

“Society as the Mode of Redemption: The Individual in Georg Simmel’s Early Sociological Writings”

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Selected Publications

Books

- *In Defence of Modernity: Vision and Philosophy in Michael Oakeshott* (Thorverton: Imprint Academic, 2003).
- *Cambridge Companion to Oakeshott* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), Editor.

Articles

- “One Concept of Liberty: Towards Writing the History of a Political Concept”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* Volume 71, Number 2 (2010).
- “How Is Modern Intellectual History Possible?”, *European Political Science* Volume 9, Number 3 (2010).
- “The Contract of Fallibility”, *Contemporary Political Theory* Volume 8, Number 4 (2009).
- “Overcoming the Conservative Disposition: Oakeshott vs. Tönnies”, *Political Studies* Volume 56, Number 4 (2008).
- “The Voice of Poetry in the Thought of Michael Oakeshott”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* Volume 63, Number 4 (2002).
- “Oakeshott’s Theory of Freedom as Recognized Contingency”, *European Journal of Political Theory* 2, Number 1 (2003).

- "Estienne de La Boetie and the Politics of Obedience",
Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance Volume LXV, Number 1 (2003).
- "The Scientific Positivism of Michael Oakeshott",*British Journal for the History of Philosophy* Volume 12, Number 2 (2004).

Introduction to the Paper

The argument of this paper is autonomous but not self-sufficient, for the text is directly related to Dr Podoksik's forthcoming book on Simmel. In an attempt to offer a comprehensive interpretation of Simmel's thought as a whole, the book will consider his work under three aspects: as a project of intellectual self-cultivation, as a vocational enterprise, and as a philosophical reflection. These three aspects are related to each other dialectically. The ideal of cultivation envisions the human person as a whole; that of vocation aims at the perfection of one specific capacity detached from the rest; whereas philosophy is supposed to find a way to reconcile these contrary ideals. Considered in this manner, Simmel's thought is presented as an expression of what was a major recurrent motive in German intellectual history: a motive which on the level of philosophical reflection revealed itself in terms of the tension between universality and particularity, and on the existential level in terms of the tension between *Bildung* and *Beruf*.

The paper is a version of what will become section 2.3.1.2 of the book (see table of contents below), and therefore belongs to part 2, which analyses the development of Simmel's thought from the standpoint of the ideal of harmonious human personality. Simmel's central question here is how such a personality can develop and preserve itself in an increasingly fragmented world. The structure of this part is also dialectical, as Dr Podoksik argues that Simmel's response underwent significant changes during three stages of his intellectual development. Simmel's early sociology and his early interpretation of Kant (section 2.3.1.3) are the most salient examples of his attitude during the first stage, when he seemed to believe that in principle one could conceive harmonious unity as the other side of growing variety, despite occasional tensions between the two.

Efraim Podoksik

Philosophy between Vocation and Self-Cultivation: Georg Simmel in Context

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