

Discipline, freedom, and the formation of the
modern subject



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Thomas Lewis specializes in religious ethics and philosophy of religion in the modern West and has strong interests in methodology in the study of religion. His research examines conceptions of tradition, reason, and authority and their significance for ethical and political thought. His publications include *Freedom and Tradition in Hegel: Reconsidering Anthropology, Ethics, and Religion* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); *Religion, Modernity, and Politics in Hegel* (Oxford University Press, 2011); *Why Philosophy Matters for the Study of Religion--and Vice Versa* (Oxford University Press, 2015); and articles on religion and politics, liberation theology, communitarianism, and comparative ethics.

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Two deeply conflicting accounts of modernity are widespread in the academy today. In one, we are anything but free: modernity is defined by a proliferation and internalization of disciplinary practices that circumscribe who we are. In the other, modernity is characterized by a kind of moral free-for-all that has given up on cultivating good human beings. Focusing on the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this talk examines these powerful but divergent narratives by examining accounts of the roles of discipline, habituation, and education in forming a free individual. Can we ultimately bring these accounts together to talk about a discipline that is necessary to make us free?