Four Letters to Apel

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WP 5/2002

February 2002

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Asger Sørensen:

FOUR LETTERS TO APEL[1]

Girona, Monday, November 6th, 1995

Dear professor Apel!

After having reread my notes from the lecture today, and compared them with the program, I think the following might constitute a question for the fourth lecture. But it is too long and fundamental to ask after the lecture. Nevertheless I hope you will consider it, when you prepare the fourth lecture, or afterwards, if you like. It concerns me a lot, because I'm working with fundamental issues within ethics, that is, moral dilemmas and the foundation of ethics (Sørensen 1995). And from you, being a veteran in ethics, I would very much like a comment.

The question is:

What is the foundation of the philosophical language game, the argumentative discourse itself, which you - and many others - use to found philosophy in general and more specifically ethics?

Some explanation is needed:

I'm a bit old-fashioned and I'm not totally convinced that the transition from paradigm one and two to paradigm three (Apel 1995) is fully justified, whether in fact the linguistic turn is not a mistake. At least in the Anglo-Saxon countries many

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[1] These letters are part of a dialogue, which took place while Karl-Otto Apel for two weeks was holding the Ferrater Mora chair at the Facultat de Lletres, Universitat de Girona in Catalonia, Spain. During these two weeks, from Nov. 6th to Nov. 17th 1995, Apel gave ten lectures entitled "Transcendental Semiotics as First Philosophy", which were meant as a total overview of his own thinking. During the lectures Apel would comment on questions and critique he had received the day before, and in that way lay the foundation for continuing the discussions after the lectures. So these letters are indeed just part of a dialogue; another part - the most important - was the lectures themselves, which will, some day, be published by the Catalonian publisher Ariel (Barcelona).

Converting my letters to Apel into an article (see also the first few paragraphs of the fourth letter), I found it necessary to make the following notes, not just to make the letters understandable outside the original context, but also to make it possible for the readers to compare my critique with relevant passages in Apel's articles - some of which however are not in print yet, but were given to us as photocopies in Girona - as well as to give hints to the sources, which have helped shape my own thought concerning discursive ethics and ethics in general.

In general I owe a lot to the discussions in Girona over Apel's philosophy, and specially to the neverending discussions between Juan Carlos Siurana Aparisi and myself. It is also thanks to him that I can provide uptodate bibliographical information concerning Apels unpublished manuscripts, following a list of publications recently forwarded to him by Apel himself. And last but least, thanks to the revision of Thomas Wulff my all too hastily formed phrases are now almost readable English prose.

philosophers are moving back towards traditional continental philosophy for new inspiration having met a dead end in their analytical tradition. From my point of view they are correct; analytical philosophy much more resembles scholastic thought than anything else. In Denmark analytical philosophy is very influential in the philosophy departments, and having received my philosophical education there, my opinion is thus based at what you could call inner experience.

Therefore, I would like to ask you how language is founded, not as a mere sceptical point, but a way of getting onwards,[2] of correcting this historical deviation, the linguistic turn. I want to use an idea from Georges Bataille, who was doing ontology in the old way together with a more modern Hegelian - paradigm two - way of constructing the being, doing what one could call subject-philosophy, which was not in any way postmodern or sceptical, much less a type of 'anything goes smartness'.[3] Actually Bataille was working for more than thirty years around some main insights, one of which I want to use to ask this question.

From a phenomenological point of view - and an historical too - we might ask about the transcendental conditions for communication. What are the necessary presuppositions to have communication between rational beings? First of all we need rational beings, and rationality only comes into question when you have time for it. What is needed is a pause, so that for instance immediate attraction or repulsion does not result in any form of stormy lovemaking just here and now or a violent attack just here and now, but in poetry, literature or in rational conflict solutions in the discursive way!! What we need is something which makes us able to rationalise our experiences and motivates us to use the language. And what are the conditions for this pause, this break?

Of course the above presupposes that nature is violent and immediate, but I hope you share that presupposition. But given this, we need something much stronger than rationality itself - which was the thing to be explained - to cope with nature. And that must be an emotion itself, an emotion, an '*Erlebnis*', which is able get rid of or at least hold down the pressure during the use of rationality. Horkheimer and Adorno's idea of subjectivity did not contain such an idea and therefore they did not have any means to protect mankind from barbarity. Their civilisation was based on reason and when reason destroyed its own human content (Horkheimer & Adorno 1944), because of their Freudian concept of the subject, they didn't have anything left.

You yourself and your college Habermas have tried to establish the foundation of mankind as communicative action, which should protect us from ourselves. But this does not seem strong enough to me either. To use Habermas' terms, then the lifeworld surely is in acute danger from being overtaken by the systems, so that rationality once more - communicative or not - falls victim to forces which it cannot resist (Bernstein 1995: 29). From my point of view in philosophy we rely, in general,

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[2] Allusion to Apel's conception of paradigm transition as a consequence of radical critical thinking, as progress and not just change, cf. Apel 1997

[3] Again an allusion; this time to Apel's characterization of science in a free society, where any new idea gets the same attention as forty years of serious research, cf. Apel, Girona, nov. 6th 1995. Apel apparently attributed the advocacy of this as a norm to Paul K. Feyerabend, cf. Feyerabend 1975.

on experience and rationality, and you, being very loyal to the philosophical tradition, rely too much on rationality and, from my point of view, too little on experience, which is to be understood not only as empirical knowledge, but as 'Erlebnis', '*expérience interieure*' (Bataille 1943/54) or impressions understood in a very general way.

Like for instance Bernard Williams I often wonder how this idea of man as a rational being has survived the history of mankind, with so much evidence against it.[4] To me, it only makes sense as an ideology, which is needed to protect mankind from itself, an idea, which people hold on to because they cannot see any other way of establishing arguments for a more human way of living. But history - and our own time - shows us that we sometimes fail and leap back into some not very human behaviour. But - and this is central to me - we always manage to establish civilisation again. We have the drive towards civilisation within us before we are rational, and afterwards as well.

We are not very much more civilised than the noble savages, but then they were not that noble either. I don't believe in progress in humanity, but not in regression either. Our material conditions change and so do our ways of realising our potential for being human. We have morality in our very being and this morality is what makes the pause possible; it is morality which makes rationality possible, not the other way round (Bataille 1957: 39).

Bataille proposes something like the Kierkegardian '*Angst*' (Bataille 1951: 53), interpreted in his own way ('Angst' being the fear of nothing, but since man is the negation of nature (Bataille 1951: 43), this nothing is nature), though, at first sight, very much similar to Adorno and Horkheimer. With Bataille, however, it has the function of keeping down nature, actually as the basic experience, which makes us different from other animals, the experience which negates nature (Bataille 1957: 41). Because of that, our experience of 'angst' is the foundation of civilisation in that it is the foundation of that pause which allows us to communicate with each other in a rational way, with language, signs and all that.

You are very concerned about not losing the unconditional validity of reason, in the way Heidegger and Gadamer made it depend on historicism, made reason relative to '*Sein-zum-Tode*' (Apel 1988b: 383); and this concern I respect, because I too consider the connection between Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* and his political involvement with nazism as an internal connection (Apel 1988b: 384), i.e. not just a contingent fact. But as far as I can se, you are making a false dilemma. It presupposes that people's emotions are strictly subjective, historically relative, easy to manipulate indefinately, and all in all unreliable, and that therefore only reason can guarantee universally valid norms.

As I see it we have something in common which transcends historical relativity, something, which is exactly our moral foundation as human beings, exactly because we are human beings, that is, moral beings. And what more can you claim than

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[4] Sorry, I got it mixed up; it wasn't Williams, who wrote what I referred to, but E. J. Lemmon (1962: 144)

validity to all human beings? Isn't that universal validity?
Sincerely yours…

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Girona, Friday, November 10th, 1995

Dear professor Apel!

Once again, the impressions from the lecture - and the discussion afterwards - make me sit down and reflect. Sorry, I can't help it! But think of it as a *cadeau* to you as a lecturer! And because you were so kind - and careless - to react on the first letter, you get another.

First of all, I think you may have misunderstood my position from my first letter, but that is something, for which you should not bear full responsibility; because it is not totally clear to myself either!!! I still hope, though, that the tensions in my thinking - some would say contradictions - might be fruitful to maintain and develop; if life is full of contradictions, so thought must be; but they might eventually show themselves capable of being dialectically '*aufgehoben*' - who knows? - although I only have hopes for such a synthesis in thought, not as a scheme for the development of real life.

Therefore, I shall try to put my critique in another way, but it still bears to the same: It concerns the status of language and rationality with regard to morality and ethics.

You believe in philosophical foundation (Apel 1988b: 406), but what status should this have; what does it found, and what does it actually give us that we could not have been without?

Philosophical explanations must connect more or less to the experience of the mundane world, as explications to the experiences imbedded in the natural language. They must make sense; if not, then we do not know what we are talking about. As you said, Husserl gives an adequate account of what we mean by truth in the ordinary lifeworld (Apel 1993b). The question is whether you give an adequate account of what we mean by rationality in the ordinary lifeworld, or whether you only explicate what is the inherent rationality within philosophical and scientific discourse, just as Pierce does (Apel 1995).

And if this is the case, I do not see how we can model any kind of generally valid ethics on this type of discourse. At the most it could be a kind of professional ethics for scientist and philosophers, who, precisely as you have pointed out, have the argumentative language game in common (Apel 1995: part IV), whereas people in general seem to put less weight on formal matters such as general consistency or coherence. When it comes to plain and simple contradictions or hypocrisy of course they react, but they do so without making claims to general consistency. And I think they are right in this, at least when it comes to ethics.

The question is whether your concept of rationality, stemming from the Kantian

concept of reason (Apel 1988b: 448), has anything to say to people in general, apart from making explicit what is meant by the word 'reasonable' which - at least in many European languages - has normative as well as instrumental rationalistic connotations. It is hard to see, how you can base so much on rationality, if this is the only connection to everyday experience.

You intend to guarantee justice through the concept of rationality (Apel 1987b: 283). But what is the use of this concept in real life, if it is only an explication of a scientific lifeform? It might serve as an ideal - or regulative idea, but where is the guarantee, where is that which makes justice necessary in an ontological way, and not just in a logical sense?

The point here is not postmodern, nor premodern, nor modern. I speak from a standpoint of God!![5] Or in the secular version I speak from the standpoint of universal validity, only that validity is to me basically practical validity, not theoretical. So I speak from a first philosophy which is basically practical and, when asking to the transcendental conditions of rationality, finds them to be moral.

I therefore have every respect for the intentions and the moral drive that keep you - and for instance Habermas - fighting in order to secure - certainty, you know![6] - the ideals inherent in modernity, for freedom, equality, and for brotherhood, solidarity or what we should call the last one. I merely think that by trying to establish rationality as the foundation of these ideals - or regulative ideas, if you like (I do!) - you defend them in a way, which, because it does not connect to many people's experiences, makes people turn away from the idea of founding these ideals at all.

Not all critics of discursive ethics are postmodernist, even though they may be young! Of course, you may use 'postmodernism' just as the emotivist uses 'bad', i.e. 'This I don't like'. But that holds no argument! And, as you have acknowledged, not all of your critics are conservatives or liberals;[7] some are actually leftists who in a lot of concrete matters would have views similar to yours.

And I would like to stress that not all critique of reason leads to fascism. Actually defenders of rationality have on occasion been just as intolerant about others' proposals of how to think as irrationalists. There is a risk in your programme that those who defend rationality simply regress to 'Beschwörungen', saying about all that they do not like: 'This is irrational', in the same emotivist way as mentioned above.

By all this talk of rationalism you tend to ignore that we are actually talking about

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[5] Alludes to the need for Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian theory of truth as a correspondence between substances, "*adequatio rei et intellectus*" to pose God as guarantee of the adequation, cf. Apel 1993b: part I; 1995: part II.

[6] Alludes to the characteristic quest for certainty by classical philosophers within the second paradigm such as Descartes and Husserl; but also by Wittgenstein, cf. Apel, Girona lecture, Nov. 7th, 1995.

[7] Actually, Apel had just disagreed with the labeling of for instance Lyotard and Foucault as 'young conservatives' (cf. e.g. Cortina 1989: 560), exactly because they are not conservative!! That I got mixed up with something else, I had read, namely Brumlik & Brunkhorst (1993b: 15).

something, and that our signs - given that there are such things[8] - refer to something, namely the world. We experience the world through our living in it, like your youth experience under the nazi regime, and these experiences are sometimes crucial in a moral way, forming us ('Bildung') as human beings, forming our understanding of the world. I cannot, for example, know how it is to be a soldier in war or how it is to stand in a crowd surrounded by thousands who all raise their hand simultaneously and shouts 'Heil Hitler'. In a way I would probably be much wiser having experienced something like that, but I must admit that I am glad to have been so fortunate as to have been born and raised in a small peaceful corner of the world in a peaceful era.

The point is that you cannot exclude experience in the sense of '*Erlebnis*' from philosophy. This is not just psychology. If you send all motives and experiences to the lands of psychology,[9] from a practical first philosophical view, you are then left with nothing whatsoever to validate your claims. Not all '*Erlebnisse*' are individual in the way described above. Some experiences are common to mankind in its very basics, from childhood to (wo)manhood - I've learned the PC-lesson as well![10] - and that gives rise to the idea of man as a moral concept, not simply nor basically a biological or - in philosophy - rational being.

The experience is part of the '*Entstehungsbedingungen*' of the theory, and a rational universalist would say that if thought has not distanced itself from these conditions and if they are somewhat extreme or biased, then thought cannot claim universal validity.[11] I, on the other hand, would give all credit to experience and claim it to be valid as a moral experience, but deny that rationalising it would make it more binding. The moral validity, that which binds, lies in the force of the experience - '*Erlebnis*' - not in whether it can be rationalised.

And the point is further that people actually have done what they have done without being monsters as the case of Eichmann and the experiment of Milgram show (Larsen 1995). Nevertheless they have done it. And from the way that the Third Reich has been a taboo in Germany - a taboo which nevertheless has been touched many times - then I would reckon that the experience was crucial to most people, although they do not have the conceptual means to cope the feeling of guilt or of having been misled.

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[8] Alludes to a discussion concerning whether we in the analysis of communication needed to overcome positivism and critical rationalism on the one side and phenomenological hermeneutics on the other really have to make use of Pierce's sign-model (cf. Apel 1995, part IV) or whether we should rather start from a totally different perspective, leaving behind us the positivist misunderstandings concerning language, concentrating instead on the concrete communicative speech, like for instance the Stoics did in their analysis of *logos* as speech (cf. Sørensen 1995b).

[9] Again an allusion, this time to Apels comments on my first letter.

[10] But like Apel I have my difficulties getting used to not using 'man' for 'human beings', as you can see already in the following sentence!

[11] Seyla Benhabib, for instance, being a good universalist, intends to reformulate the universalist claim itself, acknowledging the critique of postmodernists, feminists and communitarians (cf. Benhabib: 1992).

Of course some have not learned the lesson, but they are wrong from a moral point of view. They are wrong in the way that you name irrational, with the crucial difference that the wrongness actually connects to the majority of people's moral thought, not just today, but to all times. Killing has always been a crime against universal human law. (In wars the transgression of this law is organised and purified by the uniforms, the hierarchy and the discipline of the army, but only as an exception, not as a rule.) This is not just a factual generalisation, but part of the concept of man, the moral concept of man, the consciousness of which is inherrent in man himself, and it is that on which he bases his idea of human dignity and applies it to himself.

You connect too strongly rationality, progress and normative content, and that means that when the idea of progress in the present day and age becomes suspect because of the crisis, which you yourself have used many times as a point of departure (Apel 1967/72; 1975; 1987a), you then lose the rest. That leaves you in the hands of the post-modernists like Rorty, only left with the nazi-answer (Apel 1988b: 408). I want to insist on the ideals as regulative ideas inherent in the human '*Seinweise*', as something which is not a matter of historical contingency, but springs from our way of living with each other.

I want to give up the idea of historical progress of humanity, but not the idea of humanity. When it comes to knowledge, theoretical knowledge, we accumulate, but when it comes to skills, practical skills and crafts, for instance carpenters, plumbers, painters, artists etc., it seems to me that both progress and regress can be pointed out, which leaves the question unsettled. When it comes to technology, of course there is progress. But in humanity, only variations.

This does not mean, that all societies are equally good; quite the contrary. Some are good, in the past and in the present, some are bad, in the past, the present, and in the future, of course. This applies to people also: Some are better than others!! We are not all equal when it comes to humanity (Bataille: 1954: 368). There may be many reasons for that, but it's a fact that not all people are at the same level, neither in morality nor in rationality. That has never been the case and it never will be. Still, all count as human beings, and that is only accounted for by morality, not by rationality.

This is all meant as a solidaric critique from one who in some sense shares your ideals, but finds it hard to understand how rationality is connected to them. I think that the Kantian '*Vernunft*' with its mixture of normativity and rationality is at best an illusion, at worst a deception which only functions as ideology, and, when discovered as such by people at the high of their instrumental, subjective rationality, makes people turn away from even the most basic kind of rationality, the instrumental type, which actually serves us very well in many areas.

The danger is, that by insisting on the strong pre-Nietzschean concept of reason, you lose the more modest Anglo-Saxon concept of rationality, a concept which, as I see it, is more in accordance with the general experience of rationality. Though much more restricted, the Anglo-Saxon idea of rationality may serve us for various purposes, specially if we can convey validity to it, being based on the basic moral experience,

the negation of nature.

The communicative rationality, the inheritor of the normative aspect of the old reason, will then be left without any foundation at all, leaving - to speak with Habermas - the lifeworld totally defenceless to the colonisation of systems. But so what? Rationality was no good defender after all, as shown by Nietzsche and the early Frankfurters (Horkheimer & Adorno 1944); so why not find a stronger defence in civilisation, in morality itself?

So, if you are the hard-core rationalist,[12] then I am the concerned realistic positivist (!!!), relying on experience as a real phenomenon in a real world of things and events. Sometimes though, I would think of myself as a radicalised, a-historical Hegelian, as well as falling under other strange headings! But postmodern, or rationalistic. Never!

Sincerely yours ...

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Girona, Tuesday, November 13th, 1995

Dear professor Apel!

Once again I write - and this time I will try to make it short! Also because I have to admit that my former critique was somehow untimed and in some ways a bit misplaced. As I said today, I share your conception of the philosophic discourse, both as a rational reconstruction of what we actually do and always have done and as a normative standard, namely of the necessity of claiming the truth for whatever you propose within philosophy, and claming it rationally (Apel 1995: part IV). And the papers, distributed Friday (Apel 1993b; 1995; 1997), make sense to me, especially because of my philosophic upbringing with analytical philosophy and the discussion about rationality as the demarcation criterion of science. So your lecture made a lot of things explicit for me.

It was from not seeing any way out of the analytical dead-ends and from being convinced by Feyerabend that rationality was not the criterion for the validity of science that I changed my orientation towards German philosophy (Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer), and when I eventually got stuck in Critical Theory, I chose the anthropological strategy - strengthening the subject - in order to deal with the *aporia*'s of the dialectics of enlightment, instead of following your way through transcendental pragmatics, hermeneutics, semiotics. And I'm still not convinced, nor persuaded, though your rhetoric - and your arguments - until now have been "*m.E.*"[13] solid. So I'm looking forward to se what will follow.

And, yes, you are right, philosophical foundation has always been to give good reason, and maybe I should not ask for more. But still I do; just as you cannot accept

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[12] As Apel provocatively labeled himself in a discussion.

[13] Abbreviation for "*meines Erachtens*", that is, "in my opinion", *very* frequently used by Apel!

Rorty's "I'm just an American!" (Apel 1988b: 409), I cannot accept your "I'm just a philosopher!".[14] I want philosophy to be more than just our language game within natural language directed towards the truth.

In theoretical philosophy and natural science the discourse will eventually - if we are lucky!! - lead to some kind of shared opinion, which is fallible in the light of future investigations and discourses - in the light of the regulative ideas, as you rightly put it. The aim is the truth and we may sometimes reach it, sometimes not, exactly with reference to the world, as we know it mediated through language. So the discourse is an - if not THE - essential part of the process, as you have shown, and truth is the relevant outcome of the process (Apel 1995: part IV).

But it seems to me that you perform some kind of reduction when you give discourses that much weight within ethics. In ethics - or maybe more precisely in morality - everything is directed towards *actions*, doing the right thing; a discourse about what to do is only a means to find out what to do, not a goal in itself. If we do not doubt what is the right thing to do - and if nobody questions us - we just do it. When our moral beliefs are questioned by ourselves or by others - and that happens all the time nowadays, and most seriously in moral dilemmas - then we start to wonder about our morality, and that is the beginning of ethics.

Ethics and morality belong to the same continuity, i.e. morals give rise to ethics, and ethics is not practical if it leaves morality to become a theoretical discourse, only aiming at the truth. Therefore discourse is not essential within morality. Discourse is something, which we have to use within ethics when there are conflicts between different moralities, and I agree, that some kind of mutual dialogue is indeed the only way to prevent manslaughter.

But I am also sure that a lot of people with moral convictions will find it hard to accept a discussion on equal level with somebody with radically different opinions, not just to be obstructive, but because from a moral point of view they refuse both to discuss with immoral people and to '*thematizieren*' their own morality, so to speak, to step outside their morality, and compare it with other's to reach a consensus. If they start from different positions, they will each think that they are right morally speaking, and within the discourse they will claim their substantial assertions to be true. Reaching a consensus will thus mean giving up something, which they hold to be morally important. In the discourse it will be to give in, and to only reach a second-best solution, an agreement, a compromise, which was necessary because their original position was not accepted by their fellow being.

Just as discourse is not an essential part of morality, so consensus in the same way is simply something which we fall back on when the original plan has failed, a second-best solution. Opting for the discourse solution of moral conflicts is a moral option, not a question of rationality. It means that you accept some substantial moral claims about civilisation, about how we should live, i.e. what 'the good life' is in a moral sense; it means - at least - that you do not accept just wars, that you hold peace to be

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[14] Apel's polemics against my asking for something more substantial than what is offered by discursive ethics.

substantially moral important, that you respect the individual opinion and probably some other substantial claims.

But some moral values are worth fighting for, not just in self-defence - then it might sometimes be to late!! Remember that Britain declared war on Germany while Hitler wanted her as an ally, at least for a time! - but worth fighting for, or dying for, in themselves. At least this is part of many people's idea of moral values, and there is nothing in discourse ethics, which convinces them that this is wrong, because what they are denying, is exactly that morally speaking discourse is the right way to proceed.

So within circles that accept rationality as a means to prevent physical struggles, reasoning is o.k., but - once more - that is a moral choice, not a question of rationality. It might be very (instrumentally) rational from the point of keeping your moral intuitions to avoid discussions with people better trained in argumentative language games than yourself, i.e. philosophers, because they will always have the advantage over you, and when first you start, then you are caught; there is no way out of the discourse. So the moral "I will not talk with you and grant you claims any validity status equal to mine" is supported by the rational choice of refusing to let yourself be "*ausliefert*" to hardcore argumentation.

In short I do not think that discursive ethics account for morality in the way philosophical ethics must connect to morality in order to be able to fulfil its action-guiding function. If ethics loses its normative connection to morality, we are back into speculations '*in die Luft swebende*' once more, and all our efforts will be futile. This is not just a consequentialist argument; ethics would not be ethics if it was not moral.

I have no fear of reducing reason to merely subjective or instrumental reason. Instrumental reason is enough if we are moral; if we are not, the other kind of reason wont do either. And as human beings we are moral.

So all in all I find that discursive ethics is good as a normative methodology for ethics - philosophical ethics - but not more!! I of course hope you might convince me that discursive ethics can indeed yield something more substantial!

Sincerely yours ...

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Girona, Friday, November 17th, 1995

Dear professor Apel!

Last letter, which you will not have any chance to answer, at least not here! And that is intentional; during these two weeks I have already forced myself too much to your attention. But the reason is very simple, namely that these two weeks have been one of the most inspiring experiences - '*Erlebnis*', you know - in my entire philosophical life. And for that I cannot thank you enough. But this is not all that I want with this letter. There is now something instrumental luring in the background. Whereas the other three letters were purely in the spirit of communicative action, this one is more shrewd.

That is, this is not a real letter, i.e., not just a personal note directed only to you as a response to what you have actually said at the lectures. I actually started writing on it Tuesday, knowing that I would only give it to you Friday, where you could not answer it! So the 'as you said today' in the following should be taken in a broad sense. This letter is also different in the way that I refer to some of your earlier writings on discursive ethics.

The reason is that while writing the preceding letter, I had the idea to publish the letters together under the title "Four Letters to Apel". This means that one letter is missing so in this letter I will sum up my critique, while at the same time making it more substantial and - hopefully - more systematic. That makes this letter a bit different from the rest, but publishing them, I wont change the letters, except correct spelling, grammar and syntax, add references and a few postscript lines explaining how they came about. I'll send you a copy, when they have been published.

You see, in 1992 I actually held a lecture - the so-called "*Magistervorlesung*", which marks the end of a six-year study (which in my case was stretched over twelve years) in philosophy - exactly over your handling of the problem of foundation of ethics! As a souvenir I'll give you a copy of the presentation distributed to the people who attended the lecture, where you will also see the references.[15]

At that time, I followed you - as I do now - in your critique of the Anglo-Saxon conception of ethics as divided into value-free metaethics and - as something more or less independent - normative ethics (Apel 1967/72: 382). I also agreed with your critique of the sharp distinction between genesis and validity, of the idea of ethics as a theory (Apel 1975: 24), where especially the criterion of consistency, i.e., of non-contradiction is *the* crucial criterion (Apel 1967/72: 397). I agreed with your methodological conceptions then, as I do now, and with your way of overcoming positivism (Apel 1997), saving the rationality of humanities (Apel 1994a). Reading the articles distributed at this course (Apel 1990; 1992; 1993b; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; 1997) has not changed my mind, as little as has listening to your arguments.

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[15] I forgot to give him the copy! But the articles are Apel 1967/72; 1975; 1981; 1983: 1986b.

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What bothered me the most at that time was the impression of you as just another cryptomarxist, telling us that history would eventually realise the ideal communication society (Apel 1967/72: 431; 1975: 38), and I was very glad to hear (at Nov. 15th.) that it was the impact on the 'Zeitgeist' of that time, 68 and all that, which had sneaked in, overshadowing the principle of performative self-contradiction and the importance of regulative ideas.

But that on the other hand raises a problem, to which it was the answer, namely why we should preserve the real communication community, if it is not to realise the ideal one. We must point to the value of preserving the human race, exactly because it doesn't make itself manifest - in contrast to what Jonas seems to think - in the real world of hunger, exploitation, wars, ecological disasters etc.

As you said today, quoting Schiller: "*Das Leben ist das höchste gute nicht. Das Schlechste is das Geduld.*" But that is exactly the problem; with Levinas we may say that we are not totally innocent: When we accept the present state of affairs to simply continue, we are to some degree guilty as collaborators in a class-war against the poor of the Third World (Mosès 1993: 383), and nothing seems to be able to resist the powers of the market, of the exploitation by which we in the North literally suck out the energy - and everything else useful - of the poor countries in the South.

So where is the universally valid moral value in preserving the real communicative community? I, of course, would prefer to continue living, I actually enjoy it very much, but morally speaking, within your conception of ethics, I find it hard to give good reasons. My critique, then, is immanent, or at least, so it is intended! And it is not enough to point to the possibility of just getting closer to the ideal situation, when we haven't established it as ideal, when we haven't assigned any validity to it in a moral sense.

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From my point of view today I will say that any kind of philosophical ethics must be a rational reconstruction; nothing else is possible within philosophy. I - as I said in the last letter - agree very much with, and have learned a lot from, your reconstruction of the methodology of science in general and philosophy in particular (Apel 1994a; 1995). But I think you give too much weight to that part of philosophy, which rationalizes experiences, and too little to the experiences themselves. Thus you, especially in ethics, focus too much on the dimension of communicative community at the expense of the dimension of object cognition, morality being our object, in a shadowy way, to use your own - or was it Royce's? - terminology.[16]

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[16] Alludes what Royce considered to be the relationship between the two dimensions of cognition, the object cognition and the interpretation within a language community, that is, complementarity, not contradiction (Apel 1971: 199). In natural science the first dimension is in the foreground, the second in the shadows, whereas the opposite is the case in human science.

I still think - as I did then - that this explication of morality does not give us what we want, but - I must add - this is a fundamental problem for philosophical ethics in general. We want to change the world, make it a better place to live; we want 'Praksis'. As philosophers though we can only give good reasons for how people should act. This however does not - from my personal and theoretical experience - affect people very much, ourselves included!

So from a philosophical point of view we need to understand morality better to be able to connect to - or mediate, in your words - the moral experience in a way where we can actually achieve something practical. It might turn out that this is an impossible project, that we are actually only left with the good intentions and have to use rhetoric to persuade people. That would mean the end of ethics, but we have to be willing to run that risk; as philosophers - in contrast to many other types of people - we have a passion for the truth, and it might be that the truth of our moral life is constituted in such a way, that it immunises itself to critique.

We have no choice; if we do not want to face the moral facts, then that actually confirms my idea that practical matters do indeed precede theoretical. But in that case our task within ethics as proposed by you - and the many rational reconstructors before you - is obsolete. We must run the risk nevertheless, as a recognition of the importance of the cognitive dimension of ethics with regard accounting for and mediating to morality.

From a phenomenological point of view it seems to me that our moral views are much too strong to be affected by mere sophistry. If we discuss our most basic moral views, it is not because we want to change them, be wiser or make them more truthful; it is only when somebody - or something - actually forces us to defend them, forces us to try to convince the opponent that we are right and he is wrong. Seen from outside - and in retrospective - then, yes, we may very well be wrong; but that is not the question when the dispute is actually going on.

Only in a very limited sense does rationality affect moral change, namely in the way that pointing out hypocrisy can make us change our mind. The question is of course how we should interpret hypocrisy, but I'll leave that aside for the moment. Apart from this, the phenomenology of moral does not give much credit to the exaggerated importance of rationality, and much less to the logic of the Anglo-Saxon approach; because moral is full of inconsistencies.

The question is of course whether this is a good thing - from a moral point of view - or whether we should strive to change morality in such a way that it becomes more consistent or at least relatively coherent. The question is whether morality can make itself valid without recurring to the kind of reasoning that we use in philosophy. And in a very general sense, of course it cannot. Its normative content hinges on the possibility - at least to some extent - of answering people back, when they ask us why we did so and so. So we must have reasons in some sense, if we are to be counted as moral beings, and therefore reasons play their part in ethics as reconstruction of morality.

So the process of moral change is a process in which surely rationality plays its part, but not in a narrow argumentative way, and not as the fundament of morality. It might be that philosophical foundation is only connected with giving reasons, and that may be enough for theoretical foundation; practical foundation requires an account for what Kant called '*Praktisch materiale Bestimmungsgründe*' (Kant 1788: 48), i.e., that which motivates us to actions. Reasons are however only one candidate among others, and not the most probable, if you look at morality and the way change is brought about.

When it comes to changing our morality it is much more likely that we should choose - as point of departure - crucial experiences, '*Erlebnisse*'. Experience in general, 'Bildung', is what builds us as human beings. Of course - to give credit to Piaget and Kohlberg (Carracedo 1989) - the cognitive development does affect the development of moral consciousness, but this process does not just happen by itself. Going from one step to the other requires the right experiences, and this you get from your life in '*Sittlichkeit*', together with other people. Our morality builds itself into us during our upbringing, but this takes time. Moral change does not happen just by arguing, as I have argued (!!) before. But this being a theoretical discussion - monologue - it does not present a problem; if my arguments are valid and true, then you simply give in, as a good rational falsificationist - isn't it true? No I am only joking, I know you are not that kind of a falsificationist!

But there is something more in the development of a human being to that particular human being, which is the outcome of the process. With Hegel (1807) we can see the development as a progressing process of negation of nature, each time negating what was the outcome of the former negation, every time less immediate, every time less close to the origins. But this is only one side of the story, namely the development from the particular to the general; along with this process there is another thing at stake, namely creating yourself as something which is different from everything else, something - in the words of a Danish philosopher – irreplaceable (Kemp 1991).

And here I have to mention Bataille - who indeed criticises the supremacy of Hegelian reason, but who is not postmodern in the way Habermas represents him, and much less a Stalinist (Habermas 1985: 253,268);[17] this last accusation is ridiculous, and shows Habermas' limited knowledge of Bataille. Once more, because Bataille was the one insisting on the duality, the ahistoric dialectic between subjectivity, understood as the negation of that negation which the human being is in general (Sørensen 1994: 188), and '*das Allgemeine*', understood as that general negation of nature which bases it self on morality (Bataille 1951: 44) - in both its traditional aspects, pureness and goodness - and which after the initial break with nature is developed through rationality, which itself is based on exactly that moral negation of the immediateness of nature, that negation which makes it possible for us to calculate possible outcomes, make plans and wait, develop language and so forth (Bataille 1957: 48). My work on this is in Danish, so I can't refer it to you.

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[17] Actually, Bataille criticizes both Stalin in particular and marxism in general (Bataille 1949: 127; 1954: 360).

In a way one has to resort to Weber's ultimate irrational decision (Apel 1987a: 250). But the point is that the decision is exactly moral and furthermore that it is not a voluntary decision, precisely because it is forced upon us from mankind by our very way of being. We are not free in a strong sense of the word, being always already woven into cultural, linguistic, social, historical - you name it – prestructures (Apel: 1983). We nevertheless transgress ourselves as human beings, in shortlived moments. And we often do not know when we are acting as if free and when we are just (re)acting. But still we reflect upon it, not having any certainty. And this goes for all human beings.

But as I asked once before; does reference to 'valid for all human beings' not have universal validity? You might think it a bit ramshackle, this foundation, but the quest for certainty must give way to the quest for truth. I admit that this does not give the revolution - the goal of the Frankfurt thinking - much of a foundation.[18] That was the risk I talked about. But still we do have enough to rise up some times, and it should be enough to some piecemeal progress, although not as progress towards a substantially better world and not in every historical situation.

With this I have - you might say - regressed to the first and/or second paradigm, taking foundation much too much in the sense of causal or deductional inference (Apel 1995: part IV), not taking into account the *aporia*'s of them. But this is a substantial claim about the bases of morality. In a way I feel like Hans Jonas, whom you referred to as saying that he did not see how to do it otherwise.[19] I just hope that this conception of morality does not open up to unacceptable things in the same way as Jonas is opening up to racism among other things. Well, racism is excluded, by the universality of the conception, even though of course it is possible - as with many other principles - to twist it; but there is nothing here, which allows one to dispense from any individual.

And even though this way of thinking is presented in terms of the first and second paradigm - as ontological metaphysics and consciousness - it is presented as an argument against the conception that *moral* validity, rightness - as opposed to theoretical validity, truth - is to be found primarily in the discourse, that is, moral validity understood as practically convincing, making people do the right thing. The argument as such is part of the philosophical discourse concerning the right reconstruction of morality, and as such it accepts the methodology of transcendental semiotics (Apel 1995), i.e., it is a theoretical argument against your conception of rationality, your conception of moral validity and eventually against the using the discursive strategy to found ethics, because it lends its credibility to theoretical philosophy, not to ethics and much less to moral. The argument bases itself precisely on self-reflection and as theoretical philosophy it claims to be true.

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[18] Allusion to what Apel told us was the purpose of his own and Habermas' work, trying to establish norms with universal validity, namely giving the normative foundation of reforming - or revolutionizing - society, cf. Apel, Nov. 16th.

[19] For Apel's comments on the metaphysics of Jonas, see Apel (1986a: 185).

You have to separate two things, thought and what the thought is about. You cannot be sure that the structure of thought, that is philosophical thought, is "out there". That would mean to presuppose Leibnizian harmony or Hegelian materialised spirit. No, Kant was right in suspecting correspondence, as you have pointed out (Apel 1993b: part I); but Kant was wrong - as again you have pointed out - to presuppose the transparency of human consciousness.[20] And that is exactly the problem with discursive ethics, the philosophical foundation of ethics.

The fulfilling of the criteria for truth in the discourse do not secure the truth - or stronger, the certainty - of the account given; that would be a coherence theory of truth. No, ethics needs correspondence and fruitfulness - and goodness or rightness - in some way as well, and that is what is lacking in discursive ethics. Not committing a performative self-contradiction is indeed something necessary in the discussion of what morality is all about; but it is not sufficient, neither for securing the right account of morality (the cognitive dimension) nor to be - what ethics should be - action-guiding in a strong sense.

Kant trusted the morality of human beings more than their theoretical capacity (Vorländer 1990: xi), and I share that opinion; but I do not think that it is because they are rationale; it is exactly because they are human, that is, moral. They might lose sight of it for some time - and that might be catastrophic, like the in nazi-case, and a lot of other cases - but eventually they will get back, at least those who survive. And why is that? Because there are irrational people, willing to give up their life to the good cause, willing to stand up, not just within the discussion, no, they stand up and risk their lives. It is this stand that makes them different from vegetables, to give your quotation of Aristotle a twist.[21] I am not talking about the politicians - who might be suspected of having other motives for entertaining their countries to wars - no, I am talking about the soldier, who out of duty, out of moral conviction, patriotism or whatever, volunteers, and about the rest of the population that support him.

Soldiers always go to war to fight for the best, not to kill. And that is why it is so strong an experience when they find out that they have actually been deceived, like you were in relation to Germany, like the veterans of the Vietnam war, who all tell how they went over there to fight for freedom and democracy and found themselves to be oppressors, not liberators. And how is it possible for them to find out? It is exactly because they basically are normal people, whose morality is the basis for their behaviour, or at least for the post facto valuation of their behaviour, that is, the feeling of guilt or a bad conscience.

A bad situation will eventually make some people rise, and those who support the state of affairs will eventually - because the really bad ones are only a minority - be

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[20] Because of the prestructuredness of consciousness (Apel 1993a: 155).

[21] Aristotle says in his *Metaphysics* that he who do not stand up and argue for what he claims to be true, is to be considered but a plant!! Cf. Apel, Nov. 14th.

forced to acknowledge that they have been misled, forced, because they lose, and losing is always a mistake that makes you wonder what went wrong. So in a way the children are right, as are the fairy tales, when they do their role playing with heroes and monsters, making the heroes win in the end. Only, this process might take too long and cost to many lives to be considered morally sufficient for somebody here and know, who does not just want morality to be restored 'in the long run' because they might die themselves before this comes about! So in ethics we want people to be even better than this, not being so easy to mislead, not being so weak in their decisions, and all in all being better and being better at actually doing what morality - that is, themselves - actually tells them to do. In short, we want to speed up the correction process of time.

The problem is that it is exactly the goodness of ordinary people which misleads them, it is exactly their stubborn faith in the goodness of the other, which it takes time to break down: They generally want to think the best, they are hypnotised by the glory of the leaders to believe the best about them until something else is proven; and then they just change over to another leader, believing in him. And they believe in each other, from first sight, like Løgstrup (1956: 17) - and, I think, Kuhlman the other day,[22] although in another context - has pointed out, spontaneously. So in general they do not think about strategic rationality behind the utterances; this only happens when something goes wrong, that is, if they are deceived some way like in the case of you Germans in the thirties and in the case of the American Vietnam soldiers.

So the phenomenon to be explained, morality, and the explanation do not share the same logic, one being theoretical, the other being practical in its very roots. And this is not committing a performative self contradiction, because I propose this as a better account of what is cognitively true, that is, I am not saying that theoretical knowledge is impossible, just that your account is not good enough, since it is a reduction of the practical process of practical experience to the scheme of the progress of theoretical knowledge, which on the other hand I accept!!

And furthermore I would add that within ethics the tendency to rationalise morality is in some sense immoral, that is, it makes morality more rigid than it actually is and is supposed to be. The discursive foundation of morality in philosophy is at best unnecessary, because it does not give us anything; at worst it is wrong and might lead to inhuman rigidity, in that it makes us rely too much on the principles, and not make room for pardon and for making exceptions. I still hope to be able to overcome this problem though, relying not on philosophical foundation in this restricted understanding, i.e, as giving reasons, but on a more broad conception of foundation, as a practically valid foundation.

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By your way of arguing and supporting the foundation of discursive ethics, you in a

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[22] Two of Apel's close collaborators, Wolfgang Kuhlmann and Adela Cortina gave some additional lectures during the weeks in Girona.

sense take refuge up in the thin air of philosophy in a way similar to Heidegger after the war when he was charged with the substantial content of his philosophy in the Thirties and in the Forties. He found his refuge in onto-ontology, you yours in transcendental self-reflexivity. You reduce ethics to something very minimal, and that is probably why Habermas sometimes has lapsed into the lifeworld to look for something more substantial.[23]

When I propose to found ethics in a more substantial way, you first take it to be postmodernism, then refer to it as emotions and refer this to the subjective part of ethics, thus reducing motivation to be psychology. When I insist on experience again you then interpret it as founded in emotions - which should not be trusted, oh no, compassion and all that, which you, rightly point out wont give us justice. But that seems to beg the question when we want to give justice a foundation. And when I then continue to insist on *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, then you grant that they are important, but at the same time you refer them to pedagogic, that is, not your department!

I cannot help to see this as Bernstein does in a critique of Habermas as emptying ethics of substantial moral content, that you substitute mutual recognition with just the commitment to argue rationally (Bernstein 1995: 182). This lack of substantial content is a problem, as argued by - to bring in reinforcements - among others Benhabib (1992: 24) and Taylor and admitted by Cortina (1989: 554). This does not mean however that I share the conception of these critics. Benhabib opts for a (Hegelian) historically self-conscious universalism (Benhabib 1992: 30), Taylor for something less, but still historical and self-conscious, and Bernstein wants to take critical theory back to Adorno (Bernstein 1995: 8).

I do not wish to go back to historicism; I want an "anthropo-ontological"[24] foundation. My reasons are both theoretical - in that I think it a better account of morality - and moral - in that I believe it to be more practically effective. And that means that I share these critics' concern for the substantial moral content of ethics. Even though you insist on all kinds of good moral values, there is no recognition of or respect for the individual in itself in your thought, only as far as he or she is rational. There is only respect for arguments. You accept other kind of utterances, but only so far as they can be interpreted as arguments, i.e., they only count as arguments (Apel 1967/72: 400).

What is left then is very little and by the way of arguing you reduce philosophy to something very narrow, something which is actually only reflections over itself, over its own way of arguing, and that conception of philosophy, I must challenge, because it is a reduction of philosophy to something too narrow and unimportant.

I do not believe that is what you want, but it is what you actually get when you

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[23] Allusion to Apel's critical remarks, Nov. 16th, about Habermas' giving up discursive ethics the way he and Apel originally conceived it.

[24] Allusion to Aristotle's "onto-teleological" way of thinking foundation, within the first paradigm, that is, that of ontological metaphysics (Apel 1995).

argue in this way. You immunise your assertions to critique by making them so restricted that they almost become tautologies. Nobody can argue against the fact that when we argue we presuppose something to be true, that is, we presuppose that it should be possible to reach a consensus. All right, you can get Lyotard and Rorty with that one (Apel 1987a: 158; 1988b: 402), but they are easy victims. You could not get Jonas or Taylor only with this trick, and, rightly so, you did not try to either. You rightly charged them with their lack of universality, with their etnocentrism (Apel 1993a: 160). But this is more substantial, and to get from the so-called foundation to universality you have to use your strong concept of Kantian reason, and that is exactly the conception I challenge as an illusion.

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You claim that symmetrical relations are basic, that asymmetrical relations only come about with institutions (Apel 1986a: 196); but what status has this claim? It cannot be anything but a postulate. Because as human beings we are always already institu-tionalised, especially when you include - as you explicitly did - families within institutions. To separate the individual from institutions that basic is nothing but a separation in words, an analytical tool, which does not serve explicating what it means to be an individual. The original situation is - as both Levinas (Mosès 1993) and, as you said, Jonas insist - asymmetrical, that is, that I before me have somebody at my disposal. The basic ethical question is that somebody is given before me, and that I can actually do what I want, be it good or bad. And this situation follows us all the way in morality, in the compassion side of solidarity, that is our solidarity with the oppressed, even though we live on the Sunny Side of the Street. Solidarity is both a symmetrical relation, coming together in face of oppression, and asymmetrical, being a kind of compassion; you cannot exclude the asymmetries from the basics of morality.

And furthermore you yourself weaken the claim to universality when you, out of solidarity with the wretched of the earth, give in to - I suppose - Dussel's critique (Apel 1994b: part III; 1993a: 161)) and leave the human rights to be interpreted by whatever culture,[25] trying to avoid ethno(euro)centrism and even more when you accept the argument from the Chinese minister that they are not yet capable of making real the respect of human rights at this stage of development.[26] As you yourself have pointed out, there have always been people - the Sophists, Euripides, the Stoics in Greece for example, Confucius in China, Barthelomé de las Casas here in Spain etc. - who have been able to formulate universally valid norms.[27] The problem is just that they very seldom have the power to do anything with these thoughts. This is not very strange because their thoughts must always be seen exactly as anti-

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[25] Allusion to Apel letting human rights be interpreted by different cultures, respecting "different stages of development", cf. Apel, Nov. 16th.

[26] Related to us by Apel during a discussion after class.

[27] Apel wouldn't accept the "always"; for him this has only been the case since the birth of the great Euro-Asian world religions (Apel 1988b: 428).

authoritarian, as questioning the legitimacy of power from the perspective of the oppressed. So no wonder they seldom reach the level of '*Realpolitik*'!![28]

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Of course you are right that we cannot base anything on instrumental reason,[29] but that is not what I claim either. I want to found ethics on morality, not just any lifeworld morality - which is contingent, pre-structured etc. - but on the fundamental human experience that every human being must go trough to become human being, that is the ontological foundation of the good will, if you would like to call it that. I would rather call it the basic negation of nature. And that negation is what makes room for work, strategic life-plans and the life-form - which is universal, though not in the same degree in all cultures - that constitutes rationality, the latter being, I repeat, no more that what Luther thought, namely a "*Hure*" (Apel 1983: 56).

Where you have faith in the rationality of people, but distrust their morality which you want to give a rational foundation, I think exactly opposite, that is, I distrust the rationality of people, because it is only a whore, but have on the other hand great trust in humanity, in the long run!! Because people want to believe each other unconditionally, they often get cheated by the few that actually are strategic and use their rationality in that way.

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I cannot help feeling that your position is somehow inconsistent. You put your weight on arguing, but one could ask: Why argue, if not to convince? and: Why convince, if it would not make things better?, that is, as if truth were not something better than illusion in a moral sense. Already at this level we see the need of the good will, which you pose as necessary (Apel 1993a: 169). But it continues to be important. You have told us what a moral community should do if they disagree about something but do agree that they should find out how to live together nevertheless. And you very clearly said today that without good will, this will not work, and that no arguments can establish that good will (Apel 1987a: 254). The good will is the only thing that saves you from Rational Choice Theory (Apel 1993a: 153); without it we could enter into the discourse 'as if' we were feeling committed to the rules of the discourse, just waiting for a chance to find out how we could get out of it with some personal gain. And I would add that what is needed is not just the principle of good will, but a substantial good will, which tells us to keep peace, enter into dialogue and do so honestly, keep our promises afterwards etc.

So the question is, where does this good will come from? Or - to get rid of '*Ursprung*'-terminology - what is the basis of it? Here I am not asking about good reasons - as you rightly said there could be none - but about its metaphysical or more precisely: Its philosophical anthropological foundation. Does this not exactly mean that

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[28] Allusion to Apel's ethics of responsibility, where responsible politics demands that, morally speaking, you are only allowed to follow the ideals of discursive ethics, if is compatible with the political imperatives relevant to preserve the political entity in question (Apel 1987a: 258).

[29] Cf. Apel, Nov. 15th, commenting on my letters.

morality has primacy in relation to theoretical matters, i.e., that we should conceive practical philosophy as first philosophy, and just keep your methodology as it is for our philosophical language game, but not think that good reasoning is more than just a part of moral change, dependent on the good will, on morality. That maybe morality is not founded in rationality, even though we can rationally reconstruct it to some degree and establish a rational philosophy about it which has an effect to the degree in which rationality - as you said today, or so I understood you, there is indeed to some degree rationality on the object-side, in reality - is important in the process of moral change. That seems to me to be the basics of ethics.

This is not an answer to the question "Why be moral?". It is a foundation in the spirit of metaphysics. But the question draws a line in ethics. Of the non-metaphysical ethics, there are basically two types, one that considers it as not being very important - that of the advanced moralist, who takes morality for granted and then gives advice, like you taking the good will for granted - and on the other hand there is more hardcore philosophy which considers this the most basic question. You are right in that the question is the most radical question within your framework - as it is within ethics as it has been practised in this century - because it asks for reasons to be moral at all.

But, in a sense, it is nonsense to ask that way because as human beings we are always already human, that is, moral. In another sense of course, you can ask it, but it only makes sense as a question about the scope of the moral, that is, whether it should be very particular - maybe covering only one friend or a life companion - or it should, at the other extreme, cover the whole of humanity, i.e. be universally valid. This is the only way that this question makes sense. You said you would deal with this question in the last lecture; that's why I answer it.

So once again thank you for a wonderful fortnight!

Sincerely yours ...

PS!   But the worst question is the last one, that is, whether philosophical striving towards truth makes sense at all, whether there is anything to achieve, whether the way we behave is not just ridiculous. And now you may accuse me of the post-modern stand and whatever you like, but at the bottom of philosophy there is nothing but doubt, metaphysical doubt about whether it is actually meaningful to do all these things, argue, put up proposals, make truth claims etc. Still we have got to do it, have to continue to be human, continue trying to give meaning to our collective projects. But this way of looking at the philosophical language-game deprives it of all claims to validity; in spite of that we can do nothing else than to do exactly what we are doing, striving towards the truth.[30]

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[30] On second thoughts, after the heat of the discussion has cooled of, one might think it appropriate to ask oneself, what was the use of discussing these things? And why bother publishing it? Obviously the differences of opinion are such that no consent will ever be obtained, and therefore one might think that reflections of this kind are obsolete and/or without any sense whatsoever. But in my view we sometimes have to take discussions like this if philosophy is not to regress into just technical questions, and furthermore the whole process of the discussion simply proves my point, namely that rationality is a nothing but a "whore" who serves whatever morality you can think of, a morality which lends its credibility to being absolutely right from the perspective of precisely that morality. Whether this way of thinking may serve as proof of my stubbornness and/or irrationality

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as well, I will leave to the reader!

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