

LUCIEN PELLETIEROn Ernst Bloch's Moral Theory

This article describes the origin of Bloch's moral theory, which was formulated partly as a response to Simmel's moral relativism. It also shows that Bloch's theory is a coherent example of what Charles Taylor calls "expressivism," a contemporary philosophical attitude which emphasizes the creation of values, with its transgressive character. Finally, the article addresses some shortcomings of Bloch's expressivist moral theory, and emphasizes the necessity this author felt to complete it with norms ensuring human dignity.

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In chapters 43-50 of *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch elaborates a moral theory that has barely been noticed so far, although it contains several elements that may still be of significance today. The lack of interest for these views is not an unusual situation: the readers who, considering Bloch's reputation, expect from him a fully fledged Marxist philosophy, are certainly not disappointed by this author's resolute commitment to socialism and by his vehement calls to revolutionary praxis; but in many other respects, Bloch's texts expose readers to a metaphysical system that is most often rooted in quite another ground than the Marxist doctrine, and whose conceptual apparatus may therefore leave them disoriented. Insistent readers realize sooner or later that only a better understanding of Bloch's conceptual strategies and an awareness of their whys and wherefores can overcome such perplexity.

This is the kind of reading that the following pages would like to propose, focusing more specifically on Bloch's views on moral theory, which are both crucial and problematic in his philosophy. First, I will present the origin of these views in the young Bloch; his sources are more apparent in the early texts, but they maintain their influence in Bloch's mature works, including *The Principle of Hope*. Secondly, on the basis of this historical analysis, I will argue for the contemporary relevance of Bloch's moral theory by connecting it with a cultural paradigm that is prevalent today, which Charles Taylor has aptly called "expressivism." Finally, I will discuss some problems related to Bloch's own version of the expressivist moral theory.

1. The Sources of Bloch's moral theory

Bloch's very early philosophical endeavour can be considered as an attempt to overcome metaphysical pessimism, as this outlook had been formulated by Schopenhauer and his disciple Eduard von Hartmann.¹ These two authors viewed the world as a metaphysical Will that cannot be satisfied. For Schopenhauer, this Will corresponds to Kant's "thing in itself," which lies beyond our limited representations and can be known primarily not through our understanding but through the experience we have of our own corporality. Hartmann shared Schopenhauer's

1 The views presented here are based on an investigation that I have conducted about the formation of Bloch's early philosophy. Various aspects of this investigation have been presented in the critical edition and translation in French that I made of Bloch's dissertation (Bloch 2010), and in subsequent articles. I have synthesized many of these results in (Pelletier 2015).

er's pessimism but differed from him with regard to the dualism of Will and understanding: he viewed the world as a process by which the Will realizes progressively, through nature and through human understanding and history, its own insatiable character and the vanity of eudemonistic desires, and therefore he saw asceticism and self-renunciation as the goals to be pursued. Hartmann believed that his processual metaphysics reconciled Schopenhauer with Hegel, and he held that the late Schelling, in spite of his Christian optimism, had formally realized that synthesis. To Hartmann, the philosophers Hegel, Schelling and Schopenhauer formed "the philosophical three-star-constellation of the 19th century" (Hartmann 1876).

In many ways, this corresponds with Bloch's views, except that Bloch attempted to subvert Hartmann's pessimism by reformulating his metaphysics into the philosophy of a possible salvation. To that aim he had recourse both to Nietzsche and to Meister Eckhart. From "Nietzsche's impulse" (Bloch 1923, 108) he adopted the affirmation of life as the source of values that should inspire us. From Eckhart's mysticism he took the idea of God's birth in the human soul, and he reformulated it in non-theistic terms, through the phenomenological descriptions of inner experience which he found in authors such as William James, Theodor Lipps and Oswald Külpe; as well as through Hermann Cohen's "principle of origin."

The synthesis of all these conceptions, which was made in 1907, was preceded by an intense search for metaphysical optimism, as is apparent in Bloch's first two articles, "Thoughts on Religious Things" (Bloch 1992) and "On the Problem of Nietzsche" (Bloch 1983), originally published in 1905 and 1906. The outcome of this search was the notion of the "obscurity of the lived moment," which plays a key role throughout Bloch's work: according to this view, we exist in the present instant, but this instant can never be known as such, we grasp it only once it is past. The evanescence and mystery of being that is thereby experienced in the instant, is lived by us as an obscurity, something negative, that determines a process whereby being as Will reaffirms itself and tends toward a future instant of self-possession, which Christian mysticism calls *nunc stans*, i.e. a moment that would not pass anymore, or a *Sein wie Utopie* (being like utopia). These ideas are foundational for Bloch and he reaffirms them insistently at all stages of his work.

This also holds true for Bloch as a Marxist. He sees history as a collective process of self-clarification and self-determination; hence his insistence, already in his first book *Spirit of Utopia*, on the fact that the I-problem is actually a We-problem, and his celebration of Marx as the

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thinker of socialism, i.e. of a society based on the postulate of human dignity and on the collaboration of subjects in the organization of their material life and in the common search for the ultimate meaning of their existence. To him, the historical importance of Marxism resides in the fact that its concrete socio-economical analyses make possible a better awareness of the tendencies of the present and hence allow the right tactical decisions for the realization of an ethical socialism. The accentuation, under the impact of Lukacs' book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), of his use of Marxist conceptuality, and his emphasis in his later work on the necessity to think utopia concretely, were never seen by Bloch as a rejection of his earlier metaphysical doctrine. On the contrary, he believed that he had managed to formulate the right ontology, the world view that was needed by Marxism and to which it actually pertained.

Throughout his work, Bloch distinguishes two steps on the way to the Marxist utopia. The first one is the revolutionary step toward socialism, i.e. the abolition of private property and the reorganization of society toward justice and the satisfaction of everyone's material needs. However, as necessary as this step is, in *Spirit of Utopia* Bloch considers it to be a "socialism of the non-essential," and he sees the socialist State just as an "organization of the non-essential" (Bloch 1918, 301, 402), because the general satisfaction of physical needs is just the precondition for a second step, which is intellectually and socially more demanding: the collective search for the meaning of existence. In his book of 1921 on Thomas Münzer, Bloch quotes the following lines, in which his hero expresses his support for the revolt of the German peasants against the feudal lords: "As long as they reign over you, it is not possible to tell you anything about God" (Bloch 1962a, 69). Through this quote, Bloch shows clearly what the utopian purpose of social revolution must be. In *Spirit of Utopia*, he writes about a "political mysticism" according to which the socialist State would become something like a church, a "bearer of long-term goals" (Bloch 1918, 411; see also 404, and the translation: Bloch 2000, 246). This idea is repeated explicitly later, in Bloch's Marxist work, most strongly in the last chapter of *The Heritage of our Times* (1934) (Bloch 1991, 369-372), and again in the concluding chapter of *Natural Law and Human Dignity* (1961), which states: "It is one thing when the power church, the church of superstitions, passes away, and it is something different when a power-free force is on guard and stands guard in teaching conscience the 'where to' and 'what for'" (Bloch 1986, 277). In his youth, Bloch thought that the new socialist church would be guided by "the authority of a spiritual aristocracy" (Bloch 1918, 410).

In a text from 1921, “On the Moral and the Spiritual Guide, or the Double Mode of the Human Face” (Bloch 1969, 204-210), Bloch declares that this aristocracy would guide in an original way, inspired both by love and by the creation of new moral values. Bloch never gave up these views. In *The Principle of Hope*, he emphasizes the role of geniuses, who have the power to anticipate the not-yet, and he celebrates both “revolution and genius” (Bloch 1995, 132) as creative forces that must work hand in hand.²

These views are directly related to Bloch’s moral theory. Long before *The Principle of Hope*, moral theory had been a concern for Bloch. Even before 1907, we see him confronted with a moral antinomy that had been formulated by Georg Simmel in his critical reading of Nietzsche. Simmel presents this antinomy in various interrelated forms.³ The first form opposes Nietzsche’s aristocratic morality to the ethics of goodness and altruism, such as that exemplified by Christianity. Simmel claimed that each of these moralities, while incompatible with the other, has its legitimacy. A second form opposes the Dionysian to the Apollinian. As is well known, one of Nietzsche’s achievements was to give the Dionysian a moral legitimacy. The Dionysian represents the life principle, the affirmation of desire and pleasure, the demonic, as opposed to the Apollinian principle of reason and measure, labour and culture. The third form opposes freedom to equality. Simmel presents this opposition as follows: on the one hand, promoting individual freedom leads to inequalities among individuals; on the other hand, promoting equality causes a levelling of individual freedoms. In the 18th century, rationalism, such as that exemplified by Kant, had attempted to reconcile those

2 With his idea of a socialist church, Bloch does not aim to transform the socialist State into something religious per se. However, Bloch is not a post-religious thinker, he is rather “meta-religious”, i.e. he wants to inherit the rational and utopian content of religion: “*religion as inheritance* (meta-religion) becomes conscience of the final utopian function in toto: this is the human venturing beyond self, is the act of transcending in league with the dialectically transcending tendency of history made by men, is *the act of transcending without any heavenly transcendence but with an understanding of it: as a hypostatized anticipation of being-for-itself*” (Bloch 1995, 1288). It is with that purpose in mind that he proposes his idea of a future church.

3 See Simmel’s discussion of Ferdinand Tönnies’ book *Der Nietzsche-Kultus: eine Kritik* (1897) (Simmel 2000, 400-408), and his articles “Die beiden Formen des Individualismus” (1901), “Zum Verständnis Nietzsches” (1902), “Die Gegensätze des Lebens und die Religion” (1904) (Simmel 1995a, 49-56, 57-63, 295-303), as well as Simmel’s last lecture in his 1904 book on Kant (Simmel 1997, 215-226), and the last two lectures in his 1907 book *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* (Simmel 1995b, 348-408).

opposites by conceiving of freedom as reason itself, a faculty that is equally shared by all individuals. However, rational beings were considered here in abstract terms; their sensual nature and interests were seen as opposed to their freedom. In opposition to that view, in the 19th century, a more fully developed conception of the individual, exemplified by Nietzsche, claimed that the deployment of individual capacities is a real ethical imperative that is no less categorical than Kant's abstract one. According to Simmel, the antinomy cannot be actually overcome in any of its various forms. To be sure, he says, religion proposes an attractive solution, namely the idea of a community of love in which affectivity and reason, individual freedom and equality, would coexist under the form of fraternity. But this aspiration expresses a mere feeling and cannot be articulated discursively. As regards values in general, Simmel is by his own admission a relativist: to him, values are irretrievably contradictory and we have no other choice but to decide for some at the expense of others.⁴

Simmel's influence on Bloch began when they studied together, and would prove to be long-lasting; in many respects Bloch's work can be considered an attempt to address Simmel's relativist challenge. Like Simmel, Bloch saw in the idea of community a solution to the moral antinomy. However, he did not consider community just as an ideal, bound to remain vague; rather, he endeavored to articulate it and to think its conditions of possibility. To him, the moral polarities described by Simmel are not antinomic. Already in his 1906 article on Nietzsche, Bloch glimpsed a possible birth of the Apollinian from the Dionysian (Bloch 2003). In many ways, this is what his whole work is about: a "rationalism of the irrational" (Bloch 1918, 254), i.e. an attempt to express and articulate in words and deeds the ontological determination that manifests itself – still in a merely negative and inchoate manner – in the contingent fact of temporal existence, which is experienced in the darkness of the moment being lived right now. This immediate present

4 Simmel justifies his relativism by what he sees as an aporia in our knowledge, i.e. a vicious circle between the whole and the parts of a fact. On the one hand, we may proceed analytically, from the whole to its ultimate parts, but this method possibly leads to an infinite regress in the analysis. On the other hand, we may proceed synthetically, from the parts to the whole, i.e. to the concept, but since the parts are ultimately out of reach, the concepts we build out of them can only determine each other "into a circle, so that one statement is true only in relation to the first. The totality of our knowledge would then be as little 'true' as would the totality of matter be 'heavy'. The qualities that could be asserted validly about the interrelationship of the parts would lead to contradictions if asserted about the whole" (Simmel 2004, 104).

moment is an infinitesimal nothing, i.e. an anticipation, a Not-Yet. Existence in time is irrational, but this irrationality is also in search of its own rational determination. One cannot understand Bloch's views on moral theory unless one considers them within this ontological and metaphysical framework, and without understanding the role played in it by "anticipatory consciousness" (see the title of the second part of Bloch 1995, 43), or, more precisely, by the Not-Yet-Conscious. As Bloch explains in *The Principle of Hope* (Bloch 1995, 122-127), it may happen – particularly in youth, in periods of creativity, or in historical times that might be turning points, and most of all when these three factors occur together – that new values and possibilities appear in the course of history. Such values are created by artistic, religious, philosophical and political geniuses, and they acquire a revolutionary power when – like Marx's thought, for example (Bloch 1969, 406-411) – they are associated with social movements. It is important to notice here that Bloch's theory of the genius differs on a crucial point from Nietzsche's conception of the overman or Weber's theory of the charismatic leader. To him, the values formulated by the genius are not just the expression of an individual irrational will, rather they may be rational and *a priori*⁵: they have an exploratory character, and through experimentation they may be proven necessary and universalizable. To Bloch, what the Not-Yet-Conscious anticipates through such values is the opposite of the darkness of the lived moment. It is oriented towards an illumination, towards what mysticism describes as *nunc stans*: the "standing now," the moment that would no longer pass away and therefore would be the opposite of the darkness of the lived moment. The experiences of the Not-Yet have an illuminative character that manifests, in a yet enigmatic manner, the *deus absconditus* that is latent in the creative subject.⁶

Considering this metaphysical framework, it is no surprise that when it comes to morality Bloch gives priority to individual freedom over existing norms, as freedom is the condition for the creation of values.

5 Bloch considers the *a priori* in Kantian terms, as the necessary and universal conditions for possible knowledge. While he sees, as a reader of Simmel and Scheler, that Kant's conception of the *a priori* was relative because it was historically determined by Newton's physics, he maintains nevertheless the *a priori* as a form through which subjects become increasingly clear about the questioning that determines them cognitively and ontologically. The *a priori* takes the form of values, or ethical postulates, that are necessary and empirically universalizable. See Bloch 2010, 150-152, and the translator's notes regarding that paragraph.

6 See Bloch 1995, 1298-1311 and chapters 22, 48 and 49 in Bloch 1975. Bloch's insistence on the genius comes from a rejection of Hegel's panlogicism and from the reading of Fichte made by Emil Lask (see Pelletier 2010).

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Adapting a distinction found in Aristoteles, Bloch speaks of a duality of ethical virtues and dianoetical virtues (see Bloch 1969, 219-233). Dianoetical, or “intellectual” virtues, are about productivity, creation. Such virtues are not bound by existing rules, and hence they may appear to be, and actually be, immoral. Opposed to them are ethical virtues, oriented toward goodness; they are inspired by love, or by the Marxian concern to overthrow “all conditions in which man is a degraded, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being” (Marx 1967, 257-258), and by the desire for freedom from oppression. Both kinds of virtues are in tension with each other and cannot be reconciled prematurely. Their unity arises little by little, through a revolutionary process whose end result shall be *fraternité*, a community of *Citoyens*, i.e. of free individuals who do not consider the other just as a limitation on their own freedom (Bloch 1995, 965-973 and Bloch 1986, chapter 19). A condition for such a community is equality, both juridical and real. In that regard, says Bloch (Bloch 1986, chapter 22), there is little to inherit from the moral theories of the past, since they all bear the mark of a class society, which they legitimize in one way or another. Even Kant’s categorical imperative, whose *a priori* character might qualify as an authentic universal rule, remains ideological as long as it is observed within a merely formal democracy and the class society that supports it. The truth of moral theory consists in its utopian goal, namely classless society and community. In that regard, law oriented toward human dignity is a more primary framework than morality, as it is less constraining than moral duty and leaves individuals a larger space to express their subjective rights. In the classless society, leadership will not disappear; rather, canonical personalities will be embraced as models in the common search for meaning. Bloch insists here on canonical types like “the warrior, the wise man, the gentleman and especially the citizen” (Bloch 1995, 391), and on literary figures who transgress human limitations: “Don Giovanni, Odysseus, Faust,” and also Don Quixote, who “warns and demands, in dream-mania, dream-depth” (Bloch 1995, 16, and chapter 50). However, the individual and the collectivity will be in harmony. Moral types and values that presently contradict each other, like sensuality and self-control, friendship and loneliness, *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, will be considered as counterparts in a polyphony of differences among fully developed individuals (Bloch 1995, chapter 47). Community will pursue this search for the Supreme Good that would solve the riddle of temporal existence, and make the pursuit possible for everyone (Bloch 1991, 369-372 and Bloch 1986, chapter 25).

2. Bloch and Expressivism

Bloch's doctrine can clearly be related to what Charles Taylor calls "expressivism" (Taylor 1989, chapter 21), a philosophical paradigm that is prevalent in modernity. Expressivism claims that subjects are in search of various goods, which include the notion of a Supreme Good. However, these goods are not already known and available; they have to be articulated from within. Expressivism emphasizes the role of the subject's creativity in that search. According to this view, what we truly are cannot be known and made manifest unless we express it. Expression is not the communication of pre-existing content. Our original intent is not self-transparent; as we struggle to express it, to articulate what we mean, we give it a shape so that it may become perceptible to others and to ourselves. The act of expression is tentative, the goals that orient it are not clear from the outset and we only have a foreboding of them. Furthermore, since the consequences of the expressive act are not completely predictable, they can orient us in new, unexpected directions. Because of this exploratory character of expression, the subject cannot be bound by predetermined moral norms; expression may therefore have a transgressive and even revolutionary character when the social environment appears as an obstacle to the expression of the subject's aspirations and authenticity. On the moral level, a consequence of this open search is that individuals are free to conduct themselves according to ideals or conceptions of the good which, in the present state of the world, may not be commensurable with each other (Taylor 1985, chapter 9). However, through reflection they realize that it is led by a sense that, despite the extent to which these goods are opposed, those that concur with freedom and community are more important than others. In their attempt to articulate this feeling and this need for consistency and unity within their own lives and with others, individuals may be inspired by great characters who have imagined or reflectively elaborated values that can claim some coherence and universality. Also, they can themselves create new values, which then become debatable.

All these views match exactly with Bloch's metaphysics of a world that is contingent and in search of its own determination, and with his conception of the key role human beings play in this experiment. Bloch's philosophy also problematizes, in a way that is radically expressivist, the inner source of expression. The expressivist view considers the subject as an inner source – be it God or nature – that we can never articulate fully (Taylor 1989, 390). For his part, Bloch understands this inner source as something that does not pre-exist: it is rather something

temporal, the Not-Yet that attempts to be positively born, to come into being through our lives and values, actions and self-expressions.

3. Scheler's Criticism of Bloch

Does Bloch's expressivist philosophy provide an orientation for life and action? During his youth, his ethical and metaphysical views were subject to the critique of a perceptive moral philosopher: shortly after the publication of Bloch's first book, rumor had it that Max Scheler had described this philosophy as "a running amok to God".⁷ In my opinion, this is not just a rumor: both authors knew each other quite well from 1906 onwards (Pelletier 2009, 229-242), and Scheler's remark is fully consonant with his own philosophical conceptions. Scheler was promoting the doctrine of an *ordo amoris*, an "order of love," i.e. a transcendental hierarchy of values, whose presence in the world is made perceptible through our intuition of essences (Frings 2001, chapter 1). From Scheler's viewpoint, Bloch's rejection of every transcendental predetermination, with the exception of the utopian Good that is meant negatively in all our anticipative acts, may well have seemed to provide absolutely no roadsign for the human quest and praxis.

Even if one does not accept Scheler's ethics, based on *a priori* values "materially" present in the human world, his indictment of Bloch's philosophy is justified in some measure. Bloch talks readily about the morality that will exist once the classless society is achieved, but he has little to say about a moral and juridical framework that will guide our social and political lives in the meantime. On that point, he has provocative formulas about the duty of revolution, such as the "categorical imperative with revolver in hand" (Bloch 2000, 242). In a text from 1937 entitled "Salvaging Morals," he also takes up Hegel's famous reformulation of a sentence of the Gospel: "Seek ye first food, drink, shelter for all, namely the fundamental conditions for the kingdom of freedom, and morality will necessarily follow" (Bloch 1972, 160).⁸ In this text,

7 See Siegfried Kracauer's letter of December 4th, 1921 to Leo Löwenthal (Löwenthal 2003, 31).

8 See Matthew's Gospel, 6, 33: "Seek God's kingdom and righteousness, and all these things (food and clothing) will be given to you as well". Kant had already adapted this sentence as: "Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its righteousness, and the object of your endeavour, the blessing of perpetual peace, will be added unto you" (Kant 1917, 177-178). Hegel's own adaptation is: "Strive ye first after food and clothing, and the Kingdom of God will fall to you as well"

Bloch states that the communist morality holds only one thing for good under all circumstances, namely, the will for a classless society; as to the concrete conduct to be observed in the struggle, it varies strategically with each situation (Bloch 1972, 159). To be sure, he adds, there is a risk here that morals will be reduced to mere politics, to tactical partiality. To counter that, he reminds his reader that one does not sacrifice one's own life for a production budget, and that communist morality must never lose sight of the *summum bonum* as totality, as the utopian, still unknown goal: "totality, although it certainly contains [the production budget], cannot be reached politically, and it is even less a mere item to guide and instruct politics" (Bloch 1972, 160).

However, while such a utopian perspective is welcome as a critical stance, it says little about a normative framework to guide action in the present. It is necessary to remark here that the text "Salvaging Morals" was written exactly at the same time as other texts in which Bloch attempted to explain and justify politically the infamous mock trials against Stalin's opponents in Moscow: at this time Bloch integrally accepted the idea that these opponents had betrayed their country and socialism.⁹ Clearly, in this situation, Bloch's support of the Soviet Union and of the German Communists against fascism did not contribute to his moral perceptiveness and did not prevent him from the naivety and simplifications that were shared by many revolutionary intellectuals in favor of this socialist State. His attitude raises questions about the idea of the duty of revolution as first step toward socialism, and only later its ensuing morality.

4. Critical Remarks

Because of his insistence on freedom and creativity, Bloch had to reject the conceptual realism of thinkers like Scheler, who stated that eternal or *a priori* norms predetermine our action, and to that he opposed a "moral nominalism" (Bloch 2000, 187, and Bloch 1962b, 508) for which values and norms are positively known only under the guise of the Not-Yet-Conscious. But perhaps this language was partly inappropriate for articulating the problem of the values that should guide pra-

(Hegel's letter of August 30th, 1807 to Knebel, in [Hegel 1984, 142]).

⁹ See his articles "Kritik einer Prozeßkritik" (1937) and "Bucharins Schlußwort" (1938), in Bloch 1972, 175-184; 351-359. See also, in that same book, the postface written by one of Bloch's friends, Oskar Negt (Negt 1972, 429-444, see especially 432).

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xis. Bloch's conception of the Not-Yet-Conscious was inspired by philosophy of life (mainly by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Eduard von Hartmann, Simmel), and by views on consciousness and time adapted from phenomenology and Christian mysticism. The recourse to these authors made possible very rich descriptions of the individual's experience: for example, about the fact that the subject's life is something inchoative, expressive, not in possession of itself. The good that is pursued by subjects cannot be defined from the outset, it is determined only negatively, as a Not-Yet. However, this perspective made it difficult for Bloch to articulate the relationship of the individual and the collective. Bloch assumes that in response to the negative experience of the darkness of the lived moment, anticipative contents and values may appear, enigmatically, in exceptional individuals. However, this conception may not be sensitive enough to the intersubjective character of the expression and constitution of new moral views. The expressive process cannot shape its contents independently from the whole web of language and meaning that contextualizes it indefinitely and through which subjective demands are constantly determined anew. The anticipation of moral values and postulates has a mysterious character due to the fact that – to use Charles Taylor words – expression discloses “certain ends of life, which we endlessly redefine, without their even becoming totally transparent, that is, without our ever fully understanding the reasons for them” (Taylor 2011, 55).¹⁰ This constant redefinition of our ends by individuals cannot simply put in brackets the collective web of language that contextualizes and determines its meanings, and which it contributes to transforming.

This hermeneutical process also exists in the case of individual moral insights that are possibly revolutionary and strongly anticipative: it is in relationship with the language context that these insights get their exploratory character. This remains true in situations where moral leadership happens, like in the socialist church imagined by Bloch, which was to have been oriented toward community. Such leadership is open, it is meant to educate and help, and should not deprive the subjects of their right to freely express and share their opinions.

All his life, Bloch defended human rights and freedom. In his writings from the first world war, he protested against the authoritarian tendencies of the Bolsheviks and against “Lenin, the ‘red czar’” (Bloch 1985, 196), and he stated that “without a democracy that [...] is extended to the lives of the individuals, socialism is just a new kind of Prussianism.

10 About moral expression and creativity, see also Taylor 2016, chapter 6.

[...] It is 1789 and only 1789, not feudalism, not a divine State, that will have as a *result* socialism, true socialism, with a Marx improved a thousand times; and the new economic freedom to be conquered, i.e. the freedom from the economic, will keep readily the great ideals of *bourgeois* democracy; far from breaking them down, from shutting them down, from killing them in a Bolshevik social dictatorship, it will instead raise them to the level of full ideals of the *social* democracy” (Bloch 1985, 390).

However, after the failure of the German revolution of 1918, Bloch pragmatically turned his social hope toward socialist Russia (Bloch 1923, 34-35). He felt that he had to make compromises with Soviet politics, both because of his commitment to the anti-Fascist struggle in the 1930s, and because of his revolutionary will for socialism as a first step toward non-bourgeois morality. This attitude lasted until the 1950s, when Bloch himself became a victim of a communist State’s authoritarianism. Shortly after, in his book of 1961, *Natural Right and Human Dignity*, he strongly asserted that social utopias need the complement of natural law as a framework: “Social utopias are primarily directed toward *happiness*, at least toward the abolition of misery and the conditions that preserve or produce such misery. Natural law theories, as is so readily apparent, are primarily directed toward *dignity*, toward human rights, toward juridical guarantees of human security or freedom as categories of human pride” (Bloch 1986, 205). In such a statement, which demands a juridical framework that guarantees freedom as a condition for the expressive moral search for the good, one can see both an autocriticism of his previous attitude, and a return to the democratic faith of his youth.

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LUCIEN PELLETIER – is professor in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Sudbury (Canada). Most of his research is about the history of philosophy in the 20th Century. He has published on Lukacs, Tillich, Mannheim, and more particularly Ernst Bloch. He has published several articles on the formation of Bloch's philosophy, and translations in French of Bloch's texts, including a translation and commentary of Bloch's doctoral dissertation.

Address:

Department of Philosophy, University of Sudbury
935, Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury (Ontario)
Canada
P3E 2C6
email: lpelletier@usudbury.ca

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Autor: Lucien Pelletier

Tytuł: O filozofii moralnej Ernsta Blocha

Abstrakt: Artykuł ten omawia źródła filozofii moralnej Ernsta Blocha, sformułowanej częściowo jako odpowiedź na relatywizm moralny Simmela. Przedstawia on również teorię Blocha jako spójny przykład tego, co Charles Taylor nazwał „ekspresywizmem”: stanowiska filozoficznego kładącego nacisk na transgresywny charakter tworzenia wartości. W końcu, artykuł wskazuje na niedostatki ekspresywizmu Blocha, podkreślając konieczność uzupełnienia go normami zabezpieczającymi ludzką godność (której był świadomy sam Bloch).

Słowa kluczowe: Ernst Bloch, filozofia moralna, ekspresywizm, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler