

**Paul Oskar Kristeller, Ernst Cassirer and the
"Humanistic Turn" in American Emigration ***

1.

History bears the marks of the life of who writes it. This truism also applies to the scholarship of the historian of Renaissance philosophy Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905-1999). Moreover, in his scholarly works Kristeller responded, albeit indirectly, to what since Nietzsche became a basic ingredient of the *Weltanschauung* and the academic discourses of the German educated middle-class: the perception of a *Sinnkrise*. By this I mean the widespread apprehension of the crisis of the self, meaning, and culture. While the notion of an all-pervasive crisis resulted in the first instance from Germany's rapid industrialization and the experience of the First World War and their corollaries, modern technology, mass society and social leveling, the history of the 1930s and 1940s could not but exacerbate it for émigré humanists like Kristeller, not least because they were victimized by a movement that enlisted many of their erstwhile colleagues and almost all of their own students, who convicted them of guilt for the crisis, and who triumphantly proclaimed that their expulsion marked the end of the crisis.

There can be no doubt that scholarship in the human sciences is inextricably linked to the existential preconditions of the scholar at work. Thus it contains elements of self-reflection of the scholar, or, to put it in hermeneutic terminology, each scholarly "expression of life" (Dilthey) also encompasses the autobiography of who writes. References to a level of meaning beyond the topic at hand and towards the life of the scholar are also evident in Kristeller's work. This is of particular relevance in Kristeller's case, because his career after his departure from Germany was advanced not only by Martin Heidegger but also by Giovanni Gentile, giving him sponsorship by the two most respected minds among the supporters of fascist regimes. Although the search for elective affinities in a political sense between Kristeller and the former is without yield, these special circumstances, and what he made of them, will require further attention.

For the moment, however, let me refer to two details, which indicate the complex weave of emigrant life. After "1968" Kristeller would no longer accept invitations for lectures in his native Berlin. This was not because of the exaggerated violence with which the forces of order had reacted to the West German student movement since the summer of 1967, but because he "fundamentally disapproved" of the protesters' demands for greater participation and the abuse of the academy for political

purposes, both at Columbia University, where he was then teaching, and across the Atlantic in Europe.¹ On the other hand, a few years earlier, Kristeller had become a close intellectual friend of Siegfried Kracauer, a writer whose work on film and popular culture had earlier brought him far closer to Max Horkheimer's and Theodor W. Adorno's Institute for Social Research than to the classical tradition. It was Kristeller rather than Leo Löwenthal or any of the other members of that group remaining in the United States who completed, edited and saw through publication Kracauer's last, expressly autobiographical book, *History. The Last Things before the Last*.²

For Kristeller, as for Kracauer and many other émigré humanists, the textual space of past ages was not only an object of scholarly inquiry but also source of consolation for the drama of the present.³ In his learned narratives one detects clues of his identification with one philosophical tradition from antiquity, that is, Platonism, and its Renaissance protagonists. As I intend to show, Platonism was a *philosophia perennis* for Kristeller, that is, the revelation of an immutable and enduring, and, one might add, comforting truth, independent of the vagaries of history. This was because its rational metaphysics provided a link between classical and modern philosophy, between the Presocratics and Plato on the one hand, and Kant and Hegel on the other. While during his academic career Kristeller mostly abstained from disclosing this fundamental belief at the heart of his scholarship, in 1987, more than a decade after he had retired, he admitted its relevance as a source of comfort and consolation against the catastrophe, which in so many ways determined his life:

In my long career as a scholar, and in the midst of hard, difficult and often disastrous times, this tradition has been a rock of intellectual and moral support, much stronger than the numerous fashionable theories and ideologies that have come and gone in rapid succession over the years.⁴

In emphasizing the positive legacy of Platonism, Kristeller's scholarship was part, albeit in a very specific manner, of a wider "humanistic turn" in German thought and letters which emerged since the 1930s. This rediscovery of the "horizons of humanism" in the textual space of European history was a counter-move against the figure of the "cold persona," as developed in anthropological, ethical, and aesthetic discourses of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s.⁵ These prescriptions for "cool conduct," for a culture of distance for the modern self, as expressed for example in

the anthropology of Helmuth Plessner, the theatre of Bertolt Brecht, and the art of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, were themselves a response to the anxiety about values and culture characteristic for the inter-war years in Germany.

Whereas, as a young person in search of meaning, Kristeller was not attracted to this mode of modern thinking, he was, like many of his generation, drawn to Martin Heidegger's "philosophy of existence," itself a reaction to the contemporary experiments in distantiation. While esteem for Heidegger's early thought, in particular for *Being and Time*, remained a constant throughout his life, during the years of emigration his intellectual allegiance shifted to the humanism of Heidegger's great philosophical antipode in the 1920s, Ernst Cassirer, the main representative of the neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen's Marburg school and, by then, a German-Jewish émigré himself.

With his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923-29), Cassirer, one of the last representatives of the liberal tradition of German-Jewish intellectuals who drew their inspiration from the German Enlightenment, attempted to provide a critical cultural philosophy, meant to address and overcome the all-encompassing *Sinnkrise*. Rooted in the Kantian ideals of rationality and cosmopolitan humanity, Cassirer discarded both the pessimistic anthropology of existentialism, as exemplified by Heidegger's "Being-in-the-world" as "Being-toward-death," and the impositions of Darwinist determinism and that of other extractions. As opposed to these, Cassirer's cultural philosophy was grounded in an anthropology of human freedom. He defined man "in terms of human culture" and pointed to man as "animal symbolicum," that is, to man's unique competence to experience the world mediated by symbolic forms like myth, religion, language, art, history, and science. In Jürgen Habermas' words:

Cassirer had conceived every content of myth, philosophy, art, and language as the world of symbolic forms. In that world's objective spirit, human beings communicated with one another, and in it alone were they able to exist at all, for in the symbolic form – as Cassirer believed himself capable of saying with Goethe – the inconceivable is wrought, the ineffable is brought to speech, and the essence is brought to appearance.⁶

Since for Cassirer the symbolic forms were the manner in which man, a finite being, participated in the infinite, they opened a door towards the liberation of the individual from immediacy and anxiety. To quote from his 1944 *An Essay on Man*, in which he introduced his anthropology and cultural philosophy to an Anglo-American public: "It

is symbolic thought which overcomes the natural inertia of man and endows him with a new ability, the ability constantly to reshape his human universe."⁷

Whereas, during their famous disputation on Kant in Davos in 1929, Heidegger declared the latter's philosophy to be a philosophy of finite man, whose access to the infinite is denied and whose orientation towards the transcendent simply confirms this very finitude, Cassirer idealistically aimed at the *terminus ad quem* of Kant's reasoning, "at liberation through the spiritual form, in science, practical activity, and art."⁸

One cannot help but think that Cassirer's serene optimism was more congenial in aiding a Jewish émigré philosopher from Nazi Germany to cope with his predicament than Heidegger's philosophy of *Endlichkeit*.

2.

Born on 25 May 1905, Kristeller was the proverbial "German of Jewish origin," itself a symbolic form of great historical significance for the history of *Bildung*. His family belonged to the well-to-do German-Jewish assimilated bourgeoisie of Berlin. He was brought up by his mother, Alice Magnus, the daughter of a wealthy banker from an old Prussian Jewish family, and his stepfather, the paper manufacturer Heinrich Kristeller, the only father he knew and whose name he assumed in 1919.⁹ Deported from Berlin after 1941 on one of the *Alterstransporte*, both of his parents were to die in Theresienstadt.

Alice and Heinrich Kristeller were typical for their generation of the wealthy urban upper middle-class of Jewish descent, insofar as they "had no higher education [...] but [...] respected all cultural pursuits and made many sacrifices to further [his] education."¹⁰ As Hannah Arendt put it in her famous portrait of Walter Benjamin, who came from a similar background, the high regard in which successful businessmen like Kristeller senior held the education of their sons "was the secularized version of the ancient Jewish belief that those who 'learn' – the Torah or the Talmud, that is, God's law, were the true elite of the people and should not be bothered with so vulgar an occupation as making money or working for it."¹¹ However, for the young Kristeller meaning and fulfillment was not to be found in the traditions of Jewish culture but in the ideals of German *Geist* and *Bildung*. Accordingly, he was sent to one of the capital's better public grammar schools, the Mommsen-Gymnasium, where the focus was on training in the classical languages.

Additionally, he was given piano lessons, at which he excelled to the degree of considering a career as a professional musician, as well as private tuition in French and English conversation. In combination with Kristeller's extraordinary talent for languages, the latter was to turn out extremely useful in the future.¹²

In 1923 Kristeller followed the neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Hoffmann, his teacher of classical Greek, who had been called to a chair in Greek philosophy at Heidelberg, to study philosophy, with a specific focus on its history, as well as medieval history, mathematics, and art history. Among his academic teachers at Heidelberg were the philosophers Karl Jaspers and Heinrich Rickert and the medievalists Karl Hampe and Friedrich Baethgen. Like most students of the human sciences of his social background at that time, he did not content himself with staying at one university. He also spent a couple of semesters at the university in his native Berlin and went for a semester to Freiburg to hear Husserl, as well as to Marburg to hear Heidegger. He seriously considered completing his degree with a Ph.D. under Heidegger, but eventually settled for a dissertation supervised by Hoffmann, on pragmatic grounds, doubtless among others.¹³ In 1928 he graduated from Heidelberg with a thesis on the founder of neo-Platonism, the Greek philosopher Plotinus.¹⁴

Like many other German students of philosophy during the 1920s he probably believed that in choosing *Existenzphilosophie*, he would be "riding the crest of the philosophy of the future."¹⁵ However, Kristeller shied away from committing himself completely to Heidegger at that stage of his academic career, for the latter was known for throwing obstacles into the path of his doctoral students, thus delaying their graduation. When asked in an interview in the early 1990s what had attracted him to Heidegger, to whose house he was also regularly invited because of his skills as a classical musician, Kristeller emphasized the latter's brilliance in the exegesis of Greek texts and as a historian of philosophy.¹⁶

Because not directly in Heidegger's orbit, he partly side-stepped the dilemma that other German-Jewish émigré students of Heidegger like, for example, Hannah Arendt and Karl Löwith faced, that is, to reconcile their profound admiration for Germany's "greatest philosopher" with his zealous engagement for Nazism as rector of Freiburg University in the early 1930s.¹⁷ This is not to say that Kristeller did not fall under the spell of the "Messkirch magician" (Löwith) at all. Evidence for his fascination with Heidegger is not only that his doctoral dissertation was "an

existentialist interpretation" of Plotinus,¹⁸ but also that despite of his parents' death at the hands of Nazis, he eventually revisited the philosopher and his wife Elfride in Germany in 1973. It can be safely assumed that on that occasion he did not demand an apology, let alone an explanation, for Heidegger's involvement with the regime.¹⁹ Nevertheless, unlike Hannah Arendt, following her first re-encounter with her former teacher and erstwhile lover as early as 1950, Kristeller did not simply gloss over the matter, if not excuse the "last German romantic" in public, while privately blaming Elfride Heidegger for the philosopher's dalliances with Nazism.²⁰ Kristeller's rationale for re-establishing friendly relations with Heidegger was that the latter had behaved "decently" [*anständig*] towards him after 1933, by, for instance, providing him with letters of recommendation and thus facilitating his academic career outside Germany.²¹ This was certainly also the reason, why even during the early years of emigration, when external circumstances prevented direct contact between them, he continued to thank Heidegger for his original advice and help in the acknowledgements to his books. At the same time, he was quite clear in his correspondence that the infamous rectoral speech of 27 May 1933 was "impossible" [*unmöglich*], while everything Heidegger wrote afterwards, including the *Letter on Humanism*, "seemed wrong and confused and also contradicting his own earlier philosophy."²²

Kristeller belonged to the generation of Germans born between 1900 and 1910, which was marked not only by its relatively high birth rate, but also its generally low chances on the stagnating and over-subscribed German labor market of the mid 1920s.²³ Furthermore, while not observant he remained Jewish, and nevertheless chose to become an academic. Theoretically this should have been a matter of course, since the Weimar constitution guaranteed full civic equality for all Germans regardless of their religious affiliation. However, in addition to a very limited supply of open positions in academia, German scholars of Jewish descent had to cope with antisemitism in the ministries and universities. For Kristeller's career, this had negative consequences even before the National Socialists came to power, although the crucial decision was not made by an antisemite. Ernst Hoffmann, who would himself be forced into early retirement by the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of 7 April 1933 as a Jew, refused to supervise his *Habilitation*, because he already had one Jewish student, Raymond Klibansky, under

his sponsorship and was convinced that the Heidelberg philosophical faculty would not accept a second one.²⁴

After his hopes for an academic future in Heidelberg had been disappointed, Kristeller returned to Berlin in order to obtain a further degree in classical philology. He studied with Werner Jaeger and Eduard Norden, among others, at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität until 1931 when he passed the Prussian state examination.²⁵ This exam was the prerequisite for a career as a Gymnasium teacher but left open the possibility for a later return to academia. With this by-way to an academic career in mind, Kristeller began to work on a *Habilitationsschrift* in the summer of 1931 on the leading figure of the Florentine Platonic academy, Marsilio Ficino. The project was intended for the Freiburg philosophical faculty, but effectively relied on the personal sponsorship of Heidegger. For obvious reasons, it became impossible to conclude in Germany after 1933.

The story of Kristeller's emigration is quickly told, which is itself an unusual circumstance. Armed with letters of recommendation from Heidegger, Cassirer, whom he had come to know through Hoffmann, and other eminent scholars, he first immigrated to Italy. From early 1934 he lived in Rome, conducting extensive manuscript research at the Vatican and other Roman libraries and scraping through financially with translations and proofreading work provided by the neo-idealist philosopher and historian of Renaissance philosophy Giovanni Gentile. From there Kristeller moved to Florence in 1935, where he was lecturer in German at the city's second university, the Istituto Superiore di Magistero.²⁶ In the same year Gentile, like Heidegger, the most prominent philosopher to endorse the reigning dictatorship in his country, organized a temporary position for Kristeller as a lecturer in German at the University of Pisa and the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, where he was the director since 1932.²⁷

Gentile, Minister for Public Instruction in the first Mussolini government and "philosopher of fascism," was certainly instrumental in advancing Kristeller's career in Italian emigration, employing him also as co-director of the series of unpublished or rare humanistic texts with the Florentine publisher Leo S. Olschki, where Kristeller's own two-volume edition of Ficino manuscript came out in 1937.²⁸ But when the adoption of racial decrees by the Italian government cost Kristeller his post in September 1938, not even this powerful member of the fascist establishment could protect him. While Gentile intervened personally on Kristeller's behalf, albeit

without consequence, with Mussolini, in order to have an exception made for "this poor devil" (*questo povero diavolo*), he succeeded in organizing a significant sum to help him cope financially after the loss of his position.²⁹ As with his most important German mentor, Kristeller was once again forced to distinguish between decent human behavior towards him and the philosopher's public engagement for the cause of his mortal enemies. Not surprisingly, he would continue to acknowledge the importance of Gentile for his own scholarly work but, different from his private remarks on Heidegger, he also emphasized the qualities of the former as a liberal and tolerant intellectual.³⁰

In the autumn of 1938, Gentile and a further prominent scholar at Pisa, the historian Delio Cantimori, also wrote to American academics in their fields in order to find him a position in the United States.³¹ Among the possible employers was the University of Chicago's Classics Department, where Werner Jaeger, who in the meantime had left Germany with his Jewish wife, and the Latinist Berthold L. Ullman tried to organize a job and a fellowship from the Oberlaender trust.³² More promising though were both Kristeller's and his Italian mentors' contacts to the Yale faculty. Among those advocating his cause there were Hermann J. Weigand of the German Department, the émigré historians Theodor E. Mommsen and Hajo Holborn, and, most importantly in terms of academic power, the church historian and Renaissance specialist Roland H. Bainton.³³

As early as December 1938 Yale's Department of Philosophy extended an invitation to Kristeller to join the faculty for a semester and teach a seminar on Plotinus. However, because the American consulate in Naples needlessly delayed the issuing of a non-quota visa for Kristeller for several months, the beginning of his American career was postponed until the spring of 1939.³⁴ When his contract at Yale expired, he secured a temporary post in the Philosophy Department of Columbia University, where he gradually established himself. While advancement through the ranks was initially slow for him, in 1948 he finally received tenure. In 1956 he was made full professor and in 1967 he received an endowed chair. He retired in 1972 but continued with his scholarly work until his death in June 1999.

Despite the danger of underestimating the difficulties Kristeller encountered during those years, it is fair to say that compared to other German-Jewish émigré scholars he had a relatively smooth transition from Europe to the United States. This was certainly due to the fact that he was well trained, exceptionally gifted, early

recognized and well recommended by prominent non-Jews in both philosophy and classical philology. These two academic disciplines, in combination, possessed a special aura of legitimacy in Germany and Italy, as well as in the United States (with German university credentials in these fields having a unique value to the generation of academics in positions of power). He had been well schooled in professional flexibility from early on in his career, but this was an experience he shared with many of his fellow émigrés, given the exclusionary practices in German academia. In any event, his American career was a "success story" in terms of both scholarly creativity and recognition. As John Monfasani wrote in his obituary: "[His] bibliography seems larger than the telephone directory of many small towns."³⁵ He leaves behind a large oeuvre as a historian of Renaissance (and classical) philosophy, as an editor of Renaissance philosophical texts, translations and commentaries, and, most importantly for future generations of scholars, as an author and compiler of the *Iter Italicum*, a monumental finding aid for Italian Renaissance manuscripts in European and American archives and libraries.³⁶

In the latter years of his career Kristeller was showered with academic honors both in the United States and Europe, including Germany. He was presented seven homage volumes and received no less than ten honorary doctorates, as well as a number of medals and prizes from scholarly academies and learned societies in different countries. To quote Monfasani again: "He may prove to have been, after Jacob Burckhardt, the most important student of the Renaissance in modern times."³⁷

3.

After his arrival at Columbia, Kristeller was at first predominantly concerned with the continuation of his studies on the Platonism of the Italian Renaissance. It is on this part of his scholarship – and its direct and indirect connections with Cassirer – that I shall concentrate in the following.

Kristeller first dedicated his energies to publishing an English translation of his monograph on Ficino, which he had completed in Italy in 1938. The book, entitled *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, came out in 1943. It was a historical analysis of the entire system of Ficino's philosophy, his metaphysics, psychology, and philosophy of religion.³⁸

Until this day Marsilio Ficino is best known for two accomplishments: in the first instance, for the pivotal role he played in the foundation of the Platonic Academy in Florence. Based on the original academy in Athens of some 1,200 years earlier, this was an informal circle of Ficino's friends closely linked to the Medici court, in which Plato's philosophy was discussed and through which it was spread among the contemporaries.³⁹ Secondly, Ficino is still recognized, because he introduced the love theory of Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* to the Renaissance. While inner experience or contemplation was the central concept of Ficino's Platonism, Socratic or Platonic love provided the spiritual bond of friendship among the members of the academy, that is, the fellowship of those who participated in the contemplative life.

For Kristeller, of course, Ficino stood for much more than those two achievements. As he wrote in the introduction to his book:

Ficino's Platonism is not a philosophical conception that just happened to appear during the Renaissance, it is, so to speak, the Renaissance become philosophical – in other words, the philosophical expression and manifestation of its leading idea.⁴⁰

What were Kristeller's reasons for this rejection of the historicizing type of interpretation prominent since the writings of Burckhardt? Generally speaking, he thought it essential to take Ficino's philosophy seriously, on its own terms. This was, firstly, because at the heart of Ficino's Platonic speculation lay a theory of the immortality of the soul. While the belief in immortality as a religious doctrine belonged to the standard repertoire of all Christian and Platonic thinkers, Ficino's claim that it could be rationally demonstrated was unprecedented. Secondly, and related to this, Ficino developed a doctrine of human dignity which, in contrast to the medieval emphasis on God, placed man and man's rational soul at the center of the hierarchy of the universe.

To be sure, Ficino was not a rationalist in the modern sense but firmly rooted in his own time. He had no intention of proclaiming a this-worldly philosophy. The main purpose of his metaphysical speculation was to meet the spiritual needs of those who wanted to reconcile their Christian beliefs and the study of classical antiquity at the same time. While he emphasized man's rationality and central role, he also demonstrated that even "though Platonic philosophy ha[d] its own authority and tradition, it [was] in no way opposed to Christian doctrine and tradition."⁴¹ As Cassirer put it in his long and very positive review of Kristeller's book: "Personally

Ficino was no 'free thinker'. He did not defend, he did not even conceive the ideal of the 'autonomy of reason' or of a secular philosophy. He never went beyond the limits of a '*philosophia pia*'.⁴² Yet he advocated religious tolerance. To quote Cassirer again:

He strove for a universal religion not for a universal church. Everyone who worshiped and loved God was welcome. There were no heretics in this new religion. For what is essential in religious life is not any dogmatic formula. According to Ficino the difference between formulae, between external signs and symbols, does not endanger the unity of faith; on the contrary, it confirms this unity. This was the common conviction of the religious thinkers of the Renaissance. We find it – in almost the same terms – in Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fidei*, in Ficino's *De christiana religione*, in Pico della Mirandola's defense of the *libertas credendi*. "*Una veritas in variis signis resplendet*."⁴³

In a 1960 conference paper on the Platonic Academy Kristeller echoed Cassirer's assessment by writing that Ficino's was "a doctrine that advocated harmony and tolerance in a period torn by the religious conflicts preceding and following the Reformation."⁴⁴ One can, of course, easily detect the perception of a pre-figuration of the religious tolerance ideal, as advocated by German Enlightenment thinkers like Lessing, in Cassirer's and Kristeller's words. But certainly there are other overtones as well. Looking at Kristeller's statement, one wonders whether one could not replace some of its key-words with others, so it would read like this: *Platonism is a doctrine that advocates harmony and tolerance in a period torn by ideological conflicts, that is, both before and after the Second World War*. Such an interpretation seems legitimate not only in light of the 1987 declaration quoted at the beginning of this essay, but also when one considers what Kristeller writes about Ficino's central concept of contemplation here. For the Florentine philosopher, contemplation meant "a gradual ascent of the soul towards a highest goal, the direct knowledge of god:"

Everything Ficino says about the virtues and other moral phenomena is basically a reduction of moral theory to the life of contemplation. Inasmuch as we withdraw into the inner and spiritual life, we escape from vices and from the blows of chance, and our actions from there on are dictated by a purified knowledge and conscience. Thus the life of contemplation is the goal all human beings must aim at in order to attain not only true knowledge but also moral perfection.⁴⁵

Is it far-fetched to diagnose more than just a description of Ficino's ideal of contemplation at the heart of this statement from 1960? Can one not discern a

preference for the life of the mind in Kristeller himself, an escape from the cataclysms of the present? This would surely be an understandable response to exile, especially coming from an émigré who had successfully withstood the trials of Heidegger and Gentile. Yet this invocation of the somewhat soft neo-humanism characteristic of the public face of Cassirer's and Kristeller's American careers does not dig very deep.

For a more conclusive answer, it is worth approaching these questions from a different direction. One can look more broadly at how Kristeller proceeds in his scholarship. In his Ficino book, as well as in his later works, Kristeller was first and foremost a historian of textual and intellectual genealogies. As a philologist he focused on the textual transmission of Ficino manuscripts, while as a historian of ideas his emphasis here was primarily on the influence, which the Platonic tradition exerted on the Florentine philosopher. Like Cassirer in his own forays into the history of ideas and opposed to cultural historians of the Renaissance in the tradition of Burckhardt, Kristeller concentrated on the transmission of philosophical thought in a relatively narrow sense.

This went hand in hand with a relative disregard for the wider political and social context of Medici Florence within which the philosopher and his Platonic Academy were situated. In his assessment of Ficino's "metaphysics of reason," Kristeller did not regard it as a defect that it had an apolitical bent to it, as Ficino "was not interested in political problems."⁴⁶ Moreover, it did not concern him that Ficino's metaphysical speculations were only made possible by the patronage of the Medici family and that it fitted well with the interests of their authoritarian political regime to distract the attention of the population from the affairs of their state between the end of the Florentine Republic in 1434 and Savonarola's revolution sixty years later in 1494.

Kristeller's focus on philosophy in general and Ficino's neo-Platonism in particular also led him to play down the importance of classical humanism, the leading intellectual movement, which, according to Burckhardt, had been instrumental in setting the Renaissance apart from the Middle Ages. While Kristeller acknowledged that humanism was original to this epoch, the humanists for him were mainly representatives of a rhetorical and poetical culture, in short, a literary culture. Of course, these were learned men whose efforts revolved around the revitalization of the rediscovered literature and culture of Greece and Rome and the *studia*

humanitatis, grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy. However, in terms of earnest metaphysical speculation their contribution was rather limited. They were not to be taken seriously, for their works were 'amateurish' and not adequately grounded in reason. Accordingly, in the introduction to the 1948 *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (1948), an edition of important Renaissance texts for American students co-edited with Cassirer, Kristeller argued that, as opposed to Petrarch and other early humanists, only the representatives of the Florentine Academy, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, as well as the Aristotelians in the universities, were engaged in "serious if not original metaphysical speculation."⁴⁷

Implicit in Kristeller's approach was a twofold challenge: first, to the predominant paradigm of German historical scholarship on the Italian Renaissance which emphasized the importance of the epoch in terms of universal history as the cradle of the modern spirit where the proverbial "discovery of the world and of man" had occurred along the lines of Burckhardt. While Kristeller did not go as far as to dismiss the notion of the Renaissance as a separate epoch altogether, he stressed the importance of continuities from the Middle Ages, for instance with regards to humanist grammar and rhetoric.⁴⁸ Incidentally, Kristeller's perspective certainly fitted well with prevailing trends in American academic scholarship without damaging the wider appeals of neo-humanism among the spectators – and funders – of academic work, substantially aiding his acceptance in US academia.⁴⁹

Secondly, and crucial in terms of finding an answer for the above questions, Kristeller in his scholarly work discarded contemporary attempts to instrumentalize the humanist tradition for the present. One example of this from inter-war Germany were the vociferous efforts of Kristeller's former academic teacher Werner Jaeger to reactivate Greek antiquity against the noisy political conflict of the Weimar Republic. In his own version of the "humanistic turn," Jaeger, a conservative classicist who saw himself as a semi-political educator, wanted to imbue German politics, society, and culture with classical values by way of a "third humanism" (following on from Renaissance humanism and German neo-humanism).⁵⁰ After 1933 initiatives like this one, meant to overcome the crisis of culture and meaning of the present, easily adapted to offer support for the Nazis, by turning the moral and political ideals of Jaeger's protagonists, Plato and Thucydides, on their brutal head.

For Kristeller, historical anachronisms of this kind were simply unacceptable. What were cultural phenomena of the past could only be understood adequately, if,

as he put it in a 1962 article, one resisted the "temptation" of emphasizing the transhistorical "human relevance of certain problems."⁵¹ Against self-declared "renovators" of the humanist tradition, of which there was also no shortage in the aftermath of the Second World War in Germany and elsewhere, including the United States, he insisted on a Kantian notion of pure knowledge and scholarship, uncontaminated by the concerns of the present. *Wissenschaft* for Kristeller was "the problem of universals, the criterion of truth" and "the range of human knowledge, the plain facts ascertained by experience and reason [which] cannot be contradicted by an appeal to conventional and fashionable opinions."⁵² For James Hankins, Kristeller's "scientific" orientation was due to the influence of one of his Heidelberg teachers, the neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert. Like Rickert who had argued that both ideographic and nomothetic scholarship were ultimately based on the same cognitive model, Kristeller believed "that humanistic research was a science; he always regretted that English lacked a word correlative to *Wissenschaft* in German, which permits the assimilation of humanistic to scientific research."⁵³

Yet political aspects of scholarly disputes were never ruled out by Kristeller. Accordingly, he and his peers derided the "third humanism" exported by their uncomfortable fellow émigré, Werner Jaeger, and set forth in his history of Greek thought *Paideia*.⁵⁴ It was expressly criticized and considered dangerously close to Nazi ideology. In 1934 one of his closest friends wrote bitterly to him: "Have you read Jaeger's *Paideia* yet? There are quite funny NS'isms in it!"⁵⁵ A further friend of Kristeller, the émigré art historian Erwin Panofsky at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, for whom the translation of the teachings of the Platonic academy into High Renaissance art was of crucial importance, once jotted down a list of "old jokes." One among them referred to Jaeger in the form of a German nursery rhyme: "*Der 'dritte Humanismus': Eia, Paideia, was raschelt im Stroh?*"⁵⁶ For Panofsky as well, the Nazis were hidden in the straw.

However, the rejection of anachronistic exploitations of the "classical ideal" did not mean that Kristeller and Panofsky maintained that all achievements of history had to be relegated to a dead past. There were indeed traditions from history worth preserving for the present. But, in light of the frequent abuse of the classical heritage, one had to tread carefully. It was crucial which part of the heritage was at stake, how and by whom the "rescue effort" was undertaken, and to what end. Rather than in the public sphere, the preservation of a deserving tradition had to be

conducted in a safe and protected space, among a circle of learned friends dedicated to philosophy and removed from the noises and dangers of politics and practical life, a place not unlike the Florentine Academy. In a 1953 speech, entitled "In Defense of the Ivory Tower," Panofsky allegorically recommended the following:

The tower-dwellers, then – whether occupying their towers singly or in the company of friends and helpers, masters and apprentices – may just as well be content to stay, if they possibly can, where they are and to exercise whatever powers of observation, thought and imagination God has chosen to bestow upon them; to perfect their techniques of work and communication; and, if occasion offers, to "signal along the line from summit to summit." They should try to write or paint or compose as best they possibly can, and in so doing they will automatically contribute to the making of the world, and perhaps more effectively than by climbing down and worshipping projects.⁵⁷

Kristeller certainly agreed with this endorsement of the contemplative life, which one without doubt could lead at the Institute in Princeton where he himself held fellowships twice during his career.

For both Panofsky and Kristeller one of the "summits," to which the tower-dwellers were meant to signal, was the rediscovery of Platonism by the Florentine Academy. Renaissance Platonism, as Kristeller put it quite lyrically in the 1948 edition, was "a this-worldly religion of the imagination – attractive in contour and wistfully reminiscent of another world, like the Platonism of Botticelli's pencil and, like it also, thin and disembodied and ever trembling on the verge of the Christian mystery."⁵⁸

This bold and deeply personal assertion is the earliest sign that permits an extended exploration of a source, which may reveal more about the overlap between autobiography and scholarship in his work – the historical inquiries and commentaries of Ernst Cassirer, with whom he was closely linked during the first decade or so of emigration. Such overlap inherently creates tensions between the strict asceticism of scholarship that Kristeller invoked against the diffuse and politically dangerous idealizations of the "third humanism" on the one hand, and, on the other, the contribution of scholarship to Kristeller's own search for meaning in such cruel times. Be that as it may, the central role which Florentine philosophy in the second half of the fifteenth century played for Kristeller, not just as an object of study but also as a source of comfort, will become even more evident if we follow up on this connection.

4.

What then were the links? There was, in the first instance, the personal contact, which Kristeller and Cassirer maintained during the years of emigration from 1933 until Cassirer's death in April 1945. They regularly communicated by way of letters and postcards and met frequently once they both reached the United States. After resigning from his professorship in Hamburg even before the Nazi regime could force him to do so, Cassirer left Germany and spent the next eight years in England and Sweden, first at All Souls College in Oxford and then at Högskala University in Göteborg. He eventually immigrated to the United States in 1941, where he taught at Yale until reaching retirement age three years later. During the academic year 1944-45 he was a visiting professor in Kristeller's department at Columbia University.

Faced with the problems of life as a refugee himself, Cassirer nevertheless did everything in his power to provide support for younger and less well-known fellow émigré humanists like Kristeller. It was, for example, due to Cassirer's recommendation that Kristeller, although living in Italy, obtained a research grant in 1935 from the London based Academic Assistance Council (renamed to Society for the Protection of Science and Learning in 1936), the main British philanthropic organization in aid of German-Jewish refugee scholars.⁵⁹

Secondly, there was Kristeller's admiration for Cassirer's own exploratory studies in his chosen period, most prominently *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, his 1926 book on Nicolaus Cusanus' thought, which was among the first to acknowledge the existence of a proper "philosophy of the Renaissance."⁶⁰ This made a monograph on Ficino by a historian of philosophy both possible and desirable. For Cassirer, in turn, Kristeller's book filled an important gap in the history of philosophy. He praised it as a work that linked Greek antiquity with the German Enlightenment and idealism, Socrates with Kant and Goethe. As Cassirer pointed out in an important 1943 article on Pico della Mirandola, the history he had himself uncovered (and to which Kristeller had contributed his highly original work) stretched from the neo-Platonists thinkers of antiquity, like Plotinus and Porphyrius, to Renaissance Platonists like Cusanus, Ficino, and Pico, to the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century and Shaftesbury, and in Germany via Leibnitz to Kant, Winckelmann, and Goethe.⁶¹

Ficino's metaphysical speculation, presented comprehensively for the first time in Kristeller's monograph, was particularly relevant, because this effort set the stage for Pico's Oration *De hominis dignitate*, for Cassirer one of the key-texts of the Western tradition. While for Ficino, in truly Platonic fashion, man's excellence still consisted in the role man's rational soul played as the center of a hierarchically structured universe, his friend Pico took this idea one step further by setting man altogether apart from this hierarchy. His concept of human dignity designated an exceptional and privileged position for man, because for Pico man was different from both the natural and the spiritual world. As Cassirer put it:

This is man's privileged position: unlike any other creature, he owes his moral character to himself. He is what he *makes* of himself – and he derives from himself the pattern he shall follow.⁶²

Whereas for Ficino, man's likeness and resemblance of God was still dependent on divine grace, for Pico it is "an achievement for [man] to work out: it is *to be brought about* by man himself."⁶³ To quote Pico: Man is *sui ipsius [...] plastes et fctor*. He is, in Cassirer's translation, "the 'sculptor' who must bring forth and in a sense chisel out his own form from the material with which nature has endowed him."⁶⁴

Pico's insistence on human freedom and dignity resonated in Cassirer's own thought, as epitomized in *An Essay on Man*, a pivotal product of his emigration. In addressing the crisis of the modern self – the *Sinnkrise* that had been the younger Kristeller's starting point –, Cassirer was engaged in developing an anthropology of freedom. Its aim was to uncover what he considered to be the true meaning of human existence, as against the impositions of *Existenzphilosophie* and determinism prominent during the Weimar years, that is, the liberation of the individual from immediacy and anxiety by way of symbolic thought. In his famous 1929 disputation with Heidegger he emphasized the ultimate duty of philosophy "to allow man to become as free as possible."⁶⁵

If, as Cassirer wrote in *An Essay on Man*, "[h]uman culture taken as a whole [could] be described as the process of man's progressive self-liberation" through symbolic forms like language, art, religion and science,⁶⁶ then the Renaissance and its philosophers played a particular role in this process. In his 1926 book on Cusanus he had already interpreted this epoch as crucial for the initiation of modern thought.⁶⁷ In Cassirer's view, Renaissance philosophy rediscovered what classical philosophy knew all along, that is, the creative potential of man, man's capacity for

symbolic thought. And Pico, as he wrote in 1943, by engaging with and transforming Platonic philosophy, succeeded in liberating himself from anxiety:

Pico was perhaps the only man in his age completely free from fear of demons and from fear of the baneful influence of the stars. [...] Pico knew no such fear, because it contradicted what he felt as the true meaning of human existence, and extolled in his great oration as the *dignity of man*. For him this dignity consists in the fact that the work of man is the expression of his own will, not the influence of the stars and the gift of higher powers.⁶⁸

For Cassirer, then, while the renewal and transformation of Platonism by Cusanus, Ficino and Pico marked the beginning of modern thought, their metaphysical speculation was inseparably linked with the rediscovery of a promise from antiquity. This was the prospect of liberation from the limitations of man's finite existence through man's "power to build up a world of his own, an 'ideal' world."⁶⁹ For Cassirer, this legacy from Platonic philosophy was taken up and extended by the Enlightenment and German idealism. And, as his stirring invocation of the themes meant to show, it had lost none of its relevance in the twentieth century.⁷⁰

While Kristeller never spoke as Cassirer did, as such language would have gone against his methodological exclusion of anachronism, I think that I have shown that the underlying conception nevertheless shines through his technically much more demanding writings on the Florentine Platonic Academy. Autobiography, the personal struggle, leaves the marks of its formative effects. Before 1987 Kristeller comes closest to Cassirer's broader rendering of the meaning of the Platonist Renaissance legacy where he admits parenthetically that Platonism for him was indeed a *philosophia perennis*, what Cassirer characterized as "the revelation of an enduring Truth, in its main features immutable [...] handed down through the ages, but generated by no age [...], because, as something which eternally is, it is beyond time and becoming."⁷¹ In the closing, characteristically self-contained sentence of his 1960 paper on the Platonic Academy, Kristeller writes:

Finally, if we are inclined to consider the history of Platonism in the West as a kind of *philosophia perennis* (and I must confess that I share this inclination), we shall have to admit that the Florentine Platonism of the Renaissance, with all its defects and weaknesses, represents one of the most important and most interesting phases in the history of this philosophical tradition.⁷²

It should have become evident that for Cassirer and Kristeller (and Panofsky for that matter) the Platonism of the Florentine Academy, with the insistence on

tolerance, human dignity and the utopian promise of human freedom that they found in it, proved to be a source of comfort and consolation against the catastrophe which in so many ways determined the course of their lives. This was their version of the "humanistic turn." Whatever may have been the rhetorical strategy of Kristeller's friend Cassirer in making his philosophical life's work sound in a strange land in the hardest of times, Kristeller's pursuit of their shared objectives for the most part required a strict, aristocratic withholding of didactic uplift in his utterance. This self-denial was no less profound a sign of his intense feelings under conditions of exile as were the resonant exhortations of the older, more famous humanist, Cassirer. The thought shared among Kristeller, Panofsky, and Kracauer, as expressed long after Cassirer was dead, was that the distance that constituted an Academy in the modern age of pervasive ideologies and publicity engines could only be sustained by the utmost in disinterested attentive accuracy of a kind unimagined by the Renaissance masters, so profoundly at home in Florence. Among these exiled heirs of Moses Mendelssohn's initiation of what Habermas called the "abysmal yet fertile relationship of the Jews with German philosophy," the philosopher emerged as the stranger. Kristeller could not have gone further away from the activism of his early mentors, Heidegger and Gentile.⁷³

Endnotes

* I owe many of the ideas for this article to the collaboration with Gerald Hartung on our common project *Weltoffener Humanismus. Philosophie, Philologie und Geschichte in der deutsch-jüdischen Emigration*. Thanks must also go to Oliver Zimmer and Warren Boutcher for their comments, as well as to David Kettler and two anonymous readers for their suggestions.

¹ Kay Schiller, Interview with Paul Oskar Kristeller, New York, 4/9/1993. Transcript.

² See Siegfried Kracauer, *History. The Last Things before the Last* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), v-xi.

³ For other examples see Schiller, *Gelehrte Gegenwelten. Über humanistische Leitbilder im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000) and "Hans Baron's Humanism." *Storia della Storiografia* 34 (1998), 51-99.

⁴ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Marsilio Ficino and His Work after Five Hundred Years* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1987), 18.

⁵ See Helmuth Lethen, *Cool Conduct. The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, "The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers (1961)." In *Philosophical-Political Profiles* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), 21-43, 33.

- ⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1944), 62. For a recent assessment of this book in relation to the development of Cassirer's thought both before and during his emigration, see Gerald Hartung, "Anthropologische Grundlegung der Kulturphilosophie. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Ernst Cassirers *Essay on Man*." *Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien* 6 (2001), 2-15.
- ⁸ Hendrik J. Pos, "Recollections of Ernst Cassirer." In *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, (Evanston: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), 61-72, 67.
- ⁹ Kristeller & Margaret L. King, "Iter Kristellerianum: The European Journey (1905-1939)." *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994), 907-29, 907-10.
- ¹⁰ Kristeller, *A Life of Learning*, Charles Homer Haskins Lecture, 26/4/1990 (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1990), 3.
- ¹¹ Hannah Arendt, "Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940." In *Men in Dark Times* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt, Brace & Co.: 1955), 153-206, 179.
- ¹² Kristeller & King, *Iter*, 911.
- ¹³ Ibid. 912-5.
- ¹⁴ Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930).
- ¹⁵ Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children. Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 12.
- ¹⁶ Schiller, Interview. See also James Hankins, "Two Twentieth-Century Interpreters of Renaissance Humanism: Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller." In *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance. Collected Studies* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002), 573-90, 583.
- ¹⁷ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 9.
- ¹⁸ John Monfasani, "Obituary: Professor Paul Oskar Kristeller." *The Independent*, London, 24/7/1999.
- ¹⁹ Kristeller to M. Heidegger, 9/4/1973, Kristeller Papers [hereafter KP], Box 19, Folder Healey-Heitmann, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.
- ²⁰ See Elzbieta Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt / Martin Heidegger* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 66-82.
- ²¹ See "Empfehlung für Dr. Kristeller, Freiburg 30. April 1933." In Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges, 1910-1976* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 89 and Kristeller & King, 918.
- ²² Kristeller to R. de Rosa, 19/12/1987 and 12/1/1986, KP, B. 12, F. de Rosa, Renato.
- ²³ Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic. The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (London: Allen Lane, 1991), 87-8.
- ²⁴ Kristeller & King, *Iter*, 915. On Hoffmann's forced retirement see Dorothee Mussnug, *Die vertriebenen Heidelberger Dozenten: Zur Geschichte der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität nach 1933* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988), 68-9.
- ²⁵ Kristeller & King, *Iter*, 916.
- ²⁶ Ibid. 919-20.
- ²⁷ On Gentile see Gabriele Turi, *Giovanni Gentile. Una Biografia* (Florence: Giunti, 1995).
- ²⁸ Kristeller, ed. *Supplementum Ficinianum: Marsilii Ficini Florentini Opuscula inedita et dispersa*, 2 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1937).

- ²⁹ G. Gentile to B. Mussolini, 2/9/1938, KP, B. 16, F. Letters to and from G. Gentile concerning P. O. Kristeller.
- ³⁰ See Turi, "Giovanni Gentile, Oblivion, Remembrance, and Criticism." *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998), 919-33, 932.
- ³¹ E.g. D. Cantimori to R. H. Bainton, 25/9 and 17/11/1938, Roland Bainton Papers, Record Group 75, Yale Divinity Library, New Haven, Connecticut and R. H. Bainton to D. Cantimori, 24/10/1938, KP, B. 2, F. Letters to and from R. Bainton.
- ³² W. Jaeger to Kristeller, 13/10/1938, KP, B. 23, F. Jaeger, Werner and B. L. Ullman to G. Gentile, 8/9/1938 and to Kristeller, 7/10 and 14/11/1938, KP, B. 51, F. Ullman, B. L..
- ³³ Th. E. Mommsen to Kristeller, 11/10/1938, KP, B. 36, F. Modoni-Mommsen, H. J. Weigand to Kristeller, 22/9, 30/10, and 12/12/1938, KP, B. 53, F. Weigand, Hermann (1) and R. H. Bainton to G. Gentile, 23/12/1938 and 1/1/1939, KP, B. 16, F. Letters to and from G. Gentile concerning P. O. Kristeller.
- ³⁴ R. H. Bainton to Thomas D. Bowman, American Consul at Naples, 6/1/1939, KP, B. 2, F. Letters to and from R. Bainton.
- ³⁵ Monfasani, Obituary.
- ³⁶ Kristeller, ed. *Iter Italicum: Accedunt Alia Itineraria. A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries*, 7 vols. (London, Leiden: The Warburg Institute, E.J. Brill, 1963-96).
- ³⁷ Monfasani, Obituary.
- ³⁸ Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).
- ³⁹ For a thorough historical re-assessment of the academy, its structure, the extent of its membership, its tenuous connection to the Medici court and the limited role of Plato in its intellectual life, see Hankins, "The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence." *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991), 429-475.
- ⁴⁰ Kristeller, *Philosophy*, 23.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.* 27.
- ⁴² Cassirer, "Ficino's Place in Intellectual History." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6 (1945), 483-501, 489.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.* 490.
- ⁴⁴ Kristeller, "The Platonic Academy of Florence." *Renaissance News* 14 (1961), 147-59, 148-9.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 152-3.
- ⁴⁶ Kristeller, *Philosophy*, 15.
- ⁴⁷ Cassirer, Kristeller and John H. Randall, jr., eds. *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), 5-8. The edition, which contained philosophical texts by Petrarch, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, and Vives, was already conceived before Cassirer's death on 13 April 1945. Cassirer was originally meant to write the general introduction to the volume.
- ⁴⁸ See Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance." *Byzantion* 17 (1944-45), 346-74.
- ⁴⁹ For the "revolt of the medievalists" under the leadership of Charles H. Haskins, the doyen of medieval studies in the United States, against the Burckhardtian image of the Renaissance, see Charles H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

Press, 1927). Kristeller's approach also fitted well with the "history of unit-ideas," as advocated by Arthur O. Lovejoy, the editor of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, founded in 1940. It only took until 1943 before he was invited to join its editorial board.

⁵⁰ See Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 319-30 and Beat Näf, *Von Perikles zu Hitler? Die athenische Demokratie und die deutsche Althistorie bis 1945* (Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986), 89-92, 187-91.

⁵¹ Kristeller, "Studies on Renaissance Humanism during the last Twenty Years." *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962), 7-30, 9-10.

⁵² Kristeller, "Scholarship, Past and Future." Typescript, Medieval Seminar at Columbia University, 13/4/1976, p. 5, KP, B. Columbia University Subject Files 3, F. Columbia University Medieval Seminar.

⁵³ Hankins, Two Twentieth-Century Interpreters of Renaissance Humanism, 584.

⁵⁴ See Werner Jaeger, *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, 3 vols. (Berlin, Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1934, 1944, 1947); translated into English as *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939, 1943, 1944).

⁵⁵ "Hast Du schon Jaeger's Paideia gelesen? Es sind ganz lustige NS'ismen drin!" E. Abrahamson to Kristeller, 10/4/1934, KP, B. 1, F. Abrahamson, Ernst (1).

⁵⁶ Erwin Panofsky, "Alte Witze." Manuscript, no date, William S. Heckscher Papers, Series II, Folder 21, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica.

⁵⁷ Panofsky, "In Defense of the Ivory Tower." In *Report of the Third Conference*, ed. Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni (Princeton: no publisher, 1953), 77-84, 81.

⁵⁸ Cassirer, Kristeller and Randall, *Renaissance Philosophy*, 6-7.

⁵⁹ Cassirer described his activities on Kristeller's behalf in the United Kingdom in a number of letters and postcards to the latter: Cassirer to Kristeller, 21/9/1933, 12/1, 22/4 and 4/5/1934, KP, B. 8, F. Cassirer, Ernst. See also Cassirer to Fritz Saxl, 13/8/1935, General Correspondence, The Warburg Institute Archives, London.

⁶⁰ See Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926).

⁶¹ Cassirer, "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. A Study in the History of Ideas." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 3 (1943), 123-44 and 319-46, 345.

⁶² Ibid. 320.

⁶³ Ibid. 321.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 333.

⁶⁵ "Protokoll der Davoser Disputation zwischen Ernst Cassirer und Martin Heidegger." In Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 4th edition 1973), 246-68, 259.

⁶⁶ Cassirer, *Essay on Man*, 228.

⁶⁷ Heinz Paetzold, *Ernst Cassirer – Von Marburg nach New York. Eine philosophische Biographie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 123.

⁶⁸ Cassirer, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 344.

⁶⁹ Cassirer, *Essay on Man*, 228.

⁷⁰ See Hartung, "Einleitung." In Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, Reprint 1998), vii-xxiii, xix.

⁷¹ Cassirer, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 124.

⁷² Kristeller, *Platonic Academy*, 159.

⁷³ Habermas, *German Idealism*, 22.