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Dear Bill.

Yes, I have (finally) received all your three chapters (the last one arrived here Saturday morning). I have read them all, of course. I have been wondering whether to ring you up to write a few lines, and I have decided in favor of the latter, waiting for the moment when we shall be able to discuss your philosophical thoughts face to face. I am afraid that this will have to wait until our return from Mexico, around the middle of next month. As it happens, Priscilla is extremely nervous because she has not completed yet her paper on "Kant on animal rights," and she is afraid that it will take the whole month to perfect it.

Each one of your chapters has special merits. Let me call them* for the sake of brevity: "HK" (Herder-Kant), "CK" (Cohen-Kant) and "EW" (Eric Weil). HK shows something that is usually neglected, namely, that Kant's thought is rooted in an idea (or is it ideal?) of reason which is both dialectical and concrete. Hence Kant can criticize Herder's Ideen while "absorbing," as it were, Herder's main intuitions concerning the structure of Weltgeschichte. For some reason, your chapter seems to me to be more enlightening on Kant than on Herder; maybe, after all, you have the former more at heart than the latter. The "breaking through" universality seems to have been better understood by Kant than by Herder, despite the latter's claims to have provided an ultimate ordering of Weltgeschichte. Or have I missed the point?

I see in CK an attempt to show that a "positive" religious faith is not necessarily incompatible with a philosophical attitude based upon universal morality. After all, morality itself is a question, or an object, of faith and feeling. Thus, the "break-through to the universal" is effected by means of a deepening into a historical reality. To be sure, this historical reality becomes inevitably metahistorical. Cohen has been treated commonly as an epistemologist interested only in perfecting objective idealism. *Yours* It is quite an original turn of tables --but one that, after all, should not surprise, because it follows the lines of the primacy of practical reason (the last word needing a lot of emphasis, so

* The chapters, that is.

Kluback, W.

to avoid all temptation to reintroduce by the backdoor a theoretic-practical dualism).

EW is, in all senses, a crowning of your philosophical exploration. It may well be the best chapter of the whole book. It teems with insights concerning freedom, violence, choice, and reason. The internal dialectic reason-violence gives way, I suspect, to an assertion, as least as an ideal, of "the philosophical life of reason," in which violence has been absorbed, not simply discarded as a kind of nuisance. The finite character of man by virtue of his own self definition appears most clearly both at the beginning and at the end of the chapter.

There are, of course, scores of questions which could be asked: Is the "Enlightenment side," both in Herder and Kant, as imperceptible as it seems to follow from your exploration? I have my doubts thereupon. Is the Jewish temper and *Geschichtlichkeit* as essential to Cohen's insights as you, and he, makes it? What about a different religious view (Christianity, or Hinduism)? I seem to me that when all is said the philosophical view dominates the religious convictions --or rather, the philosophical view is compatible with a variety of religions convictions, particularly in so far as a number of the latter can also claim to be "metahistorical." Is not Eric Weil's logic of philosophy more "existential" than "rational"? A number of Weil's claims are not essentially different from Sartre's --may, indeed, have anticipated Sartre's.

It is a fine book. It is not easy to read, but philosophy is never easy to read (ask your neighbor). Sometimes the reader wishes that you would expand on some issues --make more explicit, for example, what is understood by 'reason,' since obviously 'reason' is not a perfectly univocal term. What I miss in the book sometimes is the re-iteration of a leitmotif, so not to get lost in a maze of thoughts and insights. I may miss probably some "wrapping up" (to use the horrible TV term). Do you intend to write some "final" chapter? I am sure that it would improve the undertaking.

As I was writing the third paragraph of this letter, the mail arrived, and with it the "Tenderness for the Finite." You call it (in the text) a "Conversation," and this is it. A wonderful conversation which shuns all unnecessary "gravity" to go deeper into the subject. I did not realize how much, and how well, a literary atmosphere (Kafka, La Fontaine, my own quotations) would fit my thinking, although I should know by now when I am engaged in writing a novel after I tried the short story genre. Philosophy can be, I guess, rigorous, and serious, without being dull. I feel that you have grasped my idea of meaning better than I have done myself. You have grasped, above all, my whole philosophical temperament, which has persisted throughout a number of philosophic stances. Yes.

indeed, it is a question of temperament, or should I say character, without in the least relinquishing the ideal of universality. Philosophy is, I feel, that most mysterious, and engaging, of human activities in which the universal and the personal can coalesce. Just like in art --as well as in science, when the latter becomes truly theoretical, namely, philosophical. Thank you so very much for your wonderful article! The last ten lines are the best summary I have ever read of my own thought.

I look forward to discussing further your chapters. Most cordially.

Wm