

Ascesis
Greg Früchtnicht-Ponchak

*Οὐδέν γε μὴν ἔλεγε τὸ παράπαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ χωρὶς ἀσκήσεως
κατορθοῦσθαι, δυνατὴν δὲ ταύτην πᾶν ἐκνικῆσαι*

D.L. 6.71

- 1 For each (form-of-)living, there is a lived(-experience) which is – or lived(-experiences) which are – necessary to render it livable.
- 1.1 Lived(-experience) is lived in living.
- 2 A (form-of-)living can be considered ascetic to the extent that it is lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary to render a formerly unlivable (form-of-)living livable (§1, §1.1).¹
- 2.1 In this way, ascesis has for its occasion an unlivable (form-of-)living.
- 2.2 In ascesis, the lived(-experience) which is necessary to render the occasioning (form-of-)living livable is lived through the living of already-livable (forms-of-)living.
- 2.3 There are not ascetic (forms-of-)living and non-ascetic (forms-of-)living; rather, a (form-of-)living is only ascetic to the extent that it is lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary to render the occasioning (form-of-)living livable.
- 2.3.1 Each (form-of-)living *can* be lived as ascesis (§1.1, §2.2).
- 3 Two (forms-of-)living can be said to be ‘incompatible’ to the extent that the lived(-experience) which is necessary to

¹ Here, ‘ascesis’ is described by means of ‘*living*’ in order to unbind it from the (religious, spiritual, moral, athletic, etc.) *teloι* which often restrict it, thereby making possible the conception of novel forms of ascesis – forms of ascesis which are necessary to render yet-unlived (forms-of-)living livable.

render one (form-of-)living livable also renders the other unlivable.

- 3.1 Insofar as the occasioning (form-of-)living is incompatible with other (forms-of-)living, asceticism necessarily entails the renunciation of those incompatible (forms-of-)living.
- 3.2 In asceticism, the renunciation of a (form-of-)living is secondary to, and a consequence of, the living of the lived(-experience) necessary to render the occasioning (form-of-)living livable.
- 3.3 Asceticism does not entail the renunciation of living *as such*, only the renunciation of (forms-of-)living which are incompatible with the occasioning (form-of-)living (§3.1).
- 4 To the extent that lives share a (form-of-)living, they can be said to live-in-common.
- 4.1 Just as there is a lived(-experience) which is – or lived(-experiences) which are – necessary to render each (form-of-)living livable (§1), there is also a lived(-experience) which is – or lived(-experiences) which are – necessary to render each ((form-of-)living-in-)common livable.
- 4.2 Asceticism, insofar as it is lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary to render a formerly unlivable (form-of-)living livable, can also be lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary to render a formerly unlivable ((form-of-)living-in-)common livable.
- 5 The (form-of-)living which occasions asceticism can be adopted as either *the* (form-of-)living or as *a* (form-of-)living.
- 5.1 Insofar as the occasioning (form-of-)living is adopted as *the* (form-of-)living, it does not merely serve as an occasion for asceticism, but also as *the* telos for living.
- 5.1.1 As *the* telos for living, *the* occasioning (form-of-)living is adopted as *the* form-of-(forms-of-)living.

- 5.1.2 In order for the occasioning (form-of-)living to serve as *the* telos for living, it must be possible for every livable (form-of-)living to be lived in accordance with it.
- 5.1.3 Thus, ascesis, insofar as its occasion is adopted as *the* (form-of-)living, is lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary for all livable (forms-of-)living to be lived in accordance with the occasioning (form-of-)living, thereby rendering the occasioning (form-of-)living livable as *the* (form-of-)living.
- 5.2 Insofar as the occasioning (form-of-)living is adopted as *a* (form-of-)living, it serves *merely* (cf. §5.1) as an occasion for ascesis (and therefore living).
- 5.2.1 As a mere occasion for living, the occasioning (form-of-)living is adopted as one (form-of-)living amongst others (cf. §5.1.1).
- 5.2.2 As such, ascesis, insofar as its occasion is adopted as *a* (form-of-)living, is *simply* (cf. §5.1.3) lived *in order to* live the lived(-experience) necessary to render the occasioning (form-of-)living livable as *a* (form-of-)living.
- 5.3 To adopt the occasioning (form-of-)living as *the* (form-of-)living is to adopt it as *the* end of living (living *for the* form).
- On the contrary, to adopt the occasioning (form-of-)living as *a* (form-of-)living is to adopt it as a means for (en-livening) living (*a form for* living).