



FETTERED BY THE *LINGUA FRANCA*  
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*Zuerst*, the contradiction. My first days at the Wissenschaftskolleg were spent in the six-week intensive German language course. It was *very* intensive: an exhilarating, exhausting, immensely enriching experience thanks to brilliant teaching and companions all keen to get better and better at the language. At the end of each morning I would emerge from the Villa Jaffé, head spinning, and go to lunch in search of a German willing to speak German. No luck. My fellow Fellows would reply at once in fluent, almost faultless English. The Wiko staff were prepared to have a go, but their too obvious patience was discouraging, and the moment I hesitated they would switch to English. I did not manage a meal in the language of Berlin until I was invited to a table presided over by my Oxford colleague

Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, whose fluent German, wonderfully clear and understandable, imposed itself on our neighbours.

There’s the contradiction. On the one hand, the Kolleg devotes considerable resources to encourage the learning of German, on the other it permits an atmosphere which discourages the speaking of German. Yes, it is my bad luck to be a native speaker of the language which, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has become the world’s main *lingua franca*. The Kolleg can hardly do without it, especially in the Tuesday Colloquium, since its Fellowship is drawn from all quarters of the globe. But it surely could persuade German-speaking Fellows to be as tolerant of foreigners’ attempts to cope with their very difficult language as the French these days are tolerant of bad French. Why cannot Berlin be like Paris and St Petersburg where, if you speak the local lingo, they joyfully reinforce your efforts?

One thing that greatly advanced my ability with the language was turning my draft chapter “Anger and Revenge” into “Zorn und Rache” for the Tuesday seminar. (I gave it first at the Einstein Forum in Potsdam, and later in Hamburg.) The translation exercise took me about a month, punctuated by weekly consultations with Marita Ringleb, whom I persuaded (against all her teacherly instincts) to correct my text only when my words were *unverständlich*; let the understandable mistakes be, because that is how a foreigner speaks. The translating was time well spent, and highly enjoyable, but once the benefit was gained and honour satisfied, my other work called and I allowed myself to request the Kolleg’s translation service to provide German versions of two more talks, one of which (on physiognomonics, the last part of my emotions project) I gave in the Freie Universität, the other in the Humboldt-Universität and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

This last is a lengthy paper, begun in 1995, which has nothing to do with my history of emotions project, but one that I was able to bring to completion during the past year thanks to a resource unique to Berlin: the Aristoteles-Archiv, located in the Institut für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie at the Freie Universität. The Archiv, founded by Paul Moraux in 1965, is the only institution in the world to offer for study in a single location microfilms of all the surviving manuscripts of Aristotle (there are around a thousand of them, copied by successive generations of scribes over a period of eight centuries). One of those who spent time travelling to monasteries in the Sinai Desert and other remote parts to help with the photographing was Dr. Christian Brockmann, currently working for the Berlin Academy *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*. As a complete novice in palaeography, I was fortunate to have his aid in inspecting every single one of the 45 MSS relevant to my

provocative thesis that a much discussed passage of Book IX of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, although written by Aristotle, was not written for the *Metaphysics* at all, but for a lost ethical work, and consequently should not be printed in the place where we read it today. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to spend time with an expert (even better, an expert willing to communicate in German!) in a setting ideal for the job in hand. The paper will be published (in English) in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, accompanied by two colour photographs, that journal's first-ever illustrations.

Another job that took me away from the history of emotions project (though not from emotion) was to finish editing and introducing a sizeable volume of essays on the history of philosophy by my teacher, the late Bernard Williams, Britain's most distinguished moral philosopher and a Wiko Fellow in 1996/97. That was the period when he was writing his last book, *Truth and Truthfulness* (Princeton University Press, 2002), which has important things to say about the relevance of the history of philosophy for the practice of philosophy itself. I found myself mindful of its lessons when engaged in yet another task that I had not proposed to the Wissenschaftskolleg at the time when (years ago, as it now seems) I formulated the project I wanted to undertake during my stay in Berlin. In the interval I had accepted an invitation to serve as President of the Aristotelian Society in the coming year, 2005/06.

Despite its title, the Aristotelian Society seldom discusses Aristotle, or even ancient Greek philosophy. It is devoted to philosophy as such and meets fortnightly in London during the academic year to hear papers on any aspect of philosophy as practised today in the English-speaking world. The papers are printed for the annual Proceedings in advance of the discussion. Mistakes are therefore irretrievable, which makes one deeply apprehensive (I had a nervous breakdown in 1967 while preparing my first contribution to the Society's Proceedings.) All the more so when the task is to be philosophical; scholarship will not suffice. You may chose a historical topic, but the audience will expect you to do more than describe how things were, or were believed to be, in the past. You need to engage with their current non-historical beliefs.

I chose to defend the truth – I mean, the simple, unqualified truth – of Plato's notorious doctrine, a linchpin of his *Republic*, that the human soul is composed of three parts: reason, spirit and appetite. In broad outline, reason seeks the good, spirit aspires to honour and esteem, and appetite lusts for the physical pleasures of food, drink and sex. My claim is that these can be seen as groupings of desires and tendencies which we have because we are, respectively, rational animals, social animals, and animals. So construed, the tripartite soul

ought to be accepted as uncontroversially, even tritely, true. The essay is dedicated to the memory of Bernard Williams, whose “The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato’s *Republic*” (1973) has proved to be the most influential paper ever written on its subject.

And the history of emotions? Well, it advanced without arriving at its goal. In the long run it will have benefited greatly from the multidisciplinary excitement of a year at the Wissenschaftskolleg. For that, and to all who contributed to the continuing intellectual ferment of our stay in Berlin, I am truly grateful.