THE ETHICS AND POLITICS OF AUTONOMY:
WALTER KAUFMANN'S CONTRIBUTION

by

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Introduction

Traditionally moral and political philosophy were deemed separate:
the one studied the individual's duties, the other studied the individual's
rights. If any philosopher studied the two in conjunction, it was in an attempt
to base the one on the other. Thus it remained a strange fact - noticed by
Bertrand Russell - that the moral duty to be a good citizen was hardly ever
studied. And whereas political philosophy traditionally studied the basis for
the state's right to impose on the individual, moral philosophy sought the
basis of duty in the hope of establishing it once and for all or, alternatively,
giving up this hope altogether and with it morality as such.

The strange fact is that what is common to almost all traditional
philosophers, moral, political, and others, is the supposition that the
individual is autonomous. This is why the right of the state to impose itself
on the individual was puzzling and the philosophers attempted to justify it at

times, The empirical scarcity of autonomy led to attempts to prove the validity of morality a priori; The only exception was the romantic, holistic school of philosophy, the philosophy of the Reaction with antecedents in ideas of J.J. Rousseau - the view of the individual as not autonomous, but subject to the will of his society, Yet even this philosophy was preoccupied with the autonomy of individuals - not of all individuals, but of very special ones, geniuses, heroes, leaders, or otherwise exceptional people - exceptional in their very autonomy; and their role was declared that of shaping the future of their societies one way or another, This may be questioned but it accords with the empirical fact that autonomy is scarce. Modern sociology goes often so far as to view autonomous individuals deviant or marginal in some sense or another.

The fact is that autonomy is a rare quality and yet one which is very desirable - both morally and politically, Democracy is based on the idea of the autonomy of every individual in the face of the fact that this autonomy is a rare quality, This is a major cause of stress within democracy. It is therefore morally highly desirable to address this situation in an effort to improve upon it. And to that end one must relinquish the traditional goal of moral philosophy, ignore the question of the foundation of morality, and discuss the fact that autonomy is so desirable yet so scarce.

Walter Kaufmann addressed moral philosophy in this manner, and this alone should qualify him as a pioneer and an outstanding contributor to the study of morality regardless of his success or failure in that respect. Yet, we have to advance this field, and to that end we need examine his work critically and in some detail. In particular it will be argued here, Kaufmann's ethics has the strength of advocating autonomy and of having a socio-polical bent, yet not enough of a socio-political bent, or one which is too

facile given current problems of democratic society. For example he is too much of elitist and too insensitive to discrimination, as will be argued in the conclusion of this essay.

Walter Kaufmann's *Without Guilt And Justice* New York: Wyden, 1971) is an outstanding work. It presents Kaufmann's moral ideal as extremely individualistic and pluralistic, which appears as a violent contrast to the conceptual apparatus commonly used in social psychology and sociology. These view moral education as the internalization of norms and values through the process of socialization, and he describes the process of moral growth as the liberation of the individual from social influence, indeed as the neutralization of socialization.

The question to ask Kaufmann is, obviously, what is the content of the moral value of the autonomous individual? What limits him, in other words, from encroaching on others' autonomy, or damaging others in any other way? Any answer to that question should be examined for its value as a means of coordination between the individual and his or her society. Kaufmann himself, it should be noted without criticism, pays little attention to the question, how should autonomous individuals associate and cooperate. He clearly rejects the traditional idea of justice, and he clearly hopes for better cooperation than by following its criteria. Yet we should examine this. Kaufmann is "not against having a social conscience", (p. 130), but says very little about it and nothing about political concern. By contrast to Kaufmann, Bertrand Russell assumes that autonomy entails a moral code which includes significant political concern: ethics, says Russell, must refer to the individual's social and political concern. It is perhaps possible to view Kaufmann's ethics either as traditionally apolitical, or as reflecting the new political concerns of the day, such as pluralism of intimate life-styles, the

youth revolt and women's liberation. This, however, only deepens the problem of social cooperation: how do and how should autonomous individuals comprise society?

1. *Oversocialization and Guilt-feelings*

In 1960 Dennis H. Wrong delivered a classic paper, in which he summarized the trend in sociological thinking which he views as the dominant trend, from the viewpoint of the opposite trend, which he belongs to.

The main question of social thinking is, what keeps society intact? What makes people behave as a society, what checks the animal in man? We have here three questions, not one; yet they are supposedly elucidations of each other, different wording of the same puzzlement: Man is a beast; hence we should expect a war of all against all, and hence no regular social intercourse, and hence no society. How, then, is society at all possible? Whatever the answer is, it seems, the question thus put cannot but lead to an exaggerated answer: when we say that society is integrated because of anything in the world, we have already said that society is integrated. But is it? The question, or the set of questions, how is social intercourse possible? Is, then, imprecise. We should better ask, how is there as much social intercourse, or cohesion, or coordination, as there is? Once we take care to describe, and then try to explain, the facts as they seem to us, we will not so easily find ourselves unwittingly exaggerating the answer. Nevertheless, in that wording of the question, the degree of social cohesion was not specified, because we do not know it, nor even the way to measure it: if we knew what cements people into a society, then, perhaps we could effectively measure the degree of social cohesion it effects.

It is not clear whether we should let things stand as presented in the previous paragraph or offer a correction. It is all right for Dennis Wrong to open with the view that man to man is wolf and ask both how is social cohesion kept despite all conflicts of interest? and, by what means is society organized so as to be able to maintain itself? Yet, it may be in order to observe that sociologists are less concerned with man's natural aggressive qualities and more with people's ability to adjust to their specific social roles and still more with the sum total of these roles to comprise society. For, whether man is by nature this or that, surely as a social factor the individual plays a social role; and this role is not natural, whatever else is.

Nor is this disagreeable to Wrong, since, one way or another, it is clear that we arrive, his way or ours, at the same question.

We may, than, move on and ask, whatever the degree of social cohesion, what is its fabric? Or, what is its mechanism? How do people's social roll's cohere (despite their natural readiness to fight each other)? They are educated. To be precise, they are socialized. For, education includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, etc., as well as the acquisition of common social skills; it includes the acquisition of the values and the norms of society in general as well as those peculiar to social roles. Socialization includes all education except the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The more socialization, then, the more cohesion: the more socialization, the less fighting; societies with better socialization have more cohesion. This, again, leads to exaggeration, though now of the prescription rather than the description: we want the highest degree of socialization to cause most cohesion and thus least conflict. Hence, not that deviance is impossible, but deviance is always evil: for the sake of peace we need more cohesion and for

the sake of cohesion (and peace) we need conformism; and the more the better!

This, again, is a gross error, of course: socialized people are not blind conformists, and levels of socialization are not the same as levels of conformity; rather, the socialized should be independent of mind and able to decide when to conform and to what degree. Education should be, of course, for autonomy and for social responsibility.

The two errors depicted, i.e., that each society is at an equilibrium and thus optimally organized and that education - or the part of it that is included in socialization - should mold a conforming social animal, these two errors are too trite to discuss, and would not be mentioned but for the fact, described and discussed by Wrong, that contemporary sociology has had for decades as its mainstream a school of thought - *functionalism* by name - which takes them as axioms. Moreover, two decades have passed, yet Wrong's description still holds true of the functionalists, though by now they are less dominant, despite all changes. (This is not to deny, incidentally, that functionalism has made positive contributions to human knowledge.)

Why are these two obvious errors prevalent? Because those who hold them are cognizant of their being exaggerations and mean to hold them as exaggerations rather than as literal truths. Also they feel that Wrong's alternative is still less acceptable. The major difference between functionalists and other sociologists is .not so much as to whether society is perfect or whether we want to breed conformists. The major difference concerns views on actual social mechanisms of training for social cohesion. The mechanism of socialization the functionalists describe is extremely simple and effective and. they think, their description of it is nearer to the

truth than Wrong's ideal of the offspring of ordinary citizens being raised to become independent and socially responsible model individuals.

The mechanism in question is that of socialization through internalization of the social norm, where internalization is the Freudian mechanism of creating the super-ego through the arousal of a sense of guilt, repression, and the cultivation of the neuroses which the socialized person develops, Such a person allegedly craves nothing more than peer approval, thereby becoming a veritable conformist. All this, says, Wrong, is an over-simplification which leaves no room for other motives for deviants and for non-conformists, and for their often valuable contributions to society and to social cohesion.

We can see that the major trend of social thinking need not preach the breeding of conformity: it may simply observe that more often than not people conform to the accepted social norm, and that this is the commonly available social cement; and we may explain conformity as the outcome of conformism and conformism is the outcome of socialization and socialization as the arousal of the sense of guilt plus the training for the search of relief from the sense of guilt through the endorsement of the values and norms of their society in general yet in manners peculiar to their assigned or self-selected) social role in particular. We do think that this is a thesis Wrong would not object to, except to say that social theory should be accommodating enough to study the less cohesive in society the cohesive through motives (such as a sense of justice, perhaps, or a Political concern) other than conformism (= the wish to have peer approval).

2. *Beyond Guilt and Justice*

The angle from which Walter Kaufmann approaches socialization is very broad, and very historico-philosophical. Yet he sees things very

differently from the sociologists. Let us outline the history of the ideas of guilt and of autonomy as he sees them.

The chief and oldest assumption common to all cultures is this: man is an asocial beast. This assumption led to the most widespread and popular view of social thinkers and of educators from time immemorial and everywhere: education must include repression. Freud, too, accepted this and added that repression is internalization through guilt, so that all cultured or civilized individuals must be neurotic. This brings the oldest, indeed, archaic idea quite up-to-date.

As opposed to the archaic theory of man as beast, a much more recent idea was developed, chiefly in ancient Judea and Greece, of man as a moral law-maker, of man as a moral judge, of the individual as responsible. It is hard to assess how much the idea survived in the Hellenistic world, in late antiquity, in the Roman Empire. Yet after the fall of this empire the idea of autonomy had to wait for the Renaissance and the Age of Reason. Even then, as Kaufmann points out, it did not bloom, since the great thinkers of the Age of Reason demanded so much rational justification from the autonomous man, as to rob him, in effect, of his autonomy: Kant, to take Kaufmann's example, was worried about how much tobacco to smoke a day, since he had no rule about it that he could justify. Paradoxically, the romantic movement contributed more to our image of the autonomous man with its image of the hero - cultural, religious or political - as the creative individual above society: now we can see how unnecessary are the social norms and the sense of guilt and all that: if we are only heroic enough, we can set ourselves free. The impediments to autonomy are no new topic. Yet all views of them have been refuted by the march of time. As a primary datum Kaufmann takes the claim that to "those whose minds' are not liberated, wars, revolutions, and

radical movements will never bring freedom." This is how his *Without Guilt and Justice* opens. "This is one of the most tragic lessons of the twentieth century," he observes. His book is a call for self-liberation, for the active undertaking of moral autonomy; his weapon is the appeal to his reader's understanding: people are all too often decidophobes, i.e., fear or hate to make decisions, because deciding is the acceptance of responsibility. By exposing decidophobic techniques Kaufmann hopes to dissuade his readers from using them, thus helping them to be able to opt for a life of decision and thus to choose autonomy. Without commenting on this part of the book, we wish to observe that it is outstanding. It is a most unusual characteristic of a treatise in ethics that it has such a strong and direct impact on readers who are no students of philosophy, giving them a hope that it might enable them to better cope with their daily problems: this characteristics makes this book fascinating to lay reader and to professional alike.

Let us say right away that autonomy is the main watershed dividing all moral, social, and political discourse, from the most abstract to the most concrete and pragmatic, from the ideological to the everyday. And here we are firmly on the same side, author and commentators. This, however, does not mean that we have no critical comment to make. We may discuss the arguments which the author offers, the views which serve as the background to these arguments, the arguments he rejects, his reasons for rejecting them, and, finally, the points he refrains from touching, rightly of wrongly. For our part, we think the greatest defect of the book is in its omission of the social and political dimension of ethics, which, we contend, he barely touches upon.

It is all too frequent that a commentator attacks an author's omission for no better reason than that there is a difference of opinion between them as to the

significance of the point omitted or, still worse, since the commentator ignores the author's chief design. We hope to avoid this kind of criticism. We shall therefore discuss the very legitimacy of every omission. Let us begin with a standard example.

The chief classical problem regarding autonomy is, will the autonomous not use his freedom to choose evil? Does autonomy permit evil and is it therefore inferior to naive morality, or does autonomy impose goodness and may thus be sham? It was Immanuel Kant who claimed that autonomy imposes goodness, and he then had to try to make room for the freedom of the autonomous agent (pp. 239-241). Jean-Paul Sartre, on the contrary, calls an autonomous evildoer a saint while conceding his evil. Quite rightly Kaufmann eschews this debate altogether. He says, we do not know what is the right thing to do, and so even the attempt to do good must presuppose autonomy (p. 180). He notices that autonomy permits ill intent (p. 32) or irresponsibility (p. 1.90), but adds that this is no argument against autonomy, considering that decidophobia is more likely to lead to undesirable modes of conduct than autonomy, since autonomy leads to difficult or problematic or uncertain decisions, not to dishonesty (p. 23) and hardly to intentionally evil ones (p. 1.92). These arguments may be incorrect, but they certainly enable Kaufmann to play down and avoid the thorough discussion of the classical problem: for the purpose of his book these arguments will suffice, but we are still not satisfied. Let us offer a summary of his work, however, before discussing what we consider his chief regrettable omission, the need of the autonomous for civic responsibility, including social and political concern and obligation. We stress at the start, however, that Kaufmann ends his preface with the claim that he offers a new morality, and that this new

morality may be examined for possible errors and excesses as well as for omissions.

3. *Kaufmann's contrast between autonomy and justice*

We shall say nothing about Kaufmann's discussion of the mechanisms of decidophobia, except that it is an excellent discussion of much theoretical and practical value. We have to mention one decidophobic technique, or set of techniques, however, since it may be relevant: it is what Kaufmann refers to variably as moral rationalism or manicheanism or stacking one's cards - the policy of waiting for decision to be so, obvious and necessary, that decision can be imposed rather than responsibly undertaken. This policy is justified by dividing right from wrong as clearly as possible. We remember that even Kant was forced into moral rationalism and thus had autonomy threatened.

We wish to consider in some detail Kaufmann's rejection of the entire concept of justice, since, we propose, he overdoes this: his rejection suffers from excess.

It is abundantly clear that there exists a concept of justice, even commonly accepted one, that is so absolute as to impose decidophobia and thus precludes autonomy by the manichean technique just mentioned. Does this make all concepts of justice and autonomy opposites? Certainly there is no possible compromise between autonomy and any concept of justice that prescribes all acts, or between autonomy and a criterion of justice supposedly or allegedly universally and easily applicable.

But is there no different concept of justice that autonomous people may find useful? We can go further and agree with Kaufmann about retributive justice so-called, that is to say the view that penalty is inherently a part of the rectification of injustice. He argues that both religious and secular thinkers

until recently were in favor of retributive cruelties which they thought just and which are now often considered pointless. He explains this improvement in the generally accepted view as the outcome of recent political events, from the atrocities of World War II and Vietnam, to the fact that nowadays in the developed countries of the world autonomy - which he sees as the alternative to justice - is a live option for the millions.

What Kaufmann attacks here is a metaphysics of penalty, shared by Christians and by secular thinkers like Jefferson and Kant. We join him. Penalty, continues Kaufmann, is not only retributive, preventive, or corrective (educational), as classical theories have it; there may be other functions to it. Kaufmann is not opposed to all penalty, but he approaches it by and large technically, as the penalty for parking violations, designed to keep traffic flowing. (We shall not delve into this topic here.)

There remains then, only one idea of justice as a principle: the idea of distributive justice, which is the idea of meting out everyone's just desert. How is just desert measured? The answer is, by rules specified by the law of the land. Kaufmann dismisses this answer on the ground that the law may be unjust. We admit that the law can be unjust, yet observe that the major difference between the presocratic Greek democratic theory and modern democracy is the fact that many Greek democratic thinkers taught that immoral law is not binding, thus possibly making Greek democracy unstable and perhaps even leading to its downfall, yet modern parliamentary democratic theory teaches the desirability of abiding by the law even while democratically fighting for its abolition. Admittedly the theory of passive resistance, at least in modern times, also calls at times for the open and flagrant violation of the law, but also as means of parliamentary legal reform, and on the complex assumptions of the extremity and urgency of the

situation and so on. There is nothing opposed to autonomy in this, partial and parliamentary concept of justice, justice by the (tentative) law of the land.

What makes a law just? The first answer is the idea of equality before the law. Kaufmann does not discuss equality before the law at all. This seems to us to be a serious defect. Historically, equality before the law served as a basis for the struggle for political democracy, and not by sheer accident: no doubt, equality before the law as the guarantee of both human and citizens' rights to all, is the basis of civilized living and the political base for individual autonomy. This is not to say that autonomy is impossible in societies which ignore this principle. But the possibility of autonomy for the millions- Kaufmann's major object – is conditioned on this. Nor will we deny that equality before the law is highly problematic as well as insufficient for democracy and autonomy.

Yet it is a central and a clear idea, without which the concept of equality is too diffuse, and may include the pernicious socialist concept of material equality which is compatible with the political superiority of the members of the ruling party. This threatens the concept of freedom and with it of autonomy. Indeed, when the communist countries relinquish equality before the law in favor of the goal of material equality, they lose all sense of equality and all freedom. As Kaufmann argues, we do not know what is equality - of needs, wants, contributions, worth, or any other quality. This does not alter the fact that unjust discrimination is removable, as he observes (p. 73); and, to our mind, but not to his, with the resultant improved approximation to justice. There is nothing opposed to autonomy in this either. But without the concepts of justice and of equality before the law

there is no sense of discrimination. Their absence would thus impede the struggle against discrimination.

Since equality is admittedly problematic, the idea of equal opportunity came to replace it. And when proven inadequate too, says Kaufmann, the last bastion of justice has fallen and the road to autonomy is opened (pp. 83-5). Yet here, again, Kaufmann is oblivious to the fact that today equal opportunity is increasingly becoming part and parcel of equality before the law. Hence, in a similar vein, we can say, inequalities of opportunity that are flagrant violations of justice may be rectified. Kaufmann rightly stresses the contrary: excessive equality of opportunity may be stifling to freedom (p. 85). This is a valid and important argument, but it is an argument against the extremist concept of justice only, which indeed is opposed to autonomy; it does not conflict with the reasonable, flexible, open, guiding principle of justice. Kaufmann finds the concept of equality of opportunity too vague, but only because he avoids relating it to the law. Equality of opportunity legally means that race, color, or creed, national origin, sex, or age, should not be used as arguments for barring an individual from any right offered to others, in all matters of education, training, employment, promotion, housing and other sufficiently clearly specified fields of public affairs (to exclude, perhaps, club memberships). Kaufmann says, emphatically, "the preoccupation with distributive justice is misguided and unfruitful" (p. 88), and we disagree: only when excessive is this preoccupation objectionable. Kaufmann's arguments are two. First, because other standards may exist that call for our attention, emphasis on justice may be disproportionate. Second, justice looks to the past, but the future deserves more attention. The questions of justice that evade these pitfalls are, "What kind of men and women do we want to accept, to educate, to graduate? What kind of society

is desirable?" And Kaufmann offers the observation: "The decidophobe would rather avoid such question of goals, and lie often does it by concentrating on justice" (p. 88). He thus overlooks the fact that this argument does not preclude the autonomous tackling of these questions while concentrating on justice, though of a different kind.

The desired individual, for example, opposes sexual stereotyping, and so should oppose sexual discrimination as unjust; for, if we do accept sexual stereotyping we may be blind to the discrimination that harmonizes with our model of masculinity and of femininity. Here, then, the very concept of choice that Kaufmann contrasts with the concept of justice, it seems to us, strongly interacts with it: justice should increase fields of choice. Kaufmann's discussion proceeds from here to the discussion of guilt. Guilt feelings may be prompted by a sense of injustice, and this may justify his view that justice and guilt are the two prongs of decidophobia. Yet this is incidental, since Kaufmann is far from attempting to remove guilt without replacing it with some autonomous substitute. And, indeed, he offers the idea of fault as such a substitute, and a sense of fault, he suggests, is to replace the sense of guilt, as more 'future oriented', just as regret should replace remorse and self-criticism should replace self-accusation (p. 123). We fully agree, and, indeed, in parallel to this we offer here the autonomous alternative for the decidophobe's kind of justice and sense of justice. There is an obvious connection here, which Kaufmann himself observes (pp. 134-5): political activity motivated by a sense of guilt is highly inefficient, and, when feelings are strong, even irrational. Even Kaufmann will not deny the facts which we describe as the need to remedy injustice; yet he advocates not a sense of injustice, but rather a sense of fault and of regret, and proper self-

criticism and criticism. These he rightly contrasts with a sense of remorse and of guilt.

Yet, we think, fault and criticism as opposed to guilt and accusation, are not enough: we need an autonomous sense of injustice to contrast with the heteronomous sense of injustice. The activity of meeting injustice the proper way, according to Kaufmann, is motivated by and/or accompanied with, a sense of fault, of regret, of criticism; We, on the contrary, see here also, perhaps also mainly, a sense of injustice, which is the same as a sense of justice, namely, a sense of civic responsibility. At most he acknowledges that this sense is legitimate and even positive, whereas we claim that it is required in order to maintain civic society. We shall argue that this is a genuine disagreement, and one which signifies.

4. *Kaufmann's portrait of the autonomous person*

Having disposed of guilt and justice to his own satisfaction, Kaufmann moves to his image of autonomy. Autonomy, he says, imposes some measure of alienation. No doubt the decidophobe may dream of relegating his responsibilities to his community so as to have his cake and eat it too; and in this case he may well, if he is a twentieth century social thinker, call the situation in which his dream does not obtain, a state of alienation. We endorse Kaufmann's rather scathing dismissal of the fuzzy ideal of communalism together with its associate, the equally fuzzy general concept of alienation. Yet his critique of the concept of alienation from work and of the attempts at overcoming such alienation we find superficial, and, we shall argue, elitist. The concept of alienated labor calls for specific, challenging questions: can we improve the quality of working life? Kaufmann hardly notices the problems of alienation from work, and indeed mentions in

passing only one of these, boredom, and only one possible remedy to it, job rotation (p. 150). Yet he assumes the whole matter to be rather trite if not simply pointless. For, he adds to his commendable, if brief, discussion the following observations. "Those who hate routine are few. Most men [and women] desire amazingly little variety; witness what they do in their spare time. A notion that most men, if only they had the time, would use it to reread Aeschylus' tragedies every year, in the original Greek, as Marx did, is wildly romantic." This line of argument is at variance with the tenor of the book: there is an infinite gradation between the two extremes, and denying Marx's extreme does not yield Kaufmann's. It is not that we are picking here on a weak passage in Kaufmann; it will turn up again in our central criticism of his book.

We think that the politics of autonomy is the same as parliamentary democracy plus participatory democracy in the work-place and in schools, as well as in political parties. This holds particularly with regard to increased autonomy for workers in the regulation and the shaping of their work-role. It has been observed empirically that although nearly all working persons need some routine in their work, the great majority suffer from excessive monotony. Rotation is one small aspect of the desired redesign of work-roles. Kaufmann uses workers' leisure activities as evidence against the claim that they suffer from boredom on the job. The empirical evidence on this point is that differences in leisure behavior between age groups, for example, are larger than those between occupational groups. Moreover, the more limited the worker's work-role, the more his literary and language skills may atrophy, so that his limited variety of leisure activities is no independent evidence for his alleged indifference to variety but rather evidence for the damage done to him by the monotony of the job.

Kaufmann's unintended expression of elitism becomes even more pronounced and embarrassing when ~'e turn to education. "Above all," he says (p. 153), "education has bred utterly unrealistic expectations, and this … ought to be changed… Pupils have… been encouraged to believe that they can paint and write as well as anyone, or make brilliant experiments and great discoveries. But men are not equal in talents, and this well-intentioned but misguided egalitarianism has resulted in the vast growth of a sense of disappointment," Does this mean that people should not be encouraged to be creative? Clearly, not: according to Kaufmann some should, but most not. This is elitist education. How should the talented be selected early in life? It is clear that creativity may be conceived in very different ways.

Clearly it is cruel to make young people feel obligated to be no less successful than the greatest artists and scientists they know of, Yet the desirability is obvious of dilletante creativity, at least as an uninhibited activity and as means for learning, and for developing one's ability to appreciate great arts and sciences if not also as means of introducing a touch of the great arts and sciences into daily life. The very division is objectionable of life into work and leisure, and the limitation of art to leisure for all but the few artists; it is surely decidophobic and elitist, and contrary to the tenor of Kaufmann's philosophy. The right for creativity for all, and in all spheres of activity, is the right for autonomous self-realization. Kaufmann might have advocated it forcefully and thus have enhanced the cause of autonomy still further. But his book has no discussion of rights, alas!

Kaufmann's discussion of education (p. 154) replaces the heteronomous concept of discipline with the autonomous one of self-discipline. This move

is right, yet it is unsatisfactory or at least highly problematic, since it means "the need to master skills and subjects which one may not feel like learning but without which competence in one's chosen field cannot be held" (p. 154): who chooses the field, who says one must be competent, who says how much competence? . It is not enough that school should 'stress' (whatever this may mean) 'the need of certain skills for competence. Whatever school should do, it is not 'stress'; and certainly it is not simply competence that needs be emphasized. The demand for a high level of competence, we should add, is one more decidophobic ploy which is missing from Kaufmann's terrific list.

Lines of argument now begin to blur. Kaufmann will not, of course, deny that competence may be a decidophobic ploy, nor would we deny that it may be an instrument for autonomy. Similarly, when he says (p. 155) that television watching can be uncreative passivity and reading can be creative activity, we can only retort that the converse is also true, and that to claim that "the television watcher is at the mercy of his medium" (p. 155) is as true as that the reader is also at the mercy of his public library: we are all at the mercy of the constraints we live in. Kaufmann thus is preoccupied with the elite: most people watch TV, and "the writer without TV" is autonomous (p. 156), so that in Kaufmann's portrayal of the situation it is polarized into black-and-white, contrary to the spirit of the book: the creative writer stands apart from the ordinary worker; the one is totally free and his work and leisure merge, the other does not mind routine and has no taste for variety, in work and in leisure alike.

We do not wish to argue against Kaufmann's claim that alienation is a standard feature of autonomy, or "the price of autonomy" (p. 165); yet he must have met or heard of autonomous individuals who are not alienated

from their peers; he even quotes some of them. Nor is it a bad ideal to try to create a society where there is not such a sharp dividing; line between integration and alienation, and whose members do not mind much whether - or rather how much - they are' alienated. Kaufmann is distinctly post-romantic, yet he is infected with the romantic view that the unalienated cannot be autonomous, creative, heroic. The prosaic view of things is much more in line with his own philosophy, nearer to the truth, and devoid of his objectionable and quite unintended elitism. (He mentions elitism on pp. 28 and 235-6 and dismisses it out of hand.)

The new autonomous man, says Kaufmann, possesses the new honesty or integrity, including a sense of proportion (p. 179). The new sense of proportion, however, he relates only to the considerations of alternative opinions and proposals and their pros and cons. [This is very much in accord with the autonomy-laden philosophy of science proposed by Karl Popper]. When such considerations are absent, he adds, we must either suspend judgment or admit that one's view is tenuous. For our part, we do not see how this can be done in the sphere of social and political problems without also holding some view, however tentative, about justice (or just distribution). This is not to disagree with much of what Kaufmann says in favor of the preference of honesty over sincerity, since, the one but not the other requires autonomy.

Autonomy, then, is required; but "autonomy is not enough" (p. 186). Since autonomy involves responsibility and responsibility involves rationality (p. 180), clearly, then, rationality, too, is not enough. Of the list of virtues to add to autonomy, there are the obligatory and the voluntary ones. Love is desirable but not obligatory (p. 186). We agree. 'A social conscience' Kaufmann likewise finds fairly desirable but not obligatory, it seems, though

this point is not as clearly stated or denied as we might wish (p. 186). In any case, we propose (a) that Kaufmann finds a social conscience somewhat desirable, but not at all obligatory, and (b) that for the autonomous person it is obligatory nonetheless. In particular, we add - with Russell - some measure of political concern is essential.

Before discussing this we must add a point concerning Kaufmann's image of the autonomous person and his integrity, honesty, measure of alienation, non-hypocrisy, humility, ambition, etc. In the book at hand his discussion of the rules of the new morality is out of focus because he disregards all the standards of society (and advocates the readiness to accept the penalty of alienation). For, though the autonomous has to work out his own law (nomos), giving up social law is something possible only if autonomy is the quality of the chosen few. If we want 'autonomy for the millions,' we have the problem of social and political coordination. How is coordination between millions of autonomous individuals possible if each may very well make his own rules? The sociologists of the functionalist school advocate the internalization of some basic values and norms. This must limit autonomy to the options available within these basic values. Moreover, internalization may be self-deception, and as such threaten to destroy autonomy altogether.

There is some form of endorsement of social rules known, which is less drastic than internalization; it is hypocrisy, which is a polite form of dishonesty. Kaufmann we remember, opposes hypocrisy too. We can limit coordination, and allow for a diversity of subcultures, which opens more options for choice. Still, the problem of choice for the millions while maintaining social coordination and cohesion is still far from its solution. The solution which we endorse is that of modern parliamentary democratic

society: abide by the laws of your society, and apply your own values to judge them, and when a discord results attempt a reform. The autonomous citizen, then, is better able to maintain his autonomy if he is able to examine critically the -values and norms of his society, as well as his own. Autonomy for the millions, then, is only possible in an open and pluralistic society.

It is a commonplace that most people cannot forge norms and values; and nobody can create them ex nihilo: we are all social products to some extent. The autonomous differs from the heteronomous precisely in his readiness and ability to examine critically his own values and norms, notice inconsistencies, and attempt to eliminate some of them. All this is very much in line with Kaufmann's tenor, yet he overlooks it, simply because he evades social and political questions almost entirely. Is the 'new' integrity 'really new'? asks Kaufmann (p. 198), meaning autonomy with honesty but without guilt and justice. He says, yes, but argues poorly for his view. The answer is, indeed, yes. Autonomy plus a sense of proportion is in itself not new. It is that the new morality - almost fully in accord with Kaufmann's guidelines, but not quite – is evolving because in some parts of the world both democracy and liberal pluralism are fortunately winning enough to enable many people to live in autonomy plus a social sense of proportion, - which includes a sense of justice. This sense of proportion requires of them to participate in some measure in the democratic process and to exhibit social and political awareness and concern - including some criticism.

For the autonomous person Kaufmann offers a few alternative ways of life, each of which might offer happiness: Nirvana and the creative life (i.e., negative and positive freedom) (p. 218), or else the "life of service" (p. 228). The life of service is better conceived "in conjunction with the creative life" since without it such a life is "self destructive or at least a drug" (p. 229);

also, creativity and service may alternate. (The obvious combination is teaching, he says.) He insists that service can be autonomous (p. 232), that autonomy is not necessarily elitist (pp. 235-6).

The concept of Nirvana is that of inactive, perhaps contemplative, sta1e of private bliss. In the Orient this certainly excludes hedonism of any sort; but more lax western variants may be somewhat less ascetic so as to include the proverbial dropout, or even the playboy who can afford luxuries. What is common to all who seek Nirvana, in a strict or lax sense, is the exclusion of all social ambition as well as social aspiration, thereby also excluding all creative impulse. Indeed, in Kaufmann's system it may well be defined as autonomy sans both creativity and service, namely, the lowest level which an autonomous person may reasonably aspire to. The question is, however, how reasonable is it? We agree with Kaufmann that it is too much to demand of every autonomous person to aspire to be a Beethoven or a Janusz Korczak before he dare be happy. Yet, Nirvana seems to us to be no option at all. How can a person attain Nirvana without being a parasite? Where is there a critically minded, self-reliant lotuseater to be found, anyway? It is the vagueness of Kaufmann's concept of autonomy - the absence of the social and political dimension of it - that troubles us here. We agree with all he says about heteronomy, yet do not know whether he assumes autonomy to entail moral virtue, and moral virtue to exclude damage to others and even sheer parasitism.

The creative life is a very attractive way of life, to be sure. Yet it is necessary to broaden the concept of creativity, so as to include initiative, innovation, and challenge in many if not most spheres of work-production, technology, even trade, business, and other economic affairs, administration, and education. The combination of the creative life and the life of service

seems to us as attractive as it seems to Kaufmann, yet we do not see it in quite the same way as he does. As long as the obligation is not utterly self-understood, that everyone, even the most creative, or the one most attracted to Nirvana, should handle one's own routine personal service work (and parents should be equally responsible also for infant and child care), then more than half of humanity are doomed to spend most of their time and energy on routine service activities in the home and outside it. Here the logic of Plato's *Gorgias* is forceful: injury is harmful to its perpetrator as well as to the injured party. Not dealing with social inequality as the major obstacle to autonomy, Kaufmann overlooks the fact that those discriminated against were supposed to provide services to the privileged whose autonomy was allegedly thereby safeguarded. The new autonomy ought to be egalitarian not in the sense of some arcane definition of equality but in the ancient sense of self-sufficiency (autarky) of the (autonomous) individual who makes it his own rule to be no burden on his neighbor or mate, and. to avoid exploiting them – neither economically nor emotionally, nor in any other way is exploitation compatible with autarky. And autarky is quite indispensible for the autonomous. Above all, autonomy, we say with Kant, involves the recognition of everyone's right to their autonomy.

A Note on Buber

It seems not unreasonable that the development of the new idea of autonomy should clarify earlier vague concepts. When we clarify a vague concept, however, we have a certain degree of latitude, that is to say of arbitrariness: how much of the in-between should count as old, how much as new? For example, Buber speaks of the recognition of one's guilt as an element missing from Freud's psychopathology and as one useful in psychotherapy

nonetheless. This may easily be identified with Kaufmann's replacement of guilt with regret, especially since both Buber and Kaufmann recommend future-oriented attitudes. Yet Kaufmann deems Buber rather old than new. More generally, how autonomous is Buber's individual? Perhaps in subjecting his will to the will of God, he may be less autonomous than Kaufmann's individual. Yet this is a metaphysical matter that need not concern us at all. More important is Buber's communalism as contrasted with Kaufmann's extremist individualism. For, Buber advises the individual to follow a moral law which demands the highest intensification of the interpersonal relations thereby striving also to the reform of society at large through the construction of proper communities. We deem Buber's communalism excessive in one direction; we deem the absence of any ideal of social and political obligation in Kaufmann's views excessive in the other direction.

Summary

Kaufmann's basic view is that moral philosophy should enhance individual autonomy. To that end he rejects traditional notions of guilt and of justice. His rejection of justice is based on his rejection of retribution, yet he goes too far when he sees no possible justice other than retribution and when doing this he altogether disengages ethics from political concerns - quite contrary to his intent. It is easy, however, to supplement and rectify Kaufmann's basic ideas by noticing that democracy is the politics of autonomy and that democratic justice is, as he would wish it to be, future oriented and open to improvement.

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