

**The Collected Works
of Eric Voegelin,
Volume 25: History of
Political Ideas, Volume
VII, The New Order and
Last Orientation**

*Jürgen Gebhardt
Thomas A. Hollweck,
Editors*

University of Missouri Press

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
ERIC VOEGELIN

VOLUME 25

HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

VOLUME VII

THE NEW ORDER AND
LAST ORIENTATION

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HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

VOLUME VII

THE NEW ORDER AND
LAST ORIENTATION

EDITED BY

JÜRGEN GEBHARDT

AND

THOMAS A. HOLLWECK

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JÜRGEN GEBHARDT

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THE NEW ORDER AND LAST ORIENTATION

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Editor's Introduction

I. Interpreting the Modern World— Voegelin's Unfinished Story of the Predicament of Modernity

"During the summer I was able to add some 200 MS-pages to volume III: The Modern World," wrote Eric Voegelin to his new publisher, who had given him a contract for the three-volume treatise that had grown from a one-volume college text originally to be published by McGraw-Hill. A year after the conclusion of this contract with Macmillan, Voegelin announced the completion of the volumes "The Ancient World" and "The Middle Ages" in "clear typescript." Regarding the third volume he added: "My estimate that the end might be in sight some time in the earlier part of 1946 still stands."¹ Of course, we know that Voegelin's estimate proved to be too hasty; the account of the modern world was never finished as originally projected.

The studies collected in the present volume reflect different stages of the composition of the *History*. They document in some way the slow breaking off of the enterprise. The first part, originally entitled "Stabilization," sets forth the complex of political ideas centering on the national state. These chapters were probably completed in 1943. They still show the format of a college text. The second part, "Last Orientation," dated 1945, probes reflectively into the causes of modern crisis, thus serving as the introduction to the final part of the *History*, which details the crisis of the

1. Voegelin to Henry B. McCurdy, October 8, 1945, Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, box 24. Hereafter cited by box number.

present. The piece on Nietzsche and Pascal was not destined for the *History*. It was drafted as a separate study around 1943, and Voegelin considered it a preliminary text to the Nietzsche chapter planned for the *History*, which was never written.²

The rather complicated story of the *History* from its inception in 1939 to the break with the original conception and the final abandonment of the project is told in the "General Introduction to the Series."³ As is pointed out there, the impetus to reconceptualize the hermeneutical approach to the history of political ideas was occasioned by the analysis of the modern world. It brought forth in turn a fresh understanding of the "political spirit" (*Geist*) in its historicity in terms of the anamnestic constitution of knowledge from the depth of psyche. This was the starting point for a renewed examination of sources and relevant monographic literature as well as the ensuing expansion of the scope of the *History* that delayed the completion of the third volume.

In 1948, the first two volumes were given to an anonymous outside reviewer, but the third volume was still a work in progress. In his response to the critical comments of the reviewer, Voegelin remarked that the treatment of the modern period, beginning with Machiavelli, would "occupy one-half of the total work."⁴ Since the publisher was promised three volumes of four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred pages respectively in 1944, we can surmise that the analysis of the modern world had been expanded considerably in the meantime. Accordingly, in 1949, Voegelin suggested to his publisher that he split volume III into two volumes: "From Machiavelli to Locke (volume III). From Vico to the present (volume IV)."⁵ However, not only the presentation of the modern world but the whole work kept growing in size, while being continuously revised. After a lapse of nearly four years, Voegelin surprised his publisher with a new outline of the work and the new title "Order and Symbols" to replace the former "History of Political Ideas."

2. Voegelin to Karl Löwith, December 17, 1944, box 24.

3. Thomas A. Hollweck and Ellis Sandoz, "General Introduction to the Series," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 19, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, ed. Athanasios Moulakis (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 1-47.

4. "Observations on the 'Report on Voegelin's History of Political Ideas,'" p. 1; Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Box 24, file 8.

5. Voegelin to A. Gurwitsch, April 16, 1949, and Voegelin to H. A. Moe, October 29, 1949, Box 15.

"The Ancient World" was changed to "Myth, History, and Philosophy," "The Middle Ages" to "Empire and Christianity," and, finally, "The Modern World" to "The Gnostic Age." The three volumes were to comprise about forty-five hundred pages altogether, with eighteen hundred pages allotted to the third volume. The new title for the third volume evidences best the shift in focus and conceptual approach that the whole enterprise had undergone. It was documented by Voegelin's Walgreen Lectures, given in 1951 and published as *The New Science of Politics*. It determined "the essence of modernity as the growth of gnosticism,"⁶ which operated in the medieval heterodox sectarianism, broke into the public scene in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and metamorphosed into the ideological mass movements of twentieth-century totalitarianism. From the beginning, Voegelin wanted his *History* to contribute to a better understanding of the present crisis of modern politics. He was convinced that the "state of science," as he used to say, would enable the scholar to uncover the historical roots of the intellectual and spiritual shape of Western civilization.

This argument had been developed in Voegelin's *Political Religions* of 1938. In the earliest version of the *History*, he had analyzed the emergence of the modern politico-religious phenomena that were the subject matter of *Political Religions* in terms of a double-tracked intellectual and spiritual history of Western civilization since the eleventh century, which was being enacted on two different planes. On the upper plane ideational complexes focus on public institutions like the empire and the church, and later the national state. On the lower plane "the millennial drama of the sentiments and ideas that are in revolt against the superstructure of our civilization" unfolds.⁷ It proved to be increasingly difficult to link these two planes of idea-formation as Voegelin moved into the interpretation of the modern world. One attempt to come to grips with the problem resulted in a chapter entitled "The People of God," which cuts across the chronological narrative and pursues the evolution of heterodox sectarian undercurrents from their beginnings in the Middle Ages to their political ascendancy in the

6. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 126.

7. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 22, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. IV, *Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. David L. Morse and William M. Thompson (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 132.

postreformation world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For his portrayal of the modern world after 1700, Voegelin had to grapple with the fact that the story of the lower plane began to dominate the plane of public institutions. Heterodox sectarianism mutated into politico-religious creeds beyond their Christian origins, captured the masses, and, ultimately, started to seize public power itself.

In 1945 Voegelin explained his dilemma in a letter to Alfred Schütz. "Up to 1700 I could more or less proceed chronologically. But from the eighteenth century onward this becomes impossible since the secular political problem that is dealt with by political theoreticians in a narrower sense intersects with the development of post-Christian innerworldly eschatology." Thus, Voegelin faced the difficult task "of interconnecting the chronological presentation of 18th century political thinkers (from Vico to Kant) with centuries transpiring chapters on the history of modern eschatology."⁸ This dilemma grew worse as the analysis moved into the nineteenth century and finally undermined the conceptional framework once designated for the whole history of political ideas, which was based on a theory of evocations formulated in 1939.

For a time Voegelin tried to integrate the inner-worldly credal movements into this interpretative theory of political evocations. A glance at the tables of contents illustrates the expanding scope of the material and the accompanying shift of the focus of interpretation. The original one-volume history allowed two chapters for modernity: "The National State" and "The Twilight of the National State" (1941). Somewhat later the two chapters were retitled and subdivided. The chapter "The Secular State" discusses "The Idea of the Theocratic State," "The Idea of Natural Law," "The Idea of Political Sovereignty," and "The Constitutional State." The second and at some point the last chapter of the *History* was named "The Planetary Expansion of the Western Mind." It describes first the enlargement of geographical, scientific, and historical horizons as well as the economic and social revolution, then the "New Creeds" of humanism, liberalism, and socialism, and ends with sections on "Totalitarian Movements" and "The Breakdown of Individual Independence."

8. Voegelin to Alfred Schütz, September 17, 1945, Box 34.

In 1945, a new table of contents for the projected third volume displayed a rather different picture. Its five divisions are still chronological, but to all appearances it was conceived as "more than a mere history of theories," namely "a comprehensive systematic critique of politics and modern civilization."⁹ The modern history of political ideas itself presented a civilizational drama culminating in the last act of the totalitarian execution of inner-worldly eschatology. It started with the disorder of Renaissance and Reformation after the medieval world disintegrated in the nation state (part eight) and was followed by a period of stabilization (part nine). In the eighteenth century the double-tracked character of the Western civilizational process came to the fore. On the one hand the newly constituted national politico-religious bodies became a substitute for the dissolved imperial order of medieval society. On the other hand the search for the meaning of human existence in this new world with its plurality of power units crystallized into a revolutionary consciousness of the epoch and transformed the latent intramundane and religious sentiments into novel interpretations of human existence, which were to replace the lost meaning of Christian existence. Under the heading "Revolution" (part ten) Voegelin recorded this highly complex story of the interrelated development of ideational parochialism on the national plane and the universalism of the new creeds that swept the whole of Western civilization.

However, right in the middle of this story Voegelin ran into the aforementioned difficulties when he came to Rousseau and the eve of the Atlantic revolutions. But neither Rousseau nor the political ideas of the American and French Revolutions, nor their spiritual aftermath in Germany, the "revolution of the spirit" of Kant and Hegel, would be treated yet. In Voegelin's opinion Hegel marked the end of the revolutionary age that altogether is defined by the emergence of modern man. A concluding reflection—entitled "Speculation"—was understood to be the "prelude" to the final part of the book on "The Crisis."¹⁰ Reviewing the philosophy of Bruno it describes the problem of "phenomenalism." It reveals the process of "desubstantialization of reality" as being at the root of the civilizational disintegration of the age on account of the loss

9. Voegelin to McCurdy, October 8, 1945, Box 24.

10. Voegelin to Schütz, September 17, 1945, Box 34.

of Christian spirituality. Phenomenalism became the medium of self-expression in the time of crisis.

Intellectually, Schelling's philosophy of substance presents a retarding moment in the tragedy of the modern mind. He reassembles the diverging intellectual tendencies and resists the uprooting of traditions. He musters once more the spiritual resources of those traditions in order to meet the challenge of his time by responding philosophically to the challenges of a vanishing Christian era. In this sense Voegelin views Schelling's interpretation of ideas as a "stable point of orientation in the increasing confusion of the century of crisis." Because the contours of a modern philosophy materialize in Schelling, the central question raised in Vico's *New Science* comes to the fore: what is the true meaning of *modernity* in a philosophical understanding of the term?

For this reason the section "Speculation" was renamed "The Last Orientation" and became the separate Part Eight of *History* as presented in this volume. It preceded the final Part Nine, "The Crisis," which again remained a fragment. Voegelin worked out the sections on French Prepositivism and Positivism as well as those on the revolutionary socialism of Bakunin and Marx. But the originally conceived treatment of liberalism, Nietzsche, and the totalitarian movements was never carried out. While Voegelin kept on rewriting the early parts of *History*, he continued to work on the crisis section, up to Marx in 1948. When he reworked the story of heterodox sectarianism in "The People of God," historical research convinced him of the Gnostic character of what he called the "spiritual movements of the people." Voegelin himself stated: "So far as I remember, I became aware of the problem of Gnosticism and its application to modern ideological phenomena for the first time through the introduction to Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Prometheus*, published in 1937." This discovery probably reinforced also Voegelin's reading of Balthasar's *Irenäus: Die Geduld des Reifens* (1943) and Simone Pétrement's *Le dualisme chez Platon, les gnostiques et les manichéens* (1947). Once he had realized the bearing of Gnosticism upon those ideas that were to capture the modern world, he was able to develop a new interpretative paradigm for understanding all of modernity as it culminates in the crisis of the present.

Obviously, our understanding of modern political movements in the period of Enlightenment and after will gain a new depth if we can

see the Comtian, Marxian, Leninist, and Hitlerian ideas of a final transfiguration of history not as "new" ideas but as eschatological speculations that derive in continuity from the activist mysticism of the thirteenth century; or we can understand the Hegelian and Marxian dialectics of history not as a new historicism or a new realism but as a renewed ascendancy of Gnostic speculation; if we can understand the contemporary critical struggle between Positivism, Progressivism, Communism, and National Socialism on the one side and Christianity on the other side not as a struggle between "modern" ideas and Christianity but as a renewal of the old struggle between Christianity and Gnosis; and if we look for the masterly formulation of the contemporary issues in the writings of Irenaeus against the Gnostics of his time.¹¹

Under this perspective modern Gnosticism emerged from the very center of Christianity. Thus, Voegelin discerns now in the "ecclesiastical totalitarianism"¹² of fourteenth-century papalism the operation of Gnostic ideas: "Incredible as it may seem, Boniface VIII has made the attempt of transforming the spiritual and temporal orders of medieval Christianity into a Gnostic empire."

This first version of a gnosis thesis in "The People of God" was formulated in the spring of 1948. It was applied the first time to the analysis of Marx in the following month.¹³ Afterward Voegelin halted all work on the crisis chapter. Instead he revised his studies on the Renaissance and Reformation and began to restudy antiquity in 1949. In 1950, the *History* was laid aside for a year.¹⁴ Voegelin traveled for several months in Europe and started writing the Walgreen Lectures for Chicago in the fall. In the course of preparing these lectures he familiarized himself with the scholarship on Gnosticism. In December he announced to Leo Strauss that "the problem of modern gnosis will figure prominently in my forthcoming lecture on Truth and Representation."¹⁵ The relevant

11. *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (1989; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 65–66. Vol. IV, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 178–79.

12. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 21, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. III, *The Later Middle Ages*, ed. David Walsh (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 52.

13. Vol. IV, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 207; Voegelin to Friedrich Engel-Janosi, May 1, 1948, September 1, 1948, Box 11.

14. Voegelin to E. Baumgarten, July 10, 1951, unpublished letter.

15. Voegelin to Leo Strauss, December 4, 1950, in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934–1964*, trans. and ed. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1993).

chapters in *The New Science of Politics* contain the quintessence of Voegelin's reinterpretation of the modern world in terms of Gnosticism. Consequently, he wrote his publisher in 1953 indicating that he had retitled the respective volume "The Gnostic Age from c. A.D. 1500 to the Present."¹⁶ But he never returned to write the missing chapters according to the original plan of the book. The interpretation of modernity given in *The New Science of Politics* stood, and the *History* remained unfinished. As far as it was completed it provided material for upcoming studies, with some pieces published separately. If we compare the different versions of individual sections of the *History* from the Middle Ages onward, we can discern Voegelin's growing tendency to analyze the Western historical process in terms of the civilizational disintegration that leads up to twentieth-century totalitarianism.

The concept of Gnosticism furnished Voegelin with a unifying principle of interpretation and compelled him to rethink his hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of history itself. It was, however, not the discovery of modern Gnosticism in itself that forced upon Voegelin a change of mind, but the implications of this discovery for the understanding of the historical process that had troubled him since the midforties. Voegelin asserted that modern Gnostic civilization reverses the accomplishments of the ancients and the Christians by eclipsing the authoritative source of order in the human soul. From this point of view, the conception of a civilizational cycle of world-historic proportions gives rise to the hallmark of history, which was the revelation of the logos of history in the Mediterranean civilizational area. It places the modern world on the declining branch of this cycle.¹⁷ The underlying issue at stake was the problem of the "historicity of truth" that Voegelin—prompted by his study of Vico and Schelling—raised in the revised chapter on Aristotle in 1949.¹⁸ The *historicity of truth* meant "that the transcendental reality has a history of experience and symbolization." Responding to Schütz's critique, Voegelin stated that he would have to work with this term all through his work.¹⁹ A history of ideas should in this sense be "a history of existential

16. Voegelin to Charles D. Anderson, October 15, 1953, Box 24.

17. Voegelin, *New Science of Politics*, 164.

18. *Order and History*, vol. III, *Plato and Aristotle* (1957; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 363.

19. Voegelin to Schütz, November 7, 1949, Box 34.

transformations in which the 'truth' comes to sight, is obscured, is lost, and is again recovered. A history of political ideas, in particular, should investigate the process in which 'truth' becomes socially effective or is hindered in such effectiveness."²⁰ The notion of the "historicity of truth" blended the theory of politics with the philosophy of history and, therefore, ultimately implied a break with the interpretive approach that had governed the writing of the *History* until the late forties—namely the theory of political evocation. It was a break by degrees, and the volumes on the modern world document the shift in interpretive procedure—the first chapter of this volume, "The National State," still bears the imprint of the original theory.

II. The Paradigm of the "Political Idea"

His publishers supposed that Voegelin would write a history of political ideas, which was to replace textbooks in college use, such as George H. Sabine's *History of Political Theory* of 1937. But Voegelin insisted from the beginning that, taking into account the poor intellectual condition of textbook literature, he wanted his *History* to represent the current state of international scholarship. Such an accomplishment, he thought, would be a "revolution in the field," but it would require giving "considerable room to argumentative support [of] the results" of the existing monographic literature and to "explanations why the accepted picture of leading thinkers is not correct." After all, "there is such a thing as science."²¹ Fourteen years later Voegelin pointed out once more "that the state of science in this field, as represented by me, has gone up substantially during the last ten years. What you get as the result of the labor, is a standard treatise on the subject that runs no danger of finding a rival in less than a generation."²²

This cognitive aspect of the scholarly search for truth was crucial to Voegelin's self-understanding in that it conditioned all his research. In his opinion the cognitive advancement of empirical knowledge in the historical and philosophical sciences is an ongoing process. These sciences provide the solid ground for any cognizance of social reality. Cognitive endeavor implies, at the point

20. Voegelin to Strauss, January 2, 1950, in *Faith and Political Philosophy*, 64.

21. Voegelin to Fritz Morstein-Marx, August 4, 1941, Box 25.

22. Voegelin to McCurdy, July 5, 1954, Box 24.

where the ordering logic of reality emerges in the research process, the reflective penetration of the empirical findings put forth in the different disciplines. In this sense the cognitive aspect of scholarly search for truth involves the existential moment insofar as it thematizes the human condition in itself. This interrelationship between the cognitive and the existential search for truth blends in the conceptual apparatus that was to comprehend the meaning of the sociopolitical world and provide a critical theory of humankind's political existence. The cognitive dimension of scholarship refers to the critical standards of empirical science, which in turn depend upon existential reflections on human affairs as revealed in the process of empirical research. This paradox is cogently illuminated by Voegelin's theory of "evocation" and the related concept of "political idea," the interpretive paradigm still underlying the *History of Political Ideas* while Voegelin was writing the chapters on the modern world.

Thomas Hollweck and Ellis Sandoz state in their general introduction to the *History* that Voegelin's "understanding of the nature of the political idea is so central to the theoretical framework of the 'History' that it forms the basis for the introduction to the last part of the work and the reflections on 'phenomenalism' as the formative characteristic of modernity." And they note that the intense study of Schelling in the ensuing section caused Voegelin to reconsider the nature of the basic pattern of the "History" as derived from the "complex of evocation and theory."²³ A closer look at Voegelin's theory of evocation and its theoretical implications is therefore warranted.²⁴ This "theory of evocations" provided, according to Voegelin, the basis of the *History*.²⁵ The concept of "evocation" is closely connected to the term *political idea*. "Ideas, and especially political ideas, are not theoretical propositions about reality, but they are themselves constituents of reality. This reality-character of the idea I dealt with in the introduction to volume I, under the title of evocation. An idea once formulated

23. Hollweck and Sandoz, "General Introduction," in vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 20, 23.

24. See Jürgen Gebhardt, "Politische Ideengeschichte als Theorie der politischen Evokation," *Politikwissenschaftliche Spiegelungen* (1998).

25. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 20, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. II, *The Middle Ages to Aquinas*, ed. Peter von Sivers (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 8.

and communicated evokes reality. Only this relationship between idea and reality evoked brings forth the problem of the history of political ideas."²⁶

In his retrospective comments on the abandonment of his *History*, Voegelin often gave the impression that he had subscribed to a rather conventional understanding of what political ideas are all about, following in this the usual textbook nomenclature. But this was never the case. The anonymous reviewer of the first two volumes in 1948 came to the crux of the matter: "The author uses the expression 'political ideas' in a special and quasitechnical sense. This special sense pervades the book and is briefly but not very clearly stated in the Introduction. To state it fully and with precision might require lengthy exposition since it amounts to something like a philosophy of history." The reviewer's additional remarks about the "history of 'evocative ideas' or myths" were essentially accurate, according to Voegelin's comments on the report. He agreed "that the theory of ideas and of the myth is nowhere stated succinctly and formally." "But," he continued, a "serious exposition of this problem" would require a new book or, at least, a considerable extension of the introduction. "That is the reason why I have confined myself to an incidental exposition of the theory on occasion of the emerging problems."²⁷ We do not know which version of the introduction was submitted to the reviewer. Voegelin had sent the text to various correspondents, including Alfred Schütz, Friedrich Engel-Janosi, and Karl Löwith, at different times, but no completed copy has survived. A reconstruction of Voegelin's theory can rely only on an early holograph of the text, relevant analytical reflections inserted in the historical narrative itself, and some of his publications from the 1940s. The holograph has been published as an appendix to Volume I of the *History*. The transcription of Voegelin's handwriting proved difficult and in some instances impossible. A typewritten version must have been completed in the fall of 1939 because Voegelin reported to Max Mintz that he sent it to Schütz. Mintz read it over Christmas.²⁸ Contrary

26. Voegelin to Schütz, September 17, 1945.

27. "Report on Voegelin's History of Political Ideas," p. 2, and Voegelin's "Observations on the 'Report on Voegelin's History of Political Ideas,'" p. 5, Voegelin Papers, Box 21, Folder 2.

28. Voegelin to Max Mintz, October 22, 1939; Mintz to Voegelin, February 6, 1940, Box 25.

to Hollweck and Sandoz, I think that this first draft differed from the introduction that was reviewed in 1948, because the reviewer gives references that are not included in the text that needs to be dated 1939, instead of 1940, as is generally assumed.

Voegelin's conceptual approach to the study of political ideas was based on the results of his early unpublished works "Herrschaftslehre" and "Staatslehre als Geisteswissenschaft" founded on philosophical anthropology.²⁹ Voegelin's early design of a system of *Staatslehre* addressed the question: how does the human mind wrest from the fundamental existential experiences those ideas that create political community in terms of a unity of meaning (*Sinneinheit*) among human beings in historical existence? This question is answered in anthropological terms: "The root of the state must be sought in the nature of man" insofar as there are "fundamental human experiences that evoke the phenomenon of the state by means of the formative force of ideas in the trenchant sense of the models, and indeed models—with a specific content, in which the reality of the political community is built up for the members of the political community. These state-creating ideas do not entail a science of the state but are an essential component of the state-reality in itself. The contents of these state ideas ontologically originate in the fundamental human experiences already mentioned—they are person- or community-centered ideas."³⁰ The idea of community lives "in the mind of the people belonging to the community and in its intellectual creations. There this idea can be experienced directly in the common makeup of the intellectual worlds and persons created by the community in question." The idea is real not only for the outside observer but first and foremost for those living within it and creating it. The intellectual world created by the mind in this way is indeed an object of experience. Insofar as the idea materializes historically, it is bound to the personal spirit of individual human beings because in an objective sense the idea breaks forth in the personal mind, and at the same time it is generated by the very same human mind in a subjective

29. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 1, *On the Form of the American Mind*, trans. Ruth Hein, ed. Jürgen Gebhardt and Barry Cooper (1995; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), ix–xlii.

30. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 2, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein, ed. Klaus Vondung (1997; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 2, 4–5; English wording slightly changed.

sense. The community-building function of the idea results from the interplay of the objective and subjective effects of the idea. "The idea of a community is objective and subjective at the same time. Viewed objectively, the community becomes real as the realization of the idea; subjectively, its reality is a constantly coming to be through the process of idea-generation in the minds of people who, precisely through the work of the common creation of an idea, build the community we subsequently see from the standpoint of the observer as the idea-pervaded unity of a plurality."

The idea thus understood is not a concept but the "real substance that appears as the one in the many." It expresses the spiritual being of humans insofar as it articulates itself historically in terms of a political community. This anthropological moment comes to the fore in the hierarchically constituted structure of every idea of community: "(1) the idea of humanity, in whose framework (2) the idea of the limited community is articulated, and (3) the ideas of individual persons, which are articulated in the framework of the community."³¹ Voegelin's specific concept of a history of political ideas originated from this systematic analysis of the interrelationship of state-reality and state-ideas.

When, in 1939, Voegelin presented a modified form of the findings of his race books to an American audience, he called the community-creating idea a "political idea" and explained his notion of "political idea" more precisely: "A political idea does not attempt to describe social reality as it is, but it puts up symbols, be they single language symbols or more elaborate dogmas, which have the function of creating the image of a group as a unit." This unifying element of political group life cannot be inferred from observation of individual behavior, as the behaviorists claim. "What welds the diffuse mass of individual life into a group unit are the symbolic beliefs entertained by the members of a group." But a "symbolic idea" is not a theory in the strict sense of the word and, therefore, "it is not the function of an idea to describe social reality, but to assist in the constitution. An idea is always 'wrong' in the epistemological sense, but this relation to reality is its very principle," notwithstanding, as Voegelin adds, the fact that idea and reality may differ in their ethical and metaphysical value.

31. *Ibid.*, 118.

The political idea is linked up with empirical reality in that certain "basic universal experiences regularly tend to become the material starting point from which the transformation into a symbol begins." Thus, "the symbol is based on an element of reality, but it does not describe reality. It uses the datum in order to represent by means of that single, comparatively simple element a diffuse field of reality as a unit."³²

In a paper published in 1944, Voegelin indicated, "The adaption of the history of political theory to the process of politics would require a well-elaborated theory of the ideas concerned with the mythical creations of communities, and of the far reaching theological ramifications of these ideas." He calls this task "formidable, but not hopeless," without mentioning that he has already drafted this very theory.³³ Its contours are developed in the introduction of 1939. Its starting point is the reality-evoking function of the political idea, but it is put into a novel historical frame that reveals a historically persistent morphology of any community-creating ideation that can be traced back to the primordial origins of human history.

Thus, the introduction states, "To set up a government is an essay in world creation. Out of the shapeless vastness of conflicting human desires rises a little world of order, a cosmic analogy, a cosmion, leading a precarious life under the pressure of destructive forces from within and without, and maintaining its existence by the ultimate threat and application of violence against the internal breaker of law as well as the external aggressor." But the application of violence is not the ultimate reason for creating and maintaining political order. "The function proper of order is the creation of a shelter in which man may give to his life a semblance of meaning. The founding of order involves the creation of meaning." "[T]he political cosmion provides a structure of meaning into which the single human being can fit the results of the biologically and spiritually (productive) energies of his personal life, thereby (relieving) his life from the (disordering aspects) of existence that always spring up when the possibility of the utter senselessness of a life ending

32. Voegelin, "The Growth of the Race Idea," *Review of Politics* 1-2 (1939-1940): 283-317 (283-85).

33. Voegelin, "Political Theory and the Pattern of General History," in *Research in Political Science*, ed. E. S. Griffith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 190-201 (198).

in annihilation is envisaged."³⁴ The newly introduced term *cosmion* (taken from the philosopher Adolf Stöhr) explicates the morphological principle operating in the meaning- and order-creating function of the political idea: "The expression cosmion," Voegelin explained to Schütz, "seems to me to be particularly suitable for the designation of the political realm of meaning. Because we deal empirically, in factually happening constitutions [of order] with the creation of meaning in analogy to cosmic order."³⁵ The political cosmion is a cosmic analogon. This statement entails the bottom line of this new approach to the understanding of the political idea in its historical and anthropological dimension: the morphological principle underlying all community mined from its origins in the Near Eastern preclassical civilizations.

Historically this thesis is an outgrowth of Arnold Toynbee's thesis that Western civilization has its roots in an amalgamation of Near Eastern and Hellenic streams of history. Without theorizing about the emergence of organized political society from early ahistorical phases, Voegelin said, "For the present purpose we may . . . accept the fact that as far back as the history of our Western world is recorded more or less continuously, back to the Assyrian and Egyptian empires, we can trace also in continuity the attempts to rationalize the shelter function of the cosmion, the little world of order, by what are commonly called political ideas."³⁶ Voegelin claims that from the very beginning of Western history onward one and the same principle operated in the construction of political community. In the Near Eastern civilizations it consisted of a certain style of magic creation that is a conception of life in cosmological terms. "The driving force of the magical creation is the anxiety of existence."³⁷ The experience of the fragmentary and senseless character of human existence is embedded in the experience of a comprehensive order of the cosmos as it is revealed by the regular cycles of the astral bodies and seasons in the animal and vegetable life, which promise divine completeness and absoluteness.

34. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Heilenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 225, 226.

35. Voegelin to Schütz, October 6, 1945.

36. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Heilenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 225.

37. See Eric Voegelin, "Orient," unpublished holograph, Box 56.

The creative force of the human mind strives to overcome the essential incompleteness and relativity of human life by imaginatively re-creating the cosmic order in terms of a cosmic analogy, the political cosmion, to retrieve a semblance of protection and meaning for human existence. "The important point in any system of political ideas is, therefore, the speculative [endeavor] it devotes to the solution of the problem presented by the basic conflict between the finite character of the cosmion and the absoluteness at which it aims." A general structure signifies the political idea in all its variations. It "remains the same throughout history, just as the shelter function that they are (destined) to rationalize remains the same. The permanent general structure comprises the three sets of ideas: the ideas concerning the constitution of the cosmos as a whole; the ideas concerning the internal order; the ideas concerning the status of the cosmion in the simultaneous world and in history." Such specific ideations as the conception of man, ethical, metaphysical, and religious notions of human life, tenets concerning the economic and political organization or ethnic complexion of the society, cluster around these sets of ideas.³⁸ This historically persistent general structure of political ideas pertains to all civilizational complexes of order in Western history: the polytheistic systems of early Near Eastern empires, the monotheistic systems of the Christian empire, and the modern totalitarian systems deifying the finite group, be it a nation, a race, or a clan. At this point we should again note that this conception ran into unsurmountable difficulties when Voegelin wanted to interpret the political ideas of modernity. The modern crisis could not be understood by substituting the cosmion for the cosmos.

The evocation of a sheltering cosmion is the foremost function of political ideas. With the term *evocation* Voegelin describes the specific character of mythical community-creation. The reality of a political order is called into being by means of the magical power of language: the cosmion is originally an imagined community in the same sense in which Benedict Anderson introduced this term into the debate on modern nationalism.³⁹ "The linguistic symbols

38. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 227, 225-26.

39. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1985).

(contained) in a system of political ideas, by calling a ruler and a people by name, call it into existence. The evocative power of language, the primitive magic relation between a name and the object it denotes, makes it possible to transform an amorphous field of human forces into an ordered unit by an act of evocation of such units."⁴⁰ Voegelin later analyzed this substratum of human forces being ordered by the evocative act in terms of "sentiments and attitudes" as the multiple individual and collective factors, traditions, and so forth, going into the evocative process of political ideas.⁴¹ In an incidental reflection in his study of medieval ideas Voegelin affirmed:

[I]t is our belief that the sphere of politics is the original sphere in which the fundamental changes of sentiments and attitudes occur, and that from the realm of politics new forces radiate into the other spheres of human activity—that is, into the realm of philosophy, the arts, and literature. . . . [I]n keeping with our theory of the evocative character of the political cosmion, it means that in the political evocation on principle man is engaged with the whole of his personality and that all civilizational creations of a community must bear the imprint of the comprehensive whole.⁴²

Political evocation embraces all human agency striving to create a finite cosmos of meaning. The apolitical alternative operates on the belief "that out of the perishable qualities of human existence no earthly structure of intrinsic meaning can be built, that every attempt at creating a cosmion is futile, and that man has to undergo the trial of life only as a preparation for a life of meaning beyond his earthly existence." This apolitism works as a counterforce and undermines the imaginatively created world of meaning. The evocative forces of human beings, however, designate the political as the medium of their meaningful existence in society. The political evocation is anthropologically grounded insofar as man is the spiritual center of society and history, and "[t]he most convenient object to be transformed into a symbol of unit(y) is always man himself."⁴³

40. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Hel-lenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 228.

41. See Voegelin to Schütz, January 1, 1943, Box 34.

42. Vol. II, *The Middle Ages to Aquinas*, 107–8.

43. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Hel-lenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 226–27, 228.

"By the experience of social disorder human mind is provoked to create order by an act of imagination in accordance with its ordering idea of man," Voegelin pointed out in a 1942 book review, emphasizing more than in the introduction the anthropological principle underlying the political idea.⁴⁴ The magic force of language springing from the creative power of the human person calls a political unit factually into existence; "once this purpose is achieved, the cosmion is a real social and political force in history; and then a series of descriptive processes sets in, trying to describe the magic unit as something not magically but empirically real." The political idea mutates to descriptive interpretations of the imagined community modeled upon certain aspects in empirical reality, as an organism based on common ethnicity, on a collective soul or will, on a legal contract, and so forth. Voegelin calls this whole range of secondary ideations "ancillary political ideas": they have "ancillary functions in the enterprise of (re-creating), by continuous evocative practices, a cosmion in existence." They may be developed to the point where the magic of the political idea is blotted out, and the cosmion is disenchanting and unveiled as a meaningless network of human interests, power drives, and illusions. Those political ideas that go beyond the disenchanting analysis that dissolves the magic spell of the evocation aim at the utopian identification of the cosmion with the cosmos itself or at "abolishing political order altogether and (living) in an anarchic community." Such ideas "range from evocation to abolition of the cosmion, and all of them have a claim to be called political ideas."⁴⁵

How does political theory fit into the systematics of political ideas? Voegelin distinguishes political theory from political ideas by assigning a very exclusive status to the former. In positioning political theory, Voegelin harks back to a philosophical stance adopted in the late 1930s. Theory means contemplation in the Aristotelian sense; "in a strict sense" it is obviously very rare in history. It involves "contemplative detachment from political reality" that brings the political cosmion in its entirety within sight

44. "The Theory of Legal Science: A Review," *Louisiana Law Review* 4 (1942): 554-71 (566); rpt. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 27, *The Nature of the Law and Related Legal Writings*, ed. Robert Anthony Pascal, James Lee Babin, and John William Corrington (1991; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 95-112.

45. "Voegelin's Introduction to the 'History of Political Ideas,'" in vol. I, *Heilism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 229, 231.

and penetrates to the anthropological ground of political evocation. So the would-be theorist is a consciously political person intensely moved by the evocative forces of his environment but at the same time drawn to contemplative analysis of the cosmos to the point where the magical quality of the cosmos "existing through the evocative forces of man" is uncovered. The theorist is compelled "to explain its relativity and its essential inability to accomplish what it intends to do—that is, to render an absolute shelter of meaning." Contemplative analysis may have the same effect as disenchanting analysis, but it differs from it in that it recognizes the creation of order as the necessary accomplishment of human agency. However, most of the time, the theoretician reaches only a certain degree of detachment, "the basic evocative ideas of his own cosmos prove to be the limit that he cannot transgress." Even the authors of the great comprehensive systems of theory are bound by the confines of political evocation. "Aristotle is limited by the existence of the polis; Thomas by the idea of the Christian empire; Bodin by the French national state." Political theorizing in this understanding is always in danger of coming into conflict with the established order and—in the last analysis—cannot be tolerated by society. And here Voegelin adds an interesting afterthought: the individual thinker would be hesitant "to hand over the results of his inquiry to a larger public, not because of any understandable apprehension of personal danger, but for reasons that it would be difficult to explain here and now . . . we may safely assume that the most important results of political theory never have, and never will, become known except to the more or less happy few."⁴⁶

The true nature of political theory, so it seems, implies an esoteric knowledge, just as Leo Strauss had claimed. Responding to a critical reference to this text in a letter from Max Mintz, Voegelin volunteers an explanation. We deal with an "existential problem" of theory. "Radical contemplation is ambivalent. It means to retreat from political reality, but on the other hand the intellectual results [*Denkresultate*] impact on political reality." This leads to the question:

Is not the attitude of radical contemplation absurd? Is it not perhaps unethical because it destroys the magic of the idea which is the soul of practice, whereas life, as long it lasts, is possible only by means

46. *Ibid.*, 232.

of the magic of the idea? Contemplation is strictly an individual and lonely practice and unable to construct political order; should it not, therefore, as Plato believed, remain secret at least as far as its most alarming results are concerned? But in this case it must be cultivated because otherwise every idea must stay sacrosanct at some point, must not be criticized anymore—which again is unethical, because no ethical development to higher social forms would be possible; the result would be that “progress” in good conscience is only possible if a thinker is prudent enough to criticize and destroy and at the same time stupid enough to believe that he has found the solution of all problems—by means of a new magic? For Plato the answer is: the secret of the wise is not to be laid down in writing.⁴⁷

Mintz advises Voegelin to cut out the respective remarks. And Voegelin heeded this advice. Moreover, his discussion of the spiritual realist and “Last Orientation” point to the change of mind in this regard.

The concluding part of the introduction explores the ways in which the interrelations of political history and the history of political ideas through the principle of political evocation and the general pattern of the narration derived thereof. The historical account begins with the Near Eastern empires, the Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, and Jewish evocations, the Hellenic evocation, as well as the confluence of these currents in the Hellenistic period, flowing into the creations of the medieval empires and the rise of the nation-state. From the common stock of evocative ideas, present in each type of evocation, emerge a few outstanding theoretical attempts at systemizing the materials of the period: “A history will, then, have to show the gradual growth of theory out of an evocative situation; it will have to lead up to the limits reached within a situation of that kind and, then, show the dissolution and (abandonment) of theoretical thought under the pressure of new evocations.”⁴⁸ The internal process within an evocative period, and the process of tradition from one period to another, will furnish the rough general structure of the history. The appearance, form, and transmutation of evocative ideas are the subject matter of a history of political ideas, and the theory of evocation serves as the guiding principle of cognition.

47. Voegelin to Mintz, April 11, 1940, Box 25.

48. “Voegelin’s Introduction to the ‘History of Political Ideas,’” in vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, 234–35.

III. A Paradigm Lost and the Hermeneutical Turn to the "Historicity of Truth"

As previously shown, the theory of political evocation in its original form proved to be increasingly problematic as the interpretation of modernity progressed. The closing sentences of the introduction affirmed the "general agreement that the national state is a distinct type of political organization with a characteristic set of ideas ranging from pure evocation to pure theory." Yet "the suspicion is growing that the idea of the national state may be decaying and that, for at least two centuries, new types of evocation are developing, slowly but distinctly." The final chapter of the projected book was to weave together the signs considered "to be indicative of new evocative orders."⁴⁹

Indeed, Voegelin's treatment of the nation-state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries still works with the concept of political evocation. But the general civilizational crisis of the West, signified by the emergence of political eschatologies, could no longer be interpreted as a transitional period resulting in new evocative orders. The new intramundane creeds could no longer be understood as community-creating myths but had to be seen as the consequences of the crisis leading up to the totalitarian destruction of human civilization. Voegelin had reached an impasse that required a rethinking of the anthropological basis of the political idea and a search for "a stable point of orientation in the increasing confusion of the century of crisis."⁵⁰ It is beyond the scope of this introduction to narrate the complex story of the gradual development of a philosophical history of human order, which set in with the orienting reflections of this volume.⁵¹ The problem of evocation did not simply disappear, but the focus shifted away from

49. *Ibid.*, 237.

50. See below, 175.

51. See Hollweck and Sandoz, "General Introduction," in vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*; Opitz, "Spurensuche," in *Politisches Denken—Jahrbuch* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1993), 135–56; Jürgen Gebhardt, "Toward the Process of Universal Mankind: The Formation of Voegelin's Philosophy of History," in *Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1982), 67–86, here an appropriate understanding of the theory of evocation was missing; Jürgen Gebhardt, "The Vocation of the Scholar," in *International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Eric Voegelin*, ed. Stephen A. McKnight and Geoffrey L. Price (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 10–34.

the original theoretical centerpiece of the magic evocation of a cosmological analogon. Once the Hellenic and Christian experiences of transcendence had become the pivot for an understanding of the historical process, the "symbolization of society and its order as an analogue of the cosmos and its order" was supplanted by the "symbolization of social order by analogy with the order of human existence that is well attuned to being."⁵² Attunement means that the evocative idea does not just magically create a semblance of meaning but articulates the truth about the order of being emerging in the order of history. These cursory remarks on the conceptual revisions implemented in *Order and History* may suffice because the decisive steps toward a reorientation were taken after Voegelin had written the chapters of his *History* published in this volume. But the years 1943 to 1945 foreshadowed the "period of indecision, if not paralysis, in handling the problems that I saw but could not intellectually penetrate to my satisfaction," as Voegelin recollected the years between 1945 and 1950.⁵³

Turning to the account of the national state, we find that the theory of evocation is still very much in evidence. Under the previous title of "Stabilization" this section preceded the part on "Revolution." The text had been finished in the spring of 1943, and it is essentially identical with the original holograph, since Voegelin made only slight changes in the typescript. The organization of the material in short chapters and the straightforward, moderate language still underscore the character of a textbook. Only the treatment of Locke is different in this respect. He becomes a real *bête noire* of modern political thought.

In the seventeenth century, political thought is placed between the breakdown of the medieval cosmion and the incipient evocation of new mystical bodies, the nations. The passing away of the great institutions of Western mankind, the church and the empire, left a field of scattered fragments and man in an unsheltered vacuum. In the chapter on Hobbes, Voegelin defines the problem of the age: It is "the erection of fragments of reality into cosmic absolutes. . . . However fragmentary, narrow, and worthless it may be, it has cast its magic over men."⁵⁴ Unsheltered man on his own is the only

52. *Order and History*, vol. II, *The World of the Polis* (1957; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 7.

53. Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, 64.

54. See below, 59–60.

possible basis for the reconstruction of order, and the key symbols mustered for this purpose are the symbols of natural right and science. The "rediscovery of man" is the bottom line of the new thought. It determines the "main line of thought, drawn by the outstanding political philosophers—Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx"—concerned with restoring the status of man. "Political theory must give him back his passions, his conscience, his sentiments, his relation to God, his status in history. The movement culminated, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in philosophical anthropology becoming the center of political thought."

The list of names is noteworthy notwithstanding the fact that it will be critically qualified. And it should be emphasized that Voegelin put his own position, philosophical anthropology, in this line of thought. Second, from the evocative center, the restitution of man, evolves the construction of the nation as the new social substance. Third, the plurality of emerging national commonwealths is reflected by the development of different sets of ideas concerning the internal order that separates Britain and America from the Continent, and also France from Germany. Fourth, there remains the "tension between the evolving national bodies and the idea of a humanity that is not absorbed in the membership of national mystical bodies."⁵⁵ The tension feeds on the remnants of the Christian idea of mankind, the new idea of man, and later, on the rise of international mass movements. The last problem refers to the interpretive problem of disentangling political ideas from a language not suitable for the treatment of politics and reconstructing the slow growth of the new political science from its beginnings in the seventeenth century. The newly conceived essence of man as presented by Grotius's reconstruction of state order became the center of the evocative political idea of the national cosmion. Around this center revolve the multifaceted ancillary ideas that make up the bulk of the political thought of the period analyzed by Voegelin.

Few thinkers, such as the psychological realist Hobbes or the mystic Spinoza, "*understood* the implications of the new political thought that had found its first expression in the work of Grotius" and were "inclined to pierce the evocation of the cosmion and to destroy its magic." Hobbes's *Leviathan* represents for Voegelin the

55. See below, 51.

first step to the "modern philosophy of existence, as distinguished from the Christian." He realized how precarious the situation was in which the new order existed, permanently threatened by disruptive revolutionary forces. Hobbes offered "recipes for the total spiritual and intellectual control of the people [being] followed to the letter by present totalitarian governments."⁵⁶

In short and concise subchapters, Voegelin treats the generation of national symbolisms as they materialized in the struggle between the rising state organization and the estates of the realm. The focus is on England and France, with considerable emphasis on the English revolution and its American follow-up.⁵⁷ Voegelin carefully considers the spiritual, legal, and institutional dimensions of the incipient national political cultures and extracts their lasting features from the ideational material, thus establishing a connection to the great revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Without recounting Voegelin's interpretations in detail, some of the more important conclusions have to be noted. The first complex in this respect refers to the formation of "the body of principles of so-called constitutional government" growing out of the power struggle between king, Parliament, the courts, and last but not least the people in England. A sequence of constitutional symbols arose from the different phases of the revolution, moving from the right to the left, religiously, politically, and socially. After the constitutional settlement in the Restoration period these phases of the revolution were "transformed into the new party lineup of Tory, Whig, and democratic groups." This development was furthered by a unique characteristic of the English revolution: the mass exodus of secessionist groups and their political foundations overseas. From the possibility of avoiding conflict by secession issues the "atmosphere of freedom and independence, of self-expression, self-assertion, and dignity of man on a broad democratic basis" but also "the lack of tragic sentiments" that mark the American national character. Moreover, the concomitant idea of toleration reduced the state to a service organization to satisfy the naturally inevitable needs of

56. See below, 61, 59, 62, 71.

57. For the present state of the art in the study of seventeenth-century political thought, see *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns with Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Jean-Pierre Schobinger, ed., *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. II, *Frankreich und Niederlande*, and vol. III, *England/Schwabe* (Basel: Schwabe, 1988, 1993).

men. The American-European difference in political attitudes has its root in American sectarianism as distinguished from European nationalism. In the European context, developments in England and on the Continent diverged according to the different outcomes of the struggle for order between estates and the state. The victory of the estates in England produced the stateless political society and compelled it to rely on compromise and political common sense to resolve conflicts. The victory of the state on the Continent, as exemplified by France, brought forth a state-ordered society, in which the state functions as a stabilizer when political crises occur. On the plane of political thought this difference is signified by the development of a *théorie de l'état* and a *Staatslehre* in France and Germany and a theory of government in England and the United States.

The investigation of the ancillary political ideas of this period terminates with Locke, whose doctrines of limited monarchy, consent, and property Voegelin counts among the most successful ancillary evocations. But Locke, in Voegelin's scathing critique, eliminates the spiritual personality of man from the public realm, leaving room only for the passion of property, for possessive individualism.⁵⁸ Locke represents the "psychopathology" of his time that Hobbes had diagnosed and offers a caricature of bourgeois society. But his principles, if accepted as standards of political order, operate as the "revolution-breeding element within the capitalistic order" that later revolutionaries were able to draw on.

Voegelin's study of seventeenth-century political thought confronted the editors with the specific problem of where to place it in the *History*. Voegelin himself placed it before Part Six, "Revolution," and, in effect, there we find the continuation of the story of the national cosmion in the eighteenth century. On the other hand the typescript of "The National State" does not end with Locke. There follows an analysis of Hume and Montesquieu, two eighteenth-century thinkers, whose attacks on the Myth of Reason arise from different national milieus, but are similar in their attempt at an empirical science of man. The concluding paragraph shows how the geographical expansion of the horizon contributed to upsetting the evocative Myth of Reason in Europe. This rather

⁵⁸ Cf. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

disjointed organization of the material points to the unfinished and fragmentary form of a manuscript that Voegelin himself never prepared for the press.

There is, however, a recognizable link between this part of the *History* and Part Eight, "Last Orientation," discussed below, which is provided by an "Intermission" that puts forth a theory of historical cycles of modern political thought irrespective of the notion of evocation. The first cycle ends with Locke and the mastering of the anticivilizational dangers in terms of the bourgeois settlement. It safeguards order at the price of the spirit. The next rather complicated cycle moves on a threefold track. There are, first, the representatives of a new science of politics from Vico to Weber. They diagnose the civilizational decay and thereby "restore the consciousness of the standards of a spiritual civilization in their own person." In the second group we find the spiritual activists who understand the crisis and go from there to revolutionizing the decadent society: Marx, Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler. In the third are the thinkers of the bourgeois settlement, of the Myth of Reason and Progress, who are characterized as secondary minds. In terms of relevance Voegelin announces that "the main attention will have to go to the men of the New Science."⁵⁹ As far as the *History* was to proceed, Voegelin implemented this program.

In view of the fact that "Last Orientation" and "Nietzsche and Pascal" center on figures whose intellectual stance as spiritual realists makes them prominent protagonists of the New Science, it seemed justified to combine these studies in one volume.

The attribute *last* seems to interject into the drama of modernity a retarding moment before the final catastrophe that marked the end of the story. Schelling is not just a theorist taking intellectual stock of the civilizational substance of an evocation drawing to its end, as were Plato, Augustine, and Thomas. Schelling's interpretation of his age is "the last gigantic effort to bind into a balanced whole the tensions of the European late civilization before they break asunder in the crisis of our time."⁶⁰ But—and in this Schelling's situation differed from that of other great thinkers—there was for the time being no receptive community left where Schelling's ideas could come to fruition.

59. See below, 155–56.

60. See below, 240–41.

The first part of "Last Orientation" is an attempt to analyze the true nature of the crisis engulfing the postmedieval evocations. It asks how the analyst of the crisis can come to grips conceptually with the most crucial symptom of the age, namely the loss of the spirit. The emergence of a new understanding of reality implied in the process of de-Christianization brought about a non-Christian meaning of existence. Following his analysis of Bruno, Voegelin diagnoses the emergence of a complex of ideas, sentiments, and attitudes defined as "phenomenalism." It indicates "the preoccupation of man with the phenomenal aspects of the world, as they appear in science, and the atrophy of the awareness of the substantiality of man and the universe."⁶¹ Voegelin defined the concept of *phenomenalism*, originally developed in connection with Bruno's distinction of a science of substance and a science of phenomena, in terms of an "ontological inversion": it reduces the order of being to the phenomena accessible through science and treats them as if they were substantialities. By means of the heuristic concept of *phenomenalism* Voegelin tried—in these years of indecision—to grapple analytically with intellectual modernity and the dismantling of the Hellenic-Christian ontology. Its rationalism was based on the recognition of a structure of reality in all its strata from the material to the spiritual realm, whereby each realm has a being in itself and for itself; its substance is distinguished from the *accidentia*, which are incidental to substance. The apperception of the ontic forms of substance representing the order of being is grounded in the life of the spirit. The repressing or denial of the substantiality of reality, so runs Voegelin's argument, involves the elimination of the spirit as an active ordering principle of human existence.

What Voegelin meant by "substantialization of phenomenal reality" becomes clear in his typology of phenomenalism: "biological phenomenalism," derived from Darwin's theory of evolution and dealing with the mechanics of evolution without touching its substance, "was accepted as a revelation concerning the nature of life and as compelling a reorientation of our views concerning the nature of man and his position in the cosmos." From this issued a conception of the natural order of a competitive society ruled by the

61. See below, 178.

law of biological survival with all its political consequences. The present ascendancy of the life sciences and their claim to provide the sole key to a correct understanding of human reality evidences the soundness of Voegelin's analysis. Likewise "economic phenomenalism" translates the laws of economic relations into standards of societal order irrespective of the questions "whether there are not a few things more important for man and his life in society than a maximum equipment with goods and whether an economic order that produces a maximum of wealth is worth the cost in values that have perhaps to be sacrificed in order to maintain it." These questions concerning the quality of life refer, however, to the substantial order. Again the pertinence of this inquiry is obvious in the face of persistent but futile endeavors to establish political order by means of economic organization of social affairs. Last but not least, it is "psychological phenomenalism" that a large variety of psychologies manage and condition the human psyche by use of commercial advertisement, political propaganda, and other such means. An all-pervading "virtual reality" beyond Voegelin's expectations has been put forth by "psychological phenomenalism."⁶² Voegelin noted that "the complex of phenomenalism has never been isolated as a component factor in the intellectual and spiritual life of modern man." And, we should add, he himself did not return to the problem in his later writings in order to treat it more extensively.

According to Voegelin, Schelling "has sufficient spiritual strength as well as philosophical consciousness to take his position beyond the disorder of the age."⁶³ He reestablishes a science of substance and recovers the philosophical rationalism against the phenomenalist despiritualization of reason. But Schelling does not simply restore traditional Christian metaphysics, he "establishes a new level of consciousness in Western intellectual history," and in his thought the contours of a modern philosophy of human existence materialized. He had a far-reaching effect on the formation of a genuine philosophical anthropology in the twentieth century.

Voegelin's seminal study of Schelling documents his rethinking of the anthropological basis of experience of order stimulated by his own self-reflective anamnestic experiments carried out in 1943.

62. See below, 189.

63. See below, 197.

The chapter on Schelling has to be read in conjunction with the reflection on consciousness later published in *Anamnesis*. The link can be found in the discovery of the anamnestic principle of hermeneutics. Voegelin saw his own anamnestic experiments confirmed by Schelling's philosophy, and this may have contributed to his enthusiasm about Schelling throughout "Last Orientation." "A philosopher, it appeared, had to engage in an anamnestic exploration of his own consciousness in order to discover its constitution by his own experiences of reality, if he wanted to be critically aware of what he was doing," remembered Voegelin in a preface to the English edition of *Anamnesis*.⁶⁴ During 1943–1945 Voegelin once again raised the question of an adequate hermeneutics of the historically appearing spirit—the "political spirit." It appears that he returned to the starting point of his paradigm of the political idea, namely the creative working of the spirit in the human mind, and even to his early meditative explications of the spiritual core of human personality as exemplified by Augustine, Descartes, and Husserl. After all, his own meditative exercises seemed to have been induced by carefully rereading Husserl, as demonstrated in his letter to Schütz.

But why did Voegelin turn to Schelling, who is not held in high repute in conventional histories of philosophy? In this respect it has to be pointed out that Schelling had figured prominently throughout Voegelin's early work. In the unpublished "Herrschaftslehre" and in *Race and State* Voegelin refers to Schelling as an intellectual authority. In particular his analysis of the myth-making function of the political idea had drawn on Schelling's theory of myths. Thus, the chapter on Schelling presents a reinterpretation and is linked immediately with the incipient work on a theory of consciousness.

Both the earlier texts and the present one thematize the "proper [*nicht mißbräuchliche*, that is, not improperly conceived] history of the spirit" and its symbolic expressions. As has been demonstrated, the notion of spirit as the central symbol of human self-understanding always was central to Voegelin's hermeneutics. It is the hallmark of the German *Geisteswissenschaft* but suffers from the equivocality of the German word *Geist*, which does not distinguish between spirit and mind. The multiple meaning of *Geist* also

64. Voegelin, "Remembrance of Things Past," in *Anamnesis*, ed. and trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (1978; rpt. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 12–13.

marks Voegelin's use of the word. Space does not permit a thorough inquiry into Voegelin's notion of *Geist* in the different stages of his work. We have to confine ourselves to some explanatory comments. The most important source for Voegelin's understanding of *Geist* was Max Scheler's *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (1928). Scheler's philosophical anthropology had a lasting impact on him, and he owed some of his key terms to Scheler. In simplified terms, Scheler views humans as spiritual beings (*Geistwesen*). *Geist* is the active center of human agency; it constitutes human personality, which is defined by openness to reality and thereby transcends the world of time and space. This implies the capacity to make the world the object of cognition and action. But this center that operates in human agency is not a part of the world. *Geist* is nonexistent and must be comprehended as an act of an absolute "ground of being" that "apprehends and realizes itself in man."⁶⁵ In this sense *Geist* materializes in human agency as the constituent of humanity and functions as an ordering principle in the human realm.

Basically, Voegelin adhered to the essentials of Scheler's understanding of *Geist* until the 1960s, even as he expressed them in the philosophical language of a Hellenic-Christian ontology of human existence, which reflected in his opinion the most differentiated explication of the problem of *Geist* in history. For most of the time the human mind (*Geist*), being the essence of human personality, was to Voegelin the sensorium of the formative force of a transpersonal spirit (*Geist*), a term disregarded by Voegelin only in his very late works. In Schelling's philosophy Voegelin acknowledges the resistance against the despiritualizing forces. The salient point is that in comparison to the Christian tradition Schelling reaches a new level of consciousness that brings the historicity of man into play. The consciousness of human historicity places the historical manifestations of the spirit solidly within the confines of the human psyche: the meaningful order of all historical reality emerges from an interior dialogue of the human psyche through anamnesis that extracts it from the unconsciousness of man. "Anthropology is now systematically made the key to speculation; nothing must enter into speculation that cannot be found in human nature, in its depth as well as in its heights, in the limitation of its existence as

65. Max Scheler, "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos," in *Max Scheler, Späte Schriften*, Gesammelte Werke Vol. 9 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1976), 70.

well as in its openness to transcendental reality."⁶⁶ Schelling does not speak of the "unconscious in man" brought into consciousness by recollection. He speaks of the primordial principle that is knowledge of the human soul coeval with creation (*Mitwissenschaft mit der Schöpfung*), to be recollected by anamnesis (*Wiedererkennung*). What Voegelin meant by the unconscious is not easily ascertained. He returns to the problem only in an analysis of Plato in which he refers to Schelling and Plato as "Philosophers of the unconscious" and indicates that further clarification "would burst the framework" of the article.⁶⁷ But this clarification was never given. I suggest that the anamnestic reflection reaches into the unconscious psychic depth of human nature that unfolds its potentiality historically in order to bring into consciousness the fundamental experiences at the root of the historical unfolding of human nature. As Voegelin explained to Robert Heilman: "History is the unfolding of the human Psyche; historiography is the reconstruction of the unfolding through the psyche of the historian. The basis of the historical interpretation is the identity of substance (*Psyche*) in the object and the subject of interpretation."⁶⁸ Voegelin never again referred to Schelling with such enthusiasm as in this presentation of his philosophy, because his evocation of a divine image in which blend the features of Dionysus and Christ fell under the verdict of modern Gnosticism.⁶⁹

The study on Nietzsche and Pascal included in this volume was written in 1944 independently of the *History* and in conjunction with his essay "Nietzsche, the Crisis, and the War." Unlike Schelling, so Voegelin claimed in a letter to Karl Löwith, Nietzsche had never been central to his philosophical interests; he had never been personally touched by Nietzsche. Of course, he was intensely aware of the omnipresence of Nietzsche in German intellectual life, but Nietzsche was not treated as a major intellectual figure, with a deep understanding of the spiritual crisis of modernity, until the 1940s. So Nietzsche ranks among the men of the New Science and, at the same time, is evidence of the failure of such an intellectual

66. See below, 210.

67. "Plato's Egyptian Myth," *Journal of Politics* 9 (1947): 326, 318, 323.

68. Voegelin to Robert Heilman, August 22, 1956, Box 17; Gebhardt, "The Vocation of the Scholar," 25-26.

69. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. IV, *The Ecumenic Age* (1974; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 21.

enterprise under the condition of a despiritualized social reality. The story of Voegelin's shifting assessment of Nietzsche's work does not come within the purview of this inquiry. For this purpose the reader may consult the studies of Peter J. Opitz and Henning Ottmann.⁷⁰ The essay published in 1944 criticized those authors who committed the stupidity of holding Nietzsche responsible for National Socialism. Here the diagnostician of the crisis is cursed because one does not want to admit the breakdown of civilized life that Nietzsche had diagnosed. The essay cogently sums up Voegelin's view of the Nietzschean response to the challenge of his time. Nietzsche represents an abortive Platonism in politics. He purported to create "an image of man and society to regenerate a disintegrating society spiritually by creating a model of a true order of values, and by using as the material for the model realistically the elements which are present in the substance of society." But the Platonism of Nietzsche "was both broken and vitiated. It was broken by the despair to find the human substance for a spiritual order of society; and it was vitiated through the unique structure of Nietzsche's spiritual life; his soul was closed to transcendental experiences and suffered in the vivid consciousness of the demonic limitation."⁷¹

In "Nietzsche and Pascal," Voegelin reconstructs the spiritual life of Nietzsche on the basis of his intellectual encounter with Pascal. The common ground is the contemplative *habitus* engulfed by despiritualized surroundings. Against the backdrop of Pascal's Christian response to the quest for spiritual regeneration, Nietzsche develops his "counterposition to the Christian conception of the *vita contemplativa*." It provides him with instruments to use in his critique of civilization. Both Nietzsche and Pascal "deal with the finite character of inner-worldly achievements of the spirit, and both agree on the relativity attaching to those achievements, driving man on from one happiness or position to the next." But they have to part company because they interpret the very same phenomenon from the vantage point of different religious experiences. "For Pascal, whose soul is open to transcendental reality, the

70. Peter J. Opitz, "Voegelin's Nietzsche," *Nietzsche-Studien* 25 (1996): 172-90; Henning Ottmann, "Das Spiel der Masken—Nietzsche im Werk Eric Voegelins," *Nietzsche-Studien* 26 (1996): 191-99.

71. Voegelin, "Nietzsche, the Crisis, and the War," *Review of Politics* 6:2 (1944): 177-212 (195, 198).

persistent search of happiness reflects the anamnestic knowledge of an infinite good; tranquillity can be found through the renunciation of a futile search and a turning of the desire in the right direction. . . . Nietzsche's immanentism does not permit permanent tranquillity. The building of finite positions with their perspectives and masks should not be renounced, for it is not a 'disease' but the healthy manifestation of the spirit's will to power."⁷² Nietzsche prepares for a new post-Christian religiousness to bring about a new political order of Western mankind. It might overcome the present age of nihilism, of tremendous wars and revolutions that are incapable of providing any order in future centuries. Nietzsche's "Platonism of despair," to use Ottmann's term, ending in the apocalypse of the "Last Man" who takes the place of God, will be revisited by Voegelin, and this time Nietzsche's demonic spiritualism will be exposed in his essential Gnosticism.⁷³

IV. Epilogue: The Spiritual Realist

From a more general point of view, the heterogeneous studies on the history of modern political thought assembled in this volume tell the story of the ultimate failure of modern thinkers to create an ordering image of man spiritually that would evoke a political cosmion befitting the true humanity of human beings. In the introduction the accomplished theoretician detaches himself contemplatively from the evocative forces and perceives that the political order is magically evoked by the creative power of human spirituality. But he himself refuses to engage in the business of evocation. This theoretical position proved untenable because Voegelin discovered in the course of his historical reflections that the contemplative personality was the source of the imaginative evocation of the ordering political idea. "[H]e is moved by the spirit and is able to produce an order of values out of his immediate spiritual experiences." For his evocative efficacy in social life the political thinker depends on political institutions that assume "representative function for the life of the spirit that he experiences as real within himself."⁷⁴ Modernity signals an increasing "cleavage

72. See below, 280.

73. *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, trans. William J. Fitzpatrick, introduction by Ellis Sandoz (1968; Chicago: H. Regnery, 1997), 60-64.

74. Vol. III, *The Later Middle Ages*, 70, 71.

between the conservators of the spirit, the spiritual realists, as well as the philosophers who live in their tradition, on the one hand, and the heavy mass trends toward a field of secularized and despiritualized particular power and movements.⁷⁵ Voegelin calls those political thinkers who, beginning with Dante, were forced into a growing social isolation and muted in their evocative powers "secular spiritual realists." From Machiavelli to Schelling and Nietzsche they retreated from a field of politics that they saw "as ruled by the spiritless, destructive passion of material power."⁷⁶ Spiritual realism in all its variations gravitates toward a modern understanding of human existence, which ran counter to the prevalent modern ideas of human life from which the spirit has evaporated in favor of despiritualized happiness and despiritualized brutality. But "in an age of crisis modernity and social effectiveness are not the same," as Voegelin remarks in regard to Vico's *New Science*. "The term *modern* has no absolute connotation" and, in truth, the dominating modern political ideas may be the old ones in that they do not measure up to the historico-political condition of human existence of postmedieval time.⁷⁷ Thus, we can discern in Voegelin's *History* two meanings of modernity: the socially dominant modernity of sociospiritual disintegration and the modernity of spiritual realism that prepares for a modernity after the end of modernity. The true heroes of the story told in this volume are the secular spiritual realists representing a spiritually authentic modernity.

JÜRGEN GEBHARDT

Editors' Note

There has been no departure in this volume from the practice established by the editors of all previous volumes. We have made only minor stylistic changes and have taken pains to distinguish between genuine neologisms in Voegelin's English and the occasional word or phrase for which there were perfectly good English substitutes. We have taken very few liberties with Voegelin's

75. See below, 193.

76. Vol. III, *The Later Middle Ages*, 70.

77. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 24, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. VI, *Revolution and the New Science*, ed. Barry Cooper (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 147, 146.

paragraphing for the very important reason that Voegelin considered paragraphs units of thought that should be clearly indicated as such, unless doing so created a true impediment to the reader's understanding.

We have refrained from editors' notes, except in one or two cases where it appeared essential to the understanding of a particular problem Voegelin discusses either in the text or in his notes. At the same time, we have updated references to allow readers access to the best standard editions of works cited by Voegelin and have added more complete publication information.

We have only translated or used existing translations of passages quoted by Voegelin in the original German, because we considered them essential to the understanding of the argument and because the German of Schelling and Hölderlin presents a challenge even to those with a basic reading knowledge of the language. Quotations in French and Latin we have left untranslated.

Deletions in the typescripts available to us, made by Voegelin himself, we have strictly observed, so as to reflect what we consider Voegelin's own incipient editorial work, which would of course have extended farther had the author lived to add the finishing touches to the text.

JÜRGEN GEBHARDT AND THOMAS A. HOLLWECK

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THE NEW ORDER AND LAST ORIENTATION

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PART SEVEN
THE NEW ORDER

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The National State

§I. Tabula Rasa

a. Man Alone

The state of political theory in the beginning of the seventeenth century may justly be called a wreck. The great institutions of Western mankind, the church and the empire, had passed, and the new mystical bodies, the nations, had not yet grown strong enough to support a framework of political thought. Between the empire and the national state, man was left alone. The tabula rasa of Descartes was more than the methodological principle of a philosopher; it was the actual state of man without the shelter of a cosmion. Man, indeed, was released, for the breakdown of the medieval institutions implied the breakdown of the medieval evocations. Both parties, Calvinists and Jesuits, had disgusted more moderate people through the prostitution of sacred authority in defense of their partisan positions. A great system like that of Francisco Suárez could exert little influence in the Protestant north of Europe because the author was a Jesuit. And if the lesser Grotius was more acceptable because he was a Calvinist, his actual success was rather due to the fact that his Calvinism had worn so thin that one could overlook it.

But more was discredited than the partisan literature. Both scholastic and scriptural authority, used and misused by both sides impartially, had fallen into disrepute, and their fate was shared by their content, by the Christian view of the world as created by God, giving status to every human being in the Mystical Body of Christ according to his charisma and uniting the unequal through the bond of love. In the section on Bodin we indicated that, furthermore, the Mediterranean cosmology had received a deadly blow through

the rise of natural science, particularly astronomy; and, again, with the content of ancient and medieval cosmology fell the symbols of cosmological thought. The situation was much bleaker than the comparable one after the breakdown of the polis in Hellas. The twilight of the polis was followed by the dawn of the cosmopolis, by the dawn of a monotheistic view of the cosmos. Now the cosmos had broken down, and what followed was not a new world, but the field of its scattered fragments, the particular bodies of humanity, the nations.

The umbilical cord connecting man with the universe and God was cut as it never had been cut before. Man was "cast" onto the surface of the globe and had to make the best of it. He was reduced to his physical frame, his senses, his will to live, his passions, his powers of memory, foresight, and pragmatic reasoning, and, last but not least, his fear of death. With this endowment he had to create a preliminary order and then to reconquer, in a slow process, the realms of spirit, of conscience and moral obligation, of history, of his relation to God and to the universe. As a first aid in the reconstruction of order, two symbols came to the fore that hitherto had had little independent function: the symbols of natural right and of science.

b. The Symbol of Natural Right

The category of natural law was linguistically a heritage of the past, but the meaning had changed, or was changing. Its new function is expressed in the derivation of natural law (the medieval *lex naturalis*) as a rule of order from the natural right (the *jus naturale*), a line of derivation that has practically no importance before the seventeenth century. The existence of man, and the "right" implied in his existence, becomes the starting point of political construction. Out of the right, emanating from the individual human existence, men can construct the social body, through agreements between them, and the political body, through agreements with a person or persons who will rule them. The source of authority is man himself. God has nothing to do with it, though the symbol of the *berith* is obviously continued in the new construction, as well as Roman law elements.

The new trend can be felt in the constructions of Althusius.¹ He was a Calvinist thinker, and his general apparatus was that of the *Vindiciae*, but the radicalism of his construction was his own. He built a pyramid of human associations from the family, through villages, parishes, towns, cities, and provinces, up to the sovereign unit of the state (*regnum, respublica*, etc.). Every social unit (*consociatio*) is based on an express or tacit contract between the next lower class of units to combine to a higher one. Every such community has two sets of laws: one concerns the purpose of the community and the welfare of its members, the other the administrative officers who are mandated to execute the first. Sovereignty, that is, the power to administer the order without interference from any other human authority, resides in the highest of the associations, in the *respublica* as a whole. The antimonarchic implications, the problem of the ephors, of deposition of the ruler, etc., do not concern us here; they are the standard Calvinist controversialist set of problems, adapted in this case to the situation of the Netherlands. What is important is the model construction of the sovereign state through intermediate steps from the bottom of the hierarchy. It is, we might say, the countermodel to Bodin's construction of the state from the top of the cosmological pyramid.² The sanctity of the contracts, however, was still founded on natural law of the old type, depending for its validity in the last instance on the Decalogue.

The natural law construction, as a construction of social and political order out of the natural will of individual human beings, was to remain a dominant symbol of political thought for centuries. Particularly in German theory, the textbooks on natural law practically superseded any other approach to political problems up to the period of Fichte and Hegel. Kant's political theory has still the form of a philosophy of law, and Fichte and Schelling began their

1. *Politica methodice digesta, exemplis sacris et profanis illustrata* (Herborn, 1603; enlarged edition, Groningen, 1610); 3d ed. rev., ed. Carl Joachim Friedrich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

2. I very much doubt that Althusius has great importance as a political thinker beyond this neat construction, the implications of which he did not even surmise. That he is carried along as an apparently permanent fixture in histories of political ideas seems to me chiefly due to the reluctance of historians to challenge the authority of Gierke, who "discovered" him. (Cf. Otto von Gierke, *Johannes Althusius und die Entwicklung der naturrechtlichen Staatstheorie* [1880], 3d ed., with appendixes [Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1913]).

work in the field of politics with treatises on *Naturrecht*. This break in the European tradition, the transition from the medieval status philosophy to the philosophy of contract, also had its practical consequences for the structure of modern society. One of the distinguished type constructions of the nineteenth century, H. S. Maine's transition of society from status to contract, and later the sociology of Toennies, is based on this break as the model.

c. *The Symbol of Science*

The second influential symbol was that of science. In the seventeenth century the system of physics as such had as yet less influence than the method of geometry. The resolute-compositive method, the resolution of a whole into its elements and the composition of the result out of the elements in a process of strict reasoning, became the model of political construction with Hobbes as well as with Spinoza in his ethics *more geometrico*. In the eighteenth century, after the success of Newtonian physics, the categories of mechanics became important in the construction of society, particularly the category of mechanical "equilibrium." Kant's ethics and politics are strongly influenced by the idea of the equilibrium between citizens who are understood in analogy to the elements of an equilibrated mechanical system. The same influence can be discerned in the equilibrium ideas of political economy. With the rise of new sciences, of biology and psychology, we notice in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth the corresponding attempts in political theory to construct the problems of politics on the models of these new sciences.

d. *The Problems of the New Era*

The situation presents the historian with a complicated task. Since the seventeenth century, political thought has moved along more than one path. To disentangle the several sets of symbols determining every author singly is difficult enough. To trace a history of thought through the several systems without drowning in a sea of details and qualifications is possible only through severe selection. And even then, it will be hard to discern the order in the tortuous intertwining of the several trends. It is advisable, therefore, to catalog at this juncture the main lines that we must follow from now on.

(1) The central problem is *Man* himself. Man, with the structure indicated above, is the starting point of the new thought. This man is a fragment, reduced to his so-called natural elements, including the faculty of reasoning. The main line of thought, drawn by the outstanding political philosophers—Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx—is concerned with the rediscovery of man, with the arduous task of adding to his stature the elements that he has lost in the transition from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. Political theory must give him back his passions, his conscience, his sentiments, his relation to God, his status in history. The movement culminated, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in philosophical anthropology becoming the center of political thought.

(2) The second great task, partly implied in the first, is the description and construction of the nation as the new social substance. The systems of the seventeenth century, while practically operating with the implied axiom of the existence of nations, have not developed vocabulary for their designation. The nation must be constructed out of the individual wills of the persons composing it. The great break comes toward the end of the eighteenth century with Rousseau; and the new theory of the *general will* is consummated in the Romantic idea of the *Volksgeist*, of the national spirit as the acting substance of history.

(3) The ideas concerning the internal order of the national commonwealths offer perhaps the greatest technical difficulty in their presentation, because the national developments differ widely from one another. The English ideas of constitutional government are well underway in the seventeenth century. The French approach their critical phase in the late eighteenth century. The Germans have a secondary role throughout, with the consequence that on the one hand the natural law type of literature was more penetrating and survived longer, while on the other hand the ideas of the national spirit developed more radically and influentially because they could attract undivided attention.

(4) Through the whole period runs the tension between the evolving national bodies and the idea of a humanity that is not absorbed in the membership of national mystical bodies. The sources of the idea are various. First rank the remnants of the Christian idea of mankind, felt the strongest in Catholicism and Calvinism, while Lutherism plays a less prominent part in this respect. The second

source is the idea of human nature that evolved in the seventeenth century and reached its climax in the Age of Reason. The third source is the rise of movements that are directed essentially against the bourgeois national state: the workers' movement and the lower-middle-class movement.

(5) The new political thought, with all the problems just mentioned, is wrapped up in most of the cases, and through the greater part of the period, in methodological symbols borrowed from one of the natural sciences. This means in practice that political ideas are frequently couched in language and developed by methods that are not suitable for the treatment of politics. It will be one of our major tasks to extract the political problems proper from their naturalistic form and thus to show the slow growth of a new political science out of the meager beginnings of the seventeenth century.

§2. In Search of Order

"nam naturalis iuris mater est ipsa humana natura."
Grotius

a. The State of Violence—Grotius's De Jure Belli

The first great treatise that attempted to bring some order into a disordered world was the *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, 1625, by Hugo Grotius. The title of the book is sometimes criticized because the treatment of war rather outweighs the sections on peaceful relations. But if we consider the European situation at the time of Grotius, the idea of submitting war to regulation will appear by contrast as an idea of peace. The very definition of war and of rules of war establishes in the same act the sphere of peace as the background before which acts of war can be performed by exception and with restrictions. Political violence in the time of Grotius was not confined to war between sovereign powers, but was applied in its severest form between groups of different religious affiliations. A great number of wars occurred between factions of the nobility, between cities, between the nobility and the king, between groups of German princes, between princes and the emperor. The methods employed were atrocious. Wholesale massacre, poisoning of wells, individual assassinations, slaughter of prisoners, destructions of cities, destruction of civilian property, etc., were regular occurrences. The

last two kings of France had been assassinated, Henry III in 1589, Henry IV in 1610. The elder duke of Guise had been murdered in 1563, the younger, Henry, and his brother Louis, the cardinal, in 1588. William of Orange was murdered in 1584. The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 portended the extension of the wave to England. The Thirty Years War in Germany had entered on its first bloody phases.

b. The Regulation of Violence—Subjects in International Law

Under these circumstances it was a great effort at establishing order to conceive of a system of rules that defined as public war the use of violence between sovereign states for definite restricted reasons, to exclude from the sphere of legitimate violence tyrannicide and the resistance of the famous "inferior magistrates," to differentiate between combatants and noncombatants, to rule out the massacre of women, children, old men, ministers, scholars, peasants, and other persons peacefully occupied, to protect prisoners of war, to rule out wanton destruction of the property of private citizens, etc.

Grotius's theory of sovereignty and of the state was incidental to his problem of regulating war. As a consequence we must distinguish in his work two layers of theory that are not very well related to one another but that have their good meaning, each one taken for itself. The first theory of sovereignty concerns the question of subjects in international law. Which social units can conduct a public war, and who are the sovereign rulers who can declare war? In the answer to this question Grotius relies chiefly on Cicero; he acknowledges as a person with the status of a possible public enemy any de facto ruler who can command the obedience of the civil and military apparatus of his realm, who can command the revenue and the treasury, who finds the support of his people for his actions, who can conclude a treaty and is secure enough in his position to keep it (III.iii.1). Within this set of general conditions, Grotius is extremely generous in according the status of sovereign powers not only to the great national monarchs and the sovereign popular republics and the empire but also to commissary dictators, to rulers who hold their power under stipulations, to governments in which the power is divided between a monarch and the people, to protected and tributary powers, to members of a federation, etc. The

liberal extension has the purpose of making the rules of restricted warfare binding on as many types of powers actually warring at the time as possible, while still stigmatizing as "private" wars religious civil insurrections. The drawing of the line is influenced by considerations of expediency. To the same layer of theory belongs the interpretation of actual ruling power as a kind of possession that in its acquisition and its holding, *pleno jure, usufructu, etc.*, is governed by the law of property. The construction is relevant for us as a further symptom of the attempt to press actual power relations as far as possible into current legal categories in order to keep them under some control.

c. The Authority of Rulership

However, this prodigious production of rules would not be more than an exercise in wishful thinking if in his second stratum of theory Grotius did not deal with the authority of natural law and *ius gentium*, with the natural law foundation of political community, and with the authority of rulership. At this point the theory of Grotius becomes a hopeless terminological muddle, because the authority of rulership is called sovereignty, too, although the natural law derivation of governmental authority has systematically nothing to do with sovereignty as the quality of a subject in international law. We run into a basic and inevitable difficulty of the natural law system. The actual foundation of rulership is power; the established power will be ordered in its personnel and function, and the order may be expressed in civil law terms, as in the case of Grotius, or in a newly developed set of public law categories in later periods. In any case, however, the legal construction of the political order is secondary to the power establishment. Bodin was still aware of the problem and differentiated carefully between the power foundation and the legal superstructure. The natural law systems tend to cover prelegal and extralegal phenomena with legal terminology and thus to obscure the issues. It took centuries to recover the prelegal sphere of politics as an object of scientific investigation, and the recovery does not yet meet with general consensus. This is the first outstanding instance in which we, through our interpretation, have to free the real problem from its cover of inadequate method, this time of legal method.

d. Nature—The Essence of Man

In the discussion of authority now, Grotius takes the decisive step that separates medieval Christian from modern European thought. Bodin had discarded the diffused authority of the feudal period; Grotius discards also the source of diffused authority: he eliminates God. Such rules as are binding on men derive their authority not from divine institution but from human nature. The meaning of "nature" in this context should be well understood. Nature does not mean the nature of physics or chemistry, but in modern English may probably be best interpreted as the "essence of man." The meaning is, therefore, rather elastic, for it depends, in the case of Grotius as well as of later naturalists, on the opinion of the philosopher as to what constitutes the "essence of man." As a general rule we may state that political thinkers are inclined to call "essence of man" the view that they hold of their own personality. The ultimate source of natural law in practice, therefore, is the personality of the philosopher, with its physiological, characterological, social, and historical determinants. If we wish to come to the core of the systems, therefore, we must in each case pierce the shell of legal, geometrical, or physical terminology in order to get at the self-interpretation of the thinker.

e. Grotius—The Model Man

Grotius was not a profound man; his case is comparatively simple. He was a humanist intellectual and as such considered himself the measure of man, and he had in addition a good deal of business sense. His religious personality was sensitive enough to make him state solemnly that anything in his treatise that might be incompatible with piety, morals, the sacred literature, and the consensus of the church should be considered not said, but it was not strong enough to make him take God seriously or bother about the religious implications of his position. The *Respublica Christiana* as a mystical body had disappeared from his view, and he believed instead in the generic character of mankind, God having created man without subdivision of species so that the human genus be known by one name. The belief in the unity of mankind did not prevent him, however, from distinguishing between corrupt or primitive and pure or civilized nature and from taking civilized man and the "better" nations as the standard of mankind. God, then, had

distributed natural resources all over the globe and given different skills to different nations, so that naturally they are guided to supply one another's needs, as none of them is self-sufficient.³ It follows that nations should have commercial intercourse and that no nation has a right to prevent another from contacts with the rest of the world. "Every nation is free to travel to any other nation, and to trade with it." The open sea, as the great highway connecting distant nations, must therefore be free to all. The argument is directed against the Portuguese, who wished to monopolize the East India trade. In his brief for the Dutch East India Company (founded in 1602), Grotius provided that nature had willed that the Dutch should get their share of it.

The arguments reveal the new situation. A group of European national states is forming, unequal in power drive. The strongest and most expansive are the Atlantic sea powers. The world is not so much a system of mutual relationships between nations as a field of weaker and stronger, with the power center in Europe and within Europe on the Atlantic coast. The principles of Vitoria, developed on the occasion of the Spaniards in America, are now extended to the other rising sea powers with the intention of organizing the world as a field for commercial exploitation by the West. "Those who deny this law, destroy this most praiseworthy bond of human fellowship, remove the opportunities for doing mutual service, in a word do violence to Nature herself"⁴—a remarkable piece of businessman's unctiousness, considering that Grotius was not more than twenty-one when he wrote it. It is necessary to understand the will to power underlying the idea of nature, or the later development will become incomprehensible. Human nature, and the law of which it is the mother, in the seventeenth century and after means primarily human will, rushing forward in the intoxication of life, setting the rules of its drive as the standards of human conduct—as long as no stronger power appears on the scene that uses the precepts against their author.

3. Hugo Grotius, *The Freedom of the Seas, or The Right which Belongs to the Dutch to Take Part in the East Indian Trade*, translated with a revision of the Latin text of 1633 by Ralph VanDeman Magoffin, edited with an introductory note by James Brown Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1916), I, 7.

4. *Ibid.*, 8.

f. *The Rules of Nature*

Having thus determined the substance of nature, we may now turn to the rules emanating from it. Most of the principles concerning this subject Grotius has set forth in the prolegomena to the *De Jure Belli* and in bk. I, chap. I of the treatise.⁵ "A rule of nature (*ius naturale*) is a dictate of right reason, which shows for every act its moral turpitude or moral necessity by finding it in agreement or disagreement with rational nature itself" (I.i.10). This definition can bear a little clarification. The formula is Ciceronian, but it is a Ciceronian hieroglyph, not more; the meaning has changed entirely. For Cicero the *recta ratio*, the *nomos*, or *logos* designates the divine substance, and *nature* is a synonym for God, too. In the definition of Grotius, "right reason" is the reasoning power of man that permits the operation of subsuming an "act" under "rational nature" and of pronouncing the result (success or fortune of subsumption) as a "rule of nature." And "rational nature," the decisive core of the definition, is not God, but Man. What now is Man? He is an animal, but a superior animal, distinguished from the others by an "appetite for society with those who are of his kind; not for community of any sort, but for peaceful community, organized in accordance with his intelligence; this appetite was called *oikeiosis* by the Stoics (perhaps best rendered by Franklin Henry Giddings's *consciousness of kind*)." The maintenance of peaceful community "is the source of that law which is properly so called" (proleg.).

Grotius makes it a point that the *appetitus societatis*, the desire for community, is an independent element of human nature that would lead to association even if there were no other determinants, and insofar he gives the first modern instinct theory of society. He acknowledges, however, that the desire is supported by the infirmity of man, which makes him seek community for utilitarian reasons. Once community is fixed as part of the essence of man, the rules governing community life follow as the means suitable to this end. Peaceful life in community is possible only with a minimum of security of property, fulfillment of obligations, and punishment of misdeeds. This body of rules can be increased because man has not

5. The edition used is *Hugonis Grotii De Iure Belli ac Pacis Libri tres. Editio Nova* (Amsterdam, 1646), in the reproduction of *The Classics of International Law* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1913).

only a desire for community but also judgment and foresight. He is able to anticipate the consequences of acts of passion and will forgo a present gratification in the interest of a stable and peaceful future. A third enlargement of the body of rules is due to the experience of weakness and danger in the life of single families. For their better protection they will unite in a "civil society" and agree to the establishment of a *potestas civilis* (I.iv.7). The agreement to create a body politic gives rise to the natural laws concerning the peaceful existence of the state, the sovereign power of the ruler who is submitted to no other human will, and the duty of obedience on the part of the ruled. And, finally, human nature justifies, in the interest of peaceful existence, warlike actions between individuals before the establishment of states, between sovereigns afterward. The preservation of life and limb against attack and the lusty acquisition of "things useful for life" in competition with others as long as their rights are not injured are of the essence of human nature (I.ii.1).

g. Grotius and Epicurus

This set of rules, and a multitude of others, can be developed by the method of demonstration, through the application of "right reason," once agreement is reached on the nature of man. The rules are conditioned as means to the end of human existence in a peaceful community. Conscience is not entirely eliminated, but it is relegated to the function of punishment through its torments in cases of violation of natural law. The system is hypothetical; not before Kant will nature again be linked to morality and the hypothetical imperative again be transformed into a categorical. The form that Grotius has given to natural law is comparable both in its theoretical structure and in regard to the historical situation with the Epicurean calculus of pleasures conditioned by an ideal of life. The ideals, of course, upon which the conditioned systems depend differ widely, the Epicurean being the ideal of ataraxy, that of Grotius being the aggressive prosperity of a commercial nation. Nevertheless, the parallel goes rather deep. Both Epicurus and Grotius removed God to a respectable distance in order to organize the life of man undisturbed. Grotius is careful to acknowledge God as the creator of the universe at every turn. But when it comes to the rules of human existence he almost hysterically insists again and again that the rules that he develops are independent of any

divine institution; that they are not commands of God due to a revelation; that a divine revelation of law if it coincides with the law of nature is a pleasant confirmation but not more; that the law of nature stands even if there were no God; that he, Grotius, is going to reduce natural law to notions "so certain that nobody can deny them unless he does violence to himself"; that they will be "obvious and evident" in themselves and stand firm like notions derived from sense perceptions (proleg.). "The Law of Nature is so immutable that not even God can change it. For although God's power is boundless, there are a few things to which it does not extend. . . . Not even God can make it that two times two is not four" (I.i.10). The generation of Grotius was somewhat tired of God and the saints raging with his spirit; men were in search of an order that was safe from his interference.

§3. Hobbes

*"He is a king over all the children of pride."
Job 41:34*

a. Comparison with Machiavelli and Bodin— The Problem of Realism

The place of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) is with Machiavelli and Bodin. We meet now for the third time in a century and a half with the peculiar phenomenon that the outstanding thinker of his age is surrounded not only by the solitude of greatness but also by misunderstanding, hatred, and neglect. A few words of explanation may be in order.

These three thinkers were realists, and the realist is always in danger of incurring the displeasure of his contemporaries because he is inclined to pierce the evocation of the cosmic and to destroy its magic. The danger decreases when the evocation, over the course of centuries, has absorbed so many elements of reality, worked into a balanced compromise, that the philosopher can wander a long way in pursuit of reality before he reaches the limits of the evocation. This was the case with the *sacrum imperium* of the high Middle Ages. The danger increases when a civilization disintegrates and men scurry to shelter under its fragments. The erection of fragments of reality into cosmic absolutes has for the realistic thinker the consequence that his larger world becomes a *private* world. The

question of what is *public* is always determined by the socially dominant evocation of the time. The realistic thinker becomes a private person because he has no public before which he can display what he observes in his larger world without incurring fierce resentment that may lead to disgrace, persecution, and possibly death, as in the case of Socrates. Any disturbance of the cosmion stirs up the anxiety of man that was precariously soothed for the moment.

The obvious personal solution for the realist would be to keep quiet. Unfortunately, the problem is not as simple as that. We have to acknowledge the evocation of the cosmion with its ancillary ideas as a reality, effective in history. However fragmentary, narrow, and worthless it may be, it has cast its magic over men. The existence of the cosmion is an expression of faith, and faith is real. The thinker, however, is a piece of reality, too, and probably a more solid and forceful one than his surrounding society, for it requires more vitality and strength of soul to look at the world unflinchingly than to take refuge in a cosmion. The conflict between the two realities is inevitable. Those who are living in their cosmion will find that the thinker is not realistic at all but holds an absurd view of the world because he sees things beyond the boundaries of the cosmion, which for them is the *realissimum* enclosing their horizon. Furthermore, they will consider his views immoral because the symbols of the cosmion, with which his views are in conflict, support an order. The thinker, on the other hand, will not be able to acknowledge the leading evocative ideas of his society as binding, for they distort reality and impose, by an act of faith, an order based on insufficient knowledge of the world. And his larger horizon is not simply more knowledge that he might keep for himself, for knowledge—and particularly knowledge coupled with imagination—begets the moral obligation of gaining public status for its results even at the risk of hurt feelings.

Machiavelli, Bodin, and Hobbes were realists in the particularly grave situation of internal political disorder. The Italian, French, and English domestic wars are the backgrounds before which they perform their exercises in realism. Leaving the complications of the Italian problem aside for the moment, we can see that a Bodin had to be detested when in the four-cornered fight between the evocations of the sacramental church and justification through

faith, of diffused political authority and royal ascendancy, he took the stand that none of them could satisfy a man whose world was ordered by the *fruitio Dei*, and that an integrated sovereign royal power was preferable after all because under existing conditions it had the best chance of fulfilling the requirements of cosmic order. In the case of Hobbes, even the royalists did not like his support of monarchical power because they sensed quite correctly that what he was after was order at any price and that the lord protector would do for him quite as well as the king. The period of transition is the most trying for the realist, because in the excitement of physical violence the participants in the struggle expect everybody to choose sides in an issue that is so important to them that they risk their lives for it. And that is precisely what the realist cannot do, for he questions the importance of the issue. He becomes a public scandal in the extreme, for man can rather bear opposition to his faith than contempt for it.

We have ranked the three thinkers together as realists, but their personalities and attitudes differ profoundly. The demonic realism of Machiavelli, the contemplative realism of Bodin, and the psychological realism of Hobbes each transcends the horizon of their contemporaries engaged in partisan strife, but there is no bridge between them. The historical circumstances had changed so rapidly that the problems that focused their attention differed considerably. Machiavelli could still set some hope in the reformation of the church; Bodin and Hobbes had seen enough of it. Machiavelli's myth of the demonic hero had its function in the hope of the political savior of Italy who would found a national realm in emulation of the French; Bodin, the Frenchman, and Hobbes, the Englishman, were not concerned with the foundation of a new commonwealth but with the order of an existing one. Machiavelli and Hobbes in their turn belong together and are in a sense "contemporaries," because due to the earlier disintegration of Christian civilization in Italy, Machiavelli could already have a view of man released from the divine order of the universe, creating his earthly order—the state—out of his demonic *virtù*, assisted and obstructed by *fortuna*. The horror of the Prince is the revelation of the demonic nature of Man as the source of order. Northern Europe reached this stage of disintegration only in the seventeenth century. If we may characterize the position of Hobbes in a summary fashion, we

may say that he *understood* the implications of the new political thought that had found its first expression in the work of Grotius. Under the gaze of Hobbes, the rational human nature of Grotius lost its innocence and its unctuous optimism. The man of Grotius could feel snug and comfortable in his business, because in his actions as an individual man he submitted to the nature of generic man; what he did was in accordance with an order over which even God had no power. Before the eye of Hobbes this neat little trick of unburdening the responsibility of individual man on generic man melted away, and human nature was thrown on the individual in his personal existence. Man was made aware that *human* nature was his *personal* nature. With this momentous step begins the modern philosophy of existence, as distinguished from the Christian.

b. The Analysis of Pride

aa. The Mechanical Structure of Man

The analysis of Hobbes, for which we are using mainly the *Leviathan*, 1651, begins harmlessly enough.⁶ All human action has its origin in the reaction of man, understood mechanically, toward external stimuli. The reaction may be motion toward the cause or away from the cause; the first is called appetite, the second aversion. From this dichotomy arises the fundamental structure of the field of action in love toward objects of appetite, hatred toward those of aversion, the distinction of good and evil objects, of delight and trouble, pleasure and displeasure, etc. (chap. 6). Man, then, is superior to animals through his reasoning power. He can connect causes and effects in anticipation and thus experience appetite or aversion through the imagination of future events (chaps. 5–6). The means that are at man's disposition in following his appetites and obtaining goods are called power; power is subdivided into the powers on the animal level, the so-called natural powers, and the specifically human powers such as "Riches, Reputation, Friends and the secret working of God, which men call Good Luck" (chap. 10; p. 43). In all this, there is nothing that would go in principle beyond the Nature of Grotius.

6. The edition used is that of A. D. Lindsay in Everyman's Library (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962); page references in the text are to this edition.

bb. Loss of the *Fruitio Dei*

The first break occurs in chap. 11 of the *Leviathan*, where, under the title of "Manners," Hobbes discusses those qualities of men that concern their living together in peace and unity. Peaceful life is made difficult by qualities of man that in no way can be derived from the previously expounded structure, but that have an independent origin. Man can find in this life no tranquillity or repose, because there is no ultimate end or *summum bonum* "as is spoken of in the Books of the Old Morall Philosophers" (p. 49). Felicity is a continuous progress of desire from one object to another. "So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death." The Aristotelian problem of the *bios theoretikos* has received a new formula. Bodin had still built his system on the *fruitio Dei* as the *summum bonum*, though he considered the ideal earthly life to consist in a mixture of action and contemplation. Hobbes eliminates even the contemplative approximation as a fixed point of orientation around which the life of man can revolve. The connection with God is cut off, and what is left is the directionless desire for "power after power."

cc. *Fruitio Hominis*—The Contemplation of Power

In chap. 13 a further element is introduced that casts new light on the indefinite desire. As all men are equal in their natural structure, strife will ensue because they are (1) in competition in their power drives and are therefore (2) diffident of one another. The third element, leading to quarrel, is the fact that some are "taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires." Men "glory" in their power; their joy consists in comparing themselves with other men, and they can relish nothing but their own eminence (chap. 13; p. 64). We are approaching the core of the problem. When tranquillity of soul, through the ultimate *fruitio Dei*, is lost, man in his creaturely loneliness and weakness must create the image of his own omnipotence, outstripping everyone else in ceaseless activity and expansion so that he may not become aware of his finiteness and fall into the abyss of anxiety. The life of man may be compared to a race. "But this race we must suppose to have no other goal, no other garland, but being foremost." And in it: "Continually to

be out-gone, is misery. Continually to out-go the next before, is felicity. And to forsake the course, is to die."⁷

dd. Madness

The meaning of the contemplation of one's own power, of glory, vainglory, pride, or self-conceit becomes still clearer from the discussion of *madness*. Madness is pride in excess. The typical case of madness through pride is the belief in one's divine inspiration. Such an opinion may begin, according to Hobbes, "from some lucky finding of an Error generally held by others." Not understanding the chain of association or reasoning that led to the lucky find, conceited people begin to admire themselves, believe themselves to be in the special grace of God, who has revealed the idea to them by his Spirit, erect their conceit of inspiration into an absolute, and begin to rage against everybody else who does not agree with them, as can be seen as a mass phenomenon in "the seditious roaring of a troubled nation" (chap. 8; p. 37). The ultimate case is the inmate of the insane asylum who believes that he is God the Father himself (chap. 8).⁸ The culmination of pride is the identification of the Ego with God, in lesser degrees the divine inflation that creates its particular cosmion as an absolute. In this analysis Hobbes laid the foundation of a discipline of political science that after an interruption of two centuries is continued in the analysis of the political myth. The crime of Hobbes, in the eyes of his time, was not that he disturbed a particular cosmion by the evocation of an alternative, but that he dissected the magic of the cosmion as such and revealed its origin in an element of human nature, which he called pride.⁹

c. *The Analysis of Fear of Death*

If mankind were an anarchic mass of individuals, every one striving to "out-go" everybody else and to build himself into an analogy of

7. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Toennies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), pt. I, chap. 9, sec. 21.

8. Cf. the parallel in *ibid.*, I.10.9: "We have had the example of one that preached in Cheapside from a cart there, instead of a pulpit, that he himself was Christ, which was spiritual pride or madness."

9. This analysis of pride, as well as the subsequent analysis of fear of death, is greatly indebted to the excellent study of Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936).

God, the result would be the *bellum omnium contra omnes*, the war of all against all (chap. 13). In order to prevent their mutual extermination, a power has to be set over men, the Leviathan, taking the comparison from Job 41, "where God having set forth the great power of Leviathan, called him King of the Proud" (chap. 28; p. 170). The derivation of political society is the second great topic of Hobbes. The principle on which Hobbes builds the community is not a social instinct, appearing conveniently as in the work of Grotius, but another passion, equal in power with vanity or pride and, therefore, capable of counteracting its sway: the fear of death. Man, wrapped up in the dream world of his passion, will come to grief when he runs into another power-mad individual, and this will bring him to his senses. "Men have no other means to acknowledge their owne Darknesse, but onely by reasoning from the un-foreseen mischances" (chap. 44; p. 331). Reason as such is powerless, being reduced, as with Grotius, to the faculty of "reckoning," but reason can draw conclusions from the experience of resistance of the outer world, the supreme misfortune being violent death at the hand of other men who are one's potential murderers. The man of Hobbes has no *summum bonum* serving as a point of orientation in his life, but he has a *summum malum*: death.¹⁰ Hobbes does not yet penetrate to the deepest layers of existential sentiments; we are still far from Kierkegaard's analysis of anxiety. The experience of death has not yet become the accompaniment of life in such intimacy that the sentiment of death and the sentiment of life would be inseparable and that self-conceit and the building of the shelter of pride would be itself an anxiety. Hobbes has no notion yet of indefinite objectless anxiety, but only of the definite fear of death, and of death in a definite form: in the form of violent death as it may happen to man in civil war.¹¹ The examples in the analysis of pride have shown to what extent Hobbes used as his model the experience of religiously determined civil strife. Now we see the danger of death at the hand of the murderous self-conceited dreamer in civil war as the model of death that is to be feared. This experience of death is the existential origin of morality insofar as it induces man to step out of the dream world of his pride, to renounce

10. "Mortem violentam tanquam summum malum studet evitare" (*De homine*, chap. 11, art. 6; cf. *De cive*, chap. 1, art. 7).

11. *De corpore*, chap. 1, art. 7.

the unlimited pursuit of his "glory," and to agree on an imposed order that guarantees life and therewith the pursuit of appetites within limits. The *summum malum* becomes the center that gives coherence, aim, and rules to the life of man that the lost *summum bonum* can no longer furnish.

d. The Natural Law Concepts

At this point of the argument Hobbes introduces the natural law vocabulary. The state of general competition and war between pride-mad individuals is the natural condition of man. The natural condition is not supposed to be a historical phase in the evolution of mankind but rather a border situation into which man may relapse any time if the madness of pride overcomes him. We can form an idea of what it is like "by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, in a civill Warre" (chap. 13; p. 65). The foundation of government has, under normal conditions, eliminated the war between individuals and restricted the natural condition to the relations between sovereigns. The Right of Nature (*ius naturale*) is the Liberty that every man has in the natural condition to use his power for the preservation of his Nature, that is, his Life. Every action serving this end is permitted; the notions of right or wrong, just or unjust have no place in this condition (chaps. 13–14). Liberty is the actual range of unimpeded action in the natural condition (chap. 14). A Law of Nature (*lex naturalis*) is any general rule that, under pressure of the fear of death, is found by reason to serve the end of preserving life in society. It is a general rule of reason: "That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre" (chap. 14; p. 67). The first part of this rule is the fundamental law of nature; the second part is the *summe* of the right of nature. From this first law follows the second: that a man should lay down his right of nature and preserve not more liberty for himself against other men than he would like to see them have against himself. The law is in substance identical with the law of the Gospel—Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them—or with the negative rule—What you do not wish others do to you, that do not to them (chap. 14). A mere contract

between men to divest themselves of their right of nature would be no remedy for the situation because there would be no guaranty of its fulfillment. A promise without the sword is nothing. The natural condition can be overcome only through a Covenant that institutes a power that will watch over the keeping of the agreement. This Covenant, which institutes the Commonwealth, has the formula: "I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner." "This is the Generation of that great *Leviathan*, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which we owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defense" (chap. 17; p. 89). He to whom the rights of the individuals are transferred is called the sovereign, be he a single person or an assembly; every one besides him in the commonwealth is a subject (chap. 17).

e. The Analysis of Commonwealth and Person

The designation of the sovereign as the mortal God indicates that in his theory of the commonwealth Hobbes does not lapse from his earlier profound analysis into the type of flat natural law prattle that piles legal hieroglyphs one on top of the other without the faintest idea of their implications. The theory of the covenant, by which men agree to transfer their natural right to the sovereign, rests on an analysis of the actual process in terms of personality structure. The key concept of the analysis is the concept of *person*. "A Person, is he, whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man." When he represents himself, he is a natural person; when he represents another, he is called an artificial person. The meaning of person is referred back to the Latin *persona* and the Greek *prosopon* as the face, the outward appearance, or the mask of the actor on the stage. "So that a Person, is the same that an Actor is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation; and to Personate, is to Act, or Represent himselfe, or an other" (chap. 16; p. 83). The concept of person allows separation of the visible realm of representative words and deeds from the unseen realm of processes of the soul, with the far-reaching consequence that the visible words and actions, which must always be those of a definite

physical human being, may represent a unit of psychic processes that arises from the interaction of individual human souls. In the natural condition every man has his own person, that is to say, his words and actions represent the power drive of his passions. The foundation of government, which juristically is expressed as the transfer of natural rights to the sovereign, implies in the field of passions and persons the breaking up of the human units of passion and their fusion into a new unit that is called the commonwealth. The actions of the individual consequently can no longer represent their own processes, and the representative function for the new psychological unit passes to the actions of a particular human being, the sovereign. Hobbes insists that the creation of the political unit "is more than Consent, or Concord," which would presuppose that the natural persons continue to exist; the commonwealth is a "reall Unitie of them all." The individual men agree to dissolve their personality and "to submit their Wills, every one to his (the sovereign's) Will, and their Judgment to his Judgment" (chap. 17; p. 89). To call the sovereign a mortal God is more than a *façon de parler*; through the submission to the sovereign the madness of individual omnipotence is broken, and man has found, with his limits, his God. "He (the Sovereign) is inabled to forme the will of them all." "And in him consisteth the Essence of the Commonwealth" (p. 90). The commonwealth is a true mystical body, like the mystical body of Christ.

f. Perfection of the Legal Closure of the State

The structure of the commonwealth is complete. The rest of the *Leviathan* (four-fifths of the volume) may be said to be a great series of corollaries in which Hobbes with grim satisfaction slams one door after the other through which any disturbance of the commonwealth might slip in. First he comes down with great circumspection on every civil political head that might raise a murmur. The dissatisfied individual is informed that he has no right of resistance as he has transferred his authority to the sovereign; the transfer may have the form of a contract between the subjects, but it certainly is not founded on a contract between subjects and sovereign, so that the sovereign has no obligations whatsoever and cannot be made accountable for nonfulfillment. The sovereign's authority is the subjects' own authority; if the subject rebels and

is slain in the process he has committed suicide. That man owes more obedience to the command of God than to that of the secular ruler does not help the subject very far, for in external actions man owes obedience to the ruler, and his faith—which is necessary for salvation—is not in danger because no sovereign can penetrate into the privacy of the subject's mind; the subject can believe in Christ even under an infidel ruler. "Foolish opinions of lawyers" that Parliament makes the law, while the king has the executive power, are dismissed on the ground that England is no doubt a monarchy and not a popular republic and that the power of the sovereign cannot be divided. In this part of his theory Hobbes perfects the legal closure of the state that had been begun by Bodin. After the constitutional question in England had settled down, with Parliament coming out supreme, the Hobbesian theory of positive law came to the fore again, now applied to Parliament as the sovereign, in the positive law schools of Bentham and Austin.

g. Perfection of the Spiritual Closure of the State

The second class of arguments concerns religious group resistance. In this respect Hobbes perfects the Erastian position. A commonwealth is a Christian commonwealth if the sovereign adopts Christianity and makes its worship positive law. A church is "a company of men professing Christian Religion, united in the person of one Sovereigne: at whose command they ought to assemble, and without whose authority they ought not to assemble" (chap. 39; p. 252). A commonwealth is called a civil state, insofar as its subjects are men; it is called a church insofar as the subjects are Christians. Puritans are told that they cannot have a covenant with God that would entitle them to dissent or resist, because a covenant with God can be made only by a sovereign who is the bearer of the person of the commonwealth. Dissenters may not assemble in private religious circles, because that would be an illegal assembly. The established church hears that the sovereign is pastor of the commonwealth by divine grace and that bishops and the clergy hold their offices from the king like civil officials; the reason for their ecclesiastical offices is the same as for the staff in the civil sphere: the king cannot administer the Sacraments personally in all cases but has to divide the labor. The distinction of

temporal and spiritual is an invention of the Devil destined to cause disorder in the commonwealth. This group of arguments perfects the spiritual closure of the commonwealth, as the preceding group perfected the legal; in this respect it gives a foretaste of future possibilities. The demonic units of individual pride are broken up through fear of death, but they have not gained a new creaturely status under God; their pride is transferred to the commonwealth. The Leviathan, in reducing the children of pride to humbleness, has absorbed their pride into his own person. The natural condition is abolished for individuals, but it continues unmitigated between sovereigns. The consequence is that Hobbes, as the advocate of the Leviathan, indulges in precisely the type of madness that he revealed as the evil of individual existence. The commonwealth is spiritually absolute, and whosoever dares to interfere with its conceit is taken to task as a mortal enemy. Part IV of the *Leviathan* deals with the church and its claim to represent the spiritual unity of mankind beyond secular political organizations, under the title "The Kingdom of Darkness." The Movement attitude that Hobbes denounces because of its destructive effects for the peace of the commonwealth is his own attitude when it comes to relations in the national state sphere. The uncompromising spirit of the Movement is not broken in Hobbes, but only transferred to the national commonwealth.

h. Control of Opinion

One of the most significant passages in this respect concerns the control of opinion. "For the Actions of men proceed from their Opinions; and in the well governing of Opinions, consisteth the well governing of mens Actions, in order to their Peace, and Concord" (chap. 18; p. 93). The sovereign, therefore, must determine what opinions and doctrines are averse and what conducive to peace. He must decide who may speak in public to an audience, on what subject and in what tendency; and he must institute a preventive censorship of books. The problem of truth is dismissed with the decision that no conflict can arise because doctrines that are not conducive to peace cannot be true and are, therefore, rightly forbidden. The passage could be written by a modern minister of propaganda.

i. Summary: Movement from Below and Pressure from the Top

The corollaries do no more than confirm the idea of the Leviathan. Hobbes has analyzed the two metaphysical substances that are left in possession of the scene after the fall of the medieval institutions: man and the national commonwealth. He is neither an individualist nor a collectivist but a great psychologist. The ironclad defense of the absolute power of the Leviathan over the children of pride should not be taken as expressing preference for a form of government (as is usually done) but as a witness to the strength of the forces that must be subdued in order to make peaceful social life possible under modern conditions. He was the first to see and fully understand the explosive character of the forces released by the irruption of the Movement into the sphere of institutions; only the deadly fear of self-destruction can stop the madness of the passions, and only complete power over men in soul and body can secure a precarious peace. I have attached particular importance to the recurrent civil war examples, for it would be a radical misunderstanding of Hobbesian theory if one were to classify it as another more or less well constructed story of the state of nature that, when it proved unsatisfactory, was given up for life in society. The natural condition of Hobbes is not a past stage, superseded by the institution of government, but the possibility of disruption permanently present in the national state. At any moment the passions may break loose again; inspired leaders may arise, find their sectarian followers, and blow up the commonwealth in a new civil war. The danger of the Movement from below explains the severity of the pressure from the top. Hobbes in his zeal has contributed importantly to the understanding of the totalitarian state; his recipes for the total spiritual and intellectual control of the people are followed to the letter by present totalitarian governments, perfected by modern techniques. And this technique of control by the mortal God is probably the inevitable instrument of peaceful order among men who have lost their immortal God.

The totalitarian element of the *Leviathan* has no immediate historical sequence. In his perspicacity Hobbes saw the problem correctly, but he misjudged its imminence. The Reformation drive was nearing its exhaustion; the national commonwealth was able

to digest it after the church had failed, and the Christian substance was still strong enough to last for centuries, renewed by minor reformations like the Wesleyan. The new danger period begins in the middle of the nineteenth century with mass democracy and the simultaneous infiltration of anti-Christian movements. The other great psychologist who in this new danger situation had the rank and function comparable to that of Hobbes in the earlier period was Nietzsche.



The English Revolution

§I. The English Situation

The work of Hobbes was determined by the experiences of the English Civil War, but since it penetrated far below the level of ancillary ideas to the very roots of human existence, it was of little importance in shaping the political ideas of the age. Hobbes is the greatest English political thinker, but because of his greatness his place is not in seventeenth-century English politics; it is rather in the history of the European mind. The main body of English political thought of this period, however, is closer to the institutions, concerned with the digestion of forces and ideas released by the Reformation and with the reordering of the English commonwealth under the new conditions.

An entirely satisfactory presentation of this body of thought is perhaps still impossible, although not for lack of materials. We are drowning in them; there are few periods of human history that have been explored so thoroughly and with such loving care, for it is the age that laid the foundations of modern constitutional government. But the ideas are not developed as a reasoned system. They arise on the occasion of changes in existing institutions, and the changes do not take the form of violent breaks with tradition (at least not in the beginning) but have rather the form of shifting accents, of a hardening of positions, and of consequent friction between powers that had formerly coexisted harmoniously. The evolution does not originate in programs but in a change of temper, and it is rather difficult to trace these changes in detail.

The almost subconscious character of her evolution has kept more of medieval institutions, ideas, and sentiments alive in England than in any other nation of the Western world, and the same

holds true for the United States. Setting aside for the moment the imponderables of national temperament that certainly have something to do with the matter, this character of English evolution is due to definite events of political history. The War of the Roses had exhausted the English nobility physically and still more economically to such a degree that the Tudors could assume the uncontested function of national representation a century earlier than could the Bourbons in France, and the exhaustion was so profound that the English middle class could gain a social ascendancy that the French never reached under the *ancien régime*.

That the balance of economic and political power shifted from the nobility to the middle class in the English commonwealth as early as the fifteenth century had several important consequences. First of all, the English middle class did not have to make a national revolution as radical as that of the French in 1789; the political institutions could evolve slowly and preserve a good deal of the medieval heritage through all later changes. England has never been "modernized" like France or Germany. The second important consequence was the preservation of the aristocracy as a ruling class, regenerated in its personnel through the rise of commoners to its ranks. No other country has been able to preserve within the framework of a functioning mass democracy the magnificent arrogance of its nobility in the splendor of the *ancien régime*. The third consequence, which may become the cause of England's undoing, is the medieval "hangover." No other European great power is as outrageously "backward" in its evolution of the apparatus of modern government: of rationalized law and court procedure, of bureaucracy and the military establishment, of an administrative court system, and of social legislation.

§2. James I

The changes of temper to which we referred became visible after the accession of James I to the throne of England. The king had grown up in Scotland in the atmosphere of the Calvinist controversy about royal power. The experience had left its imprint on him, with the result of a somewhat nervous insistence that royal power was a divine mystery and should not be discussed. His so-called theory of divine kingship looks very queer if one has recourse

to the sources. In his *Speech in Star Chamber*, 1616, he gave the famous formula: "That which concerns the mystery of the King's power, is not lawful to be disputed; for that is to wade into the weakness of Princes, and to take away the mystical reverence, that belongs unto them that sit in the Throne of God."¹ The meaning can only be that any attempt at submitting royal power to rational discussion will reveal its "weakness"; it will reveal that royal power has no rational foundation—in which point, by the way, it does not differ from any other power. We have to readjust our evaluation of the king as a political philosopher. Under the predominance of the myth of popular sovereignty, the insistence on divine royal right seems somewhat absurd. But if we approach the question with the detachment that a historian should at least try to have, we must say that the king was one of the rare persons in the period of controversy and after who had understood that the foundation of kingship is not to be on the level of contract theories, that meeting an opponent on this level meant certain defeat for the idea of kingship, and that the only way of preserving the myth of the royal institution was to keep it out of discussion. Later, this attitude became the accepted one in England; the king as the "symbol" of the unity of the British Commonwealth in the Statute of Westminster is certainly not an institution that would bear rational scrutiny. And in order to preserve the "mystical symbol," all good Englishmen are careful not to discuss the king—as James I advised them to do. The king, we might say, was not a reactionary but a progressive who had discarded a system of obsolete contractual symbols and fallen back on the inscrutable will of God. In political practice, however, the withdrawal meant that the issue of royal power was made supremely conscious. Under the veil of discussion an issue can be kept obscure for a long time; now that the obscuring veil was torn, kingship emerged as an irritating fact. There was no change in theory or institutions. The king simply insisted on every occasion that his prerogative was beyond dispute, that it was no subject for the tongue of lawyers, and he stretched the prerogative considerably through the use of Star Chamber and High Commission.

1. *The Political Works of James I*, with an introduction by C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 333.

§3. The Clash with Court and Parliament

Revealing is the friction with Sir Edward Coke. There was no difference of opinion between the king and his chief justice concerning the theory of common law, as is sometimes presumed. The common law was for James the fundamental law of the kingdom, determining his own prerogative as well as the rights of every subject. The issue did not concern the common law at all, but the power of interpretation. The king insisted that he was the sole interpreter of what he could and could not do, and the chief justice insisted that he held the monopoly of knowledge concerning what is the law. He held this position not only against the king but also (in *Bonham's* case) against Parliament, asserting that the courts could adjudge an act of Parliament void if it was in conflict with the principles of common law. Obviously it would not be long before Parliament would insist that it, too, had the undisputed power of declaring what is law. The clash came in 1621, when Parliament retorted with the Great Protestation of December 18, 1621, asserting that it was within its jurisdiction when it debated such matters, whereupon the king dissolved Parliament and tore the pages with the protestation from its journal. Throughout the various frictions all parties were in agreement that they accepted the law of the realm as their superior; no question of the location of power, no problem of sovereignty of king or Parliament, was raised. The legal atmosphere was still medieval, assuming the harmonious balance of the powers in the *corpus mysticum* under a law binding them all. Their differences were differences of interpretation; but, if we may use Hobbesian language, the political authorities had become power conscious. They were pushing forward to a point where the medieval harmony of diffused power would break and an explicit settlement of the rival claims would have to be found.

§4. The Church Constitution—The Mayflower Compact

The fourth power advancing its claims, besides the king, the Parliament, and the courts, was the people. The popular claims were primarily concerned with religious freedom, and in this respect the situation was perhaps the most critical because in ecclesiastical

matters the theoretical hardening of positions had progressed furthest. In the secular sphere no power theory had as yet seriously broken the medieval harmony, but in the spiritual area we find a fairly well formulated theory of royal sovereignty in the *Constitutions and Canons* of 1604.²

The first rule of royal sovereignty in these matters concerned the spiritual closure of the commonwealth. The king's power was declared to be "the highest power under God, to whom all men . . . do by God's Laws owe most loyaltie and obedience, afore and above all other Powers and Potentates on earth" (Canon I). The theory of the sovereignty of the Church of England does not differ appreciably from that of Bodin. Internally the king's majesty has "the same authority in causes Ecclesiastical that the godly Kings had amongst the Iewes, and Christian Emperors in the Primitive Church" (Canon II). Further canons declare unlawful the separation from the church and combination into new brotherhoods, the adoption of the name of a church by congregations outside the established church, and the conclusion of covenants. In church matters the Oriental hierarchic construction of personnel and legal forms was complete—at least on paper. In practice, the enforcement varied in rigidity but was never complete. It was, however, harassing enough to induce covenanted congregations to emigrate from England, the most famous of them being the parties from Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire that emigrated to Holland and later to America. But even here, where the tension was strongest, no real break with the commonwealth idea ensued. *New England's Memorial* enumerates among the reasons for emigration to America: "That their posterity would in few generations become Dutch, and so lose their interest in the English nation; they being desirous rather to enlarge his Majesty's dominion, and to live under their natural Prince." And the Mayflower Compact, concluded in the presence of God and of one another, but in the absence of the king, was nevertheless a covenant between "loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James." The national commonwealth under the king was strong enough to include even democratic republics.

2. *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical 1604*, with an introduction and notes by H. A. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923).

§5. The Restriction of Royal Power

The further course of events brought about what was to be expected under the circumstances: the increased consciousness of the relative positions and the ensuing friction made it necessary to find formulas for the delimitation of jurisdictions. The jurisdictional rules themselves as well as the political axioms justifying them are the body of principles of so-called constitutional government.

The first important set of rules was concerned with the restriction of royal power. The Petition of Right of 1628³ granted (1) that no direct taxes should be levied without consent of Parliament, (2) that the writ of habeas corpus should be observed, (3) that trial by jury should not be denied, (4) that no freeman should be deprived of his life, liberty, and property without due process of law, (5) that soldiers should not be billeted in houses against the will of the inhabitants, (6) that commissions proceeding by martial law should be abolished. These grants were called summarily "the rights and liberties" of the subjects "according to the laws and statutes of the realm." The formula "life, liberty, and property" does not yet actually appear in the Petition of Right, but it is substantially expressed in the more specific formulas of "put to death," "imprisoned," and "put out of his lands or tenements." An approximation is to be found in sec. 129 of the Grand Remonstrance of 1641 (Gardiner, 202-32), where men are said to be "more secured in their persons, liberties and estates" as a consequence of the abolition of the Star Chamber (Gardiner, 222). Closer still comes the formula in the Impeachment of 1642 (Gardiner, 236 f.), in which the king charges certain members of Parliament with an attempt to establish tyrannical power "over the lives, liberties and estates of his Majesty's liege people," and in his answer to the Grand Remonstrance the king speaks of his care "for the comfort and happiness" of his people (*The King's Answer to the Petition Accompanying the Grand Remonstrance*, 1641, in Gardiner, 233-36 at 236). Most of the formula material that assumes an important function later in the American constitutional movement is already assembled.

3. See *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, ed. S. R. Gardiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 66-70; hereafter cited in the text as Gardiner.

§6. The Trend toward Sovereignty of Parliament

A second group of restrictions indicates the trend toward the later sovereignty of Parliament. The Triennial Act of 1641 (Gardiner, 144–55) provided for sessions of Parliament every three years without the initiative of the crown and also for dissolution and reelection of Parliament in the same intervals without royal initiative. (The Mondays in November play an important part as dates in this act; this mode of dating is still to be found in American constitutional law.) The Parliament must not be dissolved within fifty days after its first meeting without the consent of both houses, and neither house can be adjourned within fifty days without its own consent. The act provides further for the election of speakers in both houses and for immunities of the members of Parliament. A step leading to the Revolution proper was taken with the Act of May 10, 1641 (Gardiner, 158 f.), which provided that the present Parliament (the Long Parliament) should not be prorogued, adjourned, or dissolved for the period of the crisis without its own consent expressed in an act of Parliament. And, finally, there was increased insistence on a demand, which later became the key rule of parliamentary government, that the king's counselors should be persons who held the confidence of Parliament and people. The demand appears in the Ten Propositions, June 24, 1641 (Gardiner, 163–66), is repeated in the Instructions to the Committee in Scotland, November 8, 1641 (Gardiner, 199–203), in sec. 179 of the Grand Remonstrance, December 1, 1641 (Gardiner, 228), and in sec. 1 of the Nineteen Propositions, June 1, 1642 (Gardiner, 254). The Oxford Propositions of February 1643 (Gardiner, 262–67) no longer contain this demand, nor do they contain other earlier demands for parliamentary control of administrative and judicial appointments. Gardiner assumes that Parliament wished to tide over the remaining years of the reign of Charles I with military and financial control only and to wait for a settlement with the successor (Gardiner, xl). The demands reappear in their full rigidity in the Uxbridge and Newcastle Propositions of 1644 and 1646 (Gardiner, 275–86, 290–306).

§7. The Covenants

A third group of constitutional symbols had its origin in the church struggle proper and in the covenant idea. In the early years of

King James we noticed the conclusion of local covenants, leading to the emigration of covenanted groups and to the American Pilgrim settlement. These movements were on a small scale and resulted, so to speak, in democratic republican enclaves within the larger commonwealth. The first covenant on a larger scale was the Scottish National Covenant of 1638 (Gardiner, 124–34), in which the “noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses, ministers and commons” subscribed individually to the defense of the reformed religion in Scotland. In November 1638 the Glasgow Assembly abolished episcopacy in Scotland and gave final form to the Scottish Kirk. In 1643 the Solemn League and Covenant (Gardiner, 267–71) achieved the union of England, Scotland, and Ireland on the presbyterian basis, thus winning the aid of the Scots to the English Parliament in its struggle with the king. In 1645 Archbishop Laud, the leader of the struggle for supremacy of the episcopal church in England, was attainted and executed.

§8. *The Solemn Engagement of the Army*

In 1647 the political initiative had passed to the army, which in its rank and file consisted of Independents and Levellers. The Covenant symbol now enters in the hands of the army in the secular national phase. The document that marks the transition is the *Solemn Engagement of the Army*, June 5, 1647.⁴ It gives first an account of the election and function of soldiers’ councils in the army, very similar to the Russian army soviets of 1917 and the German *Soldatenräte* of 1918–1919. It then proceeds to the solemn agreement between the soldiers and officers subscribed not to disband before satisfaction is given to their grievances, as well as security that they themselves and “the free-born people of England” will not be submitted to “oppression, injury or abuse” thereafter. It concludes with the declaration that they are not pressing a particular interest, but that they wish to provide “as far as may be within our sphere and power, for such an establishment of common and equal right, freedom and safety to the whole as all might equally partake of, that do not, by denying the same to

4. In *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647–9) from the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents*, ed. A. S. P. Woodhouse (1936; rpt. London: J. M. Dent; Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle, 1992), 401–3; hereafter cited in the text as Woodhouse.

others, or otherwise, render themselves incapable thereof." In the *Engagement*, the army tentatively raises the claim to speak for the people.

§9. *The Agreement of the People*

The endeavors of the army to secure the gains of the Revolution against a Presbyterian-dominated Parliament and the City of London resulted in the *Agreement of the People*, October 28, 1647 (Woodhouse, 443-49), a proposal of the army that fixed in principle the form and theory of modern constitutions. The *Agreement* does not come under the older legal forms of petitions, remonstrances, or acts of parliament, nor does it continue the covenant idea. If we wish to place it on a line of historical derivation, we might say that it is a secularized covenant, stressing primarily not the community of believers and its interest in true faith and right worship, but emanating from the people understood as the broad masses fighting for political acknowledgment of their interests against the king as well as against a Parliament dominated by the gentry. *The Letter to the Free-Born People of England* accompanying the *Agreement* sets forth the new constitutional idea. The new "principal right" that will supply the framework for all others "is the clearness, certainty, sufficiency, and freedom of your power in your representatives in Parliament." The origin of oppression and misery is seen in "the obscurity and doubtfulness" of earlier legal forms resulting in differences of opinion with regard to their interpretation and ultimately in friction and armed clashes. Using a modern category we might say that in the field of constitutional law, as well as of common law and of court procedure, the lower class of the English people desired improved legal technique, knowing from their sad daily experience that obscure law, hidden away in the jungle of precedence and custom, is the great bulwark of the social and political position of those classes who can pay lawyers. The "principal right of clearness" is a symptom of the general trend in Independent and Leveller circles to rationalize the law and to transfer as large a section as possible from the twilight zone of interpretation into the "clearness" of codification. The *written* instrument, technically regulating a field as carefully as possible, leaving a minimum of loopholes for interpretation, appears as the safeguard of the people's rights. While the code had no signal career

in England and America, with the exception of the United States Constitution, it had an enormous function in the continental revolutions. This is sometimes overlooked because the revolutionary effect of civil and penal codes, and of civil and criminal procedural codes in securing the rights of the broad masses of the population, is not always properly understood in the Anglo-Saxon countries, with their stronger medieval heritage. The attitude of the *Agreement* with regard to this question is clear beyond doubt. The *Letter* asks the people to join in the *Agreement* by virtue whereof "we may have Parliaments *certainly* called, and have the time of their sitting and ending *certain*, and the power and trust *clear* and *unquestionable*," etc. (Woodhouse, 445).

This written instrument was deliberately not submitted to Parliament for enactment. The *Letter* is explicit on this point. An act of Parliament is not unalterable and, therefore, not sufficient security against changes by subsequent Parliaments. It was the intention to create a legal form that was beyond the jurisdiction of the ordinary parliamentary authorities. The source of the fundamental law of the realm should be the people themselves; the army assumed a function that in later constitutional history, particularly in America, was discharged by constitutional conventions. The principle of popular sovereignty as against parliamentary sovereignty is formulated in this passage: "Parliaments are to receive the extent of their power and trust from those that betrust them, and therefore the people are to declare what their power and trust is; which is the intent of this Agreement." The Parliament under the agreement is called the Representative of the Nation and sweepingly invested with the powers to make law, to erect and abolish offices and courts, to appoint, remove, and call to account all officers, to make war and peace, and to treat with foreign states; the consent of any other authority is excluded. The king is not mentioned. The nation places, however, restrictions on its representative in a number of matters expressly enumerated, of which the most important are matters of religion and worship; no laws in such matters may be made. "These things we declare to be our native rights"; any infringement of them will meet with "all opposition whatsoever" (Woodhouse, 446). The table of exemptions is the model of the later bills of rights, particularly in the American constitutional development, while in England the trend reverted to complete parliamentary sovereignty.

§10. The Issues of the Franchise

A fundamental issue of the *Agreement* was the regulation of popular representation. On this question the army was divided, the gentry officers favoring property qualifications, the lower-class soldiers and officers favoring general manhood suffrage. The officers' *Heads of the Proposals*, of August 1, 1647 (Gardiner, 316–26), provided for representation of the counties “proportionable to the respective rates they bear in the common charges and burdens of the kingdom,” while the *Agreement* provided for representation “indifferently proportioned according to the number of the inhabitants.” The Putney Debates of October 29, 1647 (Woodhouse, 38–95), show a rather serious clash on this issue. The more conservative officers thought that the demand for general suffrage seemed to contain a threat to private property. Henry Ireton outlined the possibility that the mass of propertyless people might elect a majority of representatives who would abolish property. Thomas Rainborough took the natural law stand that God had given reason to all men equally in order that they should make use of it for the improvement of their situation. “I do hear nothing at all,” he said, “that can convince me, why any man that is born in England ought not to have his voice in election of burgesses” (Woodhouse, 55). There would be no meaning to the phrase that the foundation of all law is the people if the people could not give their consent to the laws under which they have to live through their representatives. Ireton insisted that the right to vote should be restricted to those who through their property holding had “a permanent interest” in the realm. Oliver Cromwell himself tried to persuade: “Where there is any bound or limit set if you take away this limit, that men that have no interest but the interest of breathing shall have no voice in elections?” The final draft of the *Agreement*, January 1649, chose the nondescript formula that the representatives should be indifferently proportioned and omits any reference to rates or inhabitants; instead, under the exemptions from parliamentary power it contains the provision that Parliament may not “level men’s estates, destroy property, or make all things common” (Gardiner, 369).

The Putney Debates on the franchise issue were far ahead of their time. The “indifferent proportion” was begun in England only with the great Reform of 1832, and the general enfranchisement followed gradually in the subsequent reforms of the nineteenth

and twentieth centuries. The American states have gone rather far in their general suffrage, but some of them still [in 1945] preserve remnants of property qualifications through poll taxes, and in several of them the "indifferent proportion" has not yet reached the English stage of 1832. The franchise ideas of the Puritans were more fruitful on the Continent than in the Anglo-Saxon countries. General manhood suffrage for national elections was introduced in France in 1848, in Germany in 1869, in Austria in 1907, in England in 1918, in America not yet.⁵

§11. The Charge against Charles I—The Declaration of Independence

The climax of the Civil War was the execution of the king. The Charge of January 20 (Gardiner, 371–74) and the Sentence of January 27, 1649 (Gardiner, 377–80) deserve some attention because they formulated the principle of limited constitutional monarchy that the king allegedly had violated. The king was trusted, according to the Charge, "with a limited power to govern by and according to the laws of the land, and not otherwise"; he was further obliged to use his trust "for the good and benefit of the people and for the preservation of their rights and liberties." The king was charged with the attempt to erect "an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will" and to overthrow the liberties of the people, and to have waged war against Parliament for this reason (Gardiner, 371 f.). The jurisdiction of the court and the contents of the charge were juristically questionable, but they reveal significantly the new ideas of national sovereignty and of the place of the king in constitutional government.

The Charge and Sentence were furthermore historically important because they set the pattern for the second bloodless decapitation of an English king, through the American Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776.⁶ The Declaration is constructed as a

5. [The poll tax in federal elections was prohibited by ratification of the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1964; suffrage was extended to all persons eighteen years of age or older by ratification of the Twenty-sixth Amendment in 1971.]

6. *English Historical Documents*, vol. 9, *American Colonial Documents to 1776*, ed. Merrill Jensen, gen. ed. David C. Douglas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 877 ff.; hereafter cited in the text as Jensen.

charge against the king in due form, setting forth, at first, the end of government, which consists in securing for the people the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The American charge states specifically what the English does not—that it is the right of the people to change the form of government if it has become destructive of the ends—and then goes on, like the English, in stating the particular acts of the king that violate the trust and show his intention of establishing tyranny, culminating in the charge of waging war against the people. The juristic setting, of course, differs profoundly from the English case. The English Charge was submitted to a special High Court of Justice for judgment; the American Declaration was submitted “to the opinions of mankind.”

§12. Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, Rhode Island

The sequence of constitutional symbols shows that the English Revolution had the same pattern as other revolutions in their movement from right to left until the drive was spent. The movement goes religiously from Episcopalianism through Presbyterianism to Independency; it goes politically from royalism through parliamentarianism to popular republicanism; socially the pressure against the existing order comes first from the gentry and merchants, then from the lower middle class, and finally from the lowest stratum of working people; in the realm of ideas the movement goes from medieval harmony under the law through the religious covenant (the *berith*) to the secular natural law agreement. After the digestive power of the national commonwealth had done its work and the forces had settled down to a new balance, the phases of the revolution were transformed into the new party lineup of Tory, Whig, and democratic groups.

The pattern of the English Revolution, however, differs notably from that of comparable movements through the structure of its emigration. Every revolution throws out its waves of refugees: first, the victims of the revolution, and second, the victims of the restoration. The English Revolution is characterized by the curious feature of the revolutionaries emigrating themselves, not individually in order to conduct revolutionary work from a vantage point abroad, but in groups with the purpose of permanent separation from the metropolitan community. The revolutionary drive is not wholly

spent in leavening the national commonwealth from within, but it goes to a remarkable and historically consequential degree into overseas settlements. The American colonial establishments bring out more clearly certain aspects of the movement because personalities and ideas could develop more freely in the spatial vastness of the new continent than in the homeland, where they ran into the resistance of the social and historical environment.

The feature that gives its color to the American phase of the English Revolution, as well as to the later independent American development up to the beginning of the twentieth century, is the fundamental possibility of evasion. If friction or conflict arises within a social group in Europe, it has to be settled by compromise or fight. In America it could be settled by moving to another place. In its good as well as in its less good consequences, this opportunity has profoundly determined the American national character. Among the good consequences we may count the atmosphere of freedom and independence, of self-expression, self-assertion, and dignity of man on a broad democratic basis; among the more questionable consequences we have to count the evasion of issues and the lack of tragic sentiment that can arise only from collective experiences of insurmountable resistance and the necessity of submission. We may take it as a symptom of the situation that American literature has not yet produced a tragedy of high rank nor a work of profound humor.

We have noted the first emigration of the Pilgrim group. The next enterprise, on a much larger scale and with considerable financial backing, was the Massachusetts Bay settlement. It shows the characteristic features of a Presbyterian gentry and merchant enterprise. The Massachusetts Bay Company as originally formed was a company of adventurers or, as we would say today, of speculators. The charter was obtained in a somewhat shady manner, in conflict with the charter given to the Council for New England. The second shady operation was the transformation of the company charter into a plantation charter on August 29, 1629, and its use as a constitution for the new settlement. It is highly probable that before the event the company directors were quite clear about their intention to create an oligarchic government and to use the democratic covenant phraseology as a facade for the establishment of a solid gentry rule according to their English customs. We have thus a singular setting

that in its results was similar to the Calvinistic construction of Geneva, though widely differing in its origin. The Geneva setting was a medieval town constitution; the Massachusetts Bay setting was that of a commercial corporation that allowed into the ranks of freemen a limited number of persons who made sufficient worldly progress. The religious sanction of the oligarchic constitution was achieved through the restriction of the franchise to church members in 1631, through the prohibition of further church foundations without approval of magistrates and elders in 1636, and through the establishment of a state creed and state church by the Cambridge Platform in 1648.

Under the able leadership of John Cotton and John Winthrop it was possible for the Bay settlement to be a success for a generation before it degenerated into conservative rigidity under Increase Mather and stagnant parochialism under Cotton Mather. But this success was in part due to the peculiarity, previously mentioned, that those who could have endangered the structure of the settlement did not have to fight out their opposition but simply went elsewhere. In 1636 the two outstanding personalities left the settlement with their followers and founded towns of their own. Thomas Hooker with his Newtown congregation went to the Connecticut valley and founded Hartford; Roger Williams with his group founded Providence. The Connecticut settlement was organized on Independent lines. It increased rapidly, and in 1639 the three neighboring towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield organized a government under the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (Jensen, 222 ff.). The Orders have the distinction of being the first written constitution that created a government. The essence of the federation is still the church; its purpose is to maintain "the liberty and purity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess, as also the discipline of the Churches, which according to the truth of the said gospel is now practised among us." The governmental organization is broadly democratic, with annual general election of the governor and other magistrates by the assembly of the inhabitants and with the lawmaking power vested in a court of deputies of the towns also elected by the inhabitants thereof. Justice must be administered "according to the laws here established, and for want thereof according to the rule of the word of God."

The most important figure was Roger Williams. In *The Bloody Tenant of Persecution*, 1644,⁷ he gave an excellent analysis of the fundamental problem involved in the religiously determined revolution. His classification of the respective positions still stands as a masterpiece of political type construction. The supreme spiritual power is that of "the great Lord-General, the Lord Jesus-Christ"; spiritual power among men can only be "a deputed or ministerial power" (Williams, 348 ff.). The competitors for the ministerial power he classifies under three heads. First comes the pope, "the arch-vicar of Satan," who controls "the souls and consciences of all his vassals." The second great competitor is the civil magistrate, who believes that he is "the antetype of the kings of Israel." Under the civil magistrate shelter three competitive factions who try to use the secular arm for the enforcement of their spiritual monopoly: (a) the Prelacy, (b) the Presbytery, (c) the Independents who would "fain persuade the mother, Old England, to imitate her daughter New England's practice, viz. to keep out the Presbyterians, and only to embrace themselves both as the state's and the people's bishops." The third class of competitors—this is the class that has his favor—consists of those "that separate both from one and the other" (Williams, 351).

The third group, properly called Separatists, professes that "they must yet come nearer to the ways of the Son of God." No definite establishment is desired by them; they are satisfied with the meanest contentment of life and do not want a civil sword to grant them a monopoly of authority over others. They want to be left alone with their conscience and, as far as the civil state is concerned, to enjoy "in the freedom of their souls the common air to breathe in" (Williams, 352). A civil government, therefore, must be separated from spiritual matters; its function is by ordinance of God "to conserve the civil peace of people so far as concerns their bodies and goods!" (Williams, 249). It is important to follow the internal sequence of Williams's thought, for otherwise we may mistake the incidentals for the essentials. The name of Williams is usually associated with the idea of toleration; this is done correctly, but it needs qualification. In our twentieth-century environment, the national state has acquired a substance and weight of its own

7. *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), vol. 3; hereafter cited in the text as Williams.

that it did not have in the seventeenth century. When today we speak of toleration we think rather of the national state as the society that possibly might suppress not any particular church, but religious groups in general, as happens in totalitarian countries. The problem of Williams, on the other hand, was to obtain freedom from persecution not from the state but from other church organizations that might be inclined to capture the power apparatus of the state for the maintenance of their monopoly. The state is seen not yet as a historical substance in its own right, but as an instrument in the service of church substances. His protest is directed not against the state but against the Presbyterians of Massachusetts Bay. "When Mr. Cotton and others have formerly been under hatches, what sad and true complaints have they abundantly poured forth against persecution! . . . But coming to the helm, . . . how . . . do they themselves . . . unnaturally and partially express toward others the cruel nature of such lions and leopards?" (Williams, 205). It was the purpose of Williams to immobilize the secular arm as an instrument in church matters, not in order to give the state a life of its own, but in order to confine it to the inferior role of taking care of "bodies and goods."

Seen in this context, the idea of toleration seems to be comparatively unimportant in Williams's thought. The element of historical importance is the reduction of the state sphere to the function of a service organization that must satisfy the naturally inevitable but spiritually nonessential needs of man. This attitude has remained predominant in Anglo-Saxon and particularly in American democracy and distinguishes it fundamentally from the continental European development. The government *of* the people and *by* the people has its reverberations throughout the Western democratic movement, but the government *for* the people has a ring that sounds clear probably only in America. It cannot find full echo in communities that do not have the background of a separatist sectarian foundation, but whose members are determined in their sentiments by the idea of service and devotion to the mystical body of the nation. The profound gulf between American and European political attitudes, which is more sensed than understood, has its roots in the difference between the American sectarian tradition and the European tradition of nationalism. The sectarian attitude dodged the issue of the nation and could do so for two and a half centuries because the continental expanse physically gave room

for evasion. The geographic isolation granted external security—though the Civil War was a symptom that the game of separating was coming to an end because a new nation, the American, was advancing its claims to domination. Under European historical and environmental conditions, a revolution that takes the form of a walkout on the nation is politically impossible; the revolutionary group has to stay on the spot and either capture the nation and mold it to its ideas or admit failure and take the consequences. A large-scale defection from the nation would entail the destruction of the political community and political submission to a conquering neighboring nation. The Marxist sectarians of the Second International toyed with the idea of defection up to the crisis of 1914, but gave it up quickly when faced with reality. With the end of the frontier, and with the transition from an agricultural economy to a national integrated industrial system, the period of sectarian evasion has come to a close for America, too; issues have to be faced within the nation, and with the development of military technique, external security is equally drawing to an end. The remnants of the sectarian attitude, however, are still strong and form the weightiest element in the sentiment of sincere isolationism. Present-day isolationism can perhaps best be understood as the agony of sectarian evasion that characterized the early New England settlements. It is probably the last great attempt at a sectarian walkout on the nation, doomed to break down like Marxist sectarianism in 1914, for America has entered on the tragic phase of her history as a nation and will have to meet her fate.

The ideas of Roger Williams could not but arouse resentment and criticism in his time. The civil power was in the general sentiment still too closely associated with the Christian substance, and the state had too little weight of its own, for the two spheres to be conceived of as entirely separate; a church without discipline, supported by the secular arm, seemed to spell the end of Christianity and all community civilization. Williams had reached a position that became acceptable only a century later. His examples and arguments give some clues to the motives that determined his advanced attitude. The most important is his previously discussed personal religiousness, which, at the time of *The Bloody Tenant*, may be characterized as that of a Seeker who professes that he has yet to come nearer to the ways of Jesus and who, out of the sincerity of his heart, is reluctant to impose on others an attitude that he

himself experiences as waiting and suspense. But there are other surprising elements. In arguing for liberty of conscience for Jews and Gentiles and even—*horribile dictu*—for Roman Catholics, he points repeatedly to the fact that civil societies could exist quite admirably without knowing anything of Christianity, in antiquity as well as in his own present in the Islamic East. In the thought of Williams we find spreading to the north of Europe the more tolerant attitude toward religion arising out of comparative knowledge in an enlarged horizon, a phenomenon that is noticeable in the Mediterranean since the fifteenth century.

The flaw in the doctrine of Williams was brought home to him during his lifetime in the government of Rhode Island. The policy of reducing the secular arm to the care of bodies and goods and of concentrating the essence of community life into the religious sphere works as long as the members of the community receive from their free consciences the order to live peaceably together and not to rebel either against the commonly accepted social customs or against the instituted government. If someone is informed by his conscience that civil power should not be obeyed because it is evil or that his behavior in public should appreciably differ from the standards of the community, a critical situation arises. The discovery will be made that conscience and civil life are not quite as separate as Williams candidly believed them to be and that action has to be taken in the name of the community substance that consists not only of conscience but also of the material ethics of a people and a few other civilizational elements. In 1640 a gentleman arrived by the name of Gorton who held antinomian views; he expressed himself freely against rulers and churches and denied the authority of civil government. Williams was in a quandary. He went so far as to consult Winthrop in the affair, and then he jailed the man, together with his conscience. In 1643 a number of his colonists hit on the idea that it was "blood-guiltiness" to execute judgment on transgressors, and Williams was compelled to explain that equality in Christ did not imply the negation of government and rulership, and if anybody should find so he would deal with him according to his deserts. A few months later he had occasion to do so. Finally, in 1656, persons appeared, rightly or wrongly labeled as Quakers, who lived quite peaceably but refused to join in the government and besides were ordered by their consciences to appear occasionally in public places without clothes. The conduct

of Williams on that occasion showed that he had reached the limits of his position. He reproached the offenders particularly on their political separatism. He had found at least someone who was still more separatist and evasive than he himself and who lived, setting aside the Adamitic excesses, peacefully without participating in the people's government.

§13. Milton

John Milton was the voice of the national revolution as Roger Williams was the clearest voice of its sectarian phase. In the interpretation of his thought we are faced by the same problem as in the case of Williams, viz., with the danger of mistaking the incidentals for essentials. Milton, like Williams, is seen as the advocate of toleration, of freedom of conscience, opinion, and the press. And again, while this view is not incorrect, it overlooks one half of the whole, and perhaps the more important half. To say that Milton advocated freedom and toleration is about as correct as to say that modern totalitarians advocate these ideas. National Socialists are for complete freedom for themselves; they only oppress those who do not agree with them. And this was the case with Milton. He pleaded for untrammelled freedom of the forces of the national revolution, but he also pleaded for the rigid suppression of anybody who resisted them. To project onto Milton the ideas of modern formalistic democrats, who insist that the enemies of democracy should have freedom to destroy it from within, is a grave anachronism.

We may dismiss his republican writings with a few words. They are fundamentally monarchomachic, only with the accent shifted from the covenant idea to natural law as the basis of government. The people who have given a trust of power to a king may also recall it if the king in their opinion does not fulfill his obligations. New are the sureness and pathos of Milton. Says he: "No man who knows aught, can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself." Because of the fall of Adam, by agreement they had to join in the creation of government in order to avoid wrong and violence among themselves.⁸ And in the *Defensio Secunda* he announces

8. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, 1649, in *The Works of John Milton* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), 5:8.

proudly that his work is undertaken not only for his country, but that it tends to be of the highest use to society and religion "of the universal race of man, against the enemies of man's freedom."⁹ England has found in Milton her voice of national pride, like France in Bodin. The English Revolution is the prototype of the revolution of man. English liberty is more than the liberty of Englishmen, it is the liberty of man himself. Whoever doesn't believe this is just stupid and must be brought to his senses.

The *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, 1649, formulates the principle of toleration, understood as the separation of civil government from the religious life of the inward man. Churches have to shift for themselves, and if they split as a consequence of internal dissent, this is not a matter for the government; the secular arm must not enforce church discipline. But toleration is restricted to Protestants. A Protestant is defined as a man who forms his religious views through the interpretation of Scripture to the best of his conscience.¹⁰ The definition is wide enough to embrace Calvinists and Lutherans, Independents, Arminians, Anabaptists, Unitarians, etc., but it is carefully chosen so as to exclude the forces that are not in agreement with the revolution. Conscience is not a moral conscience in the Kantian sense, but a conscience inspired by "the promised Holy Spirit, and the minde of Christ," which precludes any indifferentism in religious matters. It is furthermore conscience guided by Scripture, and only Scripture, which precludes any appeal to tradition and puts Roman Catholicism outside the sphere of toleration. Finally, it removes the authoritarianism of Calvin as well as the Erastianism of the Established Church and makes Protestantism radical—Milton was rather near the position of a Seeker that we noticed as being that of Roger Williams and shall find again with Cromwell.

The element of Protestant radicalism is sometimes attributed to the influence of Lutherism, which softened and transformed the Calvinist reform. This is correct insofar as the emigrations since the German Anabaptist period had established considerable personal contacts between English reformers and the more radical wing of

9. *Joannis Miltoni Angli Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda*, 1654 (*Works*, 8:19).

10. *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: Showing that it is not lawfull for any power on earth to compell in matters of Religion*, 1649 (*Works*, 6:7).

German and Dutch Protestantism. The situation, however, differs fundamentally from the German. Luther soon reached the limits of toleration because radical Protestantism threatened to engulf the civilizational structure of Germany in a chaos of anarchy. In the England of the seventeenth century this danger was not serious, though the anticivilizational element was widespread. But the substance of the nation was so much stronger than in Germany that radicalisms could be digested with relative ease. The background of Milton's toleration is English nationalism. Milton could be more tolerant than Luther because the unorganized intolerance of national sentiment was effective enough to check the centrifugal tendencies of radicals. That the essence of his tolerance was his nationalism can be seen negatively in his attitude toward Catholicism, as well as positively in his plea for unlicensed printing of Protestant writings. In his late tract *Of True Religion*, 1673, he attacks the pope who "pretends right to Kingdoms and States, and especially to this of *England*, thrones and unthrones Kings, and absolves the people from their obedience to them"; and now that England has "shaken off his Babylonish yoke" no opportunity should be given to him again "to seduce, corrupt and pervert" the People. Catholic worship cannot be tolerated "without grievous and unsufferable scandal giv'n to all consciencious Beholders." And he leaves it to the civil magistrate to consider whether Catholics in England can be tolerated at all, even without public worship. If Catholics should complain that their conscience is violated if the celebration of the mass is not permitted to them, he replies that "we have not warrant to regard Conscience which is not founded on Scripture."¹¹ Anti-Catholicism is obviously an expression of nationalism. No church organization can be tolerated that raises the claim of universalism and could come, therefore, into spiritual conflict with the national institutions. Radical scripturalism has become, in the field of social technique, the instrument through which the conscience of man can be kept within the limits of national jurisdiction.

Milton goes even further in his scripturalism: he expects everybody to do his duty and to use the opportunity offered by the English Bible translation for becoming thoroughly acquainted with Scripture. "Neither let the Countryman, the Tradesman, the Lawyer,

11. *Of True Religion, Haeresie, Schism, Toleration, And what best means may be us'd against the growth of Popery*, 1673 (*Works*, 6:172, 173).

the Physician, the Statesman, excuse himself by his much business from the studious reading thereof." "Every member of the Church, at least of any breeding or capacity, so well ought to be grounded in spiritual knowledge, as, if need be, to examine their Teachers themselves."¹² Using a modern category, we might say that Milton was a totalitarian National Scripturalist. His national pathos found its grandiose expression in the *Areopagitica*, 1644: "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sect and schisms."¹³ Milton is not afraid of the inevitable schisms. "When God shakes a Kingdom with strong and healthfull commotions to a generall reforming," false teachers will arise, but also able men who will "goe on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth."¹⁴ Truth cannot but be victorious, "for who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty."¹⁵ Complete freedom should, therefore, be given to the publication of all opinions, good and bad; all should be tolerated, with the exception, of course, of "Popery, and open superstition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill supremacies, so it self should be extirpat."¹⁶ The guaranty that the outcome will be desirable is again the Nation: "Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is wherof ye are, and wherof Ye are the governours: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to"; superior in its natural wits "before the labour'd studies of the French."¹⁷ All this no longer has much to do with Luther's faith, or even Calvin's; the Reformation that broke the unity of church and empire is completely absorbed by the Nation.

12. *Ibid.*, 6:175 f.

13. *Areopagitica* (*Works*, 4:344).

14. *Ibid.*, 4:350.

15. *Ibid.*, 4:348.

16. *Ibid.*, 4:349.

17. *Ibid.*, 4:339.

If there remained any doubt that Milton was not an advocate of sweet toleration, the proof came toward the end of the Protectorate, when the nation did not behave at all as Milton would have liked her to. Then he turned his wrath against the advocates of kingship. If they should point to the fact that the majority of the people favored the restoration, he asks in reply: If the greater part value not freedom, "but will degenerately foregoe (it), is it just or reasonable, that most voices against the main end of government should enslave the less number that would be free? More just it is doubtless, if it came to force, that a less number compell a greater to retain, which can be wrong to them, thir libertie, than that a greater number for the pleasure of thir baseness, compell a less most injuriously to be thir fellow slaves."¹⁸ This should give some food for thought to the degenerate liberals of our time who make a joke of toleration by extending it to sundry and all. Freedom in community consists in the common possession and free cultivation of a spiritual substance. A large range of toleration is necessary to protect the substance from atrophy, but while the limits are a permanent zone of strife and should be rather stretched than drawn too narrowly, there *are* limits. A study of Milton might sharpen the understanding of a problem that has become crucial again in our time.

§14. Winstanley

The Revolution penetrated deep into the people and stirred up strata of society and sentiments that could not gain influence on the actual shaping of constitutional symbols. In the chapter on "The People of God" we dealt with some characteristic instances of the millenarian undercurrent.¹⁹ On the borderline between ecstatic expectations of the new Sion and practical constitutional ideas we find a man who deserves attention because he was able to translate his religiousness into a body of ideas that touched a fundamental social problem: Gerard Winstanley. The group of which he was representative and the chief publicist styled itself the True Levellers,

18. Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establishe a free Commonwealth*, 1660 (*Works*, 6:140 f.).

19. See *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 22, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. IV, *Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. David L. Morse and William M. Thompson (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), pt. 4, chap. 3, "The People of God."

indicating by the name that they considered themselves a radical wing of the Levellers who backed the *Agreement of the People*. Preference is usually given, however, to their alternative name, the Diggers, in order to distinguish them more clearly; for they differed from the Levellers proper in the fundamental point that they extended the Leveller idea of equality from the constitutional question of general suffrage to the problem of economic equality among all men. The size of the movement was insignificant; it seems that nobody could ever discover more than thirty Diggers at a time. But the idea that the earth was the common property of mankind and that poor people could start digging up wasteland to use it for their subsistence, and the erection of an edifice of ideas around this direct action, is the first clear symptom of the communistic implications of the symbols of freedom and equality.

In the structure of the movement revolutions the Digger position corresponds, of course, to the German Peasant Revolt; as such it would be barely worth mentioning because of its quantitative unimportance compared with the German upheaval. But it gains a significance that the German movement does not have because it is not simply a revolt of poor people but fits its ideas into the framework of a national revolution with the distinct intention not of gaining particular advantages for a particular group, but of remolding the whole nation socially and economically in accordance with communist principles understood as Christian principles. The Diggers conceived the idea of a Christian communist commonwealth. Winstanley's ideas are important, if for no other reason, because they show the potentialities of Christianity in a communist organization of society, which are somewhat obscured in the public consciousness today because of the association of the main churches with the capitalistic private property type of society. More, in his *Utopia*, was still satirical and resigned; Winstanley gives an acute formulation of the practical issue, showing the will to act.

At the basis of Winstanley's thought we find a revelation in due form, which induced him to start digging at St. George's Hill.²⁰ In the next stratum of his thought, the chiliastic, we find the

20. Winstanley, *A Watchword to the City of London* (1649); cf. G. P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, 2d ed. with supplementary notes and appendices by H. J. Laski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 188.

biblical and other Oriental symbols surrounding the horizon of the historical and political argument. "In the beginning of time, the great Creator, Reason, made the earth to be a common treasury, to preserve beasts, birds, fishes, and man, the lord that was to govern this creation." Nowhere is it said in the Bible "that one branch of mankind should rule over another." But man fell into blindness, the Spirit was killed, and man looked for guidance from "teachers and rulers"; the selfish imagination of a few seized on the opportunity and appointed themselves as such, and the mass of mankind fell into their bondage. The few used their position for economic advantages and started to hedge in the land in enclosures; land was bought and sold, and those who did not have any, or were cheated out of it, became the servants and slaves of the few. The Diggers have to right this wrong and to restore the earth as the common treasure for all. The equality of man is expressed through the mother symbol when Winstanley says that every man should be fed by the earth, "his mother that brought him forth"; and by the father symbol in the passage that all should work together as one man "feeding together as sons of one father." The abolition of poverty and the common possession of all goods are ordered in the Old Testament in the command that there should be no beggar in Israel and in the New Testament by Acts 4:32, where the multitude filled by the Holy Ghost "were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common."²¹

In a third stratum appear the elements of the English historical situation. The oppression of the poor people by the conqueror is, in the original historical instance, the Babylonish yoke over Israel; the last of these conquests was the Norman conquest of England. "The Norman bastard William himself, his colonels, captains, inferior officers, and common soldiers, who still are from that time to this day in pursuit of that victory, imprisoning, robbing and killing the poor enslaved English Israelites" (Woodhouse, 383). The conquest is continued in the English constitution with the privileged position of the landowners. The passage is rich in implications that unfold in the later history of thought. The economic difference of rich and poor is, without reserve, identified with the difference of rulers and

21. Winstanley, *The True Levellers' Standard Advanced* (1649), in Woodhouse, 379 ff.

subjects. And rulers and subjects are not only two economic classes, but two different peoples, the one having conquered the other. We find, practically complete, the later theories of the origin of the state through conquests of one people over another that have an important function in nineteenth-century political thought.

In a fourth group of ideas the mechanism of oppression and poverty is discussed. The rulers have induced the poor people "to work for them for small wages, and by their work ever enrich and thus strengthen their own oppressors. Riches can never be obtained by honest means; nobody can become wealthy by his efforts alone but only by withholding from his helpers their due share of the work. The lawyers and the priests are the instruments of the rulers; the lawbooks should be burned because they are the bolts and bars of the prison in which the poor are kept poor; the lawyers are the jailors. The priests are employed to tell the people that inward satisfaction of mind was meant by the declaration that the poor shall inherit the earth. 'I tell you, the scripture is to be really and materially fulfilled. . . . You jeer at the name Leveller. I tell you Jesus Christ is the head Leveller.'"²² The Marxian arsenal is assembled in its main elements: the exploitation of the worker who is forced by his poverty to work for a mere subsistence wage; the withholding of the product of labor by the proprietor of the instruments of production; the law as the superstructure of the economic system and the instrument of the ruling class in the exploitation of the worker; religion as the opium of the people.

To the radicalism of his analysis corresponds the radicalism of Winstanley's solution. In the *Law of Freedom*, published in 1652, dedicated to All the Nations of the Earth, he outlines a new commonwealth in which private property in land is abolished. Production may be individual or cooperative, but the product has to be delivered to the state, and everybody receives from the common store according to his needs. Buying and selling are prohibited by capital punishment. Labor is compulsory; nonfulfillment of the task is punishable. The man over sixty supervises the local communities; the national Parliament is chosen by general manhood suffrage. Lawyers are unnecessary because no legal transactions occur; priests are reduced to providing useful instruction—based

22. Cf. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas*, 184. For the whole passage see the Thomason Collection of Pamphlets of the British Library, vol. 587 (pp. 41-43).

on study and observation—within the framework of a general education system.

§15. Harrington

To turn from the forces, the passions, and the pathos of the Revolution to Harrington's *Oceana* is like entering a sun-flooded room. With the exception of Hobbes, Sir James Harrington seems to have been in the England of his time the only man who studied politics before he wrote on it. He was not of a philosophic nature, but he had a keen eye for the realities of politics. He was a well-trained historian and had studied Aristotle and Machiavelli carefully. He had a good knowledge of ancient constitutions. He had read the Bible with the eye not of a Christian but of a scholar who wants to know how the constitution of Israel worked. He had a clear idea (within the limits of factual knowledge of his time) of the social and economic causes of the decline of the Roman empire. He had clear ideas about the feudal system and about the English evolution since the Tudors. He had traveled widely and studied with care the constitution of Venice and had brought home from Italy not only knowledge but also something of Mediterranean maturity in political affairs. His style is precise and concentrated and shows that he had not read in vain his masters Aristotle and Machiavelli. To read the "Preliminaries" of the *Oceana*, in which he set forth his principles, is a rare delight in a field where the bulk of literature is marred by passion or by the vanity of the writer who believes that his opinions are important because the subject matter with which he deals is important.

The *Oceana*, 1656, consists of the just-mentioned "Preliminaries" and the main body of the work containing a project of a constitution to be used in the deliberation of a commonwealth constitution for England. The work is dedicated to Cromwell. That the second part of the work adopts the literary form of a Utopia probably served the purpose of avoiding difficulties with the rigid censorship of the Protectorate. The form is external; the work is not a Utopia in substance like More's. We are here primarily concerned with the principles as evolved in the "Preliminaries."

The two principles of government are empire and authority. Empire is founded upon dominion; dominion is property mainly in land, secondarily in money and goods. The first great contribution

of Harrington to the science of government is his insistence on the connection between power distribution and wealth. The flaw in his theory is that he underrated the importance of wealth in the form of commercial enterprise and thought primarily in categories of an agrarian economy, but this flaw is one of circumstance and not of principle. The principle is stated unequivocally: no power relation can be stable if the ruler or the ruling class does not control the preponderant wealth of the country. Equipped with this principle, he explains that an absolute monarchy of the Turkish type is possible only if the ruler is the chief landowner; that in the medieval feudal system power was in the hands of the nobility and clergy, because they were the great landowners; and that with changes in the economic structure that result in the creation of a yeomanry and widely spread small landholdings, power will inevitably pass to the people and the government will change to a commonwealth. In the context of his work Harrington used the theory for an interpretation of English history as leading to the establishment of a republic. He was the first historian to understand the significance of the War of the Roses for the physical and economic exhaustion of the English nobility as well as the significance of the confiscation of aristocratic and monastic property under Henry VII and Henry VIII and its redistribution in small landholdings for the rise of the English middle class. The Civil War of the seventeenth century was to him the consequence of the shift from the medieval land distribution to the Tudor economy; the property distribution is a great historical achievement, for the single case as well as in principle. He only miscalculated, as frequently happens with monistic economic interpretations, the effectiveness of the economic factor. The very fact that the economic and power shift had been so thorough made it unnecessary, as we pointed out in the opening remarks of this chapter, to carry the revolution to the extreme of abolishing monarchy and nobility. These institutions had ceased to be factors that could seriously hamper the expansiveness of the new middle class; the weight of tradition could make itself felt for their preservation. The alternative to the medieval constitution did not have to be the republic; it could be the parliamentary monarchy.

Incidental to the interpretation of English politics, Harrington constructed another excellent political type. Influenced by Donato Gianotti, he distinguished between government "according to ancient prudence" and government "according to modern prudence."

Behind the titles hides the distinction between the ancient polis type of government, evolved in unbroken continuity out of the tribal period, and the European feudal system, evolved as the organization of a highly civilized empire by comparatively primitive tribes. Harrington distinguishes between them as civil society based on the foundation of common right or interest and government based on the interest of the conquering group. While Harrington was not able, with the historic knowledge at his disposition, to state the problem explicitly in its relevant features, it is clear from his discussion that he understood the polis as the organization of a people, while the feudal empires were in their beginnings the administration of a conquest, and national substances, comparable to the ancient polis communities in their cohesion, were only slowly growing in the conquered territories.

The second principle of government is authority. Under this title Harrington evolves a theory of the elite and the ruling class. The gifts of mind are unequally distributed among men; some are wiser, some less so. God has diffused a "natural aristocracy" throughout the whole body of mankind for the purpose of providing guidance in public affairs to the mass who would be helpless without the counsel of the more gifted. He goes farther and considers that "natural aristocracy" is not sufficient in governing a commonwealth, but that it needs institutionalization as a gentry. "There is something first in the making of a commonwealth, then in the governing of it, and last of all in the leading of its armies, which, though there be great divines, great lawyers, great men in all professions, seems to be peculiar only to the genius of a gentleman."²³ He substantiates the thesis by a series of examples. Harrington had his finger on the fundamental problem that a democracy may be constructed in its constitution on principles of political equality, but that it can be operated only by a ruling class, however large the opportunities for the rise into it from the lower stratum may be. The problem has been discussed intermittently after Harrington, until with the realization of mass democracy in the nineteenth century it occupied permanently the attention of political thinkers.

Of Harrington's constitutional devices let us mention briefly the creation of a senate in which the "natural aristocracy" must

23. See *Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 183.

deliberate public affairs and give advice, of a popular chamber that must take decisions, of a magistracy that must execute, of the ballot (taken from Venice), and of religious toleration. While it is impossible to give documentary evidence for the influence of these suggestions, it is probable that we can discern it in the constitution of Carolina of 1669, in the constitutional experiments of William Penn in New Jersey, and in the constitution of Pennsylvania. With Harrington's influence on Locke, Montesquieu, and particularly on Hume we shall deal later.



Cromwell

§I. The Wars of the Fronde—State vs. Estates

The Revolution had reached its climax with the execution of the king, and at the same time it had reached an impasse. The following decade, dominated by the figure of Cromwell, was in general feeling a period of transition, though nobody quite knew where it would lead. When Cromwell died, anarchy ensued; it became clear that England had been held together for ten years by the sheer personality force of one man. The strength and weakness of Cromwell that were thus revealed have left the man and his ideas somewhat of an enigma. His planlessness and his changes of attitude made him appear an opportunist, and the conviction that accompanied his changes made him appear a hypocrite. Before we can attempt an interpretation of this complex personality, we have to consider the structure of the political situation in which he found himself placed. In order to understand the situation we have to leave the enchanted circle of constitutional symbols and legitimizing ideas, transcend the compass of the English movement of thought, and place it in the larger European horizon.

Cromwell was not a solitary figure, nor the English Revolution an isolated phenomenon. The seventeenth century was internationally the century of the struggle between the rising state organization and the estates of the realm, which fought for the remnants of their earlier power position. Since, with the exception of the few republics, the king stood at the head of the state organization, the struggle could be easily mistaken for, and sometimes was intentionally miscalled, a struggle between absolute monarchy and popular zeal for liberty. That the monarchs actually had only an incidental role in the struggle is proved by the patent fact that the

seventeenth was also the century of the great ministers of state and generals. It was the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, of Wallenstein and Olivares, of Oxienstierna and Oldenbarneveltdt, and in England not only of Cromwell but also of Strafford and Laud. The Great Elector of Brandenburg was the only monarch who played a significant personal role in the struggle.

In France, the States General were summoned for the last time in 1614. The Huguenot wars were renewed when the royal government started operations against the fortified places of the Calvinists in the South; the decisive turn of this phase of the civil war was the siege of LaRochele, ending with the victory of Richelieu in 1629. After this clash the Protestants were disarmed and took the form of a tolerated sect. The years 1648–1653 saw the last war of the Fronde, first of the nobility, then of the middle class. In the very year in which Charles was beheaded, the French court had to flee Paris. The victory in the field went to the king because he had the abler men on his side. Simultaneously in 1640, the revolutions of the Córtes in Spain against the regime of Olivares broke out in almost all provinces. Portugal separated and became independent again under the Braganzas, and with it went India and Africa. Catalonia became a republic and was subdued only after more than ten years of war; the settlement of 1659 laid the foundation for the autonomous development of the Catalan region. Naples broke loose in 1647 and was recaptured with difficulty. In Germany raged the Thirty Years War.

The causes of the struggle were in general the same in all instances. The growth of the nation and the rise of the monarch to the function of a national representative furnished the basis for the creation and improvement of a centralized administration in financial, military, and judicial matters. The increase in jurisdiction and efficiency of the state administration as against the medieval governmental apparatus encroached on the political position of the estates and aroused resentment, not against the king but against the new, efficient governmental organization. We have to beware of the belief, however, that the state organization encroached in any way on the "people," understood as the broad masses who work for their daily living. On the contrary, they profited from it because for the first time they received a modicum of protection against the privileged ruling groups. The issue lay not between the people and the bad tyrannical king, as our textbook history presents the

story with maudlin sentimentality, but between an expert staff of administrators and the privileged section of society, which felt with dismay the check of the state on their arbitrary local power over the lower classes of the nation.

§2. The Continent and England—State and Stateless Political Society

The outcome of the struggle differed in the several countries. In France the state won, and the privileged classes had to arrange themselves within the framework of the national state. In England the privileged classes won; they succeeded in checking the growth of the state and in submitting completely to the control of the ruling class such elements of it as had to be developed in order to keep the nation fit. The German development shows a mixture of the two: in the national sphere the estates were victorious and frustrated any attempt at an imperial organization of the national state, which held for a while the imagination of Wallenstein; within their territories, however, the princes organized their states on the French model, the most important of these organizations, the Brandenburg-Prussian, ultimately growing into the national state organization. While long-range forces were certainly of weight in determining the differences in the results, accidental personal factors were surprisingly important. English political history might have taken a rather different turn but for the tactlessness of the Stuart kings and the fact that the English Fronde found a Cromwell. And the French result might have been rather different if the Cardinal de Retz and Condé had not had Mazarin and Turenne as their state opponents.

The divergence between the English and the continental development—the Fronde of the Estates being victorious in England, the state being victorious on the Continent—has fixed for centuries and up to the present a profound difference between English and continental political movements and ideas. Up to the seventeenth century, England and the Continent had, on the whole, a common structure of political thought. Since the wars of the Fronde they have parted ways. The external symptom of the difference is the use of the linguistic symbol *state* in the two regions. The word *state* was still used in Tudor England in much the same way as on the Continent. After the Civil War the word did not disappear from

the English language, but its use was distinctly restricted because the object that it denotes did not evolve sufficiently. Continental powers may create laws for the *defense of the state*; England has an act for the *defense of the realm*. France and particularly the German countries have developed a *théorie de l'état* and a *Staatslehre*; England and the United States have a *theory of government*. England has developed in fact and theory a political society with a corresponding style of politics of fair play and compromise. While this style has become justly an object of admiration in England herself as well as on the Continent, this admiration should be tempered by the sober consideration that the spirit of compromise and adjustment is the condition of life or death for England. If the compromise fails, English political society has nothing to fall back on but physical violence between the opposing groups, for the great continental umpire, the state, is lacking. This spirit of compromise and political common sense, understood as the law of existence of a stateless political society, should be carefully distinguished from a democratic political attitude. The attitude of compromise and adjustment is perfectly compatible, as the English example shows, with centuries of undemocratic and even antidemocratic class rule in sometimes very brutal forms.

French politics and ideas had a different style, because after a disruption of the balance the nation could fall back on the state as a stabilizer. The hundred years of revolution since 1789 show two cycles with exactly corresponding phases. The movement begins with a severe break of the balance. When the drive is spent, the situation is caught and stabilized by the reassertion of the state, the phases of the two Napoleons; it ends in a reestablished balance, the Restoration and the Third Republic. The English Revolution of the seventeenth century shows an approximation to this pattern in the Cromwell Protectorate following the Revolution proper, but as the Revolution had not been directed by one class of society against another, but by the ruling class against the state, the power of the infant state had been successfully broken and Cromwell's purely military organization could not furnish a framework for the future balance of society. The English Restoration took place not within the state, but outside the state. England has had no revolution since; its equivalent are the great compromises of the so-called Glorious Revolution and of the Reform period of the nineteenth century.

§3. The Parliament and the State of England

Turning now to the special English problem, we must touch briefly on the essential phase of the Revolution, which was a struggle not between king and Parliament but between the landlord and merchant members of Parliament and the state organization, embodied in Laud and particularly in Strafford. Gardiner characterizes the position of Strafford as follows: "Nothing called forth his bitter indignation like the claims of the rich to special consideration and favor. The rule of the House of Commons meant to him—not altogether without truth—the rule of the landlord and the lawyer at the expense of the poor. His entry into the council was marked by a series of efforts to make life tolerable for those who were in distress."¹ The one great instrument of this effort was the liberal administration of the Poor Law. It seems that during the autocratic period of Charles I, 1629–1640, the Poor Law administration reached a high degree of efficiency, a degree that induced a specialist in the field to make the statement that never since the time of Charles I have we had "so much provision of work for the able-bodied or so complete a system of looking after the more needy classes."² The other instruments of relief were the Colonial administration and the prerogative supervision of the common law courts. In the Colonial administration it was Archbishop Laud who aroused the hatred of the City merchants through his continuous interference with business and through the restraints that he tried to put on the ruthless exploitation of the Negroes in the Colonies. In the Star Chamber, and particularly in the Council for the North, the earl of Strafford was the culprit who tried to extend to the English workers and poor a certain amount of protection against the local gentry. The first attack of Parliament was directed, therefore, against these courts. The consequence of the abolition of the Council of the North is described by R. R. Reed in the following terms: "To the wage-earner and to the poor

1. This paragraph is based on the brilliant presentation of the problem by G. R. Stirling Taylor in his *Modern History of England, 1485–1932: A Study in Politics, Economics, and Ethics* (London: J. Cape, 1932). The quotation is from *The First Two Stuarts and the Parliamentary Revolution* (Gardiner, 76; Taylor, *Modern History*, 109).

2. E. M. Leonard, *The Early History of English Poor Relief*, in Taylor, *Modern History*, 103.

especially, the disappearance of the Council of the North was pure loss. . . . The triumph of the common lawyers established a judicial system that, at least in the North, amounted to an absolute denial of justice to poor men, and to many not accounted poor it made the recovery of a small debt a piece of extravagance."³ The abolition of the prerogative courts is usually known as the famous reestablishment of the rule of law and the vindication of the people's rights.

The circumstances surrounding the end of Strafford shed some further light on the issue. The leaders of the group that conducted the struggle were John Pym and his friends. Pym, Waller, Rich, Oliver St. John, the earls of Warwick, Holland, and Essex, the Lords Saye, Sele, Brooke, and Mandeville were the chief directors of the Company of Adventurers for the Plantation of the islands of Providence, Henrietta, and the adjacent islands. Hampden had a large estate in Connecticut; Cromwell was associated with the group through personal relations. Most of them had personal grievances against the royal administration, for the ample financial and business reasons indicated above. The attack against Strafford was opened in the House of Commons by a Sir John Hotham, who had suffered a "disobligation" from the earl through the Council of the North. One of the witnesses in the trial was the earl of Cork, who had run into the resistance of Strafford in the acquisition and exploitation of Irish landholdings. Chief informers were Clotworthy and Mountmorris, the first hampered again in Irish exploits, the second a great corruptionist in office caught by Strafford. While the record of Strafford is certainly not entirely pure, the whole affair gives the impression that an efficient and honest administrator, a patriotic, faithful servant of his country, a man who believed that the state had to protect the interests not only of the rich but also of the mass of the people, was marked down by an unsavory selection of speculators, merchants, corruptionists, and shady profiteers because he had dared to interfere with their racket. The demonstrations of the London mob against Strafford seem to have been spontaneous manifestations of the people's wrath, well engineered by Pym and his friends.⁴

3. R. R. Reed, *The King's Council in the North*, in Taylor, *Modern History*, 97.

4. For this question see again Taylor, *Modern History*, 102 ff.

§4. The Position of Cromwell

We have given the setting of interests and ideas in which Oliver Cromwell appeared as one of the great personal forces of history. There was a group of wealthy people staging a rebellion against the rising state administration; in the sphere of governmental symbols these people could use for their purpose the issue of parliamentary privileges that were endangered by the king. In this they were aided greatly by the tactlessness and gross political blunders of the Stuarts; the rebellion could gain momentum, however, only when it seized on the religious issues, when it could acquire the Scotch help through concessions in the Presbyterian direction and enlist the support of certain sections of the lower middle class by releasing the Independent movement. To fit Cromwell into this pattern we have to state first that he belonged socially to the adventurers and showed their behavior characteristics; the war was an excellent business, and Cromwell and his generals made sizable fortunes out of it through cash sums and land settlements made for them by Parliament. We discussed earlier his conflict with the radicals in his army on the franchise issue, where he appeared as the advocate of the "permanent interest." His *Instrument of Government*, of 1653, required in section XVIII a property qualification of £200 for the right to vote that, in the money value of the time, created an electorate of well-to-do people. John Lilburne was rather outspoken when in 1649 he talked of "the false saint and most desperate apostate" who wished, under the false name of godly interest, to rule the people by his will and pleasure, adding that he would rather have a royal army than a Puritan "under which the people are absolute and perfect slaves."

§5. Cromwell and the Will of God

But both the parliamentary Puritans as well as the Levellers were mistaken when they judged Cromwell as just another member of the gang. We catch an intimate glimpse of the mind of Cromwell in the Putney Debates of November 1, 1647. The meeting had been adjourned for private prayer and seeking of God. When the Council reassembled on this day the lieutenant general moved "that every one might speak their experiences as the issue of what God had given in, in answer to their prayers" (Woodhouse, 95). After

a first round of brief speeches, announcing the opinions reached in prayer, the exchange of views veered suddenly to a grandiose debate, conducted mainly between William Goffe and Cromwell, concerning the method of finding the will of God. Goffe explains that God has spoken in several ages in sundry ways. In Israel he spoke through prophets, but in these days God does not speak by any particular men "but in every one of our hearts" (Woodhouse, 100), with the result that in case of contradictory counsel, which all claim to be springing sincerely from hearkening to the voice of God, it becomes difficult to resolve upon a course of action.

And now Cromwell makes his speech in reply: "I am one of those whose heart God hath drawn out to wait for some extraordinary dispensations, according to those promises that he hath held forth of things to be accomplished in the later times, and I cannot but think that God is beginning of them" (Woodhouse, 103 f.). But actually he has no extraordinary dispensations. Nevertheless, to sit still and wait for the convincing revelation of God is impossible; for he would be "under a condemnation" who would shy from responsibility and not act according to the ordinary divine impressions "which are not so divine as to carry their evidence with them to the conviction of those that have the Spirit of God within them" (Woodhouse, 104). When the internal evidence is missing we must go by external evidence in discerning which opinion is truly in accordance with God. "I do not know of any outward evidence of what proceeds from the Spirit of God more clear than this, the appearance of meekness and gentleness and mercy and patience and forbearance and love, and a desire to do good to all, and to destroy none that can be saved." From the spirit of malice and envy comes thought that "leads us against all opposition." "On the other hand, I think that he would decline the doing of justice where there is no place for mercy, and the exercise of the ways of force for the safety of the kingdom when there is no other way to save it, and would decline these out of the apprehensions of danger and difficulties in it, he that leads that way, on the other hand, doth truly lead us from that which is the law of the Spirit of Life, the law written in our hearts." In the business at hand, whether the king and lords should be abolished, some may sincerely believe that God has decided to destroy them and that a refusal to execute the decision would be against the will of God. Others, however, and he among them, are not yet convinced that this is God's will, and rash action would

mean tampering with the will of God. Let those who are not yet sure of the will of God make it a rule to themselves: "Though God have a purpose to destroy them, and though I should find a desire to destroy them—though a Christian spirit can hardly find it for itself—yet God can do it without necessitating us to do a thing which is scandalous, or sin, or which would bring a dishonor to his name." Those that are of that mind, "Let them wait upon God for such a way when the thing may be done without sin, and without scandal too" (Woodhouse, 106).

§6. The Politics of Cromwell

This soul without decision, waiting for and seeking the will of God, hoping for a convincing revelation, winding its way with craft and cunning through the casuistry of scandal and sin, coming to action only when he can no longer resist the pressure of circumstances, and then interpreting necessity as a sign of Providence, was certainly neither a profiteer nor a prophet in arms. We cannot discern in the conduct of Cromwell any political program but only the paralysis of waiting, followed by fits of action and hysterical outbursts of his wrath at being compelled to do so, showing that he was suffering severely from the strain to the point of mental disturbance. Characteristic is his decision to deliver the king for trial: "Since the Providence of God has cast this upon us, I submit to Providence, though I am not yet provided to give you advice." The complexity of his conduct was closely revealed on the occasion of the armed dissolution of the Long Parliament. The conflict between the members of the Rump, who wished to maintain their regime, and the army, which had moved to the left and wished to secure the gains of the Revolution, had finally become an open one. The declaration of April 22, 1653, states that among the members of Parliament appeared "much bitterness and opposition to the People of God, and His spirit acting in them." The army, therefore, must dissolve the Parliament; "But we shall conclude with this, that as we have been led by necessity and Providence to act as we have done, even beyond and above our own thoughts and desires, so we shall and do in that part of this great work which is behind, put ourselves wholly upon the Lord for a blessing . . . , and therefore do solemnly desire and expect that all men . . . should wait for such issue as He should bring forth." In other words, he would have

wished the Parliament to abdicate peaceably and to delegate its power and legitimacy to an assembly more representative of the present situation; as it did not comply, he was compelled to take action, much to his anger, and now he did not know what to do next.

The tension of the declaration can be fully understood only when viewed together with his outbreak in Parliament two days before, when he dispersed it. He told the members that some of them were whoremasters, others drunkards, and some corrupt and unjust men; that they had not heart to do anything for the public good; that they had espoused the interests of the presbytery and the lawyers who were supporters of tyranny and oppression—and then he called in his soldiers and chased them out. The outbreak is important in two respects: the outbreak as such is proof of the stress under which he was acting, and its content is a candid type study of the Puritan advocates of liberty by one who knew the lot intimately. We have no reason to be horrified at his calling the mace a "Fool's bauble," for that is what it had become in the hands of Parliament in the eyes of an honest man in a lucid moment.

It is not necessary to enter into the details of Cromwell's dissolutions of his own Parliaments. The essentials have become clear: Cromwell was a great soldier, but a mediocre statesman. He was never able to form a distinct picture of the English situation and of his own place in it and then to draw the consequences. His actions are intelligible insofar as they can be traced to their roots in the structure of his personality, but this personality itself was not an integrated instrument of action, as in the case of the superb Richelieu. In the structure of history his actions appear, therefore, as incoherent, as a series of contradictions. He was religiously a Seeker, and like all Seekers he was sincerely tolerant; the whole range of Puritanism, from Presbyterians to Baptists and to the free congregations, had complete liberty. He even tolerated the Prayer Book short of public recognition, which was politically impossible, and he harassed Catholics less than did some Anglican and Presbyterian Parliaments. On the other hand, he could indulge in the atrocious massacres in Ireland, probably because when he had his mystic fits, Catholics appeared to him as a satanic force that had to be exterminated; and he, the soldier, could accomplish in action what his Latin secretary, Milton, dreamed in his ideas. To appreciate fully the sinister demonic enormity of Cromwell's performance in Ireland, one has to compare it with Richelieu's pacification of the

Calvinists in southern France. In Cromwell, the satanism of the moved soul appeared at its worst. Socially, as we pointed out, he belonged to the rebellious parliamentary group, but the vastness and depth of his soul did not allow him the easy rascality of his associates. In his lucid moments, as in the dissolution of the Long Parliament, he saw what was going on but could not free himself internally from his social environment. Politically he had delivered a king to the scaffold, but he was not a republican; that he refused the kingship for his own person was due rather to his respect for the institution than to contempt. He had no taste to become a tribune of the people, and besides, the historical situation was not favorable to this course.

Democracy had to wait two centuries before the instrument of Parliament could be used in the interest of the people; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the state organization had to be the instrument of democratization by slowly building up the sentiment of social responsibility. A broad mass representation was impossible because of the dangers of radicalism, because an electorate of the rich would turn against Puritanism and his army, and because the government, through his major generals in newly created districts, to which he resorted in 1655, was efficient and honest but politically impossible after the revolution had been fought in order to abolish the absolutism of the state and the king. This brings us back to the crucial question: Cromwell had thrown his military talents on the side of a rich man's rebellion and in their service had destroyed the state of England. Unless the element of toleration in his character had aided at the same time in giving freedom of expansion to the wealth of religious gifts of the English people, and thus introduced for centuries to come a new democratizing force of which the Quaker movement was the first indication, one would have to say that he had fought on the wrong side.



Fronde and Monarchy in France

§ I. The Parlement

The French events and ideas that parallel the English Revolution are usually given scant attention in histories of political ideas. This neglect is unjustifiable. Historians submit too easily to the bias that an idea is unimportant if it does not have political success. Besides, the ideas of the Fronde were not unimportant even under this more materialistic aspect. The Frondists did not reach their immediate aim—that is, the removal of Mazarin and the limitation of royal power by the Parlement—but their attitude and ideas remained a force in France. After the death of Louis XIV we see a revival in the first years of the regency, although it was short-lived. The transformation of the ministerial government into a government by councils, giving strong influence to the great nobility and the magistracy, had soon to be abolished because of its glaring inefficiency. Later, in the years preceding the Great Revolution of 1789, we see again the critical attitude of the Parlement in a decisive function. The causes of the Great Revolution are an intricate problem, but it seems that a saner view is coming to the fore after the era of monistic theories. Neither the writings of intellectuals nor the misery of the peasants can be credited any longer with being the decisive factors, although they had contributory importance. The lot of the peasants, admittedly miserable, was no worse than in other countries, but rather better. And the revolutionary literature, as for instance the political writings of Rousseau, was not so well known, and much too complicated, to exert a broad influence. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was little read up to the eve of the Revolution; it became better known then because the revolutionary movement had gotten underway and some of its formulas proved useful. The claim of the

Parlement to represent the *volonté publique* probably had greater practical influence than the implications of Rousseau's *volonté générale*, which are accessible only to persons very well trained in theory. The revolutionary atmosphere had its center in the friction over the financial state of the realm developing between the crown and the privileged estates on the one hand and the Tiers Etat as represented by the Parlement on the other. The Fronde of the seventeenth century already shows the main outlines of this situation and contributes insofar to an understanding of the later problems, setting aside the importance that it has in itself for the period.¹

The power of the Parlement de Paris resulted, as far as the legal question is concerned, from the custom that royal ordinances of a legislative and financial nature had to be registered by the Parlement before they acquired the force of law. That the act of registration could become a political weapon had its cause in the composition of the Parlement. The Parlement de Paris was the head organization of the French magistracy, judicial and financial, which consisted at the time of the Fronde of some 40,000 functionaries. These 40,000 families represented the commercial and industrial wealth of France. The Parlement de Paris itself consisted of some 200 members, organized in several chambers, but meeting in plenary session for state business. The respective attitudes concerning the right of registration may be gathered, on the one hand, from the Remonstrance of March 16, 1656, in which the Parlement asserted that it was born with the state, that it held the place of a council of princes and barons, and that it had the rights of deliberation, examination, and reasonable modification of all edicts, ordinances, creations of offices, and peace treaties sent for registration; on the other, from the Royal Declaration of February 3, 1641 (the last year of Richelieu), informing the Parlement that it was established for judicial matters only, that it was expressly barred from taking cognizance of any matter of administration or government that belonged to the royal prerogative, and that all ordinances had to be registered without being subjected to deliberation.

In 1642, Richelieu died. For the next four years the machine of government moved on by force of the momentum that he had

1. See F. Eppensteiner, *Rousseaus Einfluss auf die vorrevolutionären Flugschriften und den Ausbruch der Revolution*, Beiträge zur Parteigeschichte, ed. Adalbert Wahl, vol. 8 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1914).

imparted to it. In 1647, the Parlement refused to register a tax ordinance of Mazarin, and in 1648 the events led up to an attempt of the Parlement to give precision to its rights in the form of a declaration.² The draft was more comprehensive than the final instrument. Its main provisions were the following:

(1) Reduction of the *taille* by 25 percent; a measure intended to relieve the poor people (art. 2).

(2) All legislation concerning taxes and impositions has to be registered by the Parlement with complete freedom of deliberation; tax ordinances have to be executed by the Parlement (art. 3).

(3) The right of habeas corpus (art. 6).

(4) Independence of the magistracy through:

(a) Revocation of all extraordinary commissions not duly verified by the Sovereign Courts (art. 1, art. 10).

(b) No future creation of magistrates or change in the existing organization without consent of the Sovereign Courts (art. 19).

(5) Abolition of all trade monopolies (art. 24).

(6) Creation of the Court of Justice, composed of members of the Sovereign Courts and appointed by them, for the investigation of the royal administration of finances (art. 7).

(7) Protection of French industry through import prohibitions on wool and silk fabrics from England and Holland, and laces from Spain and Italy (art. 25).

(8) Submission of the postmaster general, and the postal services, to the control of the Parlement (art. 18).

The situation is in some respects comparable to the English. The medieval harmony of diffused authority was on the point of breaking up; the positions were hardening and the authorities had become power-conscious. The immediate causes—the growth of the state administration and of the financial problems in the course of the national wars—were also the same as in England. There was, however, the important difference that the French state administration was infinitely stronger than the English, due to the government of Richelieu, and that the Parlement de Paris did

2. For the text of the first draft of the declaration, discussed from June 30 to July 12, 1648, see *Journal, Contenant tout ce qui s'est fait et passé en la Cour du Parlement de Paris, Toutes les Chambres assemblées et autres lieux, sur le sujet des affaires du temps présent* (Paris, 1649). For the final Declaration of October 24, 1648, see *Mémoires du feu M. Omer Talon, avocat-général en la Cour du Parlement de Paris* (Le Haye, 1732), 6:271–91. For a historical survey see Sainte-Aulaire, *Histoire de la Fronde*, 3 vols. (Paris: Boudoin Frères, 1827); for the social background see Léon Lecestre, *La Bourgeoisie Parisienne au Temps de la Fronde* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1913).

not have the tradition of national representation that the English Parliament had. The attempt at establishing a limited monarchy proved abortive; the absolute ascendancy of the royal government was soon reestablished. The magnitude of the financial issue involved is indicated by the change in the purchase price of the French magistracies: between the early years of Louis XIV and the consolidation of absolute government they dropped 90 percent.

§2. The Cardinal de Retz

The most important figure of the Fronde movement was the coadjutor, later the archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal de Retz. In his *Mémoires*, one of the classics of French literature, he relates the history of the Fronde, showing a masterful insight into the fundamental political issues. He did not cast his ideas in the form of a reasoned system; they appear as marginal notes to the history of the time and probably for this reason have not received the attention they deserve. But among his contemporaries he has only two rivals in the analysis of the motives of human action: Hobbes and La Rochefoucauld. When the *Mémoires* were published in 1717 they created a profound impression and proved rather contagious; they were followed immediately in 1718 by the conspiracy of Cellamare. And Benjamin Constant found in the period of the Directory that he could read only two authors: Machiavelli and Retz.³ The cardinal is particularly sensitive to the change of atmosphere in politics from the pre-Reformation period to the seventeenth century. He sees that the French monarchy was built on a power balance; its peculiar feature, which he treasures highly, was the absence of any attempt to fix in writing the powers of the king. French royal power was never even partially like that of England or Aragon. Nevertheless, it was not absolute, but tempered by custom, of which the trustees were the Estates General and the Parlements, "a wise middle of the road, which our fathers found between royal license and popular libertinage." Richelieu is for him the evil spirit who concentrated all the dangerous tendencies of the last two centuries in the establishment "of a most scandalous and dangerous tyranny"

3. See Charles Augustine Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi*, 15 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1882-1885), 5:41.

replacing the old legitimate monarchy.⁴ As a result, the issue of the power balance is brought into the open, and the veil that covers the "mystery of the State" is about to be torn. "Every monarchy has its own. That of France consists in the sort of religious and sacred silence in which one envelops (while almost always obeying blindly the kings) the right (which to have one does not wish to believe) to dispose of them."⁵

In the conversation with Condé the cardinal explains to the prince the danger of the situation. The Parlement, which is forced by the encroachments of the administration to take a stand, is greatly respected by the people. "I know," he says, "that you do not count them for much, because the king has the arms; but I beg permission to say that one has to count them high when they count themselves everything. They have reached that point. They begin in their turn to count your arms for nothing; and unfortunately their force consists in their imagination; one may say truthfully that, in contradistinction from all other sorts of power, they can do what they believe they can do, when they have reached a certain point."⁶ Who would doubt in the light of later, and particularly of contemporary, events that Retz understood the potentialities of creating political power through the force of imagination—when the circumstances are propitious? Imagination, however, does not work of itself, but requires effort. There is the long way, which Retz described himself, "from the velleity to the will, from the will to the resolution, from the resolution to the choice of means, from the choice of means to their application." The respectable magistrates who had to go home for dinner at noon, and for supper at five, religiously if they wished to avoid domestic trouble, were not the men of action who could deal deadly blows. While making these qualifications for the special case, we have to say that Retz has formulated a basic problem of modern politics. His remarks about the force of imagination carry the Hobbesian analysis a step farther. Hobbes saw power consciousness as the root of evil; order can arise only when the madness of the rush is broken by fear of death and

4. Jean François Cardinal de Retz, *Oeuvres du cardinal de Retz* (Paris: Hachette, 1870-1920), 1:271 f., 275.

5. *Ibid.*, 2:105.

6. *Ibid.*, 2:103 f.

when the Leviathan is put down as the lid on the kettle of boiling passions. Retz saw imagination as the possible source of a new dispensation in politics. With imagination, supported by skillful action, one can change an existing order in a surprising way. The Hobbesian power madness can become, if directed intelligently, the source of political success.

Retz has his rank in the history of politics and ideas as the first modern conspirator, the professional agitator who enjoys the game and develops it into a fine art. "I firmly believe," he said, "that it requires greater qualities to make a good party leader (*chef de parti*) than a good emperor of the universe; among the qualities that he possesses, resolution ranks equal with judgment: I mean the heroic judgment of which the principal function is to distinguish the extraordinary from the impossible."⁷ The medieval cosmic order is definitely broken; human relations have gained a new fluency, and the skillful, intelligent individual appears as a new force with possibilities hitherto unsurmised. In the formula of the "heroic judgment" there is still a touch of Machiavelli's *virtù*, but a century and a half have changed the scene profoundly. The substance of Retz is that of a psychologist and an actor who plays a role. The change of atmosphere and temper has become supremely conscious in him, even more so than in Hobbes. He gives an excellent type sequence in a pamphlet of 1652: "When virtue reigns one can judge men by their duty; when the age is corrupt, but nevertheless produces skilfull men, one has to judge them by their interests; when it has become utterly depraved and shows little intelligence, *the age in which we now live*, one has to join the inclinations of men to their interests and to make this mixture the rule of one's judgment."⁸ Retz has fully understood the tremendous break in Western civilization and the transition from the age of "virtue" to the age of "interest and inclination," that is, of disoriented man, which also marked the end of Hellas.

The passages quoted are not incidental either to the personality or to the work of Retz. From his earliest years he was preoccupied with the problem of conspiracy. After he had become acquainted with the work of Agostino Mascardi, he himself wrote a brilliant little study

7. *Ibid.*, 1:125.

8. *Les interèts du temps*, 1652, in *ibid.*, 5:251.

on the conjuration of Fiesco.⁹ The essay is a treasury of advice for organizing a conspiracy, and it did not remain unused. The actual conduct of Retz during the Fronde, particularly his technique of gaining the favor of the people, shows that he knew how to apply his own rules. There also appears a new tone that illustrates the change since Machiavelli. The earlier thinker, when giving his precepts to the Prince, is clear about the immorality of his rules. Retz does not attempt to justify the immorality of political conduct by the necessity of a situation, but flatly denies its immoral character. "Those phantoms of infamy which public opinion has created in order to horrify vulgar souls have never caused shame to those who are carried to glorious actions, if they had success. Scruples and grandeur have always been incompatible, and the soft maxims of ordinary prudence should be dispensed to the people, but not to the masters (*grands seigneurs*). The crime of usurping a crown is so illustrious that it may pass for a virtue; every condition of man has a reputation of its own: the small fry have to be judged by their moderation, and the great by their ambition and courage."¹⁰ This attitude goes far beyond the *raison d'état* of the Machiavellian type. Retz has described the evolution correctly in his type sequence from virtue through interest to inclination.

§3. Louis XIV

After the death of Mazarin in 1661, Louis XIV organized the French government under his personal leadership. Of the first years of his regime, 1661–1668, we have an excellent account preserved in his *Mémoires*, written for the instruction of the Dauphin and amply interspersed with digressions on the principles that guided him in his task.¹¹ The document has been unduly neglected by historians of ideas. The king was a man of unusual common sense and shrewdness, and while he does not rank with the great political philosophers, he certainly has created the type of great king that

9. Agostino Mascardi, *La congiura del Conte Gio: Luigi de' Fieschi* (Venetia, 1629). Retz, *La conjuration du Conte Jean Luis de Fiesque* (1st ed., 1665; 2d ed., 1682), in *Oeuvres*, vol. 5.

10. *Conjuration* (*Oeuvres*, 5:543 f.). The passage is omitted from the second edition. It reflects a parallel passage in Mascardi, *Congiura*, 44.

11. *Mémoires de Louis XIV*, ed. Jean Longnon (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1927).

dominated the period of the absolute state. The *Mémoires* prove that Louis did not simply inherit a position but that he was, indeed, a royal master and possessed the rules of the profession. As the authentic source on the idea of kingship, his work should be preferred to Bossuet.¹²

The first measure taken was the abolition of the office of prime minister. The king advises his son that even the name of this office should never again be mentioned in France. The measure was not meant as a retrenchment of the state organization, but as a concentration of business in the hands of the king himself. He surrounded himself with a staff of able administrators, and if later critics have remarked that the king owed his successes to his ministers, we have to consider that the ministers held their offices from him and at his will. He established as a rule that the ministers should be men of inferior social position, so that they would have no dangerous ambitions. The high nobility was excluded from these offices by principle. The measure had in the eyes of the king the further advantage that the new type of men had better contacts with the real needs of the people and possessed information that persons of rank could not have. He then made himself accessible to complaints from below: "I gave to my subjects without distinction the liberty of addressing themselves to me at any time by word or writing." A few personal interventions seem to have improved effectively the administration of justice. The intervention in the famous case of the Surintendant Fouquet injected some holy fear into the race of financiers. The ministers were kept under control through frequent personal reports that they had to make and through the king's habit of unexpectedly demanding information on various subjects.

Space does not permit us to enter into the wealth of theoretical ideas of politics scattered throughout the *Mémoires*. I select two fundamental questions. The first concerns the religious foundation of kingship. The fascination of the pages on this question lies in their intimacy. They do not give a dry theory of divine right of kingship but enter into an analysis of the sentiment that gives reality to the empty legal claim. The king advises his son to observe carefully his religious duties because a neglect would be not

12. Jacques Bossuet, *La politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte* (ca. 1670).

only unjust but also unwise. Kings are the lieutenants of God; their submission to him sets the pattern for the submission of the subjects to the king. Armies and counsel would not maintain a king on his throne "if everybody believed that he has the same right as we have, and did not revere a superior power of which ours is a part." The respect shown to God "is the first and most important part of our policy." The revealing point is that the religious foundation of royal power is recognized as being shaky and that verbiage alone will not do; if the foundation has no reality in the conduct of the king, it is not to be wondered that the people get revolutionary ideas. God, however, has not become entirely a figure in the fame of the *raison d'état*. The king warns his son expressly that religious practice based on interest is not sufficient, "because the artifice betrays itself always, and does not have in the long run the same effect as sincerity." The people would find out sooner or later, and God, too, and he would be very much offended. The example that the king uses in support of his argument shows admirably his position: he explains that on the occasion of the rebellions he had experienced, the conduct of the lower people who took arms against him had caused him not as much indignation by far as the defections in his entourage. And God has the same sentiments as Louis XIV; if kings show disrespect by feigning religiousness that they do not have sincerely, he will be much more offended by them than by the irreverent conduct of ordinary people and react accordingly. God as the supreme monarch, surrounded by a court of kings, and the king as the divine analogue surrounded by his court—this picture is a perfect expression of the royal pathos.¹³

The value of this and similar passages of the *Mémoires* cannot be overrated. They show how deeply the spirit of conscious management of other people and of one's own personality has penetrated the age. Below the surface antagonisms of royalty and revolution, of state and parliamentary Fronde, of nobility and middle class, of middle class and people, there is a common denominator of psychological realism, of theatrical action, of the persona, the representative mask in the Hobbesian sense. It can be felt in the revelation of a Lilburne hanging in the block and haranguing the

13. *Mémoires*, 24, 62 f. This passage was written at the time when Bossuet was charged with the education of the Dauphin.

people, in the rabble-rousing craftiness of a Pym using sincere religious sentiments for the increase of profits, in the delightful Mediterranean rascality of a Retz who transfigures the *aceleratezza* of conspiracy into a game of ambition and makes of a papal election a comedy surpassing Molière, and now in the divine and royal play staged by Louis XIV. This is no longer the pre-Reformation corruption, as Retz had discerned clearly, but a new stage in the dissolution of European ethical and religious substances in which even sincerity becomes a conscious and carefully cultivated instrument of action. There is a straight and rather short line running from the English Puritan parliamentarians and the French Catholic king to the artificial myth of Georges Sorel and the puzzling mixture of sincerity and conscious psychological technique in Hitler.

A second passage from the *Mémoires* will further elucidate this problem. The king deals at length with the function of his own person and of the court as a spectacle for the people. "The people like the show that is conducted ultimately with the aim of pleasing them." The king has to indulge in the common pleasures and to cultivate his physical gifts because the subjects in general "are delighted to see that we love what they love and wherein they succeed best." But one must not go too far; a king should not give himself to pleasures and the exercise of talents too much; he should tolerate that in the arts of the body and the mind he is surpassed by his subjects, and only see that none equals him, if possible, in the art of governing. The king, after all, is the master, and excellence in other arts might detract attention from his real function and damage his reputation. The reasons given for the display and pomp of the court appear in the *Mémoires* in the setting of a great monarchy, but essentially the attitude does not differ from that of Jan van Leyden in his Anabaptist Münster Kingdom. That a new style of the representation of power was in the making, independent of Louis XIV, is indicated by the history of the Surintendant Fouquet. Fouquet in his castle of Vaux had anticipated much of the future Versailles. His architect, Le Vau, his painter, Le Brun, his landscape designer, Le Nôtre, and his secretary, Pellisson, passed into the service of the king. The fall of Fouquet, though amply deserved by his financial affairs, was due in part to the personal vindictiveness of the king, who was infuriated by the luxury displayed by a subject—a luxury surpassing in quality of style his own train of life. The breaking point was reached when Fouquet tried to win Mlle. de

La Vallière as the *maîtresse* of his royal establishment without knowing that she was already the king's.¹⁴

In creating the royal style, the king adopted the Sun as his device. "Its quality of uniqueness, the splendor that surrounds it, the light radiating to the other stars which form for it a kind of court, the equal and just distribution of light to the diverse climates of the world, the good that it does everywhere, producing incessantly on all sides life, joy, and action, its movement without respite, in which nevertheless it appears tranquil, its constant and invariable course from which it never deviates—is certainly the most appealing and beautiful image of a great monarch."¹⁵ The cosmological symbol of the Babylonians and Egyptians, the Sun of Plato and the later Mediterranean thinkers appears, in a last transformation, as the heraldic symbol of royal splendor.

14. *Ibid.*, 122 ff. On Fouquet see Sainte-Beuve, *Le Surintendant Fouquet*, in *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. 5.

15. *Mémoires*, 124–25.



Spinoza

Spinoza ist ein gottrunkener Mensch.
 Novalis

§I. Orientalism

With Spinoza we return to the level of the much-hated great political thinkers. The general reason for the boycott of Spinoza, which lasted for more than a century, is the same as those in the earlier cases: the profound political thinker is unpleasantly realistic. In the details, however, the case of Spinoza has its peculiarities that set it apart from those of Bodin and Hobbes.

From preceding chapters of this study it has become sufficiently clear that Western political thought does not move in one broad stream, but that the Mediterranean, western European, and central European civilizations have problems of their own within the wider frame of Western civilization. We noted the Byzantine and other Oriental influences in southern France, the Arabic influences in the scholastic period, the effects of Oriental contacts on Machiavelli and Bodin, the Mediterranean touch in Harrington and Retz. With Spinoza the Mediterranean irrupts again into Western thought. His philosophy uses the language of the European Baroque—we find the inevitable natural right, the contract, and the geometrical method—but the spirit animating these symbols is, in a general sense, Oriental.

I said Oriental in a general sense because the connection of his thought with that of specific Eastern thinkers would be difficult to prove. Space does not permit us to enter into the details of this fascinating question. We can only note that Spinoza's mystical attitude shows affinities to the mystical and speculative parts of the

Cabala, particularly of the *Sohar*, and through the *Sohar* to Neo-Platonic thought. The attitude of Bible criticism and rationalism may be traced back to the rational trends in Jewish philosophy, to the criticism of the Ibn Ezra and Maimonides in the twelfth century and of Gersonides in the fourteenth. The more immediate roots of Spinoza's heterodoxy should be sought, however, in the fate of the Marranic Jews. The first Marranos came to Amsterdam toward the end of the sixteenth century in order to resume their religious practice in the more tolerant Dutch environment. This resumption after an extended period of crypto-existence was beset with difficulties, which expressed themselves in a series of excommunications in the seventeenth century. On the one hand, the Jewish community was compelled to observe a rigid orthodoxy because any loosening up aroused complaints from unorthodox Christian sects that the Jews in Amsterdam had more freedom than the Christians, as in the complaint of the Remonstrants of 1617; on the other hand, the break in the continuity of tradition and its more or less artificial resumption did not fail to stir the more intelligent young minds to intellectual independence. The tragic case of Da Costa in the 1630s was followed by the excommunication of Spinoza in 1656 and of Juan [Daniel] de Prato in 1567. Personal factors may have played a role, too. Rabbi Morteira does not seem to have been the personality who would impress a young man of the strength of Spinoza; and the able Manasseh ben Israel was engaged in the critical years in negotiations with Cromwell over the readmission of the Jews to England.

§2. The Program of the *De Intellectus Emendatione*

The center of Spinoza's political thought is his mysticism. In the *De Intellectus Emendatione*, probably preceding the *Ethics*, he has developed his program. After experience had taught him that the usual surroundings of social life are vain and futile, he resolved to inquire "whether there might be some real good having power to communicate itself, which would affect the mind singly, to the exclusion of all else."¹ In the result it appeared that the love of

1. Benedict de Spinoza, *On the Improvement of Human Understanding*, in *The Chief Works of Spinoza*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1955), 3.

perishable objects causes unhappiness and that only "love towards a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy, and is itself unmingled with any sadness" (5). The "eternal and infinite thing" is the whole of Nature evolving according to its "eternal order and fixed laws" (6). In this whole of Nature nothing is good or evil, perfect or imperfect in itself; hence it becomes the task of man to acquire a character capable of understanding nature in itself, free from value attributes, because through the possession of this character, man arrives at the chief good, which is "the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature" (6). As this union has to be achieved within human life, the conditions favoring the end have to be procured as instrumental goods. Man should arrive at the possession of the desired character "together with other individuals if possible." "It is part of my happiness to lend a helping hand, that many others may understand even as I do, so that their understanding and desire may entirely agree with my own." Moreover, a social order is necessary that would be "most conducive to the attainment of this character by the greatest number with the least difficulty and danger" (7). Moral philosophy and a theory of education are needed; medicine has to be cultivated because a healthy body is of assistance; the science of mechanics has to be developed because contrivances make life easier; and above all the understanding has to be improved in order to achieve knowledge of the whole of nature.

The main elements of Spinoza's attitude are given: the union with nature as the supreme good, God identified with nature, without anthropomorphic attributes, the attainment of the character that makes the union with nature possible, the attainment of the character in company with other men, and the construction of political society in such a way that the attainment is possible for the largest number. We have now to fill in the main points of this outline with Spinoza's ideas as developed in the later systematic works.

§3. Mysticism

The mystical center is bk. V of *Ethics*.² Blessedness consists in love toward God; this love is an intellectual activity of the human mind, whereby it regards itself as accompanied by the idea of God as

2. Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, in *ibid.*, vol. 2.

cause; and as the human mind is a mode of the divine substance, the intellectual love of the mind toward God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves himself. The essence of the mind consists in the knowledge of its beginning and foundation in God, and the realization of this knowledge as a permanent consciousness accompanying life may be called, therefore, an acquiescence of the spirit in the order of nature (God) of which it is a mode. The attainment of this state frees man from the disturbance of passion and concentrates his life in his essential part. "[T]he wise man . . . is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit" (*Ethics* V, prop. 42).

The mysticism of the *acquiescentia* differs from the contemplative mysticism of Bodin, which derives from Aristotle. The problem of Aristotle was, as we saw, the construction of the *bios theoretikos* as a type of activity; and in Bodin the *fruitio Dei* was thinned out to an approximation in this life while the perfect *fruitio in conspectu Dei* could be achieved only in death. In Bodin there exists obviously a conflict between his contemplative and his activist sentiments. The contemplative mystic in him conceives of the *fruitio* under the image of man standing face to face with God; but for the activist this cannot be more than a culmination point, a momentary gaze from which he returns to the action of everyday life. The Spinozistic sentiment has entirely different roots. Neither man nor God is conceived as a personality; the mystic moment is not a gaze, man is not *in conspectu Dei*; the mystical experience is the enduring consciousness of the human mind as a mode of God and part of the eternal order. The personality of man is extinguished in the experience of being a transient ripple in the flux of natural necessity. Spinoza's *acquiescentia* is rendered in English translations simply by *acquiescence*, but I think we come nearer to the atmosphere of meaning if we remember that *acquiescentia* is synonymous with *islam*.

§4. Esotericism

The expression of this islamic attitude in the political writings proper confronts the interpreter with a baffling task. Spinoza conducts his argument constantly on two levels at the same time, on an esoteric and on an exoteric. The result is that we do not possess

the esoteric political theory of Spinoza in a clear exposition but have to disentangle it, at the risk of misunderstandings, from a terminology that he consciously used in order to obscure the theory and thereby to make it more palatable to his contemporaries. The plan of this undertaking is plainly announced in the *De Intellectus Emendatione*; there he lays down a rule of life as "provisionally good": "To speak in a manner intelligible to the multitude, and to comply with every general custom that does not hinder the attainment of our purpose. For we can gain from the multitude no small advantages, provided that we strive to accommodate ourselves to its understanding as far as possible: moreover, we shall in this way gain a friendly audience for the reception of the truth" (7). On this latter point he was mistaken; the multitude, while not understanding the truth, understood enough of it to become unfriendly; but nevertheless, he made the attempt.

To come right to the core of the problem, let us take his famous equation between right and power. Every natural thing, and man is a natural thing, is in existence through the power of God; its right to existence and action extends as far as the power that it has from God. To say, however, on the basis of these statements that Spinoza held a theory that can be expressed in the formula that might makes right would be incorrect. The *right* terminology is his device for capturing the multitude; it is part of the exoteric vocabulary. The esoteric theory simply denies that the symbol *right* has any meaning; it belongs in the class of inadequate, superstitious notions. Reality does not show any structure of rights, but only a structure of power. Spinoza has a chapter on Natural Right (*Tractatus Politicus*, chap. II), but he has no theory of natural right. The same applies to the distinction between a civil state and a natural state of men. Man never leaves the "natural state" (*Tractatus Politicus* III.3), but nature throws up power constellations, called civil states, that are more conducive to the development of the islamic character than other power constellations. Political theory is the art and science of such favorable power constellations, and it is the first step in this art to disguise reality behind a screen of acceptable terminology.

§5. Hobbes and Spinoza

Although there are frequent points of contact between the theories of Hobbes and those of Spinoza, the two philosophers differ in their

basic attitudes. Hobbes constructed man and society out of power madness and fear of death; reason was powerless; only fear could induce man to break his power rush into a behavior in accordance with moral principles; but Hobbes himself was a moralist. Spinoza extends the notion of power (*potentia*) so as to include reason together with the passions. Man in his desire of self-preservation may follow his passions, but also now and then his reason; whether he will more frequently follow the one or the other depends on the clay out of which the potter fashioned him; in any case, his actions will be natural and are insofar no proper objects of moral judgment. Spinoza was not a moralist. "Reason teaches one to practice piety, and to be of a calm and gentle spirit" (*Tractatus Politicus* II.21), as it befits a character that has overcome the impulses of passion and reached the stage of acquiescence. But calmness and gentleness are not ethical percepts; they are the behavior characteristics of islamic reason. "Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself" (*Ethics*, pt. V, prop. 42). Who is not calm and gentle does not commit a moral wrong, but proves that he has not yet attained the happiness of the intellectual love of God; he is in a state of ontic imperfection. There is no right or wrong in the order of nature; the man who uses his reason as a determinant of his actions is no more embraced in the eternal order than the man who follows his passions.

§6. Theory of Power

The problem of right or wrong can arise only when individual human power centers pool their forces into a common power and create rules concerning the relations between them. Perhaps the term *pooling* renders most adequately the esoteric meaning of the union of power that characterizes a civil society. In the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which was published, the pooling is covered by a certain amount of "compact" and "agreement" symbols, while the unpublished *Tractatus Politicus* uses the less exoteric words "coming together," "uniting their strength," "combining." The existence of man as an isolated power unit would absorb all powers in mere defense against enemies; a life of reason is possible only in a state of comparative security and comfort. The power pool has the double function of securing the community collectively against external enemies and the individuals singly from attacks by others within the community. The aim is achieved by creating a dominion

(*imperium*) through the transfer of individual power to a collective agent who may be either the whole of the community, or a few, or one (democracy, aristocracy, monarchy). The transfer of power is no more than what the term implies, that is, a pooling and reallocation of power. The individual is limited from now on in his "rights," but only insofar as the power pool wielded by the sovereign agent *actually* limits the power of the individuals. If the government is strong, the individual power will be weak; if the sovereign is weak, the individual power will be correspondingly stronger. No question of a "right" of the individual or the sovereign enters into this relation. The sovereign will retain his "right" only as long "as he can maintain his power of enforcing his will; otherwise he will totter on his throne, and no one who is stronger than he will be bound unwillingly to obey him" (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, chap. XVI).

The theory of government is consequently a theory not of the respective rights of sovereign and subjects but of the actually possible power distribution within a political society. The question is not whether this or that right has been or should be transferred, but which powers can be transferred without destroying the meaning of individual existence; which powers can be arrogated by the sovereign without arousing the resistance of the subjects leading to his downfall; and how far the dominion power can limit the actions of subjects without stifling the very powers that prevent the community from sinking into stagnation. For Spinoza the body politic is not a rigid entity; it is seen in the fluency of its existence, permanently under the stress of keeping the proper balance between all the individual powers that it embraces. We have met with a similar attitude in Bodin when he discussed the practical limitations that a sovereign has to draw from himself if he wishes to maintain a harmonious domestic order. The technique of Aristotle and Machiavelli was applied, in this case, to the French monarchy. Spinoza's treatment of the problem marks an advance over Bodin and, perhaps, even over Machiavelli because from his esoteric doctrine the ethical implications are entirely eliminated so that he has his mind free for a methodologically clean analysis of the *possible* and the *necessary* in the internal organization of a political society. The sections in Spinoza's work that deal with the transfer of individual rights, with rights of the sovereigns, and freedom of speech (particularly the chapters in the *Tractatus*

Theologico-Politicus dealing with these matters) are masterpieces of realistic analysis. There is no contemporary discussion of freedom of speech, for instance, that could not be greatly improved by drawing on Spinoza.

§7. Liberalism

From the wealth of detailed observations we select one line of argument that concerns freedom of thought and religion. Spinoza is usually hailed as a liberal—along with Milton; that alone should make us suspicious. And, indeed, the liberalism of Spinoza is not quite what modern liberals believe it to be. Spinoza was the first in the series of great thinkers who penetrated the situation that we tried to analyze in the introductory remarks of the section on Hobbes in chapter 1 of this part. He saw that the break in the Christian civilization had not created a new freedom but had released the passions of sectarians who wished, everyone in his turn, to impose their personal narrowness as the standard of thought and belief on everybody else. Spinoza's plea for freedom of thought is a plea for the freedom of mystical thinkers, like himself, from persecution by sectarian furor (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, chap. XX). He had particular reasons to make this plea, for his islamic mysticism did away with dogmatic symbols to which even the more radical sectarians were still clinging. The idea of God as identical with nature in its eternal order, deprived of all anthropomorphic qualities, exposed him to the charge of atheism, which is always leveled against mystics who have reached the idea of a depersonalized deity, such as the Cabalistic *En Soph*, Boehme's *Ungrund*, or Spinoza's Nature. The comparatively safe shelter that the medieval Christian high civilization offered to such border cases through an educated church leadership in the upper ranks of the hierarchy had broken down, and the thinker was exposed to the passions of a released lower Protestant ministry and laity, as well as of a sadly restricted postreformation Catholicism, and of the Jewish orthodoxy. We can gauge the situation perhaps best if we realize that Spinoza would fall in the class of "Roman Catholicism, atheism and other superstitions" to which Milton denied his toleration in the English national commonwealth; and that Milton was precisely the type of mind against which Spinoza entered his plea for the freedom of the life of reason.

§8. The Project of Government

The problem becomes still clearer from a survey of Spinoza's suggestions for governmental organization under the peculiar Dutch conditions. After the death of William II in 1650, the state rights-minded aristocracy had gained the ascendancy again and could maintain it, under Jan de Witt as the grand pensionary of Holland, until 1672, when the de Witts were murdered. To the political conflict between the aristocratic state-rights party and the centralizing tendencies of the House of Orange corresponded the social and religious conflict between the liberal sects of the Remonstrant type and the popular Calvinist predicants who supported the stadholder. The concrete political ideas of Spinoza were shaped so as to be usable for the religiously liberal, aristocratic government of the de Witts and to make the populist Calvinists as innocuous as possible. In order to strike the balance between the conflicting powers, which would give, on the one hand, breathing space to the spirit and, on the other hand, not brutally suppress the sectarians, Spinoza conceived the idea of an aristocratic government that would institute a state religion on the basis of a minimum dogma but leave to everybody the freedom of adding as much as he wanted to the minimum as long as he did not try to enforce his additions on others.

We have met with the idea of the minimum dogma before: in Plato, and later in More and Hooker. Spinoza's idea is based on his definition of faith as the knowledge of God "without which obedience to Him would be impossible, and which the mere fact of obedience to Him implies" (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, chap. XIV). Faith does not require that the dogmas be true, but that they should be pious and stir the heart to obedience. Any set of dogmas that has this effect will satisfy Spinoza. To the universal religion of mankind, however, belong only such dogmas as are *absolutely* required to produce the effect of obedience, while anybody may adopt in addition others that may aid him, without causing any controversy about them to arise. It is obvious that this position can be held only by a mystic for whom the dogmatic symbolism has lost its relevance and that it cannot be acceptable for the believer who lives in the institutional and dogmatic world, for the good reason that his soul is not strong and deep enough to be rooted in mystic religiousness. The position of Spinoza differs, moreover, from that of his predecessors insofar as he himself did not believe

in the minimum dogma but advanced it as a bit of exoteric political advice for the satisfaction of the multitude. The ideas of Spinoza are, therefore, the first high point in the new development, indicated previously, toward psychological management of the masses by playing on their convictions in order to keep them satisfied, while the player himself does not necessarily share them. We are faced with the symptoms of an evolution, the consequences of which we can observe today, in the period of beginning totalitarianism: that after the breakdown of the church civilization that could integrate the primitive image worshiper and the imageless mystic in one spiritual whole, the statesman is becoming the spiritual director of the people.

The main features of the project of Spinoza are the following. The constitution has to be aristocratic. The patricians have to be adherents of "the most simple and universal religion" (as defined by the minimum dogma) and must not split into sects; otherwise they would themselves be threatened by superstition and be inclined to deprive their subjects of enjoying the freedom of their respective pet superstitions. The subjects have to believe in the minimum dogma and are free otherwise to add what they want, if it is not logically incompatible with the basic set. They may organize freely in sects and confessions provided certain rules are observed: (1) every sect can say what it wants, but big assemblies for propagandistic purposes are not permitted; (2) they may build as many churches as they want, but the churches have to be small, for local use only, and to be placed at certain distances; (3) the churches of the state religion—"and that is important"—have to be large and magnificent; (4) in the state churches, only the patricians have sacerdotal functions (baptism, marriage, laying on of hands); they are the guardians and interpreters of the universal religion; as preachers they may appoint men of the people who are responsible to them for their function (*Tractatus Politicus*, chap. VIII, particularly 46).

§9. The Oath

The project is pathetic as the attempt of a mystic to construct a spiritual civilization in the framework of seventeenth-century political communities. Inadvertently Spinoza reveals the fundamental reason for the practical impossibility of his program. In the chapter on the oath (*Tractatus Politicus*, chap. VIII, 48) he says:

Those, whom the law compels to take an oath, will be more cautious of perjury, if they are bidden to swear by the country's safety and liberty and by the supreme council, than if they are told to swear by God. For he who swears by God, gives as surety some private advantage to himself, whereof he is judge; but he, who by his oath gives as surety his country's liberty and safety, swears by what is the common advantage of all, whereof he is not judge, and if he perjures himself, thereby declares that he is his country's enemy.

God can no longer be the surety of man's word; his country is a safer guarantor. God has become a private person; public life can no longer be built on his spirit, for the nation has taken the place of God in the political sentiments of man. This is not yet the end, but, as we said, it is the first high mark of an evolution; the other high mark came when Nietzsche could pronounce: God is dead.



 Locke

*Feed him who is dying from hunger;
if you will not have fed him, you
have murdered him.*

Saint Ambrose

*There God and Nature formed the general frame.
And bade self-love and social be the same.*

Pope

The time when Locke was considered by historians a great political philosopher seems to be passing. His thought is recognized today as the expression of the social and constitutional settlement of the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution, though it was fixed in its essential lines before 1688, and the great influence that he wielded throughout the eighteenth century in England and the American colonies, and on French political thought, was due to his very limitations. His description of the limited monarchy and his theory of consent and of property belong among the most successful ancillary evocations.

§1. The Contract Theory

Although a reevaluation of Locke is under way, I do not think that the peculiar qualities of his thought have yet been made sufficiently clear, because too much attention is given still to the incidental elements of his system that had popular appeal. First among the incidentals ranks the contract formula. His theory that political society arises through contract between persons previously living in a state of nature is not intended as a theory of the origin of government but has controversial function only. In sections 100 ff.

of the *Treatise* Locke struggles valiantly with historical reality, and while he refers skeptics to the foundation of Rome and Venice, and of course to Israel, as examples of contractual beginnings of political society, he cannot simply talk away history, which on the whole does not show so many contractual foundations.¹ He tries a little face-saving by supposing that records of early contracts have been lost (sec. 101; pp. 166 f.), but admits that in most cases the original state of society was monarchy, growing out of the father position. This "golden age" could last, however, only so long as monarchical government was not abused, either by the governor or by the subjects. In the golden age there was "no stretching prerogative on the one side to oppress the people, nor, consequently, on the other any dispute about privilege, to lessen or restrain the power of the magistrate" (sec. 111; p. 173). Only when the harmony was disturbed through discussion about respective rights was it found necessary to examine "the original and rights of government" and to find methods of restraint. The origin of government in contract gently disappears in sec. 112 (p. 174) and is reduced to "consent," tacit or explicit, setting aside the problem of military conquest. If we refer this abstract language to the historical models that Locke obviously had in mind, his contract theory means only that up to the Stuarts monarchy existed more or less unquestioned, that under James I the question of the prerogative arose, and that now the relation of governor and subjects has to be "examined." The contract as such is quite unimportant; what matters are the actual relations between the monarch and the people, which must be found satisfactory upon "examination"; if Locke as the spokesman of the people has examined them and found them good, they are said to enjoy the people's "consent."

§2. The Theory of Limited Monarchy

The type of governmental structure that wins Locke's approval is the second incidental feature that distracts attention from the essentials of his theory. It is generally agreed that Locke's preferences

1. References to the *Treatise* are to the second of the *Treatises of Government*, 1690, with the subtitle *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*. The edition used for the page references added in the text is that in the Everyman's Library, *Of Civil Government: Two Treatises*, ed. William S. Carpenter (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1924).

concerning a limited monarchy are entirely unoriginal. Locke liked the settlement of 1688, which consolidated the Revolution and made the English monarchy dependent on Parliament. The expression of his likings cannot be passed over, however, as a private affair, for his simple and not overprecise exposition and rationalization of the new structure was widely read in the eighteenth century by innocent colonials and foreigners and determined, with revolutionary consequences, their idea of what English government was like even at a time when it had changed considerably. The desirable structure consists, according to Locke, of an assembly that is the chief legislative organ and of a king in whom are vested the executive, the federal, and the prerogative powers. The assembly sits intermittently for legislative business and makes laws either alone or with consent of the king. The legislative power is the supreme power of the commonwealth, but the monarch may "in a very tolerable sense" be called supreme, too, when he participates in lawmaking and has, therefore, no superior legislator over him, as well as because he is the chief executive. The executive power as such, including the judiciary, is inferior to the legislative because it is confined to the faithful execution of the law. Executive and legislative powers are personally separated, and should be separated, because it is not wise to put the making and enforcing of laws in the same hand. The executive power must, for practical reasons, function permanently, in contrast with the only intermittently active legislative, and the permanency of the monarch is further necessary because he holds the federal power, that is, the power of war and peace, leagues and alliances, and foreign relations in general, all of which need permanent and continuous attention. The prerogative power, finally, is the monarch's power "of doing public good without a rule"; it is a power of equity that can function without legal prescription or even against the law if its strict execution would lead to undeserved hardships. The experiences of the Civil War are reflected in the right of resistance against a king who uses his power of assembling Parliament for the purpose of not assembling it; such action would be "war against the people" in the sense of the charge against Charles I. Parliament itself, which holds its legislative trust from the people, may enact measures in violation of it, and again the people are given the right of rebellion.

This is a picture of constitutional government, but it does not contain a single idea that had not been evoked in the course of the

Revolution. Such importance as Locke's political philosophy has is not to be sought in this blueprint of government but in those parts of the work in which he develops his principles of human nature on which the governmental superstructure is based.

§3. The Relation with Richard Hooker

The third incidental factor in Locke's work is its connection with Richard Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. This point is always carefully recorded by historians, and it cannot be overlooked, because some sections of Locke's *Treatise* fairly bristle with footnotes giving quotations from Hooker in support of the text. The connection is of a certain interest because it shows the extent to which the tradition of medieval theory of government is preserved through the medium of Hooker in later English political thought. In particular the theory of consent as the basis of civil society can be traced in direct lineage from Locke back through Hooker and Thomas Aquinas to Seneca and Cicero. But this, I think, is all. We should not, because of the previous number of Hooker quotations in the *Treatise*, fail to notice that some of them, if examined more carefully, have little bearing on Locke's text and prove rather that Locke misunderstood Hooker freely. Furthermore, while Hooker citations abound in certain sections of the *Treatise*, they are conspicuously absent from the decisive chapter on property. And, finally, one should consider that there is a difference between Locke's and Hooker's political theories in the important point that Hooker's derivation of civil society functions in the framework of a theory of a Christian commonwealth and is to be understood in connection with the ecclesiastical polity, while Locke's civil society has dropped this connection.

§4. The Victorious Puritan

Only when the considerable bulk of incidental subject matter is removed does it become possible to present the nucleus of Locke's theory. As in the cases of Hobbes and Spinoza, this nucleus is the new postmedieval anthropology. Locke's conception of man does not have a systematic center, however, like that of the two other philosophers, but is rather comparable in its diffuseness to that of Grotius. Students of Locke have noticed the inconsistency

between his criticism of innate ideas in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and his belief in innate ideas of reason in the *Treatise*. The logical incompatibility of the two positions need not, however, be taken necessarily as a flaw in the system, but rather as a symptom of Locke's easygoing philosophical habits that do not impair seriously the consistency of his basic attitude. Locke was not a fanatical thinker like his two great contemporaries; he did not attempt to penetrate to the elements of human nature but was satisfied with a description of man as he appeared to him and the average people of his social group. Comparing his approach to that of Hobbes, we might say that Hobbes tried to pierce through to the existential roots of this strange new animal, the modern man, while Locke drew a picture of one important variety of the species. Here, I think, lies the strength and the real importance of Locke: his man of the *Treatise* is the evocation of the victorious Puritan bourgeois in politics; out of a deep personal and environmental affinity (his father, a lawyer, fought in Cromwell's army) he grasped the essence of the type that determined the following centuries of English politics. What may appear to the philosopher as the unbearable flatness of Locke is the secret of his effectiveness: he drew the picture of the new man as the new man wanted to see himself. His *Treatise* is, therefore, perhaps the most important one of the great sources for the understanding of English commercial society and the parallel phenomena in other nations.

§5. Locke's Writings on Toleration

The analysis of Locke's idea of man best follows the chronology of his work, as it happens to coincide with the systematic order of problems. The first problem concerns the religious personality of man and the church. Pending qualifications, we may say that Locke was an advocate of toleration. One of his earliest pronouncements on the problem is the fragmentary *Essay Concerning Toleration* of 1667, one year after he had entered as a physician into the service of Lord Ashley, the later Earl of Shaftesbury. The ideas of the essay reappear in 1669 in the *Fundamental Constitutions for the Government of Carolina*, and it is to be presumed that the provisions concerning religious liberty as well as other provisions were introduced into the draft by Ashley and the other proprietors under the influence of Locke. The relevant provisions were that no

one should be a free man, or even an inhabitant of the colony, who did not acknowledge and publicly worship a God; but that any one who did so should receive protection for the exercise of his creed irrespective of denomination. The *Fundamental Constitutions* did not become operative, but their authority imparted a religious liberalism to Carolina that distinguished her from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The earlier ideas were fully developed in the *Letters Concerning Toleration* (First Letter 1689, Second and Third Letters 1690), of which the First Letter contains the materials that are relevant in our context. The First Letter² gives the definitions of commonwealth and church that also underlie the *Treatise*. "The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing their own civil interests." Civil interests are: life, liberty, health, "indolency of body," and the possession of outward things such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like (9). It is the function of the civil magistrate to secure safe possession of the enumerated items to every member of the commonwealth. The church is "a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls" (13).

§6. Toleration and the New Pattern of Revolution

The idea of the church as a private organization within the framework of civil society is the last stage of an evolution the beginnings of which we could discern in Luther and Calvin. The break of the great compromise by the Reformation expressed itself in the sectarian insistence on a purified church sphere and in a corresponding neglect of the secular arm. The result was not the desired subordination of the secular sphere to the ecclesiastical organization, but on the contrary the liberation of the secular sphere from the restrictions that the religious compromise had imposed. The Reform began with the program of submitting the secular sphere to the control of the saints and ended with the relegation of the saints to the corner of "a free and voluntary society." The moving sectarians

2. In *The Works of John Locke*, 10 vols. (London, 1823), 6:1-58; hereafter cited in the text by page references to the sixth volume.

have won their freedom of conscience at the price of keeping quiet and not bothering the political community with their affairs.

This character of the idea of toleration, in the form that it received through Locke, is still sadly misunderstood by a wider public. Our modern unqualified praise of toleration in the abstract overlooks the fact that in the concrete historical situation of Western civilization a new pattern of society has been created that is fraught with formidable revolutionary dangers. One of these dangers has become so obvious today that nobody will question it: through the privatization of religion, Western society has deprived itself of the formal public instruments of resistance against the rise of creeds that are incompatible with Christianity and in further consequence with the body of civilization that has been built on its foundations. What is by no means clear to many is the fact that this danger (i.e., the growth of anti-Christian creeds) is only a special case of a general *type* of revolutionary danger evoked by toleration. The privatization of the church means, in terms of social effects, that the political sphere has lost its spiritual authority and that the religious sphere, as far as it is coextensive with the tolerated churches, is condemned to public impotence. The toleration society has not only lost its public organs of resistance against inimical creeds but also has deprived itself of organs of public spiritual life in general. Since man does not cease to be man, and spirit does not give up its desire for public status simply because Locke or somebody else tells it to do so, persons who are of a spiritual and at the same time of a political temper have found new avenues by which to reach the public. We see the rise of the intellectual outside the church, ranging, according to temper and circumstance, from the scholar through the publicist to the professional revolutionary who tries to gain political public status for his creed. That the personnel who enter these and other occupations after the privatization of the church are to a large extent the same that otherwise would have found their way into a spiritual hierarchy seems probable when we consider the fact that a considerable number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German scholars and philosophers had Protestant ministers for their fathers, or that three leading Russian statesmen—Stalin, Zdanov, and Mikoyan—were once students of theology. The desire for public status is, of course, not confined to intellectual leaders but is shared by the broad masses of the people in their own more primitive and savage way. Our understanding of modern revolutions would be

improved greatly if we realized that their causes are not exclusively economic and faced the fact that such creeds as Communism or National Socialism give the masses something that they seriously need: a public form of their spiritual personality. We may not like the spirit, but we cannot blame the people for taking what they can get; if we don't like it we must offer something better. Unless they speedily close the gap between the despiritualized public sphere and the privatized spirit, even the Anglo-Saxon democracies may well find the future full of surprise. Hitherto, as a consequence of the broader Christianization of their citizens (itself a result of Puritanism, Quakerism, Wesleyanism, etc.), these countries have seemed immune to political religions. A military triumph over National Socialism and Communism will not relieve the existing revolutionary tensions or make the world safe for sweet spiritless normalcy.

§7. Facets of Toleration in the Seventeenth Century

We can now better appreciate the facets of toleration that appear in Milton, Spinoza, Roger Williams, and Locke. Milton represents the type of the sectarian who wishes to give public national status, with a touch of compulsion, to the life of spirit on the comparatively broad basis that we described as National Scripturalism; toleration meant for him the advancement of the public forms of the national spirit as far as it moves within a certain range and the radical suppression, not only privatization, of spiritual phenomena falling outside this range. Spinoza, the mystic, could not be satisfied with this type of toleration because it would not give public status to the forms of spirit that he deemed most important; he shares Milton's insight into the problem of public status and demands a state religion that immunizes against the danger of sectarianism by giving it status on the lower levels of a public hierarchy. Roger Williams's idea of toleration was very broad but dodged the issue of public status through the practical device of colonial evasion. The Rhode Island solution was in practice rather near to the early reformers who put the community substance in the church and considered the secular arm as auxiliary. The limits of this position became clear even in Rhode Island, as we have seen, when the conscience, which held primary rank for Williams, conflicted with the organization of government. Locke avoids Williams's difficulties by ranking the

civil state first, by giving it a monopoly of public status, and by limiting toleration from the outset by the demands of the state.

All creeds may, according to his program, organize their worship societies, with certain exceptions. Not to be tolerated are (a) antinomians (one of the sources of trouble for Roger Williams), (b) religions that imply submission to a foreign potentate as the spiritual head, as for instance Islam, (c) the Catholic Church insofar as it claims a right of interference in public affairs on the basis of its spiritual authority, (d) eschatological sects that claim dominion over worldly goods for the people of God, (e) atheists (46 f.). If we scan this list, we may find that in practice Locke's toleration was not much larger than Milton's, but there is the decisive difference that Milton positively defined the spirit that should have public status, while Locke negatively defined the phenomena that have to be suppressed altogether and excluded all other spiritual manifestation for the public sphere.

§8. The Lord's Dutch Lunch

Within the limits just outlined, the churches may organize and banish, admit members and exclude them, without resort to civil sanctions. Church discipline must rely entirely on spiritual means, ranging from admonition to excommunication. The civil magistrate has no occasion to interfere, for his task is the protection of property, and no property relations are involved in the purely spiritual realm of the church. The only conceivable violation of a civil right could arise on the occasion of excommunication, but this possibility is dismissed as unimportant: "For there is no civil injury done to the excommunicated person by the church minister's refusing him that bread and wine, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which was not bought with his but other men's money" (17). This exquisite interpretation of the Lord's Supper as the Lord's Dutch Lunch, to which one may have a title because one has paid in advance for the victuals, is Locke's unique contribution to Christian doctrine from the newly gained tolerant position.

§9. God: The Proprietor of Man

Having thus liberated the spiritual personality of man by depriving it of public status, Locke turned to those elements of human nature

that constitute the public sphere. As the spirit is taboo, the community substance cannot be any variation of a mystical body, be it Christian, or national or, as with Hobbes, a fusion of personalities. Man enters society not with a spiritual personality but as a human form, possessing pragmatic intelligence and reasoning power but (as far as the commonwealth is concerned) nothing more. We can distinguish three stages in the process by which Locke builds up the unit—man—to which he is prepared to concede public political status.

In the first stage, man is defined as the product of divine workmanship. God has made men; they are his property and they are under a duty to keep themselves alive and not to damage each other because any action of this kind would mean damage to God's property. God is a serious person. He does not make men for fun; if he makes them he wants them to last as long as possible (*Treatise*, sec. 6; p. 119). This first formula contains the key to the understanding of Locke's politics. If we inquire into the source of the rule that nobody must damage God's property we are referred to God, Nature, Reason, and Common Equity; none of these sources is defined or explained in any way whatsoever. We can, therefore, disregard this enumeration of sources as a collection of mere hieroglyphs. Locke was simply too optimistic to see that here was a problem, and he satisfied himself by throwing at the reader's head any authority that had a good name. The assumption of God's workmanship obviously permits not only the rule that God's property should not be damaged but also the rule that positive relations of love, respect, and mutual assistance should prevail between men. One could equally well derive from the axiom of divine creation a system of social obligations, setting aside the question that God's creation need not necessarily be interpreted in terms of common law.³ The

3. The idea that the world and all it contains is God's possession because it is his creation is biblical; cf. Ps. 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." For the derivation of a system of social ethics from this axiom, with the obligation of the rich toward the poor brethren as the main rule, in the biblical and rabbinical literature see S. Schechter, *Notes of Lectures on Jewish Philanthropy*, in *Studies in Judaism, Third Series*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924), 243 ff. See particularly the Cabalistic story related on 248 f.: "A poor man, a great scholar, in the city of Safed, broke his pitcher with which he used to fetch water. Not being able to buy a new one, he complained against God, saying that he had not deserved to be as poor as all that. As nobody came forth to restore his loss, God was about to smite the city with locusts. Fortunately, R. Isaac Luria, the great cabalist of that city, heard a *Bat Kol*

Treatise does not show the slightest trace of any such idea; it never occurred to Locke that positive social obligations might belong in the public sphere.⁴ The rule of doing no damage has nothing to do with reason, nature, or other hieroglyphs, but has for its source the ethical conventions of Locke and of the society of which he is the respected representative. Man is a proprietor who watches over his own property and recognizes his duty not to damage anybody else's, and God is formed in his image. The seventeenth century has produced a curious assortment of Gods. For Grotius, God was a roving merchant who wants all men to keep commercial intercourse over the seven seas; for Hobbes, he was the Leviathan sitting on the proud; for Louis XIV, a king with a court; for the profoundly religious Locke, he is a manufacturer who does not want his property to be damaged.

§10. Man: The Proprietor of Himself

Soon, however, the religious paraphernalia are discarded, and the chapter on property (*Treatise*, chap. V; pp. 129 ff.) gets down to business. Whether God is a proprietor or not, what really matters is that man is the proprietor of himself. No pretext of derivation is made for this second step; man simply "has a property in his own person" (sec. 26; p. 130).⁵ In this phase of the theory men are equal proprietors; it is the phase that Locke calls "the state of nature." The appearance of man as the proprietor of his person would have fascinated Hobbes if he had lived to witness it. He might have classified it as a variety of madness similar to that of the man who believes himself God. The history of political thought does not offer an attack on the dignity of man comparable

telling him of the impending calamity and the cause thereof. He at once collected an adequate sum of money and presented it to the poor man, thus saving the city from the invasion of the locusts."

4. The correctness of this statement may be questioned considering Locke's development of restrictive rules for the acquisition of property in the state of nature, which may be interpreted as social obligations. See for an elucidation of this point *Of Civil Government*, 13, n. 3.

5. One might argue, however, that the first part of the theory, the proprietorship of God, has not completely disappeared, since the persons owning themselves are under the duty to respect one another's rights; due to their creaturely status they are all equal, and every one of them is the proprietor of his person. But the third phase of the theory, as we shall see, does away with most of the equality, so that the creational argument wears rather thin.

to this classification of the human person as a capital good, to the undisturbed economic use of which one has a natural right. The ancient division of men into freemen and natural slaves, or the modern distinction of superior and inferior races, admits at least the dignity of a part of mankind and justifies the disregard for the rest by the argument that it consists of an inferior breed of man. But the blunt assertion that man is an instrument of economic production, that man has a property right in his living body just as in "the labor of his body" and "the work of his hands" (sec. 26; p. 130) is again as unique an idea as the Lord's Lunch. It is an assertion that is difficult to reconcile with the traditional picture of Locke—asccribed to by many excellent authorities—as not only deeply religious but also particularly sensitive to human dignity.

In the state of nature, the human self-owners have the right to mingle their labor power with nature, which God has given common to all. The sphere of property can be extended beyond the human body by appropriating and transforming natural materials for human use, by enclosing pieces of land for the growth of fruits, etc. Any natural object in which work has been invested becomes thereby the property of the investor. The only limitations are that nobody must appropriate objects that have become, through work spent on them, the property of another person, and that nobody may lay in, fence in, etc., more of the common treasure than he can use. This is a truly idyllic state, somewhat reminiscent even of that of which the Diggers dreamed. But it is not the type of society that Locke wants, though he describes it with yearning delight.⁶

6. The restrictions on the acquisition of property are Locke's closest approximation to a conception of social obligations in the public sphere. It would be unjustified, however, to attach much importance to this phase of Locke's theory as long as we are engaged in an analysis of Locke's work itself, because the description of the state of nature is for Locke not more than a stepping stone from which he ascends to the upper levels of his political system. The obligations of the natural sphere do not influence the construction on the other levels and may be neglected as far as Locke's ultimate intentions are concerned. The theory of natural social obligations becomes important, however, when it is isolated from the context of Locke's *Treatise*, as it was by later political thinkers. The theory of the personal labor investment as the limit of personal property can develop, if torn out of Locke's system, into a highly explosive idea; we find its traces in nineteenth-century revolutionary doctrine up to Marx. For this development see C. H. Driver, "John Locke," in *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age A.D. 1650-1750*, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw (London: G. G. Harrap and Co., 1928; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 91. The same author's opinion (92) that the Whig gentry could not derive much comfort from Locke's theory seems to be, however, less well founded,

§ I I. The Civil State—Money and Differentiation of Property

In order to make property in one's person really useful and to get his respectable citizens out of this absurd situation in which all must dig equally, he needs the third stage of his theory. As God, reason, and nature do not help in this situation, man has to do something himself. The state of nature is precarious because every man is his own judge and executor and everyone is exposed to invasion from everyone else. In order to avoid these "inconveniences" men consent to incorporate as a community and to create a government that takes over the task of making impartial rules for the protection of property and to execute them without discrimination as between equals (sec. 95; p. 164 f.). The three advantages of political society over the state of nature are: (1) established law, (2) an impartial judge, (3) power of enforcement. Once the incorporation compact is concluded, all resolutions concerning the institution of government are to be made by majorities, and they lead in the reasonable case to the type of government previously outlined. The creation of the civil state as such, though greatly relieving certain "inconveniences," would still leave the respectable citizen digging.

But the civil state now reveals its real significance as the source of inequality. Locke enlarges the notion of *consent* beyond its meaning in the context of the incorporating compact. Consent does not mean only the consent to governmental protection of equal rights, or in other words to a *formal machinery* for the more perfect security of a status that is essentially the natural state. Rather, consent is extended to mean consent to the *material institution* of capitalistic society. The meaning of consent is thus thinned out to the factual existence of the capitalistic social structure without

for Locke took great care, as we shall see, to make it clear that the *natural* obligations were not *civil* obligations. The gaps between the different levels of Locke's theory are the sorrow of every interpreter. At the risk of hurting feelings, I confess that I can see no other explanation for these gaps than a sad lack in Locke of that intellectual responsibility that is the first requirement of greatness in a philosopher. Other interpreters express the same criticism by speaking of Locke as a "concrete thinker" (whatever that means), or by praising his "moderation" or his "good sense." These formulas are certainly more polite, but I wonder whether a serious analysis of ideas can be conducted by means of such terminology. To praise Locke by ascribing to him qualities that may be virtues in a politician is equal to saying that he cannot be measured by the standards of a philosopher.

revolt from the bottom; as long as there is no revolt, there is consent. The decisive turn from the egalitarian state of nature to the property *differentiation* (not *protection*) of civil society comes with the "invention of money, and the tacit agreement of men to put a value on it" (sec. 36; p. 134). The recognition of the value of durable goods, which are usable for money, brings an end to the economy of use value. It enables men to store value and to acquire through the exchange value of the stored money larger possessions to which "by consent" (sec. 36) man had the same property title as to the products of his bodily labor (sec. 50; pp. 140 f.). Unequal property is not a natural right, but a right by consent in the sense of lack of revolt. But why do men consent to the property differentiation? The answer involves a surprising shift in the conceptual system; men consent because they have "the *desire* of having more than men needed" (sec. 37; p. 134). The system of legal hieroglyphs comes crashing down, and we are back to the solid Hobbesian passions: the acquisitive property society is the product not of right, but of passion. If we wish to preserve any of the respectable vocabulary, we can do it only in the formula; men consent to give reign to their passions.

§12. The Equal Protection of Inequality

We have given the essentials of Locke's doctrine, but a few details will add color. In spite of the happy end, there has been a bit too much talk about equality for the comfort of Locke's readers. In sec. 54 he allays their misgivings by assuring them: "Though I have said above 'That all men by nature are equal,' I cannot be supposed to understand all sorts of equality" (p. 142). He then enumerates as sources of legitimate inequality "age and virtue," "excellency of parts/and merit," birth, benefits received, etc. Equality is confined to the "natural freedom" of not being subjected to authority without consent. Governmental authority, however, has the one and only end of the "preservation of property" (sec. 123; p. 179). Throughout the *Treatise* runs the iron principle that men may be unequal in every conceivable respect, but that they are equal in the protection that they receive for the inequality. The government will preserve with divine impartiality the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the rich. Marx is usually credited with the criticism leveled against the legal order of the bourgeois system as being the

superstructure serving the ends of class differentiation. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary to make this statement in form of a criticism bringing out a hitherto unobserved flaw; the preservation of the inequality of property is, on the contrary, the avowed purpose of the Lockean system of government. Locke was almost an inventive genius in producing the phrases that lent themselves to later criticism. To give just one example: in sec. 142 (p. 189) he sets forth the bounds that the law of God and Nature have set to the legislative power of every commonwealth, in all forms of government; the first of them is "to have one rule for rich and poor, for the favorite at Court, and the countryman at plough." Who would not be reminded in reading this sentence of Anatole France's praise of the law that in its eternal majesty punishes with equal severity the theft of the poor and of the rich and permits them impartially to sleep under a bridge?

§13. Spiritual Disease—The Revolution-Breeding Element

Such an account of Locke's ideas leaves a curious impression: the spiritual personality of man is banished from the public sphere and condemned to impotence; the public person of man is abased to an object of property rights along with land, furniture, and other chattels; government is reduced to an instrument for the preservation of a social state of doubtful justice. If an enemy of bourgeois society would do his worst to draw a picture of it that would justify a revolution, he would assemble traits of this kind. But Locke evokes this picture with positive value accents; he recommends it as the ideal of society. If we consider this grotesque perversion of human values, if we remember further certain other details such as God the proprietor, the profane remarks on the Lord's Supper, the bland admission of passion as the determining factor of the social order, the refusal to introduce any positive ethical principles into the public sphere for the restraint of passion, and if we consider Locke's conscienceless unawareness of the enormity of his performance, we arrive at the conclusion—which the attentive reader has probably drawn by now for himself—that Locke was suffering from a severe spiritual disturbance.

I say advisedly from a *spiritual* disturbance, not from a *mental*; Locke was not a clinical case, and his disease does not come under

the categories of psychopathology. His is a case of spiritual disease in the sense of the Platonic *nosos*; it belongs in the pneumatopathology of the seventeenth century of which Hobbes was the masterly diagnostician. In Locke the grim madness of Puritan acquisitiveness runs amuck. The fury of personal mysticism has simmered down. The elements of a moral public order that derive from biblical tradition have disappeared. A public morality based on belief in the spiritual substance of the nation is practically absent. What is left, as an unlovely residue, is the passion of property.

We have mentioned Karl Marx and indicated that his theory of the bourgeois legal order, meant to be revealing, is advanced openly by Locke as a positive quality. We may generalize this point and say that Locke has succeeded in creating a caricature of bourgeois society that corresponds trait for trait to the dark image that later socialistic revolutionaries have drawn of it. When a society creates its own revolutionary caricature and pays it sincere homage, we need no further evidence of the profound spiritual disorder in which it lives. It would, of course, be ridiculous to take Locke's theory as the adequate description of bourgeois reality. Even he who has a very low opinion of mankind might be willing to admit that no society that is based on the principles of Locke, to the exclusion of all others, could survive a generation. But Locke, while not representing the most desirable features of bourgeois society, certainly is a part of it, and there are millions like him who accept his principles as the standards of political order. In this respect Locke is the outstanding symbol of the revolution-breeding element within the capitalistic order, foreshadowing the events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



Intermission

§I. The First Cycle: Order against Spirit

With Locke the first cycle of modern political thought comes to its close, and a moment of reflection on the result may be in place. The creation of the new order began with the restriction of legitimate warfare to sovereign political units. The theory of Grotius draws the circle of such units still rather large, but it excludes from the international scene the religious faction as a warring unit; henceforth only the nonreligious power units shall have public status. The counterpart to this principle is, at the end of the century, Locke's theory of toleration, which removes the church from the domestic public scene and gives public status to the nonspiritual element of man only. Sectarian religious enthusiasm had disrupted the medieval civilizational compromise; the European society of the rising national states had, after terrible convulsions, finally mastered the anticivilizational danger that the church proved unable to digest or to suppress, with a consequent enormous loss of prestige for the religious organizations and their subordination to the interests of the new political communities.

We have to realize fully the desperateness of the struggle, reaching over more than a century, and the very real danger of anticivilizational destruction in order to appreciate the strength of the new sentiment of order that expresses itself since the late seventeenth century in the belief that civilization was gained, not destroyed, in the great crisis beginning with the Reformation. From this period dates the pattern of history that still has wide popular acceptance, even among the laymen in the profession, of the dark age of religion and theology that was followed by Civilization, written large, based on Nature and Reason. The new age is the liberator of the

spirit, the church is its mortal enemy; the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and Voltaire's "Ecrasez l'infame!" have fixed the sentiment profoundly to this day. The rise of new religions, the appearance of a new Koran in the *Kapital*, of a patristic literature with Lenin as the great church father, of the heresiarch Trotsky, of a new inquisition, are either simply denied by the stalwarts of the creed as religious phenomena or admitted as such to the extent of being called barbaric relapses from the standards of Civilization into medieval forms that progress has left behind for good. They are in the nature of bad dreams and will pass away; such things do not *really* happen in the twentieth century.

The feeling that a great settlement and a great new start had been made is the dominant note toward the end of the century; the sentiment and the mythical evocations that it produced are so strong that the realities of the situation are blotted out to the believer.

Locke's idea of political order is a revolutionary caricature; that it could be overlooked as such, and is still overlooked by the majority of students, was due to the deep spiritual disorder. But even a spiritual disorder has to appear as an order relatively or it becomes unbearable, and the Myth of Order in the destruction is provided by the symbols of the settlement, which are the same for Grotius and Locke: Reason and Nature. Man is a rational being; his reason permits him through knowledge and experience to control the deficiencies of passion and to progress ever further toward a reasonable life, once the enthusiasm of religion (Locke) is subdued.

While the new order appeared roseate in the Myth of Reason and Nature to Grotius and Locke, their greater contemporaries were not happy. Hobbes, the psychologist and moralist, penetrated to the level of human existence on which the common denominator of sectarian anticivilizationalism and civilizational antispiritualism is to be found: the passion of power. Under the veneer of sectarian religiousness appear the "madness" of self-inflation and the intolerance of conscience; under the veneer of Reason and Nature appear in Grotius the exploitation of commercial opportunities at the expense of less developed nations and in Locke, in his neat slip, the desire for property expansion untrammelled by social obligations. Spinoza, the mystic, struggles valiantly for the Life of Reason but cannot do more than prove that the Life of Reason is incompatible with the reasonable life to the point of mutual exclusion.

§2. The Second Cycle: The Reassertion of Spirit

An order had been gained, but the spirit was lost. The next cycle of thought brings the reassertion of spirit—and along with it a new and very complicated structure of the history of thought. Political thought moves from now on along at least three different roads. The first road is that of the New Science, inaugurated by Giambattista Vico. It is in principle motivated by the experience of Western decadence. Its leading figures notice with growing alarm the symptoms of the civilizational and political catastrophe that in our time has reached its bloody climax. They try heroically to awaken the sense of the danger; they describe the signs of the decay and in order to recognize them as such restore the consciousness of the standards of a spiritual civilization in their own person, some of them, like Vico, or later Nietzsche, with the hope of finding an echo of saving action—which of course does not come because the toleration society offers equal opportunity to all, to the great man of his age of speaking unheard, and to the cheap smearer of capturing the public. The two centuries from Giambattista Vico to Max Weber are without parallel in the history of human thought for the number of able minds who occupied themselves with politics, fascinated by the spectacle of decay, as well as for their achievement in establishing a science of politics—a personal effort and a scientific achievement that, on the whole, has gone to waste in terms of public effect.

On a second road we find men who sometimes are excellent diagnosticians of the crisis but in addition are spiritual activists who engineer the revolution against the decadent society, men like Marx, Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler. They form a middle group between the men of the New Science and the thinkers of the bourgeois settlement insofar as they diagnose correctly the decadence but bring to the solution of the crisis a narrowness of spirit that disrupts the shaky Western civilization still further and at the same time betrays their derivation from the very decadence that they intend to overcome.

And then there is the third road, the road of the seventeenth-century settlement, of the Myth of Reason, of Progress, and of the success of Civilization that is followed by minds of a distinctly secondary cast. If we set aside the group of the activists who give their mark to the nineteenth century and after, we may say that

Hobbes and Locke are symbolic of the two attitudes that determine the parting of the roads.

As we have to proceed by selection, the line of secondary thinkers will be treated rather summarily, while the main attention will have to go to the men of the New Science. A certain difficulty arises in the presentation through the time differences of the thought phenomena on the different levels. The actual decadence and the activist revolt against it move slowly in comparison with the evolution of ideas in the New Science, so that phenomena of decay are discussed and discounted on the basis of their early symptoms in the sphere of science before they reach their full development in the sphere of decadence. To give a few examples: Vico reacted against Progress and Reason at the beginning of the eighteenth century, while the idea of Progress itself reached its full stature only half a century later and dominated a number of great sociological systems of the nineteenth century. Kant elaborated the theory of biological evolution and set forth why it does not explain what it is supposed to explain at the end of the eighteenth century, while it reached its full sway in the decadent sphere only when Darwin made it popular by transferring the struggle for life of the competitive bourgeois society to the animal realm and thereby giving it a new lease on life in politics because now it had gained the prestige of a law of natural science. Vico established the thesis of the foundation of social order on a social myth; the idea was continued by Schelling and made the basis of his *Philosophy of Mythology*, but only toward the end of the nineteenth century did it penetrate into the activist sphere and become socially effective in Sorel and later in Mussolini. The elitarian interpretation of political science was well established through Renan, Nietzsche, Mosca, and Pareto before activists used it as technical means of revolt against democracy. Mass psychology was developed incidental to the analysis of democratic decadence when general suffrage, hailed as the victory of democracy, had barely come under way, and decades before it was used as the instrument of destruction directed against democracy, etc. In practically all of these cases, the adherents of the Myth of Reason do not yet acknowledge the results of science. There actually exist recent histories of political thought in which Vico is not mentioned and Nietzsche is treated as a minor Fascist who had funny ideas about the Blond Beast. In the practice of presentation this means that in the analysis of the New Science we have to take phenomena of

decadence for granted that reveal themselves to other eyes than those of the great scientists decades and centuries later; some of the anticipated phases have not even occurred yet.

The cycle of thought that begins with Vico comes to a systematic close with Hegel. It is politically the period of the establishment of national democracy, producing in the sphere of evocations the national spirit, and Hegel's state as objective morality. The year of Hegel's death is the year of the English Reform Bill; its analysis as the opening wedge for mass democracy was Hegel's last work. With Marx begins the line of the spiritual activists with mass effectiveness.

§3. Spleen and Skepticism

After the powerful attack of Vico and the grandiose first cast of the New Science, the hesitant steps taken in northern Europe to withdraw from the Myth of Reason will look somewhat behind the time. They must not be underrated, nevertheless. The work of Vico did not become effective in England and France; the resistance had to develop independently out of the forces of those societies. While the results are modest compared with the work of Vico, the change of sentiment that makes them possible merits our attention, at least in some outstanding examples.

a. The Skepticism of Hume

In England the decisive break came through David Hume (1711–1776). The *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740)¹ brings the attack on Reason with the purpose of revealing the true foundation of morals and politics in the sphere of sentiment. It is a curiously hesitant approach, not particularly clear either about the principles of critique or about the results achieved. Hume is not a revolutionary thinker, as far as the political order is concerned. He accepts the settlement of 1688, considers as desirable a balance of power between king, Lords, and Commons, and defends Walpole's regime because the ascendancy of Parliament, tempered by corruption, will provide the delightful Polybian mixed form of government that is

1. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Everyman's Library Edition, 2 vols. (London: J. M. Dent; Toronto: E. P. Dutton, 1911, 1920); citations by page number in the text will be to this edition.

most conducive to liberty for all. He is a conservative, swimming along in a settled society; he has no principles except the desire of maintaining the pleasant state of things without disturbance. He is a conservative, but he is intelligent and acknowledges that his sympathy for, and enjoyment of, the existing order is equivalent to an absence of principles; this absence of principles is what he calls his skepticism. Society as it exists is agreeable, at least for him, and he analyzes the motives that determine his agreement with the property order as well as the constitutional order of his society. The motives reveal themselves as a complicated set of sentiments, customs, beliefs and conventions, but not as a reasoned consent to a contract.

b. Reason and Sentiment

It is the chief merit of Hume to have shown that a political society that corresponds to Locke's ideals can be constructed theoretically out of sentiments. His theory of sentiments may not stand up too well if it is meant as an exhaustive analysis of political society, but it still has its qualities as a type description of the political attitude of the considerable mass of men whose only relation to politics is the desire to be left alone and to pursue their private affairs with as little disturbance from the political sphere as possible. While this result cannot be called a great contribution to the science of politics, it was rather consequential through its negative as well as its positive implications. Negatively, Hume has taken great pains to demonstrate the absurdity of the contract theory as a theory of the origin of society. His critique of reason, which was merely preparatory to his philosophy of politics, has overshadowed what he considered his principal work. When today the name of Hume is mentioned, we think of him not primarily as a political philosopher but as the epistemologist who asserted that the category of causality was a belief. This was an important step in the theory of natural science and determined Kant's countertheory of the aprioristic structure of understanding, but it was only of incidental importance for the theory of politics. As far as the science of politics is concerned, Hume did not do much more than reestablish the position of Grotius. Reason is the function of formal ratiocination that has its place in mathematics, in the drawing of conclusions, and in the correct coordination of means to an end; but the subject matter to which

reasoning is applied has to come from elsewhere, in the field of politics from the human "propensities." Nevertheless, the sweeping character of the critique of reason, eliminating reason relentlessly as a source of material knowledge from natural science as well as from religion, morals, and politics, left a profound impression and may be said to have dealt the deathblow to contract theory in political science. Positively, his theory of sentiments had the consequence of showing that the principles of government could be found elsewhere than in reason; the way was opened again for an analysis of human personality as the center of political theory, though Hume's own contribution to this end remained somewhat restricted.

c. Propensities of a Gentleman Spleen

The restrictions are self-imposed; they are determined by Hume's political attitude and his idea of the function of philosophy in English society. Hume's philosophy is not rooted in mysticism like Bodin's or Spinoza's, but in the "propensities" of an English gentleman of the eighteenth century. He describes admirably the dilemma of his position in the last section of book I of the *Treatise* (pt. IV, sec. 7; 1:249 ff.). The search for ultimate principles, which would permit an orientation of life, has for its result the insight that there are no such objective principles. The answers to such questions as "Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread?" etc. (1:253), appear upon reflection as subjective determinants of the mind, acquired by custom. The endeavor defeats itself. The further reflection penetrates, the more disquieting and unanswerable the questions become, until "I am environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty" (1:254). Reason cannot dispel these clouds, but Nature fortunately offers a remedy against "this philosophical melancholy and delirium" by relaxing the bent of mind. "I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further." In this mood he still feels such remains of the former disposition that he is ready to throw all his books and notes into

the fire and resolves "never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy." The sentiment of "spleen and indolence," however, is not final. Philosophy cannot combat it, but Nature takes its course, and when he is tired of company and has taken a walk, his mind is again collected in itself; curiosity reawakens and if he would resist the philosophical sentiment "I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy" (1:255).

d. The Social Function of Skeptical Reflection

The nonchalant change between the philosophic and the social mood is, however, not entirely a matter of propensity. Human weakness would have to lead to speculative inquiries, because without reflection man would be given to popular fancies and superstitions that might become dangerous to social peace. Since it is impossible for the mind of man "to rest . . . in that narrow circle of objects, which are the subject of daily conversation and action" (1:256), there is only the choice between superstitious beliefs and philosophy. In that situation, philosophy is preferable. For superstitions seize more strongly on the mind and disturb conduct and actions, while philosophy, "if just, can present us only with mild and moderate sentiments." Rarely does it occur that philosophers run into extravagances of conduct like the Cynics. "Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous."

The last remark gives the key to Hume's philosophical attitude. Religion is still a public danger and should be banished; philosophy, a cooler form of occupation with the position of man in the universe, is safer, though sometimes it may get too hot. The "careless manner" of philosophy is the most desirable; reflection should go to the point where current beliefs in an objectively true structure of the universe, of man and society, are destroyed and the dangers arising from faith (which is a synonym for superstition) are neutralized. The ensuing melancholy will be relieved by the employment with "domestic affairs" and the amusement in "common recreations." It is a very hygienic philosophy, balancing a diet of speculative melancholy with more earthy pleasures, so that on the whole a settled society will run its course smoothly.

e. Sympathy and Convention

That society can run smoothly when by a little skeptical reflection the disturbing bubbles of superstition are pricked is due to the structure of human nature. The element in man that makes for coherence of society is *sympathy*. "No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own" (bk. II, sec. XI; 2:40). It is difficult for men to follow their own inclination or judgment in opposition to their social environment; the psychological pressure is strong enough to operate, through empathy, in the direction of general uniformity. The effect of sympathy is all the more assured because human nature on the whole is uniform, and what gives pleasure to one gives pleasure to the other. If a man follows merely his self-interest he will soon find that he is safer in the possession of his life and property if he refrains from attacking others, and the others will see the same. A mutual understanding that self-restriction is the better course in the long run will establish rules of social conduct based not on contracts but on what Hume calls *conventions*. A convention is a rule of conduct that is observed not for moral reasons, or because a promise has been given, but because by mutual understanding its observance is in the interest of everybody concerned. It is not necessary to go deeper into the details: self-interest, a limited generosity, and sympathy are the forces that permit the construction of political society. The merit of the construction lies, as I have said earlier, in the fact that it describes empirically fairly correctly the attitude of large masses of people who are integrated into society by social pressure, self-interest, a vague sympathy, and unwillingness to oppose the settled order as long as the property and comfort sphere of life is tolerably secure; in brief, the ahistoric stratum of society.

The attitude and theory of Hume are in essence a confirmation of Locke. The peripheral sections of human personality are given the monopoly of constituting political society. Spirit is deprived of public status, and philosophy is added as a safeguard against unrest emanating from enthusiasms of any kind. The "freezing" of history has reached its climax. On the other hand, a decisive change

has taken place. The ahistoric society is no longer constructed by means of legal hieroglyphs but is presented realistically as a structure of sentiments, however defective the analysis may be in the details. Hume writes occasionally a sentence that recalls the atmosphere of Vico: "Human Nature is the only science of man; and yet has been hitherto the most neglected" (bk. I, sec. VII; 1:257).² He certainly did not intend to open the way for the later anthropological philosophy of Kant and Hegel, but his critique of reason and his realistic analysis of at least the periphery of personality actually had this effect.

§4. Montesquieu

a. Atmosphere of Montesquieu

The French revolt paralleling Hume's critique of reason came through Montesquieu (1689–1755). Again a new set of problems was opened that could not be covered by the Myth of Reason or the contract theory of government. But here the parallel ends, for the approach of Montesquieu differs as widely from that of Hume as the French political situation differed from the English. Hume was the philosopher of a settled society that had passed through a revolution. A splenetic humor is creeping up, tempered in Hume by a natural complacency; but through the veneer of his conformism and skepticism one can sense other possibilities: the century of Hume is the century of Beckford and his *Vathek*. The France of Montesquieu is full of unrest presaging a revolution; the expectancy of movement, the smell of unknown horizons, is as characteristic of Montesquieu as a certain musty smell of stagnation is peculiar to Hume.

It may surprise the reader to see Montesquieu and Hume compared in terms of atmosphere, but I am not indulging in poetic

2. One should not overrate such affinities, however; I am giving Hume the benefit of the doubt. Actually, the quoted sentence may be no more than a conversational platitude current at the time; cf. the lines in Pope's *Essay on Man* (London, 1734), 23 (Epistle II, lines 1–2).

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
the proper study of mankind is Man.

It would also be good for the better understanding of Hume's previous shifting between speculation to compare [Richard] Steele's *The Club at the Trumpet* (*Tatler*, no. 132 [February 11, 1709–1710]), where the pleasures of dull company as a transition between thought and sleep are described delightfully in almost the terms of Hume.

license. It is necessary to get a feeling of the atmosphere if we wish to understand the significance of Montesquieu's work at all. The great treatise *De l'esprit des Lois* (published 1748) is a curiosity in the literature on politics, for there exists no other work of similar physical dimensions, of a similar range of problems, of a comparable reputation, and of an investment of some twenty years of labor that, if we look for tangible results, does not offer any. We can scratch up some minor ideas, such as the suggestions for the reform of criminal law, or Montesquieu's stand against slavery, his personal enthusiasm for liberty, or his tripartite division of governmental powers into legislative, executive, and judiciary, all of which, though not unimportant, are not in a reasonable proportion to the magnitude of his work. But his name is not associated with any outstanding contribution touching the principles of political theory. The results of the *Esprit des Lois* are distinctly not worth reporting like those of Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, or Vico.

The importance of Montesquieu's work lies entirely in its restatement of the range of problems of a system of politics at a time when this range had been deplorably reduced through the intellectual provincialism of the reason and contract theories. It is a restitution of the complex of problems in principle. The problems themselves are not integrated into a system. Incompatible fragments of theory stand side by side because Montesquieu had not the philosophical power of constructing a system, and the application of his theory to large masses of historical materials is irrelevant because he did not have the power of penetrating them critically. The *Esprit des Lois* is in its theoretical as well as in its empirical aspects the work of a dilettante, but of a dilettante with enthusiasm, with ambition, with a great horizon, and with a flair for the essentials.

b. The Anthropological Question

Montesquieu was clear about the problem that faced him. The center of politics is man, and what his time needed was a science of man. In the preface to the *Esprit des Lois* he praises himself as happy if his work could help in the destruction of "prejudices," and by prejudices he means "the fact that man does not know himself." Hume's idea of sympathy is recalled when he says that man is pliable to the impression of others to the degree that he is capable of knowing his own nature if somebody shows it to him and of losing

every sense of it if it is kept hidden from him. The anthropological question is introduced as the central systematic topic.

However, as soon as the execution of the plan commences, we run into the difficulties of a technically incompetent terminology slurring over the problems. Space does not permit a step-by-step disentangling of the messy book I, *On Laws in General*. I must refer the reader to the original and shall give only the substance of the argument. Man belongs structurally to several realms: he is a physical object, an animal, he has intellect, a moral personality, and a spiritual personality capable of religious experiences. This structure determines his relations to his environment in the widest sense of the word, comprising nature, fellowmen, and God. The relations between man and his environment are governed by rules that have been fixed by the Creator and that are accessible to human knowledge. This set of rules Montesquieu calls the "laws of nature," comprising the laws of physics as well as the natural rules governing social relations and the natural rules governing the relations with God. As man is fallible, weak, and influenced by passions, he is liable to depart from some of these rules. The rules of the physical world are beyond his reach, but in religion, morals, and politics he can violate God's natural rules. In order to prevent the violation, or at least to minimize it, man has to be reminded permanently of them, and this end serves the laws of religion by which God recalls to man his natural state, the moral laws by which the philosophers keep moral consciousness alive, and the "political and civil laws" by which the legislators keep men to their social natural relations. The last mentioned class of laws is the subject of the *Esprit des Lois* (I.1-2).

c. *The People*—*Esprit des Lois*

Thus far the exposition of the desirable political and civil laws might result in another natural law construction. But at this point the new factor of the *people* is introduced. The people is conceived on the same structural lines as man, from its physique through its temperament and *moeurs* to its religion. Within the framework of general human nature, nations differ. They are not simply replicas of one another, but have each their individuality. It is the art of the legislator to adapt the political and civil laws to the circumstances of the case. The whole of variations that the general law undergoes

in the process of its adaptation to the structural elements of an individual people is what Montesquieu calls the *esprit* of a legal order (I.3).

The structural features that have a bearing on the *esprit* of the laws fall into two classes. The first class consists of the governmental structural elements. A people may be organized as a republic, a monarchy, or a despoty. The question of which should be preferred is determined by the size of a people. Small countries are most favorably organized as republics (democratic or aristocratic); middle-sized territories as monarchies; large territories like the Asiatic as despoties. The second class consists of the "more particular" elements, ranging from the climate and soil to the religion of a people. The organization of the *Esprit des Lois* follows on the whole this program. The frequent charges that the work is for the larger part disorganized are not justified. It is organized about as well as it can be considering that the theoretical problems are skipped with serene insouciance. The following table of contents of the *Esprit des Lois* is supposed to bring out the systematic order to the topics that Montesquieu's arrangement of thirty-one coordinated books leaves in the dark, and it is supposed to present the catalog of problems that Montesquieu has reinstated.

d. Contents of the Esprit des Lois

I. General Structural Elements (Books 2–8)

- (1) The Three Types of Government (2)
- (2) The Principles of the Three Types of Government (3)
- (3) The Influence of the Principles
 - (a) On Educational Laws (4)
 - (b) On Political Laws (5)
 - (c) On Civil and Criminal Laws (6)
 - (d) On Laws Concerning Luxury and Women (7)
- (4) The Corruption of the Three Principles of Government (8)

II. Particular Structural Elements (Books 9–25)

- (1) Security
 - (a) Offensive (9)
 - (b) Defensive (10)
- (2) Liberty of Man
 - (a) Political Liberty, the Constitution (11)
 - (b) Civil Liberty, Slavery (12)

- (c) Revenue, Taxes (13)
- (3) Climate and Soil
 - (a) Influence of Climate on Man and His Customs (14)
 - (b) Climate and Slavery (15)
 - (c) Domestic Slavery; Position of Women (16)
 - (d) Political Servitude (17)
 - (e) Nature of the Terrain; Topographic Influences (18)
- (4) The National Spirit (19)
- (5) Economics
 - (a) Commerce; Nature and Distinctions (20)
 - (b) Evolution of Commerce (21)
 - (c) Use of Money (22)
- (6) Size of Population (23)
- (7) Religion (24-25)
- III. Legislative Technique
 - (1) Relations between Civil, Political, Moral, Religious, and Natural Laws (26)
 - (2) Composition of Laws (29)
- IV. Historical Digressions
 - (1) The Roman Law of Succession (27)
 - (2) Civil Laws of the Franks (28)
 - (3) Feudal Law of the Franks, and Monarchy (30-31)

e. A New Sense of History—National Destiny

A perusal of this table of contents shows its systematic weakness but at the same time the total change of atmosphere since the time of Hobbes and Locke. The obsession of constructing an ideal system of government has given way to the recognition of the infinite variety of peoples who require governmental orders in accordance with their historic individualities. If a system of institutions is well adapted to the general spirit of a people, it has become so strongly individualized, in the opinion of Montesquieu, that it is unusable for any other people. (Montesquieu might be read with profit by the incurable provincials who believe that a system of government that has worked in one country is a panacea for the evils of the world.) The feeling that nations are historical individuals is all of a sudden present. The feeling is strengthened by a great enlargement of the historical and geographical horizons. Montesquieu's work abounds in references to China, Japan, Persia, and primitive societies. One

can sense his enthusiasm in discovering the multitude of peoples and civilizations, the rich diversification of mankind. There are still remnants of the brutality of reasonable man, who believes that his own standards define the ideal man and that everybody else has to be transformed in his image, but his prevailing sentiment is that of a profound respect for variety and the feeling that it should be left alone. Montesquieu goes so far as to admit that Islam is the proper religion for the Near Eastern regions and that the actual extension of Christianity corresponds to its natural environment. He further believes that new religions should not be introduced frivolously in a country because this would endanger the solidarity of the national spirit. When, however, critics drew his attention to the conclusion that this principle would preclude Christian missionary activity, he retracted it and admitted that the true religion was, of course, exempted from the rule. The incident reveals his quandary. He feels that Christian Western civilization is itself a historic individuality and not obligatory for other peoples, but does not have the inner freedom to admit the fact, nor the intellectual power to construct a philosophy of history that could cope with this problem.

There is even present in Montesquieu the sentiment of fatalism that appears in its full strength only in the later nineteenth century as the fruit of historicism. In book XI.5 of the *Esprit des Lois* he says that every state has besides its general aim of maintaining itself in existence "a particular aim," its peculiar historical mission. In his essay on Roman history the "idea" of Rome, its drive for aggrandizement, is the guiding principle for the dissection of the Roman destiny. Once the mission, the aim, has taken shape, the course of history is inevitable for a people, and the aim will not be discarded even if it leads to destruction. The statesmen as well as the nations are helpless against their destiny: "if Caesar and Pompey had thought like Cato, others would have thought like Caesar and Pompey, and the Republic that was destined to perish would have been torn into the abyss by another hand."³ The sentiment of destiny and decadence is present in Montesquieu as in Vico.

Reflections of this kind show how far Montesquieu has been able to realize his program of restoring the science of man. The

3. Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*, 1734 (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1954), 60.

rationality of man has become one structural element among others; political science must incorporate into its system the complete structure of man and deal with politics in all the complexity that results from the complex structure of man. The body politic is not a realm of reason, but a sphere of life in which climatic and temperamental factors exert their influence as much as religious experiences. The theory of the general spirit and its fatal determining force has added the factor of the historical existence of man.

f. The Idea of a Free Government

The factors are assembled in Montesquieu's work, but they are not knit into a system. The sentiment of historical fatality appears now and then, but it does not interfere with the more optimistic attitude of governmental reform that appears in other passages. A final word on this side of Montesquieu is necessary because it was, in the sphere of ancillary evocations, the most effective. The three forms of government that Montesquieu distinguishes are less important as scientific types than as controversial political ideas. The republic, democratic or aristocratic, characterized by civic virtue is modeled on Rome; Montesquieu considers it a form of government suitable for small political communities, of no serious importance in current politics. The despot, an arbitrary rule of a monarch based on the principle of fear, is modeled on the France of Richelieu and Louis XVI; it is the form that has replaced the other French constitution, much to the detriment of the French people. Monarchy, a royal rule under fixed law, based on the principle of honor, moderated by the nobility and a magistracy that functions as the "guardian of the law," is the desirable type that should be restored in France.

The English constitution attracts his interest as a form of government that assures liberty and the rule of law and can serve as a model for the French reform. In this context Montesquieu has given what may be called the classic rational idea of liberty, in contrast with our modern emotional idea of liberty. "Political liberty," he defines, "is the tranquillity of mind that results from the conviction that everybody has his security" (XI.6); but this liberty is not a liberty to do what one wants to do. Under a rule of law liberty consists in "the power to do what one should will, and not to be compelled to do what one should not will to do" (XI.3). Or, to bring the contrast with the modern idea to the point: for Montesquieu

a free government is given when everybody can safely do what he should do according to moral rules, while today we conceive of a free government as a state where people can do what they want to do whether they should do it or not. In order to secure liberty in this sense it seems necessary to distribute the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers on different persons: the principle of the separation of powers.

§5. The Enlargement of the Geographical Horizon: The Biological Diversification of Mankind

a. Knowledge of New Worlds—Beginning Sentiment of Relativity

There are certain features in the work of Montesquieu that cannot be fully understood in their import without some knowledge of the surrounding intellectual climate. The conventional picture of Montesquieu overstates the elements of tradition; it is easy to point out the obvious Aristotelian touch in the catholicity of problems, and one can point learnedly to Bodin's theory of climates as preceding that of Montesquieu. Historical relations of this kind do actually exist, and it is necessary to set them forth. But the peculiarity of Montesquieu's work is not to be found on this level of traditional features. What is new in Montesquieu is the shiver of historical relativity, the faint suspicion that Western civilization is not the center of the world and not a standard obligation for all mankind. We have noticed the beginnings of this unrest in Machiavelli's idea of the *virtù* that wanders from one nation to the next, giving every one her great day of history and then letting her sink back into darkness. The sources of the unrest are manifold. In the Mediterranean, the physical contacts with Arabic civilization, with the Turks and the Mongol empire, kept alive the sense of worlds beyond the Western. A permanent source of fermentation is, since the Renaissance, the renewed knowledge of the rise and fall of the Roman empire; we noticed its effects in Machiavelli as well as in Vico and Montesquieu. The *Römisches Gespräch* is always an effective antidote against an overdose of optimistic smugness. A further solvent was the conflict of the Reformation, which destroyed the shelter of the Western church. And the age of voyages and geographical discoveries finally broke down the limits of the Western horizon and opened new dimensions, spatially as well as ethnographically. As an immediate

reaction we noticed the scurrying to shelter in the more restricted cosmion of the nation. In France, in England, and in Italy the nations begin to develop the myth of the *omphalos*; the national cosmion takes over the function from the *sacrum imperium*. But the rise of the new national shelters cannot blot out the consciousness of fragmentization. The particularization of Western mankind into the national societies cannot but increase the sentiment of tension arising from the contrast between a limited national community and the spatial and temporal vastness of mankind.

b. *The Travel Literature*—Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*

The sentiment of this tension is clearly present in Montesquieu. The references to Asiatic and primitive societies are ample, but because of his unsystematic manners the massiveness of the materials that caused the tension does not appear in its full weight. We must briefly consider, therefore, Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, which gives in its first volumes a systematic survey of the problem of man in his somatic variety, based with scientific care on the enormous travel literature.⁴

The main point of relevance for our context is the bulk of the material. The chapter "Varieties of the Human Species"⁵ quotes more than eighty titles of travels, collections of travels, and reports on European and non-European peoples. I select from the large bibliography a few items that may give an impression of the range of the material. The oldest travel report used by Buffon is Marco Polo's of the thirteenth century. Sources of the sixteenth century are Pigafetta's *India Orientalis*, the Brazilian travel of Jean de Lery, and the observations on Turkey of Pierre Belon. In the seventeenth century the material increases. Among the quoted are: the *Genio vagante* del conte Aurelio degli Anzi, the travels of Pyrard, Thevenot, Villamon, an anonymous *Nouvelle Relation du Levant* of 1667, Olaii Rudbekii *Atlantica*, a Spanish and two Russian travels, a collection of *Voyages historiques de l'Europe*, the *Histoire de la conquête de la Chine par les Tartars* of Palafox, Johann Albrecht

4. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du Roy*. The first volume appeared in 1749, the year after the *Esprit des Lois*.

5. *Oeuvres complètes de Buffon*, ed. M. Flourens, 12 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1853-1855), 2:137-221 ["Variétés dans l'espèce humaine"].

von Mandelslo's travels in Persia, East India, Madagascar. But the big mass of the material comes with the first half of the eighteenth century, above all the great collections: the *Recueil des voyages, qui ont servi à l'établissement et au progrès de la compagnie des Indes Orientales, formée dans les Provinces-unies des Pais-Bas*, the *Recueil des voyages au Nord, contenant divers memoires très utiles au commerce et à la navigation*, and the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus*, the volumes of which began to appear in 1703. Frequently quoted items of the eighteenth-century literature are the travels of Jean Struys, Le Gentil, Chardin, Ovington, furthermore the *Histoire générale des voyages* of 1746, reports on Formosa, the Marianas, Ceylon, Guinea, a history of San Domingo, New France, a history of the Incas.

c. *The System of Human Races*

The work of Buffon has a decisive position in the history of political ideas. A mass of materials that had accumulated for centuries, but had hitherto exerted only incidental influences, was now systematized in a classification of the varieties of the human species, and the classification of the varieties did not extend to physical characteristics only, but included what Buffon called the "nature des différens peuples." Human groups were distinguished in his system by complexion and body shape, but also by their institutions, customs, religions, etc. The system was fairly comprehensive; the later natural anthropology has added immensely to the details, but the great outlines of the biological diversification of mankind were complete. The system of Buffon stands like a solid rock; the race question had entered the modern history of thought. Blumenbach, Herder, and Kant developed the problem further in the eighteenth century. Klemm, Gobineau, and Carus added in the nineteenth century the new materials that had been accumulated by the stupendous rise of history since Buffon. By the middle of the nineteenth century the race theory was elaborated in the form that we know today.

d. *Racial Diversification and Unity of Mankind*

The system of Buffon is of greater interest in some respects than Montesquieu's because his anthropology was better elaborated and

therefore showed more clearly the new problem. He coordinated, as we said, somatic and spiritual elements in his description of the subtypes of mankind, but he did not draw a line of determination from the body structure to the mental. The climatic differences of the earth determine in his theory the somatic as well as the mental characteristics. A change of climatic environment would bring about changes in the type. The time required for changes Buffon estimates at eight to twelve generations. Negroes transplanted to the temperate zone would become white in this time; whites in Africa would become black. We can understand now the function of the theory of climates in eighteenth-century thought: when racial differences are due to climatic influences, the unity of mankind is saved in the face of the disquieting horizon of differences. The modern racial determinism could develop only after biology had shown that somatic differences have their foundation in the genetic structure of man and are little or not at all influenced by the environment. It is possible for Buffon to maintain the idea of the standard man as the form that develops under the favorable conditions of the temperate zone while the other varieties bear the character of exotic curiosities and deformities ranking lower than the Western European. The position could be more easily preserved by Buffon than by Montesquieu, because Buffon's materials included the whole range of primitive societies, while Montesquieu's work was weighted in the direction of great non-Christian civilizations like the Roman and the Arabic, which might arouse some doubt concerning the clear superiority of the Christian Western type.

e. The Geographical and Historical Horizons

The difference in the attitudes of Buffon and Montesquieu permits a clear distinction between the two factors that caused the movement away from the Myth of Reason in the direction of new systems of political thought: biologism and historicism. In the *Esprit des Lois* the two elements are not sufficiently separated. Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* has isolated the somatic factor and thus made it possible to define precisely the nature of one of the new elements of thought as well as its origin in the enlargement of the geographical horizon that was brought about by the age of discoveries and travels. The isolation of the somatic factor in its turn sets off more clearly the enlargement of the historical horizon as the second independent factor.

PART EIGHT
LAST ORIENTATION

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Introductory Remarks

In a time of civilizational disintegration, intellectual history does not follow a straight course. We cannot distinguish between the continuous evolution of a predominant complex of problems on the one hand and subinstitutional complexes that press toward the surface on the other, as we could distinguish in the Middle Ages between the dominant complex of spiritual maturation and the rising complex of problems that we treated under the title "The Structure of the Saeculum."¹ In a time of disintegration the field of problems is socially open: the questions dominating the public scene will be precisely those that reveal disorientation and confusion, while the successful attempts at spiritual and intellectual orientation are relegated to socially obscure corners. Considering this situation, the analysis of the crisis after Hegel would meet with difficulties if we would simply follow a chronological order of thinkers and ideas; we would lose ourselves in a desert of materials with few threads of meaning to guide us. In order to cope with this methodological difficulty, we have chosen the course of isolating in the present part, under the title "Last Orientation," a complex of ideas that we consider systematically central and, therefore, suitable for furnishing a stable point of orientation in the increasing confusion of the century of crisis.

For the main body of this orienting complex of ideas, we could draw on the interpretation of the age given by Schelling. The exposition of Schelling's philosophy of historical and political existence

1. See *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 20, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. II, *The Middle Ages to Aquinas*, ed. Peter von Sivers (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 105–204.

will form the central part of the following "Orientation." This self-interpretation of the age through the person and work of Schelling must be preceded, however, by an analysis of the problems of "Phenomenalism." In this analysis, forming Chapter 1 of the present "Orientation," we intend to furnish the historical perspectives in which the problems of Schelling must be seen. Supplementing the perspectives in this manner was necessary for the aforementioned reason that the continuous evolution of the systematically central problems is broken in the age of disintegration. As a consequence, the position of Schelling does not fit chronologically into a continuum of preceding and subsequent thought. The ideas of Schelling can be a point of orientation for the understanding of the crisis because they are not engulfed in the crisis themselves. They belong to the level of the *philosophia perennis*. Over the centuries, Schelling resumes the great problem of Giordano Bruno, the problem of interpreting the universe by projecting into the realms of nature and history the meaning that is to be found in the immediate experience of the nature of man. Bruno's distinction between a science of phenomena as the science of "the accidents of the accidents" and a science of substance was resumed by Schelling after the centuries of predominance of mathematized science and of a philosophy that developed into a critical epistemology of physics. The restatement of this problem by Schelling and its solution through a philosophy of the unconscious did not, however, break the momentum of "scientism." The destruction of the speculation on substance under the impact of the model of mathematized science went on and even reached new lows of devastation in the fields of biology, economics, and psychology. Hence in the chapter entitled "Phenomenalism" we shall at first restate the problem of Bruno, then proceed to an exposition of the principles of phenomenism, and conclude with a brief survey of the variants of phenomenism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Against this background the grandiose effort of Schelling to reestablish a philosophy of substance will gain its full significance, and it also will become clear why this effort failed to become the starting point for a civilizational restoration.

The chapter on Schelling, finally, will be followed by a "Note on Hölderlin." The rebirth of a pagan symbolism of nature and the new understanding of the ancient myth through Hölderlin have to be presupposed as determinants of Schelling's work. And beyond

the immediate relationship between the poet and the philosopher, the new evocation of the myth has its importance as the portentous symptom of the rise of post-Christian mythical sentiments in the century of crisis.



Phenomenalism

§I. Phenomenalism and Science

a. Scientism

We must remind the reader that at the end of the sixteenth century Giordano Bruno had formulated clearly the issue between speculation on the infinite substance of the cosmos and a mathematized science of "the accidences of the accidences." Bruno's speculation, on the one hand, found no immediate succession. The "accidences of the accidences," on the other hand, had become the absorbing interest of scholars as well as of a wider public in the centuries of the rising natural sciences. The impressive spectacle of the advancement of science and of the Newtonian system created attitudes and sentiments that have become a decisive ingredient in modern man and modern civilization. One element in this new complex of sentiments we had to mention occasionally, and we called it *scientism*: the belief in mathematized science as the model science to the methods of which all other sciences should conform.¹ We must now deal with the complex as a whole, and we shall call it *phenomenalism* in order to indicate the preoccupation of man with the phenomenal aspects of the world, as they appear in science, and the atrophy of awareness of the substantiality of man and the universe. Phenomenalism has nothing to do with the methods of the advancement of science itself; the term is supposed to designate sentiments, imaginations, beliefs, ideas, and speculations, as well as patterns of conduct determined by them, which originate *on*

1. On scientism see F. A. von Hayek, "Scientism and the Study of Society," *Economica* 9, no. 32 (1942): 267 ff.; 10, no. 37 (1943): 34 ff.; 11, no. 41 (1944): 27 ff.

occasion of the advancement of mathematized science. Furthermore, we must beware of the assumption that the advancement of science is the one and only cause of the rise of phenomenality. The new sentiments and attitudes, while hardly conceivable without the prodigious advancement of science, are not necessitated by it. That phenomenality could gain the importance that it actually has is primarily due to the atrophy of Christian spirituality and the growth of intramundane sentiments. The advancement of science is a contributing factor in this process, insofar as its success is apt to fortify intramundane sentiments, and insofar as phenomenality, grafted on science, has become an important instrument for their expression.

b. Phenomenality and Materialism

We must beware especially of mistaking phenomenality for materialism. The danger of this mistake is considerable; the two problems usually are not distinguished terminologically, and sentiments and ideas that, indeed, are phenomenality in their character have been misnamed as materialistic in the nineteenth century. The confusion will arise easily because phenomenality in the sense of a substitution of phenomena for substances will occur frequently, in the nature of the case, on occasion of the science of material phenomena, that is, of physics; hence the substance for which phenomena are substituted may happen to be matter and, as a consequence, the phenomenality component of the belief may be overlooked, while its materialistic content will be emphasized. A pure materialism, however, which assumes matter itself, and not its phenomena, to be the fundamental and real substance in all ontic forms, leads to metaphysical assumptions, widely differing from the phenomenality notions. A pure, nonphenomenal materialism will indeed come sometimes very close to a pure, nonphenomenal spiritualism.

We can understand this question perhaps best by reflecting for a moment on the relation between Giordano Bruno's spiritualistic speculation on the infinity of the universe and the materialistic speculation of Lucretius on the same problem. Accepting the cosmos in the Hellenic sense (earth, sky, surrounding air) as a closed entity, the Roman poet speculated on the infinity of space beyond "the walls of the world" into which thought extends by an *animi*

jactus liber, by a free projection of the mind. The result of his projection was the conclusion that the infinity of space must be filled by an infinity of matter, and that beyond our cosmos there must lie an infinity of cosmoi like the one we know; for the cosmos is no exception to the law that governs other productions of matter, like animals and plants, that there exist of them an infinite multitude of instances. The conception of Lucretius, in spite of the speculation on the infinite, does not transcend, however, the limits of Hellenic sensual vision; the cosmos remains a closed sphere with its shell of fixed stars, and the fixed stars are not envisaged as the infinite other worlds. The cosmos does not open and expand into the infinite as with Bruno, it only multiplies. Nevertheless, the conception must have influenced Bruno strongly, for the principles of speculation on the substantial infinite are not affected by the choice of substance, be it spirit or matter. The choice of spirit or matter is rather determined by the sentiments and the spiritual experiences of the philosopher. For Bruno, matter could be, and had to be, an animated principle because spiritual aliveness was the *realissimum* that he experienced and affirmed in himself. For Lucretius, the substance manifesting itself in the infinity of cosmoi had to be matter because animation of the cosmos implied for him the existence of the Hellenistic gods. Only if substance was soulless matter could the gods be abolished and with them the fears and hopes in man caused by their existence and by human reflection on their probable action. The most intimate motive for the assumption of an infinity of material worlds is for Lucretius the conclusion that he can draw from it: that no god can be imagined who could be the moderator of an infinity of worlds. The striving for ataraxy determines Lucretius in his assumption of matter, as the "bacchantic" exuberance of imagination and speculation determines Bruno in his assumption of spirit as the cosmic substance.²

True materialism is rare, and the philosophers who turn toward it are among the most distinguished minds of their age. In our time the great materialists are George Santayana and Paul Valéry, both strongly under the influence of Lucretius. Materialism does not imply a negation or even a contempt of the spirit. On the contrary, a great spiritual sensitiveness alone can induce the fatigue of spiritual

2. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II.vv.1045 ff.

existence, disillusionment with its symbols as substances, and their acceptance as aesthetic expressions of the substantial mystery of life. We may even suspect that the materialist who expects and desires life to end in depersonalization, that the mystic who lives in the insight that "Tout va sous terre et rentre dans le jeu!" and nevertheless can accept the game of life with courage and a smile—"le vent se lève! . . . Il faut tenter de vivre!"—has sensed more acutely the tension of substance and accident in the life of the spirit than many a spiritualist.³

c. Definitions

We have distinguished phenomenalism from the growth of intramundane sentiments whose expression it may serve, as well as from materialism, for which it can be easily mistaken. We have now to define in a preliminary fashion phenomenalism itself as the complex of sentiments and ideas that cluster around the tendency to interpret the phenomenal relations that are the object of science as a substantial order of things. Whenever phenomena are taken for substances, we shall designate the result of substantialization as "phenomenal reality." Once the symbols and relations of science are accepted as substances, the resulting phenomenal reality can be made the object of speculation as if it were a substantial reality; this type of speculation we shall designate as "phenomenal speculation." Into phenomenal reality, moreover, can be projected hopes and fears, and man can enter into experiential relations with it as if it were substantial reality; projections of this type we shall designate as "phenomenal projections" and their effects on man as "phenomenal obsessions." When, finally, man acts on the basis of phenomenal speculation and under the influence of phenomenal obsessions, we shall designate the resulting patterns of conduct and attitudes as "phenomenal action" and "phenomenal activism." The complex of phenomenalism has never been isolated as a component factor in the intellectual and spiritual life of modern man, as far as we know, and there exists no monograph on the subject to which we could refer the reader. Since the context of the present study is not the place to supply such a monograph, we shall proceed

3. Paul Valéry, "Le Cimetière Marin," *Nouvelle Revue Française* 81 (1920): 781–87; see also Paul Valéry, *Oeuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), I:147–51.

by presenting the first case in which the problem attracted the attention of a philosopher, and then giving a brief enumeration of the principal phenomena that must be classed under this title.

d. Pascal and Phenomenal Speculation

Phenomenalism became a problem by the middle of the seventeenth century. The advancement of astronomy and physics had gathered sufficient momentum to appeal to broader sections of the educated public and to fascinate men by apparently opening unlimited horizons of knowledge of the external world. The appeal and the fascination seem to have been accompanied immediately by the belief that the new science was not simply an instrument for exploring phenomena, but that it offered a key to a new dimension of reality; that, as a result of this new science, our knowledge of man and his place in the cosmos would be materially affected; and that, as a further result, the understanding of man that had been achieved in Christian anthropology would be decisively invalidated. The problem attracted Pascal. In his *Pensées* we find a lengthy fragment in which he tries to lessen the pride and exuberance inspired by the successes of science and to persuade the reader that the phenomenal view of the world should rather make him aware of his insignificance and finiteness, and that precisely the infinite phenomenal perspectives should throw him back to a realization of his creatureliness in the Christian sense.⁴

Giordano Bruno's substantial speculation on the infinite seems to have become entirely phenomenal by the time of Pascal. The infinite that was created by Bruno in a free projection of the spirit and had its meaning as a projection that would assure man, not of his phenomenal knowledge of the universe, but of the reality of his own spirit and its roots in the divine Oneness has now become externalized to the infinite exploration of accidents. For Pascal, in his fragment, invites the reader to contemplate the sun and the relative insignificance of the earth, and then to proceed to a contemplation of the fixed stars and the relative insignificance of the sun: if his imagination then would try to proceed farther he would soon find that the infinity of things would outrun the

4. Pascal, *Pensées de Pascal*, ed. Leon Brunschvicg (Paris: Garnier, 1925), no. 72 (pp. 80-86).

infinity of imagination. "We may inflate our conceptions beyond imaginable spaces, and we shall never produce anything but atoms at the price of the reality of things." Like Giordano Bruno, he suggests that the center of the infinite sphere is everywhere and its circumference nowhere. "That our imagination loses itself in this thought, is the greatest sensual cipher (*le plus grand caractère sensible*) of divine omnipotence." The attempt at, and the failure of, phenomenal imagination should, therefore, throw man back on himself and make him ponder the question: "What is a man in the infinite?" This meditation will find further nourishment if man will go on to contemplate the infinity extending below him into ever smaller particles, approaching Nothing (*le néant*). In the atom his imagination will find "a further infinity of universes, each with its firmaments, its planets, its earth, in the same proportions as the visible world." As a consequence of his imagination in the two dimensions of the universe, he will find himself suspended between the abysses of the maximum and of the nothing; his curiosity will change to admiration, and he will be more disposed to contemplate in silence than to search with presumption.

Man, however, does not take this meditative course. He indulges with temerity in the exploration of nature, as if he were proportioned to it. "It is a strange thing that he wants to understand the principles of things, and on this basis to know everything, by a presumption as infinite as its object." If we realize the nature of our finiteness, suspended between nothing and the infinite, we shall understand that the principles are hidden to us because they rise from the nothing and that the infinitely great is hidden to us by the limitations of our existence. The world does not stand still for us: "We burn with the desire to find a firm position and an ultimate constant basis in order to erect on it a tower into the infinite; but our foundations crack and the earth opens to its depth."

The position of Pascal and the implications of his critique are clear. The conception of human finiteness in suspense between the maximum and minimum of speculation lies in the tradition of Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno.⁵ His attack on the search for

5. In the Fifth Dialogue of Bruno's *De la causa, del principio et uno*, not only the principle of the speculation on maximum and minimum that meet in God but also some of the illustrations are taken directly from the *Docta Ignorantia* of the Cusanus.

principles and his occasional remark about the fatuity of books that bear the title *Des principes de la philosophie* are directed against the new physics and the system of Descartes. And the diagnosis of the new evil that accompanies the advancement of science—"Voilà où nous mènent les connaissances naturelles"—goes straight to the core of the attitude with which we must deal: the attitude that transforms the science of "the accidents of the accidents" into a science of the "real" order of nature, into a foundation of knowledge concerning man and the universe that is supposed to replace the knowledge of substance, originating in spiritual experience.

e. Biological Phenomenalism

The survey of phenomenalism can be opened perhaps best with a problem that is a source of bewilderment to the historian of ideas: that is, the success of the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century. The evolution of the forms of life, as we observed, was treated thoroughly in the biological theory of the eighteenth century. The creational theory of the species was abandoned; the idea of a chronological succession of living forms from primitive to the most complicated was conceived. The increase of phenomenal knowledge concerning their unfolding was acknowledged, but the insight was also gained that the idea of an evolution of living forms did not bring us one step nearer to an understanding of the mystery of the substance that was evolving through the chain of forms. The chain of evolutionary forms as a whole was just as much of an ultimate datum in ontology as previously had been the single species. No speculative prolongation of the chain into inorganic matter and no raising of the question of whether organic forms originated in inorganic matter could change the problem either. Such speculations simply meant pushing the mystery of the potentiality that unfolded morphologically in time a step further back without understanding it any better. In the end we would always be faced by the two fundamental ontological questions of Leibniz: Why is there something, why not nothing? and: Why is the something as it is? By the time of Kant the problem of evolution was reduced to its phenomenal proportions. And now, in the nineteenth century, as if nothing had happened, a new phenomenal theory of evolution, operating with the conceptions of the struggle for life, the survival of the fittest, natural selections, etc., had a popular success and

became a mass creed for the semieducated. A theory that, assuming that it was empirically tenable, could at best furnish an insight into the mechanics of evolution without touching its substance was accepted as a revelation concerning the nature of life and as compelling a reorientation of our views concerning the nature of man and his position in the cosmos.

The reopening, on the new level of a mass movement, of a problem that was settled in theory is important generally as a symptom of the critical split in the history of the Western mind between the narrowing main line along which the problems of substance move and the phenomenal mass movements that increasingly dominate the public scene and produce the moral and intellectual confusion of our time. The case of biological theory is, furthermore, specifically important because it reveals in great clearness the peculiar problem of phenomenalism. A theory that in itself might contribute to our knowledge of the phenomenal unfolding of a substance is perverted into a philosophy of substance; the causal relationship of phenomena (always assuming the correctness of the theory) is understood as an explanation on the level of the substance of life.

The principal causes of this transformation of phenomenal relations into a phenomenal reality are well known. Darwin was a great empirical biologist who marshaled convincingly the materials in support of his theory; the massiveness of empirical data opened a view into a new realm of ordered knowledge. At the same time, neither Darwin nor his followers were the best of theorists, so that the issue between phenomenal and substantial knowledge could remain relatively obscure. We are faced with the problem of the nineteenth century that with the increasing specialization of the sciences, scholars who are impeccable as masters of their field become unable to see the theoretical problems of their special science in proper relation to the problems of ontology and metaphysics. Moreover, the will to create a phenomenal reality out of the propositions of a science of phenomena was an independent factor on the occasion of the magnificent unfolding of biology, just as it was on the occasion of the unfolding of astronomy and physics in the seventeenth century. The evolutionary movement has a distinct anti-Christian, secularistic flavor through the assumption that the interpretation of man as the final link in the chain of evolution has a bearing on the understanding of man as a spiritual existence; the will to understand man as having his position in a world-immanent

order revealed by a science of phenomena, instead of in a transcendental order revealed by the *cognitio fidei*, is the dynamic factor in the transformation.⁶

As far as the results are concerned, again the evolutionary movement can be used as the prototype for the problems of phenomenal speculation, obsession, and action. The biological conceptions of the struggle for life, the survival of the fittest, etc., were absorbed into the interpretation of society and politics. Within the order of competitive society the idea of natural selection could fortify the belief that the successful man is the better man, that success is fated in the order of nature, and that the order created by success is a right order because it is willed by nature—irrespective of the moral and spiritual issues involved. In combination with the theory of racial differentiation, the biological conceptions made possible

6. Again we should like to stress that the acceptance of the evolution of living forms, with its culmination in man, does not of necessity induce an intramundane, phenomenal interpretation of man; neither does there necessarily result a conflict, so dear to the heart of fundamentalists, with Christian doctrine. For in the sixteenth century, in the anthropology of Paracelsus, we find a biological interpretation of man on the basis of Genesis that solves the problem raised by the theory of evolution on the level of a theory of substances. Paracelsus assumes the creation as having taken place in two steps. First God created all things out of nothing by his "word"; then, in a second step, he created man out of substance "which was an extract of all creatures in heaven and earth." "From all creatures, all elements, all astral bodies, in heaven and earth, from all quality, essence, nature, kind, mode, etc., he extracted what was most subtle and best, and contracted it into a *massa*: out of that *massa* man is made. From this follows that man is the small world, that is the microcosm." In this evocation of man not only the animal ancestry is included but also the elemental, the vegetative, and the sidereal. The inclusion, however, is not phenomenal in the sense of morphological derivation, but substantial in the sense of absorption of a substance distilled by an alchemistic God. The terms *extraction* and *contraction* refer to the processes by which the first substance is transformed into its "quintessence," that is, the natural substance of man. The idea of the "quintessence" is of decisive methodological importance for a philosophical anthropology because the nonspiritual strata of man (inorganic, vegetative, instinctive, associative, etc.) cannot be explored exhaustively in phenomenal isolation as if, indeed, they were nothing but vegetative, animal, etc. In the human compound the lower ontic strata undergo functional changes that make them specifically human by virtue of their integration into the life of the spirit. Man is not simply an animal plus reason or spirit, but a unit of existence that is ordered throughout from the spiritual level. This transformation of the lower natures in the human compound is designated by the Paracelsian idea of the "quintessence." Paracelsus is yet unacquainted with the unfolding of the forms of life in time, but the principle of speculation by which our knowledge of the evolutionary chain must be built into an anthropology that is concerned with the substance of man is present. The enlargement of phenomenal knowledge can require a division of labor and the differentiation of a specialized science of the phenomena of life, but it does not touch the fundamental problem. (Quotations from Paracelsus, *Erklärung der ganzen Astronomie*, in *Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, 1st ser. [Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1928], 10:648 ff.).

a reinterpretation of history and politics in terms of inferior and superior races, destined to rule or to be ruled—again irrespective of moral and spiritual problems involved. The substance of man and society is overlaid with a coat of biological phenomena that smothers the spiritual and moral awareness and tends to replace the spiritual order of society with an order of biological survival. The phenomenal order of life becomes a phenomenal obsession when it is erected into a rule for action.⁷

f. Economic Phenomenalism

Having established the type, we now can deal more succinctly with the parallel problems in economics and psychology. The problem of economics is involved already in the theory of evolution insofar as the biological categories of survival of the fittest, etc., have absorbed the phenomenal obsessions of competitive society that grew in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the case of economic theory we have again a science of phenomena operating with certain assumptions such as a rational, economic individual, guided by self-interest, and the further assumption that from the rational economic actions of the multitude of individuals in a society there will result a maximum equipment with goods for the whole society. Assuming the assumptions to be valid, nothing follows from them concerning the desirability of a society with a legal order that favors unhampered rational, economic action. The problems of the substantial order would be whether there are not a few things more important for man and his life in society than a maximum equipment with goods and whether an economic order that produces a maximum of wealth is worth the cost in values that have perhaps to be sacrificed in order to maintain it.

The theory of economic phenomena quite legitimately does not deal with these questions. The element of phenomenal obsession enters only when the laws developed by a theory of economic action are erected into standards of action, when the theoretical system of economic relations is considered a right order of society that should not be disturbed by interventions. As a consequence, again

7. For an exhaustive discussion of the problems touched on in this section, see *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 3, *The History of the Race Idea*, trans. Ruth Hein, ed. Klaus Vondung (1997; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

we must observe the atrophy of moral awareness, as well as the willingness to accept the evils that may arise from the translation of phenomenal relations into a substantially obligatory order as inconveniences of the short run to be compensated by the ultimate gains in the long run. The argument of the short and long runs is particularly revealing for economic phenomenalism. In the order of human substance, the short run is the concrete existence of human beings; the long run, on the other hand, does not exist at all, for when the point of time that in the perspective of the concrete presence appears as the long run becomes present itself through the lapse of time, it is the short run of the individuals living concretely at the later point of time. In substituting the phenomenal order for the substantial, the phenomenalist overlooks the fact that man is not simply an absorbent of goods but a being whose status is determined in relation to the whole of society. The so-called real equipment of an individual with goods, which actually may rise in accordance with the predictions of economic theory, is indeed phenomenal, while the substantially real poverty or wealth, which is determined by the relation to the poverty or wealth of other members of a society, may not change at all. The disregard for the substantial order of man in society engenders, on principle, the same brutality of phenomenal action as in the case of biological phenomenalism.

The brutality of action is not even broken by the revolutions that try to reestablish a substantial order of society. The totalitarian revolutions, Communist as well as National Socialist, have as one of their components the desire to break the liberal economic obsession and to evolve a new substantial order. But the revolution of a substance is overshadowed in various degrees by the new phenomenalisms of planning. The "plan" would be, like the market mechanism of liberal economy, a system of economic relations spread over a substantial order of society. An idea of a substantial order would be the precondition without which the idea of planning is empty. In political practice, however, we find the same tendency as in liberalism to erect the plan into an absolute order and to treat the individual as a function of the plan, with even greater brutality than phenomenal liberalism treated the individual as a functional element in the interplay of economic actions.

Economic phenomenalism in nineteenth-century politics was sensed keenly by Marx. His awareness of the problem has entered

into his much misunderstood economic interpretation of bourgeois society. The idea that the legal and civilizational order of a society is the "superstructure" over the fundamental economic order, or that the substantial order of society is a function of the economic order, would be in itself the misinterpretation of society at the hands of a phenomenalist. It contains, however, a solid empirical truth because at the time when Marx conceived the idea, liberal phenomenism was at the height of its development, and the order of economic relations had in the age of the Industrial Revolution indeed acquired the obsessional character that made it an effective determinant of society. In the chapter on Locke we have seen how even by the end of the seventeenth century the procedural protection of property had become an obsession to the point that the problem of social obligations had completely disappeared from Locke's *Treatise on Civil Government*. That the poverty of the poor would be protected by the law with the same impartiality as the wealth of the rich could be advanced by Locke as the value of civil society without arousing ridicule and revulsion, because in his work the substantially existing English political society is tacitly presupposed. By the twentieth century, the praise of procedural protection to the exclusion of any substantial idea of order had become dubious, in the face of the workers question, even in England. Considering the absence of an articulated political society in Germany, it must have appeared almost nonsensical to a German of that period. The very arguments that Locke used in defense of property society appear with Marx as instruments of the attack on an order that had become largely phenomenal and thereby destructive of the moral and spiritual substance of society. The Marxian concept of ideology, useless as a basic category for the interpretation of society, has nevertheless caught for the special case, with great empirical perspicacity, the atrophy of substance under pressure of the economic obsession.

g. Psychological Phenomenalism

Psychological phenomenism has penetrated our civilization so thoroughly that the problem can be supposed to be well known. It will be sufficient to remind the reader of some varieties of phenomenal psychology, and then of some of the consequences. We have an experimental, physiological psychology that has lost the spiritual

substance of man entirely; we have furthermore a behavioristic psychology in which the actions of the mind have become "language behaviors" and ideas are "thought materials"; and we have a depth psychology in which the soul is reduced to an economy of sex quanta and their sublimation. Under the impact of psychologies of this type the life of the spirit, with its operation of substance on substance, tends to become dissolved into a manifold of manageable causal relations; the "psychological manager" takes the place of the *directeur de l'âme*. Psychological management has become an all-pervasive element in our civilization and has created a phantastic world of phenomenal obsessions, devoid of substantial reality, by means of commercial advertisement, political propaganda, the reporting of "news," literary critique in journals and magazines, etc. We live in a world of name brands, soaps, cigarettes, men of authority and distinction who drink choice brands of whiskey, of must-readings, best-sellers, body odors, and irresistible perfumes for special occasions; of leaders, movie stars, big shots, educators, and war criminals; of third realms, perpetual peaces, and unconditional surrenders; of Big Threes and Big Fours and Big Fives; of unprecedented bomb loads and speeches; of historical meetings; of adjustment, conditioning, education, and reeducation; of propaganda and counterpropaganda; of complexes, balked dispositions, frustrations, and gratifications; of centuries of progress, of the child, of the common man, and whatnot. In brief: we have created a modern demonology next to which a medieval catalog of angels and demons looks a trifle shabby.

h. Combination of Types

In conclusion, let us reflect for a moment on some phenomena of our own time in which the various types of phenomenalism intermingle. The phenomenalism of physics, and of the natural sciences in general, has produced in the nineteenth century and after a peculiar genus of literature: the fictional exploitation of the scientific obsession. With Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* opens a world of scientific monsters and adventures, of split personalities, of time machines, of travels to the moon and to Mars, of travels around the world and under the sea and to the center of the earth. The bearers of this movement are distinguished authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jules Verne, Curt Lasswitz,

H. G. Wells. In our own time it has become commercialized in the mass production of adventurous comic strips and "science fiction." The movement is of relevance in our context because a point seems to have been reached where fictional imagination shades off into genuine phenomenal obsession. In the case of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, we could observe that the public reception of the work oscillated between its understanding as a satire on phenomenalism and its misunderstanding as a perspective into the potentialities of science and their effect on the future of human society.⁸ The fusion of fictional imagination and phenomenal obsession was finally achieved on occasion of Orson Welles's broadcast of the invasion from Mars. A panic broke out among the listeners because they believed the fictional invasion to be real, and they could believe it because they lived in a phenomenal world in which invasions from Mars are something to be expected in the same manner in which the appearance of a demon with claws and a tail was something to be expected in the world of a medieval demonologist. Among those who believed it were two geologists from Princeton who set out heroically to investigate the invasion at the risk of their lives, as befits true scientists.⁹

On the other hand, we see the potentialities of science unfold in a realm of magnificent technical achievement. This technical realm is becoming increasingly phenomenal and acquiring obsessional characteristics insofar as it tempts man to translate into reality what can be done by technical means without regard for the consequences in the realm of a substantial order. The realm of technical means becomes a legitimating order in the same sense in

8. On the increasing difficulty, if not impossibility, of writing satire in an age of phenomenalism, see Karl Kraus, particularly his three-hundred-page reaction to National Socialism, published under the title *Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint* as numbers 890-905 in *Die Fackel* 36 (July 1934). Furthermore, see Karl Kraus's main work, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Vienna-Leipzig: "Die Fackel," 1922), where the massive horror is reached not through satirical exaggeration but through direct quotation from newspapers and other sources.

9. I had not followed the affair closely when it occurred and had lived under the impression that the listeners had mistaken the invasion from Mars for the report of a real military invasion by some foreign power. That would have been crazy enough. But I remember still the cold horror that gripped me when I read Hadley Cantril's analysis of the panic (*The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940]) and realized that the listeners had understood the invasion from Mars quite correctly as coming from Mars and acted on this conviction. I understood on this occasion the depth of the madness in which we live.

which the theoretical order of biology or economics has become a standard: what can be done, should be done. As a consequence, we must observe the transplantation and destruction of whole populations, the machine-gunning of fleeing civilians, terror-bombing and pulverization of towns, and the horrors of extermination camps. The tools cease to be simple instruments of execution in the service of substantial purposes and gain a momentum of their own that bends the purposes to the technical possibilities. If the realm of purposes itself is drying up in substance, as it does in our time, and biological, economic, and psychological obsessions move into the place of purposes, the combination of the various phenomenalisms threatens to extinguish the last vestiges of substance. The National Socialist exterminations are the starkest manifestation of the victory of phenomenal obsession over spiritual order. There is a most intimate connection between the comic strip and the concentration camp. The man who runs away from an invasion from Mars because the comic strip and the broadcast have decomposed his personality and the SS man who garrotes a prisoner without compunction because he is dead to the meaning of his action in the order of spiritual reality are brothers under the skin. Phenomenalism has gone further toward transforming our society into the combination of a slaughterhouse with a booby hatch than many contemporaries are still sane enough to realize.

P.S. This chapter was finished six weeks before the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima—the date that has brought us one step nearer to the point where reality and comic strip become indistinguishable.



Schelling

§I. The Realist in an Age of Disintegration

a. Social Isolation of the Realist

With regard to biological phenomenalism, we noted the peculiarity that, on the level of a mass creed, a problem reappeared that had been settled as such in the speculation of the eighteenth century. The event is the grave symptom of the abyss to which the cleavage has widened that is characteristic of Western history since 1300: the cleavage between the conservators of the spirit, the spiritual realists, as well as the philosophers who live in their tradition, on the one hand, and the heavy mass trends toward a field of secularized and despiritualized particular powers and movements. The widening of the cleavage is due to the gradual disappearance of communities whose spirit the realist can express in a representative manner, and who in their turn preserve the standards and traditions created by him. Saint Thomas, as we observed, had still the Dominican Order to preserve and keep alive his work; and though it had no immediate effects on the larger European scene for which it was meant, it has remained a framework of philosophical orientation down to the neo-Thomistic thinkers of our time. A generation later, Dante already stood alone. Still, *majestate genii* his work has retained a measure of authority in the life of the Italian nation to our day, and its influence is strongly noticeable in Mazzini. Bodin's real greatness as an intellectual mystic, and as the author of the *Heptaplomeres*, is all but dead; still, his evocation of the national, royal state has entered, in the seventeenth century, into the political life of the French nation. And even Spinoza's mysticism and tolerance were not yet quite isolated but had their community background in the Dutch aristocracy of his time. Only

with the eighteenth century begins to expand the great desert of partisan positions in which the spirit with increasing difficulties finds the oasis of a receptive community at all. The actually existing communities and movements of social relevance have broken away so far from the Western spiritual order and the remnants of its tradition that the voice of the spirit can no longer reach them on their blind course.

b. Philosophical Dilettantism

The case of biological phenomenalism reveals, furthermore, a new aggravating element of the situation. Men may differ profoundly in their sentiments and attitudes and still live in the same universe of discourse. Dante's evocation of a temporal monarchy has not stopped the European trend toward the national state, but his philosophical technique and argumentation were understood by the *docti* of his age. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the spiritual cleavage and decay begin to corrode the rational conceptual apparatus that is supposed to serve the adequate expression of ideas. The common philosophical language begins to break down, and with it the possibility of men understanding each other across the differences of sentiments and attitudes. Moreover, with the difficulties of understanding increases the unwillingness to discuss rationally at all, and the various creed communities begin to move each in its own vacuum of discourse. The breakdown of the common language has various causes, and the cause that we are isolating in this context is only one of them, but it is a highly important one: we mean the increasing philosophical dilettantism. Hitherto we have characterized phenomenalism as the substitution of a field of phenomenal relations for substantial reality, without reflecting on the technical philosophical implications of the substitution. Now we have to stress the technical aspect, and we must say that the understanding of a theory of biological phenomena as a theory that affects our understanding of the spiritual existence of man is a gross technical error in metaphysics. And in the same manner we would have to characterize other phenomenalisms, such as for instance economic materialism: the acceptance of the creed on a mass scale cannot abolish the fact that the theory is dilettantic metaphysics. A not inconsiderable part of the intellectual confusion of our time, with its bitterness and irreconcilable hatreds between democrats

and Fascists, Communists and liberals, is due to the fact that the philosophical dilettantes run amok.

c. Rationalism

Despiritualization and metaphysical dilettantism, or irrationalism, are interrelated, for rationalism of philosophical discourse is dependent on a sound ontology. If the realms of being are not distinguished properly, if they are not recognized each in its peculiar substance and structure, if spirit is construed as an epiphenomenon of matter, or matter of spirit, if the operations of the spirit are reduced to psychological relations or explained as the sublimation of instincts, or as the effects of an economic or social situation or of racial determinants, discourse ceases to be rational, because by the principle of epiphenomenal construction the various ontic realms are distorted in their own structure as well as in their relations to each other, and because consequently things are not called by their names but by the names of things of another realm. Rationalism, in the sense in which we use the term in this study, implies the acceptance of an ontology that recognizes the structure of reality in all its strata from matter to spirit, without attempts at reducing causally the phenomena of one realm of being to those of another; and it furthermore implies the representation of reality by language symbols that follow the stratification of being, without any attempts at applying the symbols for the phenomena in one realm of being to the phenomena of another realm. When we enter the age of phenomenalism, we enter an age of rapid disintegration of rationalism in the sense just defined.

The first great blow to rationalism was administered by the Age of Reason itself. For we have seen in the chapter "Apostasy"¹ that Reason (capitalized) as an absolute standard presupposes the non-recognition of the realm of spirit. The immediate consequence of such ontological decapitation is the confusion of terminology to the point that "rationalism" becomes the name for an attitude that is truly irrational. The "rationalist" commits the cardinal sin of destroying the structure of reality by denying the order of spirit that in himself is not a living force. In the absence of a spiritual principle of

1. See *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 24, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. VI, *Revolution and the New Science*, ed. Barry Cooper (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), chap. 1.

order, however, there is no limit to the spiritual disorder into which the "rationalist" may fall, when in the course of historical time he moves away from the point at which the break occurred, and when the spiritual content that was embodied in the institutions, habits of thought, and patterns of conduct at the time of the break dies from atrophy. "Rationality" of conduct comes then to mean no more than the correct coordination of means and ends, however disordered the ends may be. In this perverted sense of "rationality," any type of phenomenal action under the influence of phenomenal obsessions will have to be called "rational"—and actually is called "rational" today—as long as the action is oriented correctly in the means-end relation within the horizon of obsessions.

For the historian of ideas, such ontological destructions and irrational terminologies create enormous difficulties. It is comparatively easy to represent the ideas of a Saint Thomas, for the Thomasic system rests on an excellent ontology and is developed by a master of philosophical technique; for the ideas of Saint Thomas set in themselves a standard for rationality and can be presented in their own terms, making allowances for the difference of fundamental attitudes between the thinker and his historian as well as for the defects arising from human weakness. It is very difficult, on the other hand, to represent the ideas of a Voltaire, for Voltaire was a technically miserable thinker and the implications of his ideas can be elucidated only by referring them to a rational standard beyond his own thought. Such reference to a transcendent standard, however, requires the elaboration of a terminological apparatus for the more or less adequate description of Voltaire's irrationalism. In a case like Voltaire's the historian has to operate, therefore, with three sets of language: (1) the language of Voltaire, (2) the language of the rational standard, and (3) a language descriptive of the relations between (1) and (2).

d. Partiality and Inversion

If we realize the difficulties that arise in historical interpretation, it will be easier to understand the problem encountered by the spiritual realist in an age of phenomenalism and dissolving rationalism. The great medieval philosophical technique, as preserved in the Schools, was losing its authority under the impact of sentiments

and attitudes that could not find their place in an intellectually contracting ecclesiastical organization, as well as of the new problems arising from the advancement of science. A new secular philosophy was developing since the Renaissance, outside the traditions of scholasticism, and it had to elaborate and preserve its own technique without the safeguards of continuity offered by orders and schools. The eighteenth century again marks a revolutionary epoch because by this time the decision had fallen that the Western world from now on would not have a tradition of philosophical technique, to be developed in continuity as the instrument of expression for a common spiritual substance, but that philosophical schools and individual philosophies would go their own widely diverging ways in the expression of parochial community substances, of particular aspects of the world as they came into view with the advancement of physics, chemistry, economics, biology, and psychology, and of idiosyncratic views of "original" thinkers.

Parochialization of thought according to communities and fragmentization of thought according to partial perspectives of contemporary interest, with the concomitant inevitable decay of philosophical technique, are the great mass trends of the eighteenth century and after. We enter a period of confusion in which anybody can easily be right because almost everybody else is wrong to the extent that it is sufficient to stress the opposite of what somebody else says in order to be at least as partially right as the opponent. This inversion of positions has become a pervasive trait of modern political ideas and movements. And it is characteristic not only for the lower level of opposites: for anarchism and totalitarianism, individualism and collectivism, freedom and authority, egalitarian democracy and hierarchical order, the common man and the elite, economic liberalism and planning, feudal and bourgeois values, bourgeois and proletarian values, middle-class security and *vivere pericolosamente*, etc., but it extends also to the highest levels of modern philosophy. The classic instance of inversion is the relation between the systems of Hegel and Marx. Even Hegel was so deeply involved in the partialities of his time that Marx could perform on his dialectic the fascinating operation of putting it "on its feet." And the dialectic of Hegel turned upside down still was a product of a certain interest with meritorious points. It is an operation that

hardly could have been performed on a Plato, or a Saint Augustine, or a Saint Thomas.

e. Ineffectiveness of the Realist

Thus the realist finds himself in an intellectual and social environment that is no longer receptive to the rational, technically competent thought of a spiritually well-ordered personality. In the disorder of irrationalisms pitted against each other, he will frequently find the continuity of problems broken. Questions that have long been settled will be resumed as if nobody had treated them before. Elementary philosophical mistakes can be advanced with success and dominate a public scene that has lost the rational standards of critique. If the realist would throw himself into the general melee as one of the contestants, he would defeat his philosophical purpose. In order to be heard he would have to become a partisan himself, and in order to become a partisan he would have to surrender the standards of rationality. If on the other hand he has sufficient spiritual strength as well as philosophical conscientiousness to take his position beyond the disorder of the age, where as a philosopher he ought to take it, he will remain socially ineffective to the point of not even being misunderstood. This again is a new element in the age of revolution and crisis. Medieval spiritualists of an unorthodox type were persecuted with great consideration. Bodin and Spinoza were at least condemned by good Christians as sinister atheists. And Giordano Bruno received the social attention of being burned at the stake. Now, however, the realist does not find any reaction at all on a socially relevant scale. Uncomprehending attacks are his lot and equally uncomprehending praise, at best some pragmatic misuse of his arguments for partisan purposes, and for the rest oblivion.

f. The Influence of Schelling

We have to be aware of the desolate spiritual and intellectual climate of the age when we approach the person and the work of the man who is one of the greatest philosophers of all times, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854). Schelling's qualities as a philosopher were hardly realized by his contemporaries, and when Jacobi attacked him in 1811 and charged him with pantheism,

he confined his publication for the rest of his life to a few minor articles. The great body of his work was published posthumously, and the treatise that he considered the representative formulation of his philosophy, *Ages of the World*, was never finished. His early critique of transcendental idealism was not without influence in Germany as well as abroad, but the influence was exhausted by the middle of the nineteenth century when Schelling's critique ceased to be useful in the anti-Hegelian struggle because this struggle itself subsided. Economic materialism, Darwinism, liberal economic theory, neo-Kantian epistemology, historicism, empirical sociology, and psychology were the strong movements, leaving no room for the unfolding of Schelling's spirit. The positive philosophy of Schelling has never become the starting point and nucleus of even a modest "school." Nevertheless, a philosopher of the stature of Schelling can be relegated from the public scene when the movements occupying it are spiritually decadent, but he cannot be prevented from exerting an undercurrent influence that will swell in importance with time. The very tension between the realist and his age that precludes an immediate effectiveness will be dissolved in a delayed effect when the spiritually blind forces have run their course into helpless confusion. Underneath the surface trend toward spiritual disorder, we must observe therefore the stimulation by Schelling's work that can be felt in Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard and later in Eduard von Hartmann and Lotze; and we can see the stream broadening in Bergson and Tillich, in Jaspers and Heidegger, in Ortega y Gasset and Berdyaev. In the twentieth century the occupation with Schelling has gained such momentum that one can speak of a "Schelling Renaissance."² The effectiveness of Schelling thus has

2. For the extent of the occupation with Schelling, see Frederick de Wolfe Bolman Jr.'s introduction to his translation of Schelling's *Ages of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 8. The translation itself is a symptom of the increasing interest, just as is James Gutman's translation of Schelling's *Of Human Freedom* (Chicago: Open Court, 1936). Of the rich literature may be mentioned as of particular interest Paul Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schelling's philosophischer Entwicklung* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1912); Kurt Leese, *Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling: Zur Metaphysik des Gottesproblems* (Erfurt: K. Stenger, 1927); Vladimir Jankélevitch, *L'Odyssée de la conscience dans la dernière philosophie de Schelling* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1933); Otto Kein, *Das Apollinische und Dionysische bei Nietzsche und Schelling* (Berlin: Junker und Dunnhaupt, 1935); and perhaps most important, the excellent chapter on Schelling in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*, vol. 1, *Der deutsche Idealismus* (Salzburg and Leipzig: A. Pustet, 1937-1939). The English reader may be referred to the fine introductions by Gutman and Bolman to the above-mentioned translations.

hardly begun. We still know less about him than about Nietzsche or Kierkegaard. But we can see his work emerge as one of the most important points of orientation for a modern philosophy of human existence.

§2. Elements of Schelling's Position

It is not our task in this context to present Schelling's ideas in the fullness of their dimensions. We have to confine ourselves to a few main lines of thought that are relevant for the unfolding of modern anthropology, and more specifically for the advancement of the problem of substantial speculation that was inaugurated by Giordano Bruno. We have seen how Bruno reestablished a natural philosophy that could penetrate to the substance of the universe by finding the substance in the spiritual aliveness of man. Schelling resumes Bruno's problem over the span of two centuries, and the first question we must ask is: What happened in between, and what induced the resumption?

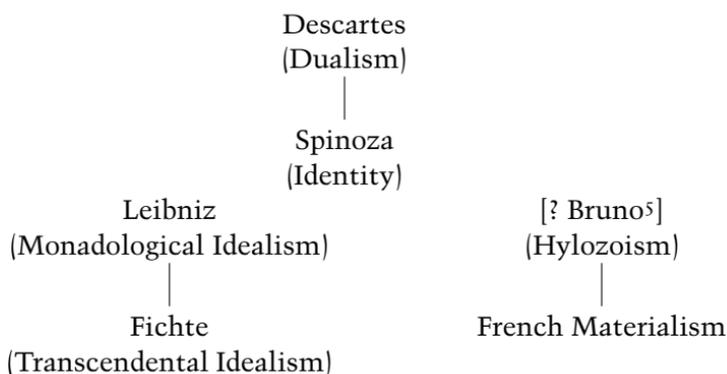
a. Descartes and Post-Cartesian Speculation

Schelling himself has dealt with the question. His answer assumed the form of an interpretation of his own position as the systematic conclusion of the philosophical development between Bruno and himself. This intervening development, however, is nothing less than the classic age of modern philosophy from Descartes to Hegel, and we have to understand why it appeared to Schelling as a great aberration that by his time had run its course. Schelling's interpretation is the interesting attempt at construing the various philosophical positions since Descartes as the stages of decomposition of an initially vitiated system. The initial vice was Descartes's splitting of the universe into body and mind. On the one hand we have the meditative investigation of the ego; on the other a mechanistic theory of matter. The substantial unity of the world is lost in the dualism of mind and dead matter. Spinoza wanted to reunite the two by maintaining their ultimate identity in a fundamental substance (God) of which they are the thinking and extended modes. Schelling has the greatest respect for the attempt of Spinoza because it points in the right direction. He considers it nonetheless a failure because the identification

is mechanical only and does not show matter and mind as the moments or stages in the process of a living substance (as did Bruno). After Spinoza's insufficient attempt, the decomposition begins and manifests itself, in a first phase, in the opposing positions of Leibnizian idealism and a position that Schelling calls hylozoism. Leibniz attempted to reestablish unity by abolishing being altogether and by interpreting reality as representation (*Vorstellung*). He did not deny, however, the reality of a body-world but preserved it in the idea that bodies are representational powers (*Vorstellkräfte*) independent of our own knowledge and thought. The opposite position of hylozoism is a bit suspect. Schelling does not ascribe it to any historical philosopher, though he mentions on occasion that it was inspired by Bruno. It looks as if he constructed hylozoism as a position contemporary with Leibniz in order to have his ideal type of philosophical decomposition complete. Such things happen. Anyway, hylozoism is supposed to be a metaphysical position that uses the other of the two Spinozistic modes as the absolute substance but preserves the mind by assuming matter to be animated.³ The final stage is constituted by the elimination of the respective opposite element from the Leibnizian and hylozoistic substances so that now we are faced with the opposite positions of French materialism and Fichte's transcendental idealism. Materialism conceives of matter as a "mere externality," a "mere agglomeration of parts" from which living nature as well as human thoughts, sentiments, and actions would have to be derived. Fichte's idealism, on the other hand, restricts the ideal substance to the subjective ego: "a complete homicide of nature."⁴ The whole pattern can be presented in the following manner:

3. [Voegelin's conjecture that Schelling may have constructed the concept of hylozoism as a position to complete his ideal type of philosophical decomposition is not borne out by the historical facts. Hylozoism was a term already used by the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth in his book *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678) in clear reference to Bruno's and Vanini's notion of ensouled matter. Cf. J. G. A. Pocock, "Thomas Hobbes: Atheist or Enthusiast? His Place in the Restoration Debate," *History of Political Thought* 11:4 (winter 1990): 744 f.]

4. The presentation in the text is a fusion of two accounts given by Schelling: *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* (1810), in *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Karl Schelling, 1856-), I, 7:443 ff., and *Die Weltalter* (1812-), in *Werke*, I, 8:339 ff. (I and II refer to the two series of the *Werke*, the Arabic figures to the volume within the *Abtheilung*.) New edition: *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Michael Baumgartner et al. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976-1994).



b. Critique of the Age

What is the conclusion to be drawn from this analysis? Schelling indicates some of the implications himself in the pages following his remarks on Fichte in the *Weltalter*. In Fichte's idealism he sees becoming explicit a trend that had been in the ascendancy for some time in the sciences, in the arts, and in public life. What was the endeavor of all modern theology, he asks, but gradually to idealize and to empty Christianity? As in life and public opinion character, ability, and strength were counted less, and so-called humanity, which is nothing without them, counted for everything; the age would be satisfied only by a God from whose concept had been taken away everything that is power and strength—a God whose highest expression of life is thinking and knowing, and a world in which he schematizes emptily himself; a world that is only image, and indeed image of the image, a nothing of the nothing, a shadow of the shadow; men who also are nothing but images, and dreams of shadows; a people who in their good-natured endeavor for so-called enlightenment have indeed succeeded in dissolving everything in thought, but with the darkness have also lost all strength, who have lost that *barbarous* principle that must be conquered but not annihilated in order to preserve the foundation of all greatness and beauty: "such are the rather necessarily contemporaneous phenomena, as we have seen them contemporaneous indeed."⁶

5. In *Werke* I, 8:342, Schelling calls "Jordanus Brunus" a representative of Hylozoismus.

6. Schelling, *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:342 ff.

This is the nucleus of Schelling's critique of the age. The various elements contained in it separate later and become independently the starting point for the great critique of the nineteenth century. Christianity has become idealized and empty: the revolt against this fact determines Kierkegaard's critique of middle-class Christianity as well as his restorative efforts. This fact is the starting point for Marx's revolutionary attack against the "opium of the people" from which Christianity has not yet recovered, and it is still the irritant for Nietzsche's hatred of Christianity. Christianity has become empty because God has lost his "power and strength." In the perspective of Schelling this attack is directed against the variants of deism since Descartes, Newton, and Voltaire. At the same time, however, it is a first formulation of Nietzsche's assertion that "God is dead." In the formulation of Schelling the historical-empirical content of the complaint becomes clearer: "God is dead" means that God is not living in the men of the age. When God, however, is no longer a living, but only a thinking and knowing, God, then man and his world will be an "empty schematizing" of God. In Schelling's piling up of formulations like "image of the image," "shadow of the shadow," etc., we are reminded of Bruno's "accidences of the accidences," and in the men who consequently are only "dreams of shadows" we recognize the phenomenologists in their world of phenomenal obsession and actions. Humanity, finally—that is, humanitarian feelings without strength and character—is the destructive force that saps the foundations of greatness and order. We have to admire the perspicacity of Schelling, for only in our time has the destructiveness of the optimistic belief in the goodness of man been revealed to the full. Today we know: when the "barbarous principle" is annihilated phenomenally instead of conquered, it will break out in its unconquered nakedness and destroy the world of the good-natured, enlightened, reasonable, very moral, and civilized people—but unfortunately not only *their* world. We can recognize as preformed in Schelling's attack on humanity the later attacks of Nietzsche on the "last man" and of Stefan George on the "lämmer" (lambs).

c. The Aphorisms on Reason

What is Schelling's positive alternative to the evaporation of substance in enlightened Reason and Humanity? We find a first answer

to this question in his aphorisms on reason (*Vernunft*): "Not we, not you or I, know about God. For reason, insofar as it affirms God, can affirm *nothing* else, and in this act it annihilates itself as a particularity, as something that is *outside God*." There is in reality no subject and no ego, and hence there is no object and no nonego (against Fichte), but only the One, God or the Universe, and otherwise nothing. "The 'I think,' 'I am,' is since Descartes the fundamental error of all knowledge (*Erkenntnis*); thinking is not my thinking, and being is not my being, for all is only of God, or of the All." "Reason is not a faculty, or tool, and it cannot be used: indeed there is no reason that we have, there is only a reason that has us." "Reason is not an affirmation of the One, that itself would be outside the One; it is a knowing of God that itself is in God." "Reason does not *have* the idea of God, it *is* this idea, and nothing else." "There is no ascent of knowledge to God, but only an immediate recognition; not an immediate recognition by man, but of the divine by the divine." In no way can God be an object of knowledge; we are never outside God so that we could posit him as an object. Equally reprehensible is an attitude in which the subject would assert itself as the subject: "There is no belief in God as a quality in the subject. You only wanted to save the subject, you did not want to transfigure (*verklären*) the divine." "Hence the Absolute can be eternally preserved only as the absolute and indivisible identity of the subjective and the objective, which formula is equivalent to the infinite self-affirmation of God."⁷

These aphorisms are the full stop after the Age of Enlightenment and Reason.

§3. Schelling's Speculation

The interpretation of the classic age of philosophy as the decomposition of speculation on the One, the critique of the theology and anthropology of enlightenment, and the aphorisms on reason together form an assembly of elements that will enable us to analyze Schelling's problem of speculation. We do not intend, however, to survey the magnificent elaboration of the system as a whole but shall confine ourselves to the principles of Schelling's method.

7. *Aphorismen zur Einleitung in die Naturphilosophie* (1806), aphorisms 42–54 and 65, in *ibid.*, I, 7:148 ff.

a. *Return to Bruno*

In the first instance, the problem of speculation is thrown back, behind Descartes, to the stage that it reached with Giordano Bruno. Schelling does not return to a Christian ontology, nor to the pneumatocentric anthropology: he returns to the speculative task of constructing the universe as an intelligible whole with the means that can be found in the nature of man. We have seen how this problem had become acute when the precarious coexistence of a spiritual Christianity with an astrological and alchemistic philosophy of nature broke down under the impact of the new science of nature. On the one hand, the gloriously advancing science of natural phenomena could not be brushed aside; on the other hand, it became clear that a science of phenomena is not a philosophy of substance. In this situation, Bruno took the decisive step of rationalizing natural philosophy by abandoning the alchemistic tradition and constructing the *anima mundi* that lives even in matter and unfolds through the realms of being to its culmination in the speculative and reflective spirit of man. Furthermore, he could develop this idea because he shared with Copernicus the intramundane sentiment and the will to order the world by submitting it to the speculative form of the human mind. And the adventure, finally, was not an inconsequential flight of fancy but existentially justified because he had the experience of his own spirit as an expansive nature: he could create the speculative analogue of the infinite universe because his speculative spirit was itself a wave crest in the stream of animated nature rising from matter to the One. This was the element in Bruno's nature that Hegel characterized as "something bacchantic," and we shall meet this element again in Schelling, in a metamorphosis, as the Promethean existence.

In contrast with Bruno's speculation, Cartesian philosophy must appear as a fundamental error and even a work of destruction. The identity of spirit and nature in the speculative philosopher is disrupted in Descartes. Since he cannot want to go back to a Christian ontology, the result of the disruption is the experience, peculiar to Descartes, that nature in its immediacy is annihilated (an *Ausfallserlebnis*, if we may use the German psychiatric term). It becomes doubtful whether the external world is accessible for true knowledge at all, and the assurance can only be regained by the existential contraction to the cogitating point, to the ego of

the philosopher; the world can be reconstructed when the philosopher has assured himself that the existence of his ego implies the existence of God and that God cannot wish to deceive him. The so-called methodical skepticism of Descartes, as well as the ideas of a *tabula rasa* and a new start of philosophy, have their serious existential foundation in the disappearance of an immediate experience of nature. It was the greatness of Descartes to have lived through and enacted in his work this existential possibility, and the result was the foundation of a critical epistemology that culminated in Kant, but we have to agree with Schelling that the Cartesian position was a fatal fall from the level of speculation that had been reached by Bruno.

b. Return to Kant

Once the problem created by Descartes is understood, Schelling's pattern of post-Cartesian decomposition is self-explanatory. One point, however, which the reader will have noticed, needs attention: Kant does not figure in the schema. Schelling has, indeed, the greatest respect for Kant because he was aware of the problem of nature in speculation. While he did not give a solution himself, he left the problem open and did not misconstrue it. Kant's idea of the *Ding an sich*, inaccessible under the phenomenal surface of causal relations, keeps the problem in the state of flux that it still had at the time of the controversy between Kepler and Robert Fludd. The idea of a *Ding an sich*, given in its immediacy in practical reason (*praktische Vernunft*) but inaccessible in nature, remains the warning to the philosopher that there exists a problem of substantial identity between nature and reason that can be ignored, as it was by the neo-Kantian critique of methods of science, but cannot be abolished. Schelling's speculation does not return behind Descartes to Bruno only, it also returns behind Fichte and Hegel to Kant.

c. Immersion into the Substance of the Universe

The result of the return became partially visible in the aphorisms on reason. The Cartesian position of the *ego cogitans* was abandoned. The ego is not an ultimate entity with faculties of reasoning but a medium through which the substance of the universe is operating in its processes. In the knowledge of God, there is

for Schelling no subject or object of knowledge; there is instead the life of the divine substance, animating the world and man as part of the world. In this sense, the knowing of God is in God, reason does not *have* an idea of God but *is* this idea, and the knowledge of God by man is a self-affirmation of God. For the special relation reason-God, the identity of substance in the process is reasserted as the foundation of cognitive relations. This immersion of the morphological differentiation of the realms of being, as well as of cognitive relations, into the identity of the universal or divine process is the general principle of Schelling's speculation. Not only the relation reason-God but also the relations man-nature and God-nature are immersed in the universal process. This principle of general immersion confronts Schelling with the problem that God cannot be a being beyond nature, as in the deism of the eighteenth century, but that God has to be in nature and nature in God. The speculation on the universe becomes therefore again, as with Bruno, a speculation on the revelation of God in the universe—now, however, on a new level of consciousness and rationalization.

In Bruno the speculative problem had still remained in a certain suspense because he operated with the traditional Christian and Hellenic philosophical symbols without integrating them into a coherent system. As a consequence, it can still be debated today whether Bruno was a pantheist or not. He can be understood as pantheist if one isolates his idea of the world-soul and assumes it to be identical with God. Bruno himself, it is true, spoke of the world-soul as a divine being, but he also had the idea of a God who transcends the animated world and has created it with its soul. This idea of a transcendent God beyond the *anima mundi*, who is not a God operating in nature and therefore practically functionless after the act of creation, moves Bruno's theology very close to the deistic idea of a God who has created the world-machine that after creation runs according to its own laws. The Inquisition, which knew a few things about theology, was greatly interested in this aspect of Bruno's philosophy, and what could be called his unitarianism was perhaps the most important factor leading to his condemnation. We must say, therefore, that it does not make sense to classify Bruno either as a pantheist or as a unitarian deist. Such classification would destroy precisely the point that is relevant in a history of ideas: the inconclusiveness of his speculation and the conclusion

given to it by Schelling. For Schelling, after the trials and errors from Descartes to Hegel, understood the problem thoroughly and knew that the source of Bruno's inconclusiveness was the lack of an adequate terminology for distinguishing the substantial identity of God and the realms of being from their static morphological differentiation. This understanding induced Schelling to create the much misunderstood term "potency" (*Potenz*) for the stages of the substantial process. The German *Potenz* designates the degree of a member in a series of mathematical powers (for instance, $2, 2^2, 2^3 \dots 2^n$). By using this formalized terminology and designating the stages in the process of the One as A^1, A^2, A^3 , Schelling escapes the difficulty of having to identify terminologically the fundamental substance with any of the partial phases into which the process of the whole is articulated. The fundamental substance is, therefore, neither matter nor spirit, neither a transcendent God nor an immanent nature, but the identity of the process in which the One becomes the articulated universe.

d. The Potenzenlehre

In what terms then shall we speak of the fundamental substance and its process of articulation, if none of the articulated phases must be used, although it is not given to our knowledge except in the articulation of phases? On this point we have to be brief because the *Potenzenlehre*, perhaps the profoundest piece of philosophical thought ever elaborated, is not our primary concern. It will have to suffice to indicate that Schelling speaks of it in terms of the tensions of a psyche: of freedom and necessity, of a desire to expand and a counteracting desire to confine itself and to close within, of an original negation and darkness and an urge for unfolding the essence and bringing it to light, of a blind struggle between the contradictory tendencies and an equally blind breakthrough to articulation, of a higher and lower in the original nature and a desire of the lower to orient itself toward the higher, etc. The outcome of the struggle is the positing of the first potency, of the principle that resists revelation and articulation, as nature (A^1), of the blossoming out of nature into the articulated world from inorganic forms to man through the actualization into the second potency (A^2) as "the savior and liberator," and of the elevation of nature into freedom in the third potency (A^3), the world-soul that

is the connecting link between the universe (the *All*) and the purest God (the *lauterste Gott*).

The advantages of the terminology are obvious. The articulation of the necessity in God into the universe and the consequent articulation of the freedom in God into a transcendent "purest God" show perhaps most clearly Schelling's solution of the theological problem that had remained in suspense with Bruno. For Schelling "nature is not God"; it only belongs to the necessary in God, for God "strictly speaking can be called God only with regard to his freedom." And even of the necessary, nature is only a part, to wit, the first potency. Nature therefore cannot be called God because it is only a part. "Only the whole can be called God, and not even the whole, after it has grown out of the One into the All and thus has issued, as it were, from the Godhead."⁸ These passages should make it clear that the classification of Schelling's system as "pantheistic" is quite as inadequate as the classification of Bruno as a pantheist. The fundamental substance is not even God in the conventional philosophical terminology, because God himself is a differentiation of the fundamental process, occasionally called by Schelling A^o in order to indicate his rank outside the struggle of the potencies. On the other hand, we shall see in the case of Nietzsche the absence of such distinctions as a source of grave difficulties. Nietzsche's philosophy of existence is always in danger of sliding into a cheap naturalism because the distinction between nature as the "ground" of existence—Schelling's first potency—and nature as the articulated realm of being is never drawn clearly. The "will to power" as the will of the universe to self-realization and the *libido dominandi* as the biological urge of a particular human existence to self-assertion are with Nietzsche in a permanent state of confusion.⁹

8. Schelling, *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:244.

9. We have followed in the text Schelling's presentation of the *Potenzenlehre* as given in the *Weltalter*. The reader should be aware, however, that in his last years, after 1847, Schelling stressed other aspects of the "potencies" more strongly. In the *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, Schelling says: "Wegen dieser natürlichen Ordnung haben wir auch von einer ersten, zweiten, dritten Potenz gesprochen, und ohne an eine Analogie with den mathematischen zu denken, sie auch also solche bezeichnet" (*ibid.*, II, 1:391; Because of this natural order, we have spoken of a first, a second, a third potency and, without thinking of an analogy to the mathematical "powers" (*Potenz*), we have called them "potencies"). In this context he frequently uses the formulation "*Macht (Potenz)*" emphasizing the dynamic

§4. Historical Existence: The Key to Speculation

For the details of the *Potenzenlehre* we have to refer the reader to Schelling himself. Here we have rather to ask the question: What is the source of knowledge that would enable us to construct the universal process? The core of Schelling's answer is to be found in the passage: "There is a light in the darkness. According to the old and almost outworn saying, man is the world on a small scale. Thus the processes of human life from the utmost depth to the highest consummation must be in accordance with the processes of universal life. It is certain: anybody who could write the history of his own life from the ground, would at the same time have concentrated the history of the universe (*Weltall*) in a brief synopsis."¹⁰ Anthropology is now systematically made the key to speculation; nothing must enter into the content of speculation that cannot be found in human nature, in its depths as well as in its heights, in the limitation of its existence as well as in its openness to transcendent reality.

a. Historical Existence

The classic age of philosophy has borne fruit in spite of its decomposition, for Schelling's attitude, if compared with Bruno's, has become critical.¹¹ Schelling has gained a clear consciousness of the foundations on which speculation must rest. The assumption itself of human nature as the basis of speculation is now carefully justified: "To man there must be conceded a principle outside and above the world; for how could he alone of all creatures trace the long way of evolutions from the present back to the deepest night of the past, how could he alone ascend to the beginning of the ages, unless there were a principle in him of the beginning of the ages." The human soul has been drawn from the source of all things and is akin to it, and hence "it has a co-knowledge (*Mitwissenschaft*) of creation." The soul does not know, "it rather is itself knowledge."¹² The historicity of man thus is introduced as a constituent element

element more than the formal. We must revert to these other implications of the term *Potenz* later in the text.

10. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:207.

11. For Schelling's recognition of the positive achievement of the classic age of philosophy see *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *ibid.*, II, 3:39 ff.

12. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:200.

of speculation. The philosopher does not begin with a *tabula rasa* but finds himself existing historically in a realm of knowledge that is coextensive (in mythology, revelation, rational philosophical speculation, and empirical historical sciences including those of nature) with the universe itself to its origins. Bruno's existential experience of the identity of nature and spirit and of the coextensiveness of the infinite universe with the substantial speculation on the infinite is broadened and deepened in Schelling's experience of human historical existence as coextensive with the historical process of the universe. And just as with Bruno the speculation on the infinite could become the key to an understanding of the infinite universe with its plurality of worlds, so now with Schelling mythology and revelation become the key to the infinite historical dimension of the universe.¹³ Pagan polytheism, Hebrew monotheism, and Christianity are stages of a theogonic process in which divine revelation and human creation of symbols interpenetrate each other. Myth and revelation are the vessels of divine self-affirmation in the world through man; they are part of the history of the universe just as much as of the history of living forms. And this process has not yet come to an end but is continuing through the souls of man as its medium and manifesting itself in the creation of new religious symbols—such as the *Potenzenlehre* of Schelling.

b. The Anamnestic Dialogue

History thus has a double meaning. It is, first, the actual course of natural and human events in the universe; and this course of events becomes history in the second meaning if it is understood by man as a meaningful unfolding of the universe. This internalization of the course of events, this immersion of the external process into a movement of the soul, is possible because the internalizing soul is itself part of the stream. When the soul gives meaning to the stream, it discovers the stream and its meaning in itself. In this sense the soul is knowledge, and history is a science of the soul. This knowledge of the soul, however, does not lie open as a realm of objects that could be known by a subject. Rather, the soul is polarized into a principle of freedom by which it can understand everything and

13. See Schelling's *Philosophie der Mythologie* (in *ibid.*, II, 1–2), and his *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (in *ibid.*, II, 3–4).

a principle of darkness and oblivion in which the archetype of all things slumbers obscured and forgotten. "There is one thing in man that has to be brought into recollection and another that brings it into recollection; one thing in which lies ready the answer to every searching question, and another that brings the answer forth from it." The free principle is bound and held down by the darkness at its bottom and cannot hold anything true without the witnessing consent of the darkness, while the darkness is unbound by the free principle and opens itself toward it. "This split, this duplication of ourselves, this secret intercourse in which there are two beings, . . . this silent conversation, this inner art of persuasion is the peculiar secret of the philosopher." The external philosophical conversation and art of persuasion is the "imitation" of the internal dialogue and therefore is called *dialectic*.¹⁴ We can summarize these passages in the thesis that the process of the universe can be made intelligible through an anamnesis by which the meaning of the external process is extracted from the unconscious in man.

c. Anamnesis and History

In this thesis we find the most comprehensive formulation of a principle that had been animating the growth of German historicism, in opposition to Enlightenment, since Herder and Baader. Herder had already conceived of history as "the history of the human soul" and had recognized the soul of the historian as the instrument of interpretation, for "we can transplant into others nothing but ourselves," and "only by another soul can the soul be discovered"; and he had also seen the importance of unconsciousness in historical events.¹⁵ Schelling gives precision to these earlier efforts and broadens the principle so far that philosophy becomes identical with history and history with the science of the soul. Moreover, the source of "meaning" is not clearly circumscribed as the anamnestic dialogue that is going on in the soul. This anamnesis is neither completed nor will it be completed soon, and we do not know, therefore, the meaning of history as a whole; the future is still open. An "objective" history as a science that could view the course of

14. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:201.

15. See Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *The Growth of German Historicism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 19; and Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1936).

events as a completed past is impossible. "We cannot be narrators, but only explorers." We cannot do more than weigh the pros and cons of each opinion until the time has come to establish the right one firmly and indubitably.¹⁶ There is a promise in these words, but not more. Schelling's realism prevents any eschatological indulgence. The dialogue of the soul is still going on, and speculation has not yet become a "science," that is, knowledge of a past; it is only "dialectic," that is, a striving for consciousness through anamnesis (*Wiederbewußtwerden*).¹⁷ As a consequence philosophy cannot be established as science by dialectic because "the very existence and necessity of dialectic prove that philosophy is not at all yet real science."¹⁸

d. Schelling and Hegel

These last remarks are directed against Hegel. They distinguish clearly between Schelling's dialectic as the conceptualization of the anamnestic dialogue and Hegel's dialectic as the transposition of the dialogue into an absolute movement of the Idea. In Hegel's dialectic, the movement has come to its end and philosophy has reached its systematic end with the end of the objective movement; for Schelling the dialectical elaboration of the anamnesis is a work of art that does not prejudice the elaborations of future artists.¹⁹ Hegel's philosophy of history bears still the marks of Enlightenment insofar as the Idea has come to its full, reflective self-understanding in the present; Schelling is beyond Enlightenment insofar as man has become an unexhausted historical existence. For Hegel there

16. *Weltalter*, in *Werke*, I, 8:206.

17. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, 8:201.

18. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, 8:202.

19. Schelling, *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:414: "Jede Begeisterung äußert sich auf eine bestimmte Weise; und so gibt es auch eine, die sich durch dialektischen Kunsttrieb äußert, eine eigentlich wissenschaftliche Begeisterung. Es gibt darum auch eine dialektische Philosophie, die als Wissenschaft bestimmt, z.B. von Poesie und Religion, geschieden, und etwas ganz für sich Bestehendes, nicht aber mit allem Möglichen nach der Reihe eins ist, wie die behaupten, welche jetzt in so vielen Schriften alles mit allem zu vermischen bemüht sind" (Every enthusiasm expresses itself in a particular form; and thus there is also one that expresses itself through the dialectical creative instinct, an intrinsically scientific enthusiasm. There is, therefore, a dialectical philosophy which, defined as science, is distinguished, for instance, from poetry and religion, existing wholly by itself rather than being one with all kinds of other things, as is asserted by those who, in so many of their writings, nowadays strive to blend everything with everything).

is no perspective into a future; for Schelling the unconscious is pregnant with time that has not yet become past. Both Hegel's and Schelling's dialectic is derived historically from the mystical tradition, in particular from the mysticism of Jacob Boehme. With Hegel the movements of the mystical soul become objectified in the dialectical pattern of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, and this pattern can be used for the organization of historical materials and the construction of meaning. Schelling, on the other hand, dissolves even the element of objectivation that is present in the work of the mystic insofar as the truth that the mystic sets forth is supposedly given to him as an object in "vision." Schelling insists that "we do not live in vision (*im Schauen*); our knowledge is piecemeal, and that means it must be produced piece by piece in divisions and stages, and that cannot be done without any reflection."²⁰ The truth of speculation is neither "given" in vision nor results as it were automatically from the dialectical movement of an Idea; it is an elaborated, reflective truth that must be verified permanently by recourse to the anamnestic dialogue.

§5. Orgiastic Existence

At this juncture we must introduce a term that will prove useful not only in the interpretation of Schelling but generally for a philosophy of human existence: *protodialectic experience*. It shall designate the experience of the emergence of a content from the unconscious, still in the state of flux and vagueness before its solidification into language symbols, together with the dynamic "tones" of the soul that accompany the emerging, such as anxiety, contraction, urge, pressure, striving, hesitation, unrest, disquietude, release, joy, etc. We need the term because the experience that we have just described in a preliminary fashion, the experience of transition from unconsciousness to consciousness and reflection, is Schelling's model for the interpretation of the universal process. Pieces descriptive of this realm of experience are scattered all through Schelling's work, usually in the context of a dialectical elaboration that they serve to support. A full survey of these pieces would require a considerable monograph. We shall select only a few

20. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:203.

that are apt to throw some light on the development of anthropology after Schelling.

The protodialectic experience is the experience of the creative process. We have to say "process" because "act" would already be an elaboration of an immediate experience in which the subject of action is not yet distinguished from an object. There is as much passion in this process as action. It is the process that links the conscious with the unconscious. Schelling has formulated the relation between the terms of the process in the sentence, "All conscious creation presupposes an unconscious and is only an unfolding, an explication of the latter."²¹ A first set of tones pervading this transition has an orgiastic tinge. Following Franz Baader, Schelling finds that "the urge for knowledge has the greatest analogy with the urge for procreation."²² We shall understand the analogy best by following Schelling's description of such a process: The active potency does not manifest itself immediately in full power but rather as a *gentle contraction*, like that which precedes awakening from deep slumber. With increasing strength the powers of being are excited to *sluggish, blind activity*. *Shapeless births* begin to rise. The being that exists in this strife *heaves as in heavy dreams* that rise from being, that is, from the past. With increasing conflict these births of the night pass like *wild fantasies* through the soul, and it experiences in them *all the terrors* of its own being. The predominant feeling in this conflict of tendencies, where it does not know which way to turn, is that of *anxiety* or *dread (Angst)*. "Meanwhile the *orgasm of powers* increases more and more and makes the integrating power of the soul fear a *complete dissociation, or total dissolution*." At this juncture the integrating power *sets free* or *surrenders* its own life, by recognizing it as already past, and in this act of *release* the *higher form* of its own life and the *quiet purity* of the spirit appear before it as in a flash.²³ This orgiastic suffering is inevitable, for "pain is something general and necessary in all life, it is the inevitable passage to freedom." "Each being must learn to know its own depth; and that is impossible without suffering." All pain comes only from being, and everything

21. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, 8:337.

22. *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:414.

23. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:336.

living must first enclose itself in being and break through from its darkness to transfiguration.²⁴

With the last sentences we have passed already from mere description to a generalizing interpretation. Schelling considers this experience as revealing the character of the universal process in general. "It is a futile endeavor to explain the manifoldness of nature as a peaceful interpenetration and harmonization of different powers. All that comes into being can do so only in restlessness and discontent (*Unmut*), and as anxiety is the fundamental feeling of every living creature, so is everything that lives conceived and born in violent strife."²⁵ The generalization, however, is presently referred back to the immediate experience, for "we see in the one instance in which we are allowed to be witnesses of an original creation that the first foundation of the future man is formed only in deadly struggle, terrible restlessness, and an anxiety that goes to despair."²⁶ And then again the immediate experience is projected into the divine nature itself: "We shall not hesitate to represent even that primordial being (the first potentiality of the externally manifest God) in the state of suffering that is peculiar to the unfolding process. Suffering is generally the way to glory (*Herrlichkeit*), not with regard to man only, but also with regard to the Creator. . . . The participation in all that is blind, dark, and suffering in nature is necessary in order to elevate him into the highest consciousness."²⁷ The suffering God is a necessary assumption for understanding the phases of divine revelation in history: "Without the conception of a humanly suffering God, which is common to all mysteries and spiritual religions of ancient times, all history must remain incomprehensible."²⁸ And the terror and anguish of this procreative revelation is still with us in the world; the time has not yet come when "God is all in all."²⁹ For the present God is enthroned over a world of terrors and "with regard to what is hidden in him and through him, he could be called the terrible, the awful, not only figuratively, but literally."³⁰

24. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:335.

25. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:322.

26. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:322 f.

27. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:335.

28. *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:403.

29. *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:404.

30. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:268.

In the light of these descriptions and constructions, we may assume that even the term *potency* was chosen with an awareness of its sexual implication. And, to the extent to which it rests on this aspect of the protodialectic experience, the *Potenzenlehre* would be a mathematizing speculation on the experience of the procreative act.

§6. Promethean Existence

Man is not an absolute existence but has his being as part of the whole system of the universe. His nature, his unconscious, is not posited by himself as his ground of being, as the divine nature, the first potency, is posited by God, but he finds himself with it, as something under him on which he is dependent. At the same time, he is a self that exists as a clearly distinguished center in the universe; he is not a mere flicker in a universal fire but an existence grounded in itself. By propositions of this type, which belong to Schelling's dialectical sphere, we have circled around a complex of "tones" in the protodialectic experience that are designated by terms like freedom and necessity, guilt, defiance, fall, melancholy, etc. This whole complex is focused for Schelling in the symbol of Prometheus. What does the symbol of Prometheus mean?

"Prometheus is not a thought that was invented by man; he is one of those primordial thoughts that wedge themselves into existence and unfold consequently if they find the appropriate environment in a perfect spirit, as Prometheus in Aeschylus." "Prometheus is that principle of humanity which we have called spirit (*nous*); he put understanding and consciousness into the souls of those who formerly were spiritually feeble."³¹ "Prometheus is on the one side the principle of Zeus himself and something divine in relation to man, a divine something that becomes the cause of his understanding. . . . But in relation to the divine, Prometheus is *Will*, unconquerable, not to be put to death by Zeus himself, and able therefore to resist the God."³² "Zeus is the *nous*, the *nous basilikòs* of Plato, and Prometheus has elevated to it a mankind that formerly did not participate in its activity; the heavenly fire stolen from God (the *ignis aetherea domo subductus*) is the free will."³³

31. Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:482.

32. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:481.

33. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:484.

a. *The Double Life*

In more technical language, Schelling formulates the myth of Prometheus in the thesis of the "double life" (*gedoppeltes Leben*) of the particular in the All. The particular has (1) a life in the absolute, that is, the life in the idea, which therefore has to be described as the dissolution of the finite in the infinite, of the particular in the all, and (2) a life *in itself*, which belongs to it truly, however only insofar as it is dissolved into the All; if it separates from the life of God it becomes a life of mere appearance. The absoluteness of life, the eternal in life, is conditioned by the dissolution of the life into the All. The particular life cannot be absolute and at the same time enjoy itself as a particular life. "In the eternal affirmation of God it is in one and the same act created and annihilated: created as an absolute reality, annihilated because it has no life that could be separated as a particular from the All." "This life in the All, this *essence* of things, as grounded in the eternity of God, is the *idea*, and their being in the All is a being according to the *idea*."³⁴

The *double life* is the key to the Promethean complex of experiences. The anamnestic dialogue and the orgiastic transition from the unconscious to the conscious are concerned with the process in which the soul rises from nature to spirit. Now we are concerned with the content that comes from darkness to light, that is, with the essence of the soul, its idea that has to be extracted from the unconscious and elevated to spiritual manifestation. On the occasion of this growing of human life to its spiritual, reflective stature we experience the tensions of freedom and necessity, of guilt and harmony. Free action is action in harmony with necessity; guilty action is action in rebellion against necessity. Guilt and harmony are the "tones" of experience that reveal the structure of existence and form the experiential basis for dialectical elaboration.³⁵ Moreover, guilt and harmony are experiences of tension and relaxation, hence they reveal the poles of existence between which the tension is felt. In guilt is revealed the defection from necessity, and in this defection necessity itself is revealed as well as the freedom of defection.

34. *System der gesamten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere* (1804), in *ibid.*, I, 6:187.

35. *System der gesamten Philosophie and der Naturphilosophie insbesondere*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:553.

The terms *freedom* and *necessity* in this sense obviously do not apply to the question of freedom of empirical action. In empirical action man is always necessitated physically and psychologically; there is no empirical freedom. The empirical necessitation, however, does not abolish the experience of guilt if action was not in harmony with necessity in the existential sense. Freedom and necessity, therefore, must be understood as structures of the soul that extend in the direction of an origin in the unconscious. And since the unconscious, the nature of the soul, is embedded in the nature of the universe that is posited from eternity, freedom and necessity are the structure of the eternal in the soul. Guilt and harmony are the experiential gates to the understanding of the "double life": man has spirit and selfhood and by their virtue can separate as a particular will from the divine will in which necessity and freedom are in eternal identity.³⁶

b. The Inner Return

Thus far Schelling's description lies fairly within the range of Christian experience. Man is the image of God, but he is not God. His yearning goes beyond finiteness and creatureliness to the ultimate communion with God. "The highest aim of all free action is identity of freedom with necessity; and since this identity is only in God, the aim is to manifest God in one's action, that is, to be identical with God."³⁷ This identity with God can only be achieved by the eternal in the soul. Since the eternal in the soul is timeless, this identity is not comprehensible empirically. The experience of identity abolishes all time and puts right into the middle of time the absolute eternity. "Peace with God, disappearance of the past, forgiveness of sin. The incomprehensibility of such a transition to a timeless state that occurs in time has always been felt."³⁸ The awareness that one has eternity in one's own soul is "like a sudden clarification and illumination of consciousness." From the empirical point of view, this irruption of eternity can only be expressed as grace.³⁹

This restoration of the Christian meaning of life in sanctification determines Schelling's attitude toward the dominant political

36. *Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:364 f.

37. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:562.

38. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*

39. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:563.

ideas and attitudes of the age. Sanctification requires contemplative return to the eternal origin; it cannot be achieved in blindness of action. Those who strive for freedom of action in the world (in the Christian sense) will lose it; the point for which they strive, the harmony of freedom with necessity, recedes from them in action. This point does not lie *ahead* of them, it is *behind* them. "In order to find it, they would first have to come to a stop. Most people, however, never come to a stop."⁴⁰ This return is, furthermore, everyone's most personal affair. The sanctification of the individual life has nothing to do directly with the salvation of mankind; the destiny of man is not absorbed in the destiny of mankind. Every man has to try for himself to represent the highest. "Nothing is remoter from this sentiment than the restless striving to improve or advance others in direct action, that philanthropical addiction of so many people who permanently talk about the weal of mankind and want to accelerate its progress, thus taking the place of Providence; usually they are people who do not know how to perfect themselves and want to make others enjoy the fruit of their boredom." "The philanthropic ideas of a future Golden Age, of a perpetual peace, etc., lose much of their importance from this point of view. The Golden Age would come of itself if everybody would represent it in himself, and who has it in himself does not need it outside himself." "The wisdom of the ancients has left us an important hint when it placed the Golden Age into the past, as if to suggest that we should not search for it by endless advancing and acting in the world, but rather by a return to the point from which everyone started, that is, to the inner identity with the absolute."⁴¹

c. Melancholy and Grace

This Christian idea of the inner return to God, however, is bent by Schelling in a new direction by "tones" in the experience of the double life that opens the insight into other dimensions of existence. The return is precarious and the moment of grace is fleeting. Man cannot escape the finiteness of his particular existence. His will to perfection in life is frustrated insofar as the nature under him can never be completely spiritualized. The independent ground in him resists conquest. This aspect of existence is

40. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:553.

41. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:563.

revealed experientially in the "tone" of *melancholy*. "The darkest and deepest in human nature is yearning (*Sehnsucht*), as it were the inner gravitation of the soul; hence in its deepest it is melancholy (in German *Schwerkraft* and *Schwermut*). In this melancholy is founded the sympathy of man with nature. The deepest in nature also is melancholy; nature too mourns a lost good, and to all life attaches an indestructible melancholy because it has something under it that is independent of it."⁴² In God there would be a ground of darkness too if he did not make this condition unto himself, if he were not united with it to an absolute personality. Man, however, never brings his condition completely into his power, even if he wickedly strives to do so; his condition is independent of him; hence his personality and selfhood can never rise to the perfect *actus*. "This is the sadness attaching to all finite life; and even if in God this condition is at least relatively independent, still there is in God himself a source of sadness though it never rises to actuality but is overcome in eternal joy. Hence the veil of melancholy that is spread over all nature, the deep, indestructible melancholy of all life."⁴³

From the sadness attaching to all life there is no escape except in a fleeting *moment*. The moment of happiness over the ground of sadness is the utmost that can be reached; and it arises only as the culmination of an austere religious life. Schelling's idea of religiousness is intimately connected with the Promethean experience. "We do not mean by religiousness what a diseased age so calls, that is lazy brooding, pietizing, surmising, or a velleity of feeling the divine." "Religiousness is a conscientiousness, or that one acts as one knows and does not contradict the light of knowledge in one's action." A man to whom such contradiction is impossible is religious or conscientious in the highest sense of the word. "He is not conscientious who, when the occasion arises, has first to remember his rule of duty and then decides to do the right thing out of respect for the rule."⁴⁴ Virtue in this sense of conscientiousness does not have to be enthusiastic; on the contrary, it is the austerity of sentiment from which blossom forth true gracefulness and godliness. If, however, in the austerity the divine principle breaks through, the

42. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:465 f.

43. *Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:399.

44. *Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:392.

virtue will become enthusiasm, the heroism in the fight against evil. Enthusiastic virtue is faith. Schelling is regaining the existential meaning of faith against the decadent Christianity of the enlightened middle class. Faith is not a belief that something is true; that was Voltaire's conception of faith, and this faith succumbed to the attack of rational and historical critique. For Schelling there is no merit in such belief. Faith has to be restored to its original meaning (*fides*) as trust and reliance on the divine that excludes all choice. And only when into this solid seriousness of sentiment, which always must be presupposed, "should fall a ray of divine love, will arise the highest transfiguration of human life into gracefulness (*Anmut*) and divine beauty."⁴⁵ The implication of this moment of grace becomes still clearer in the sentence, "The *grasping* of this eternity, recognized in oneself, can appear from the point of view of action only as the effect of *grace*, of a peculiar happiness."⁴⁶ The idea of the grace that falls in as a ray of divine love but still is grasped from the bottom of the eternal unconscious reveals the non-Christian character of the Promethean experience. The tension between creaturely finiteness and infinity, the tension between life and death, is solved in the Christian experience by grace that grasps man from above and annihilates him into the happiness beyond; the Promethean grace is grasped by man and releases the tension of life and death in a flash of immanent happiness.⁴⁷

§7. Political Existence

a. The Intelligible Order of Being

The occasional critical remarks on the age, the idea of the inner return, and the reflections of the Golden Age have suggested already the systematic place that political existence holds in Schelling's

45. *Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:393 f. The choice of the terms *gracefulness* and *beauty* in this passage is not accidental. The Promethean happiness that can be grasped only in the "moment" through action can be realized lastingly in art. See for Schelling's philosophy of art *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur* (1807), in *ibid.*, I, 7, particularly the pages on Michelangelo and Raffael, 318 ff.; furthermore the section on art in the *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:569 ff. The reader should further compare the passage on "melancholy, which pervades like a sweet drug the most excellent works of the Greeks," in the *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *ibid.*, II, 3:512.

46. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:563.

47. See on this point Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*, vol. I, *Der deutsche Idealismus*, 236.

theory. Man is not alone in the world; he is a part of mankind. The inner return is the path to personal perfection; it is not the path of human coexistence in community. The idea of man, the idea of his eternal identity in God, would require that God be the unity of free essences. But man has fallen, and mankind does not exist in actual unity with God. The substitute for, as well as the remnant of, the lost eternity is the state: a unity of nature, a sort of second nature over the first. The state is "a consequence of the curse that rests on mankind."⁴⁸ We might say: "the intelligible order of things from which man has turned away has become his debt to the state."⁴⁹ "In face of the factual world, the state is the intelligible order that has become factual."⁵⁰ This intelligible order is part of the general constitution of being. The individual men who live simultaneously and in succession are not equivalent casts that come from the same mold. Men differ from each other. Not the whole possibility of mankind is fulfilled in any human being; only mankind as a whole realizes this possibility through the manifold differentiated realizations in all men. Here is the root of the individual inequality of men in the framework of their generic equality, as well as the basis for a harmony that arises from the complementary character of the individual differences. The order between men, therefore, is the intelligible order "that is older than all actual men and does not derive from reality."⁵¹ In historical reality this order manifests itself in the manifold of nations and empires, in rulership and obedience, in revolt and subjection, and in war. It furthermore becomes in historical reality the source of state power as well as of its legitimacy.

b. State and Church—The Covenant of the Peoples

Human existence is political in the sense that man has ontologically his place in the historico-political process. The intelligible constitution of being that has become factual is not an order created by man to be formed after a rational pattern and to be changed at will. It is coeternal with the idea of man and a component of his existence. In view of the ontological objectivity of the order,

48. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, in *Werke*, I, 7:461.

49. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:547.

50. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:550.

51. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:528.

the search for an ideal state must be futile. The perfect state is not for this world, and any attempt to devise it can only end in apocalyptic fancies.⁵² On the other hand, this existential conception of politics opens the understanding for the state as a historical phenomenon.

From the wealth of Schelling's reflections on political institutions in history we shall select his observations on the power-state and the church in the *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* (1810). Schelling's starting point in the *Vorlesungen* are the events of the French Revolution. The constitutional problem of the Revolution, and in its wake of the Kantian philosophy of politics, was the attempt to show how unity is compatible with the existence of free individuals, how a state is possible that can serve as the basis for the highest freedom of the individual. "Such a state, however, is impossible." We should add, to avoid terminological confusions, such a state is impossible as a power-state. When the power of the state is deprived of its strength, a short dream of freedom will be followed by a despotic increase of state power, as the course of the Revolution has shown. And the same sequence can be observed in political theory. After a period in which everybody talked of freedom, the most consistent men, when they developed the idea of the perfect state, arrived at the worst despotic conceptions, as for instance Fichte in his *Geschlossene Handelsstaat*. Schelling concludes that the power-state as such cannot find a true and absolute unity at all. The power-states are only attempts to find such unity, attempts to become an organic whole—with the result that they share the fate of organic beings, that is, to flourish, mature, grow old, and die. The greatest obstacles to the unifying attempts of this type arise through the collisions of the states. The symptomatic manifestation of a unity not found and not to be found in this way is war—as necessary and inevitable to the relations between power-states as the struggle of the elements in nature. In war human beings are reduced openly to the level of relations as between natural beings. To this picture of the natural power-state must be added the vices brought forth by the state itself, that is, poverty, evil in great masses, a mankind reduced to the struggle for existence.⁵³

52. *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:552.

53. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:461 f.

c. *Ideal and Idea*

The merely external unit of the power-state, however, is not the only type of unifying institution that has arisen in history. Side by side with it we see the church, established on the basis of a divine revelation, as the attempt to produce an inner unity of the mind between men. Since, however, the internal and external worlds have separated in human existence, the church cannot become an external power; the church will always be driven into the inner life by the power of the external. The great mistake of the church was not, therefore, that it interfered in affairs of state but on the contrary that it permitted the structure of the state to enter it. The church did not preserve its purity from the external; it indulged in advancement by external power. When it started to persecute the heretics, it had lost its true idea.⁵⁴

The political history of Christian Europe can be interpreted as the movement from a feudalized, hierarchical church to a secularized, nonspiritual power-state. The first attempt—the attempt to produce internal unity through the church—had to fail because the church became externalized. Only after the fall of the ecclesiastical hierarchy did the second attempt, the power-state, come into its own. It is characterized by an increase of political tyranny in the measure in which one believed that the internal unity of men could be dispensed with. And tyranny will probably increase until it reaches a maximum that will perhaps induce mankind to embark on a less partial course. What these future attempts will be, we do not know. But it is certain that a true unity can be achieved only through the highest and most comprehensive development of religious insight of which mankind is capable. The state will not disappear in this event, but it will liberate itself gradually from blind power and be transfigured into intelligence. The church should not dominate the state, nor the state the church, but the state would have to develop within itself the religious principle so that the great Covenant of all Peoples (*Bund aller Völker*) can rest on the basis of a common religious conviction.⁵⁵

In the preceding paragraphs we have used the term *power-state* wherever Schelling uses simply *state*. This precision of terminology

54. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:463 f.

55. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, in *ibid.*, I, 7:464 f.

was necessary because, as the reader will have observed, Schelling does not develop a theory of the state as a constant political form in history; he rather develops a theory of political existence that is inseparable from the general process of history, understood as the theogonic process in which God in the universe unfolds and returns to himself. The "state" is one specific historical differentiation of political existence that characterizes the postmedieval political development. The "state" of the *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* is neither the polis, nor the Roman empire, nor the *sacrum imperium*; it is a type of existence modeled after the French national state of the period of Louis XIV.⁵⁶ The term *state* in a strict sense is reserved for a form of political existence in which the state is the vessel for the free, organic unfolding of art, science, and religion. "The church is not outside such a state, it is inside. The church can be 'outside' only in a state of merely profane purposes and institutions; but such a state is no longer a state."⁵⁷

The construction of blueprints for an ideal state is considered by Schelling a futile endeavor because such constructions—"and particularly the forms of government constructed in science since Kant"⁵⁸—deal only with the profane power-state. On this level ideality cannot be found. This impossibility of constructing an ideal does not mean, however, that the philosopher of politics is a relativist to whom one form of government is as good or as bad as another, since he has no standard of value by which to measure them. On the contrary, only if the search for ideal states is abandoned does a realistic interpretation of political existence become possible, because now the interpretation can be oriented not toward the ideal, but toward the idea of the state. The construction of an ideal is a subjective adventure that destroys the structure of reality, while the ontological assumption of an idea in existence submits to reality and enables the philosopher to understand politics as an existential component in the life of a historical community.

56. See *Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *ibid.*, II, 1:546. This passage is of importance because in it Schelling opposes to the French construction of the power-state the German Reformation as a countermovement to the state that ultimately will replace the medieval ecclesiastic theocracy by the "true theocracy"—"die eine Herrschaft des erkannten, göttlichen Geistes selbst seyn wird" (which will be the rule of the recognized divine Spirit). In this movement Schelling sees the German historical mission.

57. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:576.

58. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:575.

By this return from political organization to political existence, Schelling has reestablished the theory of politics on the level of Plato and Saint Augustine. The theory of politics is not concerned with the differentiated political organization that arose in the secularized modern state; it is concerned with political form as part of the total human existence in society at any given historical time. The topics of a theory of politics are extended again to the range of the *Politeia* and the *civitas Dei*. For the treatment of the modern state this extension means that political theory is not exhausted by reflections on absolute and constitutional monarchy, on republic and democracy, on administration and rule of law, on executive, legislative, and judiciary powers, etc., but that the secular state must be understood in its very secularity, that is, in its relation to the spiritual substance of the community. Not the internal organization of the state, but the relation of the differentiated, secularized, political unit to the spiritual substance (to the idea, in Schelling's terminology) is the primary political problem. In this relation are rooted the problems of stability and instability, political rise and decay, change and evolution, revolution and crisis. If the secularized state is not placed in the context of the spiritual history of the modern world, the political phenomena of an age of crisis must remain utterly incomprehensible, and their discussion must be reduced either to a dreary description of external events or to ravings about the bad people who do not like good, liberal, enlightened democracy.

d. The Polis—The Third Dionysus

The central problem of political science is the idea in existence. The thesis can be elucidated best by an example. We shall therefore briefly outline Schelling's masterful analysis of the consciousness of crisis in the Greek polis as it manifested itself in the tension between the polytheistic state religion and the mysteries. The Olympian gods were the gods of the polis; their rule of the present aeon was intimately connected with the existence of the polis in the historical present. We have seen in our study of Greek political ideas that with Xenophanes and Heraclitus the rise of a new logos-religion becomes clearly distinguishable, in conflict with the official religious institutions of the polis. The open break with the traditional spiritual substances comes with the death of Socrates and the Platonic myth of the soul, and in the end the idea of the polis

dies in the apolitism of the Cynic, Stoic, and Epicurean schools.⁵⁹ Schelling tries to discover behind the public course of the crisis the evolution of the consciousness of crisis and the latent willingness to surrender the gods, and the polis with them, in the Dionysian element of the mysteries. We cannot enter into the voluminous evidence supporting his theory but must confine ourselves to a presentation of the result. Schelling finds that Dionysus has in Greek mythology three aspects: the Zagreus, the Bacchus, and the Iacchos. The Zagreus is the wild God of nature and the underworld, of ancient times; the Bacchus is the Dionysus that is celebrated in the public orgiastic festivals, the ruler of the present; the Iacchos is the Dionysus of the Demeter mysteries, the ruler of the future aeon, beyond the Olympian present of the polis. The gods do not rule forever: Kronos preceded Zeus, and Dionysus-Iacchos will be his successor. The mystery of Dionysus is the knowledge of the theogonic process and the presentiment of the end of the polytheistic world. The god undergoes the metamorphosis from the ruler of darkness to the Bacchus of the living and his final transfiguration into a spiritual god, represented in the mystery as the death of the god and his rise as the Iacchos. The consciousness is alive that the theogonic process has not reached its end in the present existence of the polis but will move on to a spiritual existence beyond the polis.

Why did the consciousness of the end of the aeon have to assume the form of the mystery? And why was the profanation of the mystery the greatest political crime? Schelling's answer is that there was one element in the mystery that made it compatible with the polis, or the mystery would not have been tolerated at all, and that there was a second element in it that was incompatible with the existence of the polis and that therefore it was refused public recognition. The element that made the mystery tolerable was the acceptance of Dionysus as the Bacchus of the present. The element that was excluded from public life was the expectation of, and yearning for, the death of the God and the advent of the new aeon. Schelling finds a revealing symptom of this state of consciousness in the curious affair of Aeschylus, who aroused with his *Prometheus*

59. See *Order and History*, vol. II, *The World of the Polis*, and vol. III, *Plato and Aristotle* (1957; available Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999); see also *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 19, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. I, *Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, ed. Athanasios Moulakis (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).

the rage of the people because they felt that he had profaned the mystery. Aeschylus saved himself by pleading that he could not have profaned the mystery because he was not initiated. The affair of Aeschylus is still a dark question, for we do not know for certain which passages were supposed to contain the profanation.⁶⁰ Schelling assumes them to be the lines where Prometheus expresses his contempt for Zeus: may he rule for his little time as he likes; he will not rule long over the gods;⁶¹ and a later passage in which he refers again to the "shortness" of the Olympian rule.⁶² In brief: the Hellenic late civilization had developed a strong eschatological consciousness, a consciousness of the impending twilight of the gods, and with them of the polis.

e. Mystery and Eschatology

The expression of this consciousness was confined, however, to the mysteries. On the public surface of the polis it manifested itself only in the development of metaphysics, in the elaboration of notions of God and the soul that transcend the sphere of polytheistic religiousness.⁶³ The strict institutional separation between the official state religion and the eschatology of the mystery is the peculiar trait of Hellenic polytheistic political existence. And it does not need much reasoning to show that the idea of Greek politics can hardly be understood adequately without proper regard to this fundamental trait. The medieval Christian civilization did not ban eschatology from the public sphere because the eschatological consciousness is the core of manifest Christian religiousness. As a consequence, the tension that plays in the polis between state religion and mystery appears in the Middle Ages as a widely diversified field of tensions between institutionalized Christianity and the eschatological movements raising rival claims to public status. The spiritualization is accompanied by the phenomenon of subeschatologies within the official eschatology and a variety

60. See Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 3 vols. (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1939-1945), 1:235 ff.

61. Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, vv. 936 ff.

62. *Ibid.*, vv. 952 ff.

63. For the numerous contacts between the mysteries and the public sphere see Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *ibid.*, II, 3:411 to the end of the volume. An interesting contact between the spheres of mystery and metaphysics is suggested by Werner Jaeger in the chapter on Parmenides in *Paideia*, 1:176 ff.

of solutions for the conflicts that must inevitably arise: from the integration of orders like the Franciscan to the persecution and destruction of movements that seem incompatible with official religion. The tension between eschatologies assumes the public political form of reform and revolution, down to the secular, reforming revolutions of the Age of Reason and after. The eschatological consciousness as a source of revolution is signally absent from the Greek polis. The revolutions are predominantly social and economic and express themselves spiritually in public only in the change of ethos—though the propagandizing of popular cults is not scorned as a means of breaking the religious privileges of the aristocracy. Nowhere in Hellenic politics do we find a parallel to the internal transformation of a civilization through the eschatology of the Third Realm since Joachim of Fiore.

f. The Third Christianity—Christ and Dionysus

There is no Third Realm in Hellenic political speculation, but Schelling finds the Third Dionysus in the mysteries. This idea of the Third God leads us back to the historical existence of Schelling himself. We remember the idea of history as the immersion of the materials into the meaning that is welling up from the unconscious in the soul of the historian. In the interpretation of Dionysus are inextricably interwoven the materials as established by critical, philological methods (on the level of philology in Schelling's time), the theory of the theogonic process through the potencies, and the historical situation, both personal and social, of which it is the dialectical expression. The evolution of Dionysus toward the figure of the Third God, still within the polytheistic experience but foreshadowing the Christian spiritual God of all mankind, could be seen by Schelling because he stood himself in the parallel situation of the Christian crisis: still within the experience of the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, both Petrine and Pauline, but foreshadowing the Third Christianity, the Johannine. While the idea of the third, spiritual Christianity was perhaps not conceived under the direct influence of Joachim, Schelling was acquainted with his ideas and was aware of the relation between his own speculation and the Joachitic.⁶⁴ We have seen the idea active in the prospect of a

64. See Schelling's footnote on Joachim of Fiore in *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *Werke*, II, 4:298.

Covenant of the Peoples, resting on a new spiritualized Christianity of all men.

In the discussion of Promethean existence we have seen how close Schelling's experience was to the Christian and how, nevertheless, in the decisive point it received a new tone through the experiences of melancholy and immanent grace. We have to observe a similar break in Schelling's apparent continuation of the Joachitic speculation on the Third Realm. The perspective of a third, Johannine Christianity is not his last word. The spiritualization of God into the third potency of his revelation, as well as the idea of mankind united in the spirit, could be in agreement with Schelling's existence only under the condition that the advancement to a new spirituality is at the same time a return to nature. This tendency toward a new naturalization is inherent in the "eschatology within the eschatology" since the medieval speculation on the Third Realm. The thinkers who want to see the spirit become immanent in mankind do not seem to be satisfied with the inner increase of spirituality in individual human personalities (that would be an inner return that they could have any time without an eschatology of the Third Realm). They want to see the spirit become flesh again as in the Joachitic *dux*, in a *Papa angelico*, in the *veltro*, etc. The aeon of the final spirit yearns for a new mythological personnel. Schelling's sentiments in this respect do not express themselves in the vision of a new leader, either spiritual or temporal, but rather in a profounder understanding of the existential problem that is at the bottom of such an urge for mythical creation. The spiritualization through Christianity has suppressed and partially destroyed the world-immanent creativeness of mythological imagination—a destruction that is inevitable when the "world" is a *saeculum senescens*, if it is not a living nature expressing itself with finality but has to find the fulfillment of life beyond life.

With the rising wave of immanentism since the thirteenth century, the urge also increases to create mythical symbols representative of the intramundane existence of man in community. Within the particular political communities the mythological urge can express itself in the myth of the nation, of its founders, protectors, and saviors, of national missions and manifest destinies, of the heroization of mass representatives like Lincoln and Marx, Lenin and Hitler, etc.—all this until recently without breaking decisively

with the idea of the *corpus mysticum Christi* as the comprehensive unity of mankind. We are living in a mixed religious system of Christian monotheistic spirituality and a polytheism of particular communities and movements. The problem changes its character entirely if mankind as a whole rather than particular communities is conceived as having an intramundane destiny. Now, in Schelling, a curious inversion of the Dionysian evolution imposes itself. The Third Dionysus of the mystery is the image of the spiritual God of the future beyond polytheism; the forms of Dionysus move away from nature ultimately toward spiritualization. In the Christian aeon, the speculation on the Third God must envisage a God who is transcendent or becoming immanent again. On the Dionysian scale, this would mean a return from the Third Dionysus to Bacchus.

This inversion is precisely what Schelling envisages as the solution to the civilizational crisis. The problem is raised characteristically in the context of the philosophy of art. Schelling complains that the age has no art comparable to the Hellenic, and particularly that it has no tragedy. The cause of this state is not to be sought in an atrophy of individual powers, but in the fact that art can flourish only if it uses a material that has ceased to be raw and elementary and is in itself organic. Such an organic material can only be symbolic material. Why then does the age have no symbols that can be used by the artist? Because "all symbolism must start from nature and return to nature. The things of nature mean and are at the same time. . . . A genuinely symbolical material is only to be found in *mythology*; and mythology is possible only by relating its images to nature. That is what is glorious about the gods of ancient mythology, that they were not mere individuals, mere historical beings like the figures in modern poetry—not transient appearances but eternal essences of nature who intervene and act in history and at the same time have their eternal ground in nature, who are generic in being individuals." "Hence the rebirth of a symbolic view of nature would be the first step toward the restoration of a true mythology."⁶⁵

A mythology of this kind cannot be produced by individuals or by a race that acts in diffusion. The precondition of a new mythology

65. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:571 f.

is the reunification of mankind. In the present state "only a partial mythology is possible which uses the materials of the age, as in Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, but not a universal and generically symbolic one."⁶⁶ Mythology and art of Hellenic quality "can be born only out of the totality of a nation that exists in its identity as an individual." "Only from the spiritual unity of a people, from a truly public life, can emerge true and universally valid poetry—as only in the spiritual and political existence of a people can science and religion find their objective existence." "No such political life exists where public freedom is submerged in the slavery of private life."⁶⁷ History cannot be planned, and Schelling does not indulge in the futility of details. Nevertheless, it is clear that Schelling's idea of the Third Realm is not modeled after an order of monks, as was the realm of Joachim of Fiore, but after the Hellenic polis. The realm of the Christian logos should have its roots in nature, and from this nature should arise a new world of gods of the immanent, present existence. Schelling dreams of a public state under the condominium of Dionysus-Bacchus and the spirit of Christ. This is not a return to the former Promethean existence in expectation of the end of the aeon; it is the vision of existence in community as a permanent state of that immanent grace that in Promethean existence transfigures only the fleeting moment of happiness.

§8. Nirvana

The greatness of Schelling has to be measured by his strength in holding existentially in balance an explosive compound of experiences and in dialectically translating the balance into a system. His Protestantism does not prevent him from seeing the historical necessity of the Roman Church nor the value and meaning of its continued existence. His Christianity does not lead him back to the church, Protestant or Catholic, but beyond the church into the Johannine increase of Gnosis. The Christian return to the identity with God does not dull but sharpens the sensitiveness for the "double life" and the Promethean moment of grace. His spiritualism does not transport him beyond nature but urges him to the

66. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:572.

67. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:572 f.

evocation of the God who suffers like man in the anxiety of the act in which he rises from his nature to his purity. His love for Hellas does not let him fall into a classicistic idealism but is balanced by insight into the crisis of polytheism. And his consciousness of the Christian crisis does not convert him to an asceticism of the spirit but is balanced by the longing for a new myth of nature. The Joachitic speculation on the Third Realm, finally, does not express itself in eschatological indulgences but is set off by the sober knowledge that a spiritual community substance grows through its growth in single individuals.

The balancing of the contradictions of existence is the signature of Schelling's philosophizing. We must turn now to the final act of balancing in which the whole compound of existence with its network of tensions is balanced by the experience of salvation through the transcendental reality of a natureless spirit (*naturloser Geist*). The reader will remember Schelling's description of the universal process as a movement of God from nature, which he posited as his ground, to the articulation in the universe with its climax in man, and to the *anima mundi*, the third potency, which is the general form of the universe. This process of the universe has a direction insofar as it moves from nature to spirit, and the direction is determined by the longing for liberation and salvation from the suffering of existence in the quiet of being without desire. In this experience of the longing for salvation opens for Schelling the insight into the being of the purest God (the *lauterste Gott*) beyond the process of the potencies, of the being without potency (*das an sich Potenzlose*). "All higher and better doctrines are in accord that the highest is above all being. In all of us dwells the feeling that necessity trails existence as its fate. . . . A most intimate feeling tells us that only above being dwells true, eternal freedom."⁶⁸

To some who have never experienced this freedom, personality will seem the highest, and they will ask: What could be imagined above being, or, What is it that neither is nor is not? And they will say complacently: Nothing. Schelling agrees, but not with complacency. The purest God beyond the potencies is Nothing, but nothing "like the purest freedom is a nothing, like the will

68. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:234.

which wills nothing, and does not desire a thing, . . . and therefore is moved by none. Such a will is nothing and everything. It is nothing insofar as it neither longs to become active itself, nor longs for any actuality. It is everything because all strength comes from it like from eternal freedom, because it has all things under it, ruling them all and ruled by none." This Nothing is the supratrinitarian godhead of the mystics, the "naught and overnaught" of Angelus Silesius, the "unground" of Jacob Boehme. It is "the affirmative notion of unconditioned eternity"; it is "the eternal immobility . . . that is the goal of all motion."⁶⁹ The dissolution of existence into this Nothing is "the true goal" of life even in its most violent turmoil of forces. In the description of this "goal" as it reveals itself in the strivings of existence, Schelling continues the great tradition from Saint Augustine to Pascal. "Every creature, and in particular every man, strives at bottom to return to the state of willing nothing. And not only the man who withholds himself from all objects of desire but also the man, though unknowingly, who lets himself fall into all desires. For even he desires only the state in which there is nothing left for him to desire, although this state flees from him and is removed further from him the more eagerly he pursues it."⁷⁰

The passage on the worldly pursuit of happiness is almost literally coincident with some of Pascal's remarks on the *divertissements* in which, as in a darkened reflection, is mirrored the desire for eternal happiness. The "tone," however, has changed in Schelling. Schelling's "goal" is not the Christian *summum bonum* of the eternal beatific vision; it is rather a desire for depersonalization into a nirvana. This existential possibility is always inherent in Western mysticism, though it is prevented from taking an independent development comparable to the Oriental by the orthodox Christian elements in mysticism. We have to be aware of this development in Schelling because here we can observe, as a process immanent to Western spiritual history, the transition from the great mystical tradition—as represented by Eckhart, the Cusanus, and Boehme—to the experience of nirvana. Shortly afterward, in Schopenhauer, the issue becomes obscured through the direct "influence" of Oriental sources. Moreover, in Schelling we can discern the experience

69. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:235.

70. *Weltalter*, in *ibid.*, I, 8:235 f.

that awakens the longing for nirvana: the experience of the Will in its world-immanent independence, in defiance of a God who trails existence fatally with a necessity that can never be conquered within life. The Promethean suffering through nature is a tone of existence that arises *within* Western history but transcends the Augustinian, Christian tensions of *amor Dei* and *amor sui*; it is related to the experience of karma, and it becomes the source, in the nineteenth century, for the understanding openness for Oriental affinities.

§9. Conclusion

a. The New Level of Consciousness

Schelling's philosophy of the idea in existence establishes a new level of consciousness in Western intellectual history in general and in the history of political thought in particular. We can characterize this level tentatively by comparing the position of Schelling in European history to the position of Plato in Hellenic history. In both instances, the religious crisis has reached the stage of enlightenment, and in both instances the enlightenment is followed by a great philosopher who restores the order of thought by means of a new vision of the soul. The atrophy of polytheism, the Age of the Sophists, and the Platonic myth of the soul have their parallel in the atrophy of Christianity, the Age of Enlightenment, and Schelling's philosophy of existence. We may even take one step more and compare Plato's evocation of the *politeia* of the well-ordered soul functionally with Schelling's evocation of the Covenant of the Peoples through inner return.

At this point, however, differences begin to appear that would make it unwise to press the comparison still further. They are differences of the levels of consciousness. For Plato, the life and death of Socrates was the great experience that awakened the consciousness of the soul (with its forces of Thanatos, Eros, and Dike) as the source of metaphysical evocation; Plato had to break through the myth and had to discover the soul as the source of authority in speculation. For Schelling, the soul as the source of philosophizing is no new discovery, for he is living historically within the realms of meanings that have been created by the Hellenic discovery; what is more, he lives in the aeon of Christ and the meaning that history and the world have received through his soul. Schelling's philosophy

of existence has to be characterized, therefore, as a new level of critical consciousness within Christian history. The difference expresses itself in an externally tangible manner in the technique of philosophizing. Plato had not yet the Christian dimensions in the understanding of the universe and of history; wherever he touches on the meaning of existence beyond the limits that are drawn by the political type of the polis, he has to resort, therefore, to the "myth" as his instrument of expression—in the *Politeia*, in the *Politikos*, and in the *Timaios*. For Schelling, the soul has penetrated universe and history; he does not need the myth but can translate his experience of the soul completely into the dialectic of the *Potenzenlehre*.⁷¹

Nevertheless, Schelling has to break through the symbolism of the past just as Plato does in order to arrive at the new critical level. The break and its direction can be recognized in his experience of a Third Christianity. We have stressed the connection of Schelling's speculation with that of Joachim of Fiore, but we have to stress also the decisive difference between his idea and the Joachitic. The three Christianities are not the Joachitic three realms of the Father, the Son, and a paracletic *dux*. They are the phases of internalization of Christianity through Catholicism and Protestantism to a spiritual Christianity beyond ecclesiastical discipline. The churches are not replaced by a new church; rather, they are understood as symbols, comparable on their level to Hellenic mythology, to be overcome by the free Christianity of the individual souls. Schelling is neither a prophet nor the founder of a sect; he is a realist who expresses in his dialectic the existential fact that he, as an individual, is beyond the churches because the meaning of the churches has become actualized in history to the point where it has become part of the past in his soul. Neither is the Third Christianity a creed to be propagandized or organized; again, it is part of his existence, though not of its past, but with the time index of the future. The perspective into the future is not pragmatic; it is no more than the projection into dialectical symbols of a direction to be found in his existence.

71. See on this point Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *ibid.*, II, 3:99 ff., where he stresses the "prophetic" character of the Platonic myth. The myth is prophetic insofar as it brings into present expression a realm of experiences that is not yet actualized in history and hence cannot be expressed in language that refers to immediate experience.

b. A Comparison: Realism and Eschatological Indulgence

The critical realism of Schelling's speculation in comparison with the eschatological indulgence of his contemporaries can best be made clear by an example. On occasion of the question whether a system of moral rules can be established independently of religious experience, Schelling criticizes the idea that God can be deduced as a necessary postulate of morality. In particular he reflects on the people "who have a habit of looking at everything from an economic point of view. God is for them a home medicine that everybody can use for himself in order to fortify his morality, which it costs much trouble to keep up. This idea is in no way better than the opinion held by high-placed persons and so-called statesmen that the belief in God is a good thing to restrain the people and to support a rotten and cracking machinery of government."⁷² Schelling obviously castigates the evil that provoked Marx to his formula of the "opium of the people." But the realist and the eschatologist differ profoundly in their description as well as in the consequences that they draw from it. For Schelling, religion *is* not an opium of the people but it is *used* as a house medicine by individuals as well as by statesmen. Marx, for his part, commits the gross blunder of mistaking a phenomenal misuse for the substance of faith. Schelling proceeds, therefore, to a clarification of the problem. He first denies that there is such a thing as a morality of man at all, for which religion could be misused. "The very word morality is a product of newfangled enlightenment; in reality there is only virtue, *virtus*, a divine quality of the soul, but no morality which the individual could give to itself as an individual, or of which it could pride itself. In this sense I shall willingly admit to anybody who wishes to maintain it that morality is excluded from my system."⁷³ In a few sentences not only is the misuse stigmatized but also its source is revealed in the enlightened philosophy of ethics that tries to establish a commonsense morality and degrades God to a useful threat in support of moral conduct. The phenomenalism of a substantially unfounded ethic destroys the existential roots of moral conduct in the identity of necessity and freedom; and

72. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*, I, 6:557.

73. *System der gesamten Philosophie*, in *ibid.*

Schelling opposes to such destruction the idea of existential virtue, suggesting in its Christian version the Hellenic *areté*. Marx, on the other hand, has to implement his phenomenalist mistake by throwing the substance of Christian civilization overboard and indulging in a perspective of revolutionary action that is supposed to restore by changes in the phenomenal sphere of institutions a "goodness" of man that only can grow through the *metanoia* of the person. The spiritual realist is not only the better philosopher, he is also the better empirical scientist.⁷⁴

c. Summary

The new level of consciousness is critical insofar as speculation is transformed from an operation, with symbols taken from tradition, within a traditional universe of discourse, into a dialectical art that consciously legitimates its operations by referring them to the sphere of protodialectic experiences. Speculation, of course, always rises from the soul—whether the philosopher knows it or not, and even if he lives in the illusion that his speculation is a science of external data given through intuition, intellection, vision, or whatever form of immediate experience. What is new in Schelling is the critical consciousness of the source of speculation. Concerning his achievement in this respect, there is not much we must add to our presentation. We can only summarize the main issues. The necessity for a new critical level arose from the advancement of science. The new critical science of the phenomena of nature made impossible the uncritical method of dealing with the substance of nature. The classical philosophy from Descartes to Schelling's time struggled in vain to regain a tenable philosophy of substance. With Kant we have gained an enormously increased critical insight into the problem but no solution; the state of the problem is in Kant on principle the same as in the controversies of the early

74. In order to stave off a possible misunderstanding at this point, the reader should be aware that philosophy and science are not all in life. Marx was a dubious philosopher, and his empiricism while shrewd in focus was limited in horizon, but he was a prophet of Israel who put his curse on the doers of evil and held out a new faith to the oppressed and created a people unto him. The formula in question would also have to be considered in its function as a "curse." On this question the reader will find more in the chapter on Marx (*The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 26, *History of Political Ideas*, vol. VIII, *Crisis and the Apocalypse of Man*, ed. David Walsh [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999], chap. 5).

seventeenth century. The return to Bruno's "nature in spirit" became for Schelling the basis for the elaboration of a philosophy of the unconscious as the natural ground of the life of the spirit. The philosophy of the unconscious is the historical answer to the search for access to the substances of nature. On the borderline between the conscious and the unconscious, furthermore, we find the protodialectic experiences, with their "tones" of existence, as the source of "meaning" that can be projected into the universe and into history in particular, and the projection renders results because the materials of human existence in history are manifestations of the same stream of unconscious nature to which the projecting philosopher himself belongs.⁷⁵ This insight establishes history as the science of the soul and opens in particular to critical understanding the vast field of mythology. Moreover, it makes the study of history the key to the exploration of the unconscious. Projection of meaning and stimulation by materials interpenetrate so that the materials receive their meaning from the existence of the interpreter, while they in their turn touch the unconscious and bring to the level of consciousness meanings that otherwise would have remained submerged. History receives meaning from the soul, while the soul discovers the historical meanings as strata in its existence. We have suggested, finally, that Schelling's greatness consists in the amplitude of experiences that are touched and held in balance dialectically. In this respect we must compare the position of Schelling to that of Saint Thomas: as the Thomasic system is the last effort to harmonize the tensions of the European high civilization before they break asunder into the new order of intramundane, particular communities, so is Schelling's system the last gigantic effort to bind into a balanced whole the tensions of the

75. A fine, recent formulation of this problem is to be found in José Ortega y Gasset, *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (1923), 4th ed. (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, 1942), 13: "Ideología, gusto y moralidad no son más que consecuencias o especificaciones de la sensación radical ante la vida, de cómo se sienta la existencia en su integridad indiferenciada. Esta que llamaremos 'sensibilidad vital' es el fenómeno primario en historia y lo primero que habríamos de definir para comprender una época" ("But ideology, taste and morality in their turn are no more than consequences or demonstrations of the root feeling that arises in the presence of life, the sensations of existence in its undifferentiated totality. What we are going to call vital sensibility is the primary phenomenon in history and the first we should have to define in order to understand a particular age"; José Ortega y Gasset, *The Modern Theme*, trans. James Cleugh [New York: Harper and Row, 1961], 13).

European late civilization before they break asunder in the crisis of our time.

d. The End of an Epoch

We must be clear about the position of Schelling at the end of a period, and about the character of his work as a harmonization before the crisis, in order to avoid certain misunderstandings that insinuate themselves easily. Throughout the work of Schelling we find formulations and a treatment of problems that we are accustomed to associate with later thinkers of the nineteenth century. This observation should not induce the opinion that Schelling "anticipated" this or that. The use of the term *anticipation* would have to rest on the assumption that the later thinker or the later idea has an authoritative present while the earlier thinker was an anachronism, perhaps "ahead of his time." This construction is inadmissible. Schelling did not anticipate a future present, but expressed the present of his own existence. After him comes the violent dissociation of the elements that are held together by the strength of his soul, and as a result we see the *disjecta membra* of his experiences scattered through the following generations: the experiences of the will and the nirvana in Schopenhauer; the craving for the inner return in Kierkegaard; the psychology of the unconscious in Freud; the experiences of Dionysus and of immanent grace in Nietzsche; the social critique of the age and the longing for the Third Realm in the mass movements of Communism and National Socialism; the ominous orgiastic experiences with their anxiety in Nietzsche, in Freud, and in the orgasms of destruction and self-destruction of the General Wars. This scattering of the elements is the signature of the crisis, as their balance was the signature of Schelling's greatness. He did not anticipate the dissociation, and still less did he cause it: a great thinker is the seismograph of a civilizational earthquake, not its cause—and a German thinker ought to be a particularly sensitive seismograph because in his compound of experiences is missing the stabilizing experience of an old, firmly institutionalized political society, as for instance the English. Schelling thus marks the end of a period, not a beginning; he marks an end in the same sense in which Plato, or Saint Augustine, or Saint Thomas marks the end of an age. But while his work marks an end in the sequence of civilizational epochs, it

establishes a new level of consciousness and critique, and by virtue of this achievement it becomes of increasing importance in a time of crisis as the point of orientation for those who wish to gain a solid foothold in the surrounding mess of decadent traditions, conflicting eschatologies, phenomenal speculation and obsessions, ideologies and creeds, blind hatreds, and orgiastic destructions.



Note on Hölderlin

Schelling's idea of a mythology that would be based on a renewed symbolism of nature, as well as his evocation of a divine image in which are blended the features of Dionysus and Christ, may seem strange if taken as isolated phenomena. We must remind the reader, therefore, that Schelling was not indulging in a flight of fancy but that a new mythological view of the world, and in particular the blending of Dionysus and Christ, had become reality in the work of Hölderlin. The philosopher could base his ideas experientially on the miracle of a poet who indeed lived in the polytheistic world of the myth. Schelling's third potency, the *anima mundi*, had become mythical reality through Hölderlin's *Seele der Natur*, in *An die Natur* (1795),¹ and the Gods were resurrected: the Sun, Helios, in *Dem Sonnengott* (1797; 1:203); the Night in the first stanza of *Brot und Wein* (1801; 1:285 ff.); the Okeanos in *Der Archipelagus* (1800; 1:253 ff.); the Sea, Thetis, as the mother-goddess, in *Achill* (1799; 1:213); and Necessity, *heimarmene*, in *Das Schicksal* (1793–1794; 1:157 ff.). The Father-Godhead appears in *An den Aether* (1796–1797; 1:182 ff.) in terms that remind of an Ionic, pre-Socratic sage:

Und es drängt sich und rinnt aus deiner ewigen Fülle
Die beseelende Luft durch alle Röhren des Lebens.

(And from your eternal abundance the animating air presses and runs through all of life's pipes. [trans. T. A. Hollweck])

1. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, 3 vols., ed. Jochen Schmidt (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), 1:163 ff, hereafter cited in the text by volume and page number.

Moreover, the poem *Die scheinheiligen Dichter* (1798; 1:202) distinguishes between genuine evocation, on the one hand, and invocation of the Gods and the "poetical," ornamental use of their names in Baroque poetry, on the other.

To the Olympian realm of the Gods corresponds in the work of Hölderlin the heroic anthropology, most forcefully expressed in *Hyperions Schicksalslied* (1798; 1:207). The meaning of life is to be found in the fleeting moment of grace, as with Schelling, and the moment is made lasting through sanctification in the work of art. This is the sentiment expressed in *An die Parzen* (1798; 1:197):

Doch ist mir einst das Heil'ge, das am
Herzen mir liegt, das Gedicht, gelungen:

Willkommen dann, o Stille der Schattenwelt!
Zufrieden bin ich, wenn auch mein Saitenspiel
Mich nicht hinabgeleitet; *Einmal*
Lebt' ich wie Götter, und mehr bedarf's nicht.

([B]ut if once I have accomplished that which is holy and dear to me,
the poem,

Then welcome, O silence of the world of shades! Contented I shall be,
even if my lyre does not accompany me on that downward journey;
once I lived as the gods live, and that suffices.)²

The intensity of life and the moment of grace in human relationship, the meaning of the Greek Eros, finally, is caught in *Sokrates und Alkibiades* (1798; 1:205) with the superb line:

Wer das Tiefste gedacht, liebt das Lebendigste.
(He who has pondered the deepest truths, loves what is most alive;
21).

The interpretation of history grows for Hölderlin out of the experiences of time, grace, and art. In *Natur und Kunst oder Saturn und Jupiter* (1798; 1:297 f.), Zeus is understood as the ruler of the present, "a son of time like we are." Time, however, the rule of the present,

2. [Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, with an introduction and prose translation by Michael Hamburger (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 13. All translations from Hölderlin, unless otherwise noted, are from this volume.]

is erected over the abyss into which Saturnus, the god of the Golden Age, is banned together with the "savages" of ancient times. Both innocence and savagery are superseded by the order of the present, but the god of peace without compulsion has become guiltless long ago in his banishment, and the present order of compulsion is no more than an analogue of a peaceful golden order without savagery. The present receives its meaning as the analogue of the higher order in the fleeting moment when the poet "feels the alive at his heart," then sinks into the shadow what Zeus has formed, and the restless change of time falls into sleep in its cradle. Then, only, on the borderline between time and the timeless, is the order of the present transfigured in the poem and made transparent for the secret of the "Holy Twilight." Thus hearkening back to the primordial order of innocence before the Fall, the poet becomes the priest of the God who will rise again as the ruler of the future.

Brot und Wein (1801, 1:285 ff.) develops the problem further into the Christian dimension of history. This and the related poems of Hölderlin are of importance for the history of ideas because here we find the unique attempt to construe a continuum of meaning for Western history from the pagan position. The Christian philosophy of history, beginning with Saint Paul, interprets the pre-Christian periods as phases of divine revelation, culminating in the appearance of Christ. In Hölderlin's pagan philosophy the Christian period is an interlude after the withdrawal of the Olympians that will find its end with their reappearance. In *Brot und Wein* we live in the "night" of the gods; they still live but they have withdrawn from the earth (1:289):

Denn nicht immer vermag ein schwaches Gefäss sie zu fassen,
Nur zu Zeiten erträgt göttliche Fülle der Mensch.

(For not always a fragile vessel can hold them, only at times can
men bear the plenitude of the divine; 111).

Life is now only a dream of the gods; but need and night are strengthening, and the gods will return when the hearts of men are again strong enough to bear their fullness. We live in the night of the gods—but they have left a sign of their former presence. For when they withdrew, when the Father turned his face from mankind and sadness descended on earth,

Als erschienen zuletzt ein stiller Genius, himmlisch
Tröstend, welcher des Tags Ende verkündet' und schwand
([W]hen last of all a quiet spirit appeared, divinely comforting, who
proclaimed the end of the Day and withdrew; 112)

They left as their sign Bread and Wine (1:290):

Brot ist der Erde Frucht, doch ist's vom Lichte gesegnet,
Und vom *donnernden* Gott kommet die Freude des Weins.
(Bread is the fruit of the Earth, but is blessed by the light, and from
the thundering god comes the gladness of wine; 112)

In the present aeon, the poet is the priest of the wine god, traveling from land to land through the Holy Night, praising the torchbearer of the Highest, the Son of the Syrian, coming down to the shadows until the Father will reveal himself again and restore his fullness to man.

In *Patmos* (1801; 1:350 ff.) the theme of the wine god is linked with the figure of Saint John, who saw the face of the God:

Da beim Geheimnisse des Weinstocks sie
Zusammensassen zu der Stunde des Gastmahls,
Und in der grossen Seele ruhig ahnend den Tod
Aussprach der Herr und die Letzte Liebe.
([W]hen, over the mystery of the vine, they sat together, at the
banqueting hour, and in His great soul, calmly foreknowing, the
Lord pronounced death and ultimate love; 196 f.).

The last of the gods has withdrawn but the disciples

liebten unter der Sonne
Das Leben, und lassen wollten sie nicht
Vom Angesichte des Herrn
Und der Heimat.
(under the sun they loved life and did not wish to depart from the
face of the lord and their homeland; 197).

Therefore God sent them the Spirit, binding the community of men together and flashing a light of hope and promise through the night (1:356):

Denn noch lebt Christus.
Es sind aber die Helden, seine Söhne,

Gekommen all, und heilige Schriften
 Von ihm, und den Blitz erklären
 Die Taten der Erde bis jetzt,
 Ein Wettlauf unaufhaltsam,

(For Christ lives yet. But all the heroes, His sons, have come, and holy scriptures about Him and the deeds of the world until now explain his lightning, a race that cannot be stopped; 202),

until the prophecy is fulfilled (*Die Bücher der Zeiten*, 1788; 1:65 ff.) and Christ will reappear as the *dux* of the new Golden Age.

That Hölderlin's interpretation of history is determined by his consciousness of the civilizational crisis is clear. In his *Grund zum Empedokles* (2:428 ff.) he has attempted a theoretical formulation of the issue. The symptom of the crisis is the increasing intellectualism, the *freigeisterische Kühnheit*, which opposes itself to the "unknown," to that which is beyond the sphere of consciousness and action. Such intellectualism—cutting loose from the substantial, unconscious, natural ground in man—is not bad in itself. A certain degree of reflective consciousness is necessary in order to form personality and to escape the immersion into "the deep, friendly influence of the elemental" (2:435) to the point of self-forgetfulness. But the balance can be disturbed by a swing to the other extreme, through "negative reasoning, through nonthinking of the unknown"; and when this other extreme, the crisis, is reached it becomes necessary to regain the level of the "aorgic," that is, of the universal, of the unorganized in nature. The portrait of Empedocles, who attempted the harmonization in crisis, sometimes gives the impression of a self-portrait: "Nature, which dominated his intellectual contemporaries with its power and its charm all the more when they abstracted from it to unrecognizability, appeared with all its melodies in spirit and song of this man so warmly and intimately and personally as if his heart was nature's heart and the spirit of the elemental lived again in human form among the mortals" (2:436). This elemental constitution of the man would have made him the poet of his people in more harmonious times; but in a time of crisis the poet becomes a tragic figure because the objective substance of the people that by his art he should transfigure has disintegrated. We might say that Hölderlin expresses the problem of the crisis in pre-Socratic terms of a disintegration of the inherited *nomos* and a recourse to elemental *physis* as the

"aorgic" universal bond of all existence. Of Empedocles, Hölderlin says that the "objective" in him "was early driven from its tranquil self-unconsciousness through the hyperpolitical, always arguing and calculating Agrigentians; and the sensitiveness of the artist, his power to order and organize, to create in his peculiar and appropriate sphere, was universalized into a reforming spirit through the anarchical savagery which surrounded him" (2:434).

When the age is distended into violent extremes, the song is out of place. The work of art is suspended in precarious balance between the historical destiny of the community and the primordial forces living in it; when the age is out of joint, that is, when man in community has lost this balance, the people are no longer receptive to the externalization of this balance in the work of art. Nor does a disjointed age permit of the "genuine deed," for political action can be a forceful intervention in the troubles of the time, and it can be of immediate remedial value, but it has to remain inevitably *partial*. In an age of crisis the whole, substantial man cannot be thrown into a deed, for a representative, substantial deed requires a sane community substance from which it springs and into which it issues. In this situation, a man with the elemental constitution of Empedocles can represent the destiny of his community only through a "sacrifice": the individual that tries to force together the extremes of the age by the "aorgic" ground of his own existence must break under the unbearable strain. Empedocles refuses the kingship of his people as futile and symbolizes the *renovatio* that the people will have to undergo through his sacrificial reunion with aorgic nature in the flames of Aetna.

The problem of the crisis as developed by Hölderlin has to be presupposed in the understanding of Schelling—and not of Schelling alone. The peculiar form that the problem assumed at the hands of Hölderlin is due to an experience of nature that is quite as unique in Western Christian civilization as the Franciscan experience of nature. In the case of Saint Francis, we must look for comparable experiences in the Orient; in the case of Hölderlin, in the pre-Socratic, Hellenic metaphysics of nature. Within Western civilization the two experiences are complementary to each other: in Saint Francis we find the experience of silent, suffering, humble, creaturely nature; in Hölderlin, the experience of exuberant, forceful, princely nature—expressed magnificently in the closing stanzas of the *Bücher der Zeiten* (1:69 f.):

Da steht geschrieben—
 Menschliches Riesenwerk
 Stattlich einherzugehn
 Auf Meerestiefen!
 Ozeanswanderer! Stürmebezwinger!
 Schnell mit der Winde Frohn
 Nie gesehene Meere,
 Ferne von Menschen und Land,
 Mit stolzen, brausenden Segeln
 Und schaurlichen Masten durchkreuzend.
 Leviathanserleger
 Lachend des Eisgebirgs,
 Weltenentdecker,
 Nie gedacht von Anbeginn.

Da steht geschrieben—
 Völkersegen,
 Brots die Fülle,
 Lustgefülle
 Überall -
 Allweit Freude,
 Niederströmend
 Von der guten
 Fürstenhand.

(There is written — / Human work, gigantic / Walking with stately
 gait / Upon depths of the sea! / Ocean wanderers! Storm conquerors /
 Fast with the winds' labor / Crossing seas never beheld / Far from
 men and land, / with proud, roaring sails / and fearsome masts. /
 Leviathan killers / Scorning mountains / World discoverers, / Never
 thought of from the beginning.

There is written — / Blessing of nations, / Abundance of bread /
 Fields of bliss / Everywhere — / Joy throughout / Pouring down /
 From the prince's good hand; trans. Hollweck.)

Both Saint Francis and Hölderlin have in common the penetration into the substance of nature. At this point lies the importance of Hölderlin for the expression as well as for the shaping of the crisis. He understands the phenomenalism of nature in his time as the symptom of the crisis. The "Agrigentians" who have dissolved the substance of the *nomos* through their hyperpolitical intellectualism have not become free from nature, but on the contrary are dominated by it; the savagery of nature breaks loose if the interpenetration of the primordial forces with the ordering spirit is broken—we have met with this problem in Schelling's *Weltalter*. The Christian solution of the "inner return" is impossible

for Hölderlin, who—like his Empedocles—gravitated existentially toward the level of the “objective” in the community substance of the people as well as in the “aorgic” universalism of the elements. The pneumatocentric existence of the mystic is precluded from this position. Equally impossible, because senseless in the age of crisis, is the solution through political action. Empedocles’ refusal of kingship is the rejection of the Platonic evocation of the philosopher-king as the savior of the community. The end that Hölderlin envisages for the “aorgic” existence in the age of crisis is the sacrificial death—which solves nothing as far as the historical destiny of the community is concerned but is the meaningful, tragic symbol of the end of a civilization. This “sacrifice” becomes central two generations later in the existence of Nietzsche.



Nietzsche and Pascal

I

In a note of 1884, on the "Road to Wisdom," Nietzsche has attempted an interpretation of his personal development as a thinker. The Road to Wisdom has to be traveled in three stages. In the first stage, man has to respect, to obey, and to learn; it is the time of asceticism of the spirit, of loving admiration, and of the overcoming of petty inclinations. In the second stage, the loving heart has to break with its attachments; it is the time of independence, of the desert, and of the free spirit. The third stage will decide whether the wanderer is fit for positive action; it is the time for the creative instinct and the great responsibility; it is the time when man has to accord himself the right to act.¹ The three stages of this note correspond to the three periods of Nietzsche's work: the early period, which is dominated by Schopenhauer and Wagner; the second period, from 1876–1882, of his positivism, his psychology, and his intellectualism; and the third period, of *Zarathustra* and the transvaluation.

The division into the three periods has become the accepted pattern for the interpretation of Nietzsche's life and work. One cannot and should not dispense with it, but one should be aware that a too exclusive adherence to it is apt to obscure certain traits of Nietzsche's thought that remain permanent throughout the three periods. One of these traits, of which the importance—so it seems to us—has not been fully appreciated, is Nietzsche's procedure of

1. *Unveröffentlichtes aus der Umwerthungszeit* §93, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Werke*, Musarionausgabe, ed. Richard Oehler et al. (Munich: Musarion Verlag, 1920–1929), 14:39 f.

fixing his own position by establishing its relation to that of other thinkers. For the earlier period, this trait and its expression in the work are well known. The portrait of Heraclitus in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* is a self-portrait; and with regard to his *Untimely Meditations* on Schopenhauer and Wagner, Nietzsche has himself stressed that "fundamentally, they talk only of myself."²

Elaborate portraits of other thinkers, as a medium of self-expression, are not to be found in the work after 1876, and the absence of what may be called the literary genus seems to have obscured somewhat the fact that the function that those earlier portraits had in the intellectual life of their author is served in later years by other means. It is clear why the elaborate portrait had to disappear: the tracing, with loving care, of other personalities in whom Nietzsche sensed a substance related to his own was the proper method to arrive at clearness about himself in the period of "veneration"; it was not the proper method in the time of "independence" and "creation." Once the catharsis of personality through asceticism, respectful following, and learning had resulted in the maturation of Nietzsche's substance, the relation to other great personalities had to be established by means of a critique that would give recognition, as between equals, where Nietzsche thought it due. That would distinguish his own position, sometimes with violence and hatred, from others that he considered inimical. The willing acceptance of the earlier period is followed by the critical orientation of the later; the careful and lengthy portrait is replaced by the brief and sharp remark à propos.

Beginning in 1876, at decisive junctures, Nietzsche orients his position by relating it to that of Pascal. The importance of Pascal for the later Nietzsche has not remained unnoticed. The whole middle period, the period of intellectual independence, is marked by a rich influence of the French *moralistes*, of Pascal as well as of Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld, of Fontenelle and of Chamfort, and the broad exposition by Charles Andler in the first volume of his treatise on Nietzsche has shown conclusively that the influence of Pascal is the most far-reaching because it extends to such fundamental

2. *Ecce Homo*, in *Werke*, 15:72.

conceptions as the will to power.³ Unfortunately, however, the historical method used by Andler did not permit the distinguished scholar to reveal much more than doctrinal influences. Andler classifies Pascal as one of the *précurseurs* of Nietzsche. The category indicates that Andler was in search of ideas that are to be found in the work of earlier thinkers and that became integrated into the thought of Nietzsche. The exposition of such relations is valuable in itself; but the fact that elements of Pascal's psychology of passion, imagination, and custom have been adopted by Nietzsche is no more than a symptom of the more intimate meaning that Pascal had for Nietzsche as a model and as an antagonist. Andler, it is true, speaks of the two thinkers as *âmes fraternelles*, a hint that a relationship of personalities forms the background for the relations between their ideas; but he does not elaborate the problem beyond this phrase.⁴ That, for the later intellectual and spiritual life of Nietzsche, Pascal has a function that for its decisiveness can be compared only to that of Wagner and Schopenhauer in the earlier cannot be shown on the level of a history of dogma.

The method that must be used for a full understanding of the problem must be adapted to the structure of Nietzsche's work. For a starting point, the inquiry will have to take the explicit references to Pascal, which are fairly numerous. When these references occur in the posthumous fragments, in most cases not much can be extracted from them beyond their meaning in the context of one of the isolated aphorisms. When they occur, however, in the works prepared by Nietzsche for publication, their environment of meaning is much larger. Nietzsche's works are written in the form of aphorisms, but the single aphorisms are not islands of meaning; they are chosen and linked with the greatest care so as to form coherent complexes of thought and—as we shall see—in decisive instances the references to Pascal radiate beyond the immediate context of the aphorism in which they occur. The name of Pascal appears in some cases as the culmination of a trend of ideas; it is so closely worked into the network of the surrounding aphorisms

3. Charles Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, vol. 1, *Les Précurseurs de Nietzsche* (Paris: Edition Bossard, 1920-1931). See bk. II of this volume, "L'Influence des moralistes français," 157-259.

4. *Ibid.*, 171.

that the reference identifies the whole complex as oriented toward Pascal. Once we have established such larger complexes, it will be possible to recognize other complexes as Pascalian in their orientation, even when the name does not occur, because their content is closely related to the former complexes that are identified by an explicit reference.

Nietzsche never analyzes ideas of Pascal in any detail; the remarks are brief and presuppose that the reader knows Pascal well enough to grasp immediately the implications of a hint. This terseness introduces a new dimension of complications. The *Pensées* of Pascal are a collection of posthumous notes for a work that was to be entitled *Apology*; we know the plan of the work as it was envisaged by Pascal in the last years,⁵ but we do not know to what use he would have put the single notes in the economy of the whole work. The arrangement in the various editions, in spite of the plan, is largely arbitrary, and as a consequence the picture of Pascal varies with the arrangements and with the judgments on the relative weight that must be accorded to one or the other of the fragments. Hence the questions arise: Which Pascal did Nietzsche see when he oriented his thought toward him? Was it the orthodox Pascal presented by the editors of Port-Royal? Was it the skeptic that emerged from Condorcet's edition of 1776? Was it the apologetic Pascal of Havet's edition of 1851? There is no simple answer to these questions. Certainly Nietzsche did not see Pascal as the orthodox Christian. But it is doubtful whether he saw him as a skeptic either. When Nietzsche remarks occasionally that Pascal, if he had lived thirty years longer, would have scorned Christianity itself as he had scorned the Jesuits in his earlier years,⁶ he does not mean that Pascal's arguments concerning the impotence of reason in religious matters, concerning the inevitable rational uncertainty of the faith, and concerning difficulties in the interpretation of prophecies and miracles would have dissolved his faith. The motive force for a development of this kind would have come from what Nietzsche calls the "depth" of Pascal, a category that is elucidated somewhat

5. The plan, as it was developed by Pascal before friends, is reported by his nephew, Étienne Périer, in "Préface de l'édition de Port-Royal," in Blaise Pascal, *Pensées de m. Pascal sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets*, L'édition de Port-Royal (1670) et ses compléments (1678-1776) (Saint-Étienne: Éditions de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 1971).

6. *Unveröffentlichtes aus der Umwerthungszeit* §800 (1885), in *Werke*, 13:327.

in the context by mentioning other personalities who have the same quality: Socrates, Caesar, perhaps Emperor Friedrich II, certainly Leonardo da Vinci. The skepticism of Pascal is not understood as a body of philosophical tenets but as a symptom of forces of the soul that might have asserted themselves at a later period more strongly than they did before, with the result of a different intellectual constellation in Pascal's thought. For his interpretation of Pascal, Nietzsche seems to have applied the principles that he developed in *Beyond Good and Evil*: the substance of a man, and particularly of a philosopher, is characterized by "the order of rank in which the innermost forces (*Triebe*) of his nature are stabilized with regard to each other."⁷ "Thought" is the resultant of the relationship between the forces of the soul.⁸ The category of "depth," then, would signify the richness and strength of the forces that by their order of rank determine a personality and its thought.

If Nietzsche was not interested in "doctrines" of Pascal that might prove useful in his own philosophical enterprise, but rather in his "thought" as the resultant of the forces of the soul, the question of Pascal's orthodoxy, or Jansenism, or Pyrrhonism, loses in importance. The ideas were not interesting because of their contents, but as expressions of a personality, not as an *oratio directa* concerned with objects, but as the *oratio obliqua* that would reveal the man.⁹ Hence we shall not be surprised to find that other works of Pascal that are of lesser rank than the *Pensées* were of equal, if not greater, value for Nietzsche as means for his orientation toward Pascal's personality. Unfortunately, we are only insufficiently informed concerning the extent to which Nietzsche used such other sources. One of the earlier quoted passages shows that he knew the *Lettres provinciales* and their purpose; but his assumption that an anti-Jesuitic position of the *Provinciales* would let appear possible a later anti-Christian position seems to indicate that other works of Pascal on the mystery of Grace, such as for instance the defense of the

7. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §6, in *ibid.*, 7:15.

8. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §36, in *ibid.*, 7:56.

9. Cf. a note like the following: "The thought, just as the word, is merely a symbol: there can be no question of an agreement between thought and reality. Reality is a movement of forces (*Triebe*)" (*Aus der Zeit der Morgenröthe, 1880/81* §317, in *ibid.*, 11:282). "Reality," in the first sentence, means the object of thought in *oratio directa*; "reality" in the second sentence means the reality of forces revealed in *oratio obliqua*.

doctrine of Grace as formulated by the Council of Trent,¹⁰ did not make any impression on Nietzsche. Of the three documents that reveal most intimately the religious life of Pascal, only the *Mystère de Jésus* is mentioned expressly.¹¹ It touched Nietzsche deeply and, as we shall see, seems to have been the principal influence in forming his conception of the personality of Jesus. Of the *Mémorial*, on the other hand, we find no trace. The *Confession du Pêcheur*, however, the third document, while not mentioned expressly, was apparently influential in forming Nietzsche's conception of nihilism. Other works are not mentioned, but the little *Discours sur les passions de l'amour* suggests certain formulations of Nietzsche so strongly that a direct influence seems highly probable. A source of the first importance for Nietzsche was, finally, the *Vie de Pascal* written by Mme. Périer. It is expressly referred to once,¹² and at least one other aphorism of the *Will to Power* is intelligible only if the *Vie* is assumed as the source.¹³

What fascinated Nietzsche was the depth and order of Pascal's personality; it is the same fascination that Pascal held for a solitary spirit who preceded Nietzsche by a generation: Alexandre Vinet.¹⁴ In the studies of Vinet, whose work was unknown to Nietzsche, we find the most perfect expression of the level on which the later thinker established his relation to Pascal. Vinet sees Pascal as the great "individual" who is able to pierce the layers of tradition and to penetrate to the ideas that can properly be called his own. The probe that opens this well of wisdom "is a certain courage of the spirit, and perhaps of the character, by which are not always distinguished the most skillful and the most learned." This courage is the most valuable instrument in the search for truth because "in order to search well one has to have found first the *ego* which is the agent of the search." We owe a great debt to those who are able to hear their own voice in a confusion of strange voices, in which our own loses itself so easily that it becomes the strangest of all.¹⁵ The fierce pride

10. *Lettre sur la possibilité d'accomplir les commandemens de Dieu*; see particularly the first part of this letter.

11. *Aus der Zeit der Morgenröthe*, 1880/81 §425, in *Werke*, 11:319 f.

12. *Wille zur Macht* §388, in *ibid.*, 15:421.

13. *Wille zur Macht* §252, in *ibid.*, 15:328 f.

14. Alexandre Vinet, *Études sur Blaise Pascal*, with a preface and notes by Pierre Kohler, Édition augmentée de fragments inédits, 2d ed. (Paris, 1846; rpt. Lausanne: Payot, 1936).

15. *Pascal, non l'écrivain, mais l'homme* (1845), in *ibid.*, 304 ff, chap. 10, "Pascal non l'écrivain, mais l'homme."

of the spirit, the passion of truth, and intellectual honesty are the ingredients of Pascal's profoundness, and this portrait that Vinet draws of Pascal might be the portrait of Nietzsche. The fascination exerted by the "discourse" of a man of this type has been described by Pascal in the *Pensées*: "When a natural discourse paints a passion or its effect, we find in ourselves the truth of what we hear, a truth we did not know was there. We love him who makes us perceive it, for he does not show us his possession but our own. This benefit makes him lovable to us; setting aside that the community of understanding that we have with him inclines the heart necessarily to love him."¹⁶

II

Nietzsche was a mystic. But the structure of his mystical experiences differs so widely from that of the main trend of Western mysticism that we hardly even possess the terminology that would express it adequately. Nietzsche's spiritual life was curiously defective insofar as, apparently, he was incapable of the transcendental experiences that form the nucleus of the *unio mystica* in the Christian sense. In order to designate his type of experience, we shall use the term *immanentism*, without further definition at this juncture; the meaning of the term will disclose itself in the course of this study. We have to proceed in this anticipatory fashion because Nietzsche's work is in every phase so fully expressive of his spiritual life that a gradual exposition of his attitude is impossible. We have to place ourselves in its center and explore it by observing Nietzsche's thought (in the earlier defined sense) in action.

In the last paragraph of *Mixed Sentences and Epigrams*, entitled "Voyage to Hades," Nietzsche has formulated his relation to the great dead.¹⁷ He was in the underworld, like Odysseus, in order to speak with the dead, and he sacrificed his own blood to make them speak. Four pairs of men did not deny themselves to him: Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. They are the partners of his discourse; by them he is willing to be proved right or wrong; and to them he is willing to listen when they prove each other right or wrong while discoursing

16. *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, no. 14. All further references to Pascal's *Pensées* will give the numbers of Brunschvicg's edition.

17. *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* §408, in *Werke*, 3:183.

with him. "Whatever I say, my eyes are fixed on these eight and I see their eyes fixed on me." The living sometimes seem to be shadows, striving in vain for life, while the eight seem so living as if never would they tire of life now they are dead. "And the *eternal aliveness* is what counts: what good is 'eternal life' or, for that matter, life!"

Clearly, this is not the atmosphere of intellectual history. Neither is it an accident that Nietzsche characterizes his own sentiments by setting them off against the Christian, for we shall see this method employed with great deliberation at decisive points. Hades is the countersymbol to Heaven; the chthonic experience of this passage is the counterexperience to the Augustinian *intention animi* toward God; and the eternal aliveness is the purpose of existence in the same sense in which the eternal beatitude, as the *summum bonum*, is the principle of order for the Christian existence. While the direction of the mystical movement diverges widely from the Christian, both movements have the *contemptus mundi* for their driving sentiment. Eternal life is not Nietzsche's desire, but life is not either; and the living, "so pale and disgruntled, so restless and, oh!, so lusting for life," are like shadows. Nietzsche's immanentism necessitates the use of intramundane categories, such as "eternal aliveness," "discourse" with other minds, "power," etc., but the terms are not used in their empirical meaning; rather they denote a transfigured reality in which the soul moves when it has overcome the world in which man lusts for life.

The structure of this experience is clarified by some aphorisms of *Dawn of Day*. The aphorism on "Flight from One's Self" describes three modes in which the thirst for reunion with a beyond can be satisfied: the Christian thirsts for the *unio mystica*; a Shakespeare will find satisfaction in the union with his images of passionate life; a Byron thirsts for action, for acting diverts from one's self still more effectively than sentiments and works of art.¹⁸ "Should thirst for action be, at bottom, flight from one's self?—Pascal would ask us."¹⁹ But none of the three modes is the mode of Nietzsche. The aphorism on "Victory over Force" criticizes the veneration for human achievement in objective work. Force in itself may be the

18. *Morgenröthe* §549, in *ibid.*, 4:358.

19. Pascal has treated the flight from one's self extensively under the title *divertissement*. Of the numerous fragments on *divertissement* see particularly the long one bearing this title in *Pensées*, no. 139.

cause of a great performance, but to what degree it is venerable will have to be determined by the degree of reason in force. Only if mere force is overcome by something higher, if it serves as the means to an end, can we speak of true achievement. The eyes are yet blind for the true measure of genius, and the most beautiful achievement is not yet understood: the spectacle of the force that a genius does apply, not to his work, but to himself as a work, that is, to the mastery of himself, to the purification of his imagination, to the ordering and selecting of the stream of tasks and ideas. The greatest thing that compels veneration remains invisible like a too distant star: the victory over force.²⁰ The double meaning of force is the key to the understanding of this passage: force as the raw material of human life, and force as the means of overcoming mere nature by disciplining it spiritually and transforming it into eternal aliveness. Force in this second sense has a function in Nietzsche's thought comparable to that of Grace in the Christian system. As the transfiguration remains, however, world-immanent, no special terminology denoting a transcendental reality is introduced. The resulting equivocation is the permanent source of misunderstanding on the part of interpreters; and Nietzsche himself has not always kept the spheres of meaning clearly separate. On the contrary, we find in his work numerous "derailments," in the sense that the spiritual discipline is, by a short circuit, translated into empirical ideals, as for instance in Nietzsche's most famous "derailment" from the "victory over force" to the "blond beast."²¹

"I have replaced the saint . . . by the historical man of the highest piety. I have replaced the genius by the man who will create man beyond himself."²² The immanentism of the new piety requires man to conceive of himself as historically existing and to

20. *Morgenröthe* §548, in *Werke*, 4:357 f. I am translating as "force" Nietzsche's term *Kraft*. The translation is inadequate because it does not catch the shade of meaning between the term *Trieb*, which also was translated as "force" earlier in the text, and the term *Macht*, power, which Nietzsche uses consistently in his later work. *Trieb* has the connotation of a biological force; *Kraft*, the connotation of strength and vitality that express themselves in a piece of work; *Macht*, power, designates strength that is permeated by spirit.

21. The term *derailment* is a translation of Jaspers's concept of *Entgleisung*. See, for the problem of the derailments, Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1936). For a special list of derailments in which National Socialist interpreters have a habit of indulging, see 391 ff.

22. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft*, 1881/83 §452, in *Werke*, 12:215.

establish his relations "with all other phases of culture in loving just understanding."²³ Here we touch the deeper sentiments that make it necessary for Nietzsche to develop his own "thought" by orienting it toward other great minds. The orientation toward Schopenhauer and Wagner was necessary for his maturation, and insofar it had an educative function; but it was at the same time the fundamental procedure by which Nietzsche found his place in the company of his equals in human history. The procedure could outgrow its educative phase, but the method could not be surrendered, and the preoccupation with the two dominant figures is, even in the earlier phase, paralleled by the relation to the pre-Socratic philosophers, which has the same atmospheric color as the later relation to the "Eight." The orientation in this intramundane realm of the human spirit is, furthermore, not considered by Nietzsche as his personal problem. It is a problem with which every man of superior quality, "every higher man," is faced in every historical period. The solutions, though, change with the personal position in the process of history. "In antiquity every higher man had the desire of fame." The reason is that everyone believed humanity to begin in his own person and that he could give himself the sentiment of breadth and duration on the scale of humanity only "by imagining himself into posterity as the co-acting tragedian on the eternal stage." In our time, the unfolding of humanity has left a long trail of past. The pride of being a link in the chain of humanity need not express itself any longer in the desire for fame; it can manifest itself today in the pride of ancestry. "I have an ancestry, that is why I do not need fame." "In that which moved Zarathustra, Moses, Muhammad, Jesus, Plato, Brutus, Spinoza, Mirabeau, I am already living. And in some respects, only in my own self comes maturely to the light of day what was embryonic for a few millennia. We today are the first aristocrats in the history of the spirit—historical sentiment begins only now."²⁴ The ancestry is extended quite generously in this passage so as to embrace the great epochs of the spirit. But we have seen that Nietzsche makes his selection of an ancestry, more specifically his own, as in the list of the Eight; and on other occasions, the list is further narrowed to Plato, Pascal, Spinoza, and Goethe. "When I speak of them, I know that their blood is rolling

23. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft*, 1881/83 §452, in *ibid.*

24. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft*, 1881/83 §456, in *ibid.*, 12:216 f.

in mine; I am proud when I can tell the truth of them; the family is good enough that it does not need embellishment or hiding . . . *I am proud of humanity* and I manifest my pride in my unconditioned truthfulness."²⁵

A final narrowing seems to have occurred in the last years. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche confesses that the few books to which he returns again and again are by a small number of older French authors, above all Pascal. In this context he also states most summarily his interest in Pascal: "I do not *read* Pascal, I *love* him as the most instructive victim of Christianity; slowly murdered, first bodily, then psychologically; the whole logic of this most horrible form of inhuman cruelty."²⁶ Pascal is "most instructive" because, in the Christian sphere, he is Nietzsche's counterpart in the passionate and intellectually honest probing of his soul. In his discourse with Pascal, the fraternal spirit, he clarifies his own spiritual life in opposition to the Christian.

III

Nietzsche gave to his earlier studies the title of *Untimely Meditations*. The meditation is a fundamental Christian method, employed for the orientation of the soul toward God. Nietzsche's meditations are not Christian, for they serve the orientation of the soul toward the mystical experience of a world-immanent humanity. They are not means for ascending toward a transcendental reality and, hence, they do not tread the traditional *via negativa*. A specific technique was developed by Nietzsche in order to accomplish his meditative ends: the aphoristic method.

The aphorism is for Nietzsche more than a literary genus. The editors of the posthumous works have drawn attention to the fact that the aphorism was his mode of thought even in the early phase when his publications still had the form of the organized essay.²⁷ After 1876, Nietzsche developed the aphorism consciously as the instrument of thought of the *moraliste* in opposition to the systematic thought of the philosopher. In an aphorism of 1879, "The Original Sin of the Philosophers," he criticizes them for having always

25. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft*, 1881/83 §457, in *ibid.*, 12:217.

26. *Ecce Homo*, in *ibid.*, 15:34.

27. See Ernst Holzer's preface in *ibid.*, 9:xv.

corrupted the sentences of *moralistes* by dogmatizing them and by mistaking for a general truth what was no more than a hint.²⁸ As the great example of such corruption he analyzes the generalization of the concept of "will" through Schopenhauer into a metaphysical principle, and he opposes this misuse to the proper aphoristic use made of it by Pascal.²⁹ An aphorism of the middle 1880s advances the problem a step further. It is scientific vanity to affect a method for which the time is not ripe; the application of systematic deduction and dialectics to a subject matter is "falsification" insofar as the systematic presentation tends to cover the experiential basis of thought. We should not hide the way in which our thoughts have come to us. The first rule for the presentation of a thought is that it has to render truthfully its genesis. "The most profound and inexhaustible books will have perhaps always something of the aphoristic and abrupt character of Pascal's *Pensées*."³⁰ The driving forces and valuations will remain for long under the surface; what appears above the surface is only the effect. If the "effects" are arranged systematically, they are severed from the soil in which they grow, and we can no longer trace the immediate experiences that caused them. The aphorism preserves the experiential roots of a thought and hence is the proper instrument of a non-Christian *vita contemplativa* that takes its pride in its loyal interpretation of immanent experiences.

The conception of a new *vita contemplativa* is the centerpiece of Nietzsche's first aphoristic work, *Human, All-Too-Human*. The "Lamentation" of Aphorism 282 considers it possible that the very advantages of our age have caused the undervaluation of the *vita contemplativa*. Whatever the reasons, our time is poor in great moralists. Pascal, Epictetus, Seneca, and Plutarch are little read. Labor and industriousness rage like a disease; diverging opinions are hated, not considered, because the time and tranquillity for thought are lacking. An independent and cautious attitude is considered almost a kind of madness. The free spirit is in disrepute, particularly with scholars; they would like to banish him into a

28. *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* §5, in *ibid.*, 3:16 f.

29. Another great aphoristic thinker, Henri Frédéric Amiel, has leveled the same criticism against Schopenhauer. See Amiel's *Fragments d'un Journal Intime*, rev. ed., 2 vols., introduction by Bernard Bouvier (Paris: Stock [Delamain et Boutelleau], 1927), 1:281 f.

30. *Wille zur Macht* §424, in *Werke*, 15:450.

corner, although it is his function to point the ways and aims of culture from his higher position. But Nietzsche hopes that the character of the age will change and that such lamentation will become unnecessary "once the genius of meditation returns in force."³¹

The following aphorisms, 283–92, elaborate the motifs of the "Lamentation"; they gain their full meaning only as corollaries to the idea of a new *vita contemplativa* opposed to the older, which Nietzsche exemplifies for the Greco-Roman world by Epictetus, Seneca, and Plutarch, for the Christian world by Pascal. These aphorisms constitute one of the complexes that are identified by the culminating reference as oriented toward Pascal. The elaboration is rich in contents; the whole complex is, indeed, one of the most revealing self-portraits, and a full interpretation would have to reach far into the ramifications of Nietzsche's work. We shall have to restrict ourselves, therefore, to some of the leading ideas.

The contemplative man is characterized more clearly by opposing him to the active. The active man is devoid of "higher," that is of "individual," activity; scholars, officials, merchants are active as generic beings, but not as concrete and singular men. "In this respect they are lazy." Today, as always, men are divided into slaves and freemen. "A slave is he who has not two-thirds of his day for himself, be he otherwise whatever you wish: a statesman, a businessman, an official, a scholar."³² The slave is identified with the active life, the "higher" man with the contemplative. A good deal of serious misunderstanding of Nietzsche could be avoided if his numerous utterances on slaves and the higher men, from the early fragment *The Greek State* to the late *Will to Power*, were not interpreted in terms of social institutions, but rather in the light of these identifications. Aphorisms 284 and 285 amplify the meanings of *otium* (leisure) and unrest. *Otium*, not laziness, is the precondition of the contemplative life; the modern restlessness, on the other hand, prognosticates a new barbarism of action. Aphorism 286 closes this topic with some remarks on the fundamental laziness of the man of action. The active life is a diversion into the typical, the ready-made; the moral obligation to form one's own opinion on every subject on which opinions can be

31. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* §282, in *ibid.*, 2:260 f.

32. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* §283, in *ibid.*, 2:261.

formed is avoided by the active life. Laziness prevents the man of action from the not always easy task of drawing the water from his own well.³³

The aphorism "Censor Vitae" reveals the "mood" of the soul to be achieved by the *vita contemplativa*, at least in one of its aspects. The independence of judgment will, at first, be marked by oscillations between love and hatred; ultimately, when the soul has become rich with experience, the contemplative man will be beyond hating, despising, or loving existence. "He will lie above it, with the eye sometimes of joy, sometimes of sadness, and, like nature's, his mood will be now summerly and now autumnal."³⁴ The peculiar halcyonic mood of Nietzsche's mystical experience responds with great sensitiveness to certain moods of nature, especially of the high summer and autumn, of the Engadin, and of the Mediterranean. Nature symbols and references to certain landscapes frequently serve as the expression of this mood, as the experience of the landscape is apt to induce it. In rivalry with certain phenomena of the human mind, nature is the source of experiences that in Nietzsche's intramundane mysticism correspond to the transcendental experiences of Christian mysticism.³⁵

The contemplative life requires favorable external conditions. The picture of these conditions in Aphorism 291 is practically a picture of Nietzsche's own conditions of life. The free spirit will have his external aim of life easily satisfied. He is not desirous of a great position in state and society; a small office or a small competence that will enable him to live is sufficient. He will organize his life in such a manner that, if possible, it will not be touched by events in the economic and political sphere. The energy that he does not have to devote to external problems will be set free for diving

33. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* §286, in *ibid.*, 2:263. The reduction of action to laziness is not Nietzsche's last word on the problem, as we have seen. A few years later he adopts the interpretation of "flight from one's self," which is closely related to Pascal's conceptions of ennui and divertissement.

34. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* §287, in *ibid.*, 2:263.

35. The halcyonic mood of the contemplative state is one of the constants in Nietzsche's spiritual life. A good number of Nietzsche's valuations and preferences that would be puzzling in themselves will become quite intelligible if they are seen as expressions of this mood, such as his love for the late Goethe of the Eckermann period, for Adalbert Stifter, for the landscape painting of Claude Lorrain and Poussin, etc. For a fine presentation of this whole class of experiences see Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin: G. Bondi, 1918), particularly the chapters on Weimar (181 ff.), Nachsommer (238 ff.), Claude Lorrain (249 ff.), Venedig (261 ff.), and Portofino (271 ff.).

into the element of knowledge. He will restrain himself with regard to attachments and not enter too deeply with his passions into the course of the world. He will trust that the genius of justice will speak in defense of his disciple if he should be accused of poverty in love. His mode of life and thought will express a *refined heroism* that does not crave for the admiration of the mob like its coarser brother; quietly he will walk through the world, and quietly he will walk out of it.³⁶

The descriptions of the mood and the external conditions of contemplative life are completed, in Aphorism 292, by the description of its aim. The aim is the *unio mystica* with humanity as it unfolds in history. The individual man must transform himself into an epitome of the experiences of humanity to the point that the historically unfolding spirit becomes incarnate for its actual present in his person; his person must become the medium of transition of the spirit into the future of humanity. Our age is favorable to this feat. Today experiences of religion and art are still possible of which later generations perhaps will be deprived. That the contemplative man, in this case Nietzsche, has such experiences enables him to penetrate with understanding into earlier periods of human history. One cannot become sage without having lived through the cultural manifestations that are determined by religion and art, and it is equally necessary to be familiar with history at large. Retreading the road of the past, man will learn best where humanity in future will or should not go. The ego, reliving the experience of humanity, will understand the necessity of the course that leads up to the present, and the reliving will lead the individual to the point where the necessity of overcoming the present and reaching out into the future will impose itself. "When your eye has become strong enough to see to the bottom of your nature and knowledge, then, perhaps, will become visible in its mirror the distant constellations of future cultures." Wholly should you merge yourself in this aim: with your errors, mistakes, illusions, passion, your love and your hope. And when your life has been consumed in this task, you will find that with the climax of age you will have reached the climax of wisdom "in that mild brilliance of a constant spiritual joyfulness . . . that is how nature wanted it."³⁷

36. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* § 291, in *Werke*, 2:264 f.

37. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* § 291, in *ibid.*, 2:266 f.

This description of the contemplative has the character of a prelude. Nietzsche has formulated his problem clearly, but the personal tone for its expression has not yet developed fully. The problem can perhaps best be clarified by fixing its relation to Hegel's conception of history as the dialectical revelation of the Idea. Nietzsche shares with Hegel the conception of history as a manifestation of the spirit, but he has abandoned the dialectical unfolding of the Idea. The Christian transcendental remnants in Hegel's conception have disappeared, and the process has become completely immanent. Intramundane "humanity" is the subject that unfolds, and "nature" functions as the source and the determinant of the movement. Nietzsche shares, furthermore, with Hegel the consciousness of epoch; both thinkers are convinced that a great period of history has reached its end. But Hegel's philosophy is dominated by the sentiment of endship to the exclusion of any prospects of a future; the dialectical process of the Idea has come to its fulfillment and its rest in the present. History has totally become past. Nietzsche, while conscious of the end of a period, is dominated by the sentiment of transition toward a future. His protest against the "system," against "deductions and dialectics," is directed against the systematization of history in Hegel's work. He, for his part, has recourse to the immediate experience of the individual as the substance of the future. The contemplative life is the means of overcoming the past by penetrating to the roots of human existence from which will grow the culture of the future.

"Humanity" realizes itself historically through the instrument of the individual human existence. Hence the philosophy of existence becomes the center of the new post-Hegelian philosophy of history. The problem is clear, but its expression, as we said, has yet the tone of a prelude. One can sense the tentativeness of the expression in its assonance with Epicurean and Spinozistic moods; there is yet a certain superficiality in the too exclusive reduction of activism to laziness. The arduous task of overcoming the past by reliving it is yet in the initial stages of fulfillment, and the deep well of existence does not yet mirror the future. The following years only, the time of *Dawn of Day*, show Nietzsche at closer grips with his problem.

IV

Of the years of planning that resulted in *Dawn of Day*, several titles are preserved that Nietzsche intended to use either for books or for subdivisions: "Vita Contemplativa"; "Passio Nova, or: Of the Passion of Honesty (*Redlichkeit*)"; "Religion of Courage"; "The Sentiment of Power." These titles indicate a nucleus of thought around which the peripheral complexes of an analysis of knowledge, of Christianity, of morality, of the order of estates in society, etc., would have to grow.³⁸ The "Plans" of the same period reveal the directions in which Nietzsche's thought was to evolve. One of the "Plans" describes admirably the movement of the soul that leads to the discovery of passion as the ultimate driving force even in contemplative life: "We believe it is the opposite of passion: but it pleases, and thus we begin the fight *against* passion for reason and justice. We innocents! We discover that it bears all the marks of passion itself. We suffer in this knowledge; we strive for the undimmed, morning-quiet light of the sage. But we divine: even this light is *passionate movement*, though sublimated and unrecognizable for the coarse. . . . We discover how passions originate, how they become sublimated. Then begins the repercussion from outside: all the arguments by which we tried to liberate ourselves, all our errors turn against us from the outside. . . . It is a new and unknown passion!"³⁹ Another of these "Plans" reveals as fully developed even now the social perspectives of the contemplative life that are later set forth in *Will to Power*: "I see the socialistic bodies forming, inevitably! Let us take care that the *heads* begin to sprout for these *bodies*! These organizations together with all their leaders will form the future estate of slaves—but above them will rise an aristocracy, perhaps of *hermits*! *The time of the scholar is past* who lived and believed like everybody else (as instrument of the church, of the courts, of the commercial parties, etc.)! *The great heroism* has become necessary again!"⁴⁰ The driving passion is expressed most tersely in a third "Plan" as the aim "To restore the honor of one's individual soul!"⁴¹ These leading conceptions and

38. For the titles see the editors' *Nachbericht* in *ibid.*, 11:408, 411.

39. *Plan*, in *ibid.*, 11:409.

40. *Zum Plan*, in *ibid.*, 11:410.

41. *Zum Plan*, in *ibid.*, 11:409 f.

plans will serve as points of orientation in the maze of aphorism of 1880/1888.

The deeper idea of the *vita contemplativa* is implied in an aphorism entitled "Comparison with Pascal": "Do not we have our strength in the conquest of our self (*Selbstbeziehung*), just as he? He in favor of God, we in favor of honesty? Certainly: an ideal to tear man away from the world and from himself makes for the most unheard-of tensions; it is a *permanent self-contradiction down to the roots of existence (im Tiefsten)*, a beatific resting *over oneself*, in the contempt of everything that is called 'ego.' We are less embittered and less revengeful against the world; our concentration of force is lesser, but then we do not burn down too rapidly like candles, but have the force to endure."⁴² The self-contradiction inherent in contemplative life is the new problem. The contemplative state is the result of passion overcoming passion, and it must be maintained by a permanent tension of the ego against itself. The contempt of all that is called "ego" cannot overcome the fundamental fact that the "beatific resting" is achieved by an effort of the very ego that is left below. Not even in the *vita contemplativa* can man escape the life of passion; he can only live in the illusion that he has escaped.

With the *vita contemplativa* as a phenomenon in the life of passion we shall deal more closely in the following section of this study. For the present we are concerned with the use that Nietzsche makes of this conception in order to distinguish his own position from that of Pascal: "The state of Pascal is a passion; it has all the symptoms and consequences of happiness, of misery, and of profound, enduring seriousness. Hence it is rather laughable to see him so proud against passion—it is a kind of love which despises all others and pities the men who lack it."⁴³ Nietzsche's insensitiveness to transcendental experiences makes it impossible for him

42. *Aus der Zeit der Morgenröthe*, 1880/81 §277, in *ibid.*, 11:271.

43. *Aus der Zeit der Morgenröthe*, 1880/81 §278, in *ibid.*, 11:271. The most explicit formulation of Pascal's conception of "true felicity," to which Nietzsche opposes his own position in these aphorisms, is to be found in the fragments on "Les grandeurs et les misères de l'homme" in *Pensées*, nos. 425 and 430. Cf. also Pascal's note on his own state: "Voilà quels sont mes sentiments; et je bénis tous les jours mon Rédempteur qui les a mis en moi et qui, d'un homme plein de faiblesse, de misère, de concupiscence, d'ambition, d'orgueil, a fait un homme exempt de tous ces maux par la force de sa grandeur à laquelle toute la gloire est due, n'ayant de misère que la misère et l'erreur" (*La vie de Pascal par Mme Périer*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Jean Mesnard, 3 vols. [Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1964], 595.

to accept the phenomenon of Grace that is the indispensable factor in Pascal's "felicity"; the contemplative experiences in which he *transcends* the ego have to him the character of experiences entirely *within* the life of passion. This deficiency compels Nietzsche to interpret Pascal's solitude with God in terms of "egoism" and enables him, as a consequence, to distinguish his own attitude from the Pascalian as historically productive. Pascal, he says in an aphorism of the same period, "had in view not *useful* love but all wasted; with him everything is an egoistic private affair. That out of this cumulation of action a new generation will be produced, with its passions, customs, and means (or lack of means) to satisfy them—that is what he does not see. Always the single individual, not the process (*das Werdende*)."⁴⁴ One should note in this passage the characterization of the contemplative life as an "accumulation of *action*." The difference between contemplation and action is not abolished by this identification, but the necessity of interpreting the contemplative life ultimately in terms of action reveals the rigidity of Nietzsche's immanentism. Contemplation is historical action in the sense that the overcoming of the historical past in the process of contemplation sets free the resources of the individual contemplating existence so that they will become the determinants of the future.⁴⁵

In Nietzsche's interpretation, the cumulative action of Pascal's life produces the future generation, whatever he thinks he is doing. The stream of history has an immanent structure. The two attitudes of Pascal and Nietzsche are not simply opposed as two types on the level of scientific classification; they are related to each other by the necessity of the historical movement, the first having contributed through its action to the rise of the second. In an aphorism on "The Desire for Perfect Opponents" Nietzsche makes

44. *Aus der Zeit der Morgenröthe*, 1880/81 §279, in *Werke*, 11:271.

45. This attitude should be compared with other interpretations of the contemplative life that bear a superficial resemblance to Nietzsche's. Aristotle, for instance, also conceives of the *bios theoretikos* as a form of action, but as an action in which self-sufficiency is achieved, as far as humanly possible, in order to make human existence an analogue of divine existence. The orientation of contemplative life is not intramundane; it has an ahistorical, transcendental purpose, like the Christian. A similar problem arose for Bodin, who adopted the Aristotelian conception of contemplative life. But for Bodin, again, the culmination of contemplative life is the fleeting, ahistorical moment as the anticipation of the full *fruitio Dei* in afterlife. For the Christian doctrine cf. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. II-II, qu. 180, particularly arts. 1 and 2.

a suggestion concerning the relation between the French types of Christianity and secularized intellectualism, which is important as a key to the manner in which he understands his own relation with Pascal. He surveys the principal figures of French Christianity since the seventeenth century: Pascal, "in his combination of ardor, spirit, and honesty the first of all Christians," Fénelon, Mme. de Guyon, the founder of the Trappist order, and the scholars of Port-Royal, and then he concludes that the people of the perfect type of Christianity were bound to produce also the perfect countertype of un-Christian free thought.⁴⁶ The relation between the perfect types of Christianity and free thought within French society is Nietzsche's model for the relation, on the larger European scale, between perfect Christianity, as represented by Pascal, and the perfect free spirit, as represented by himself. The Christianity of "the most Christian people of the earth," and particularly Pascal's, is meant when Nietzsche orients his non-Christian mysticism toward the European past. Pascal, "the first Christian," is designated as "the type" when Nietzsche refers to the "Christian corruption" to which he opposes himself.⁴⁷

The Pascalian "type" is further clarified by Nietzsche when he distinguishes it as a first type of Christianity from a second that is mainly represented by German Protestantism. Protestantism is for Nietzsche "that spiritually unclean and boring form of *décadence*, in which Christianity has managed to conserve itself as yet in the mediocre North."⁴⁸ "What has the German spirit done to Christianity!" This German average Protestantism "I call a modest Christianity"; and his particular wrath is directed against the "*immodest* Protestantism of the court preachers and anti-Semitic speculators."⁴⁹ An aphorism of 1884, finally, brings the confrontation of Pascal and Luther: "For a way of thinking like the Christian one has to imagine the ideal man who is completely fitted for it, as for instance Pascal. For the average man, there never will be anything but a surrogate-Christianity, and that applies even to a nature like Luther's—he concocted for himself a rabble and peasant Christianity."⁵⁰ The fact that French Catholicism is the

46. *Morgenröthe* §192, in *Werke*, 4:182 f.

47. *Wille zur Macht* §51, in *ibid.*, 15:177.

48. *Wille zur Macht* §88, in *ibid.*, 15:203.

49. *Wille zur Macht* §89, in *ibid.*, 15:203 f.

50. *Unveröffentlichtes aus der Umwerthungszeit* §752, in *ibid.*, 13:306.

prototype of Christianity for Nietzsche should throw some light on why French intellectual history generally holds an important place in his thought.⁵¹ Pascal becomes so firmly identified with the ideal type of Christianity that whenever Nietzsche speaks in his later work of Christianity without further qualifications, the presumption will have to be that it is the Pascalian type that he has in view. Pascal acquires in the later work a typical function similar to that of other great figures: Pascal is most frequently meant when Nietzsche says "the Christian," just as "the philosopher" means Schopenhauer, "the artist" means Wagner, and "the statesman" means Bismarck.⁵²

V

In "Comparison with Pascal," the self-contradiction of the contemplative life appeared as the new problem. The passion that overcomes passion in self-conquest is the new object of inquiry whose aspects are denoted by the terms *pride*, *power*, *cruelty*, *honesty*, and *heroism*. The assemblage of this cluster of sentiments seems to be suggested by Pascal. In the absence of direct references and quotations, no more than this cautious judgment is possible. But considering the all-pervasive presence of Pascal in Nietzsche's work, as shown in the preceding section; considering, furthermore, the obvious parallels in Pascal's and Nietzsche's analyses; and considering, finally, the absence of any other influence of comparable strength, a direct connection with Pascal's *Pensées* seems almost beyond doubt. The search for the origin of this complex of ideas should not obscure, however, the immediate experiences that, by Pascal as well as by Nietzsche, are interpreted by means of a terminological apparatus that has grown historically.

51. See also *Wille zur Macht* §87, in *ibid.*, 15:203: "The decline of Protestantism: theoretically and historically understood as an indecision (*Halbheit*). Actual preponderance of Catholicism; the sense of Protestantism so evaporated that the strongest anti-Protestant movements are no longer felt as such (for instance Wagner's Parsifal). All higher spiritualism in France is Catholic by instinct; Bismarck has understood that Protestantism exists no longer."

52. The function of Pascal as the Christian countertype to Nietzsche's free spirit receives a formal confirmation in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886). Chapters 2 and 3 deal with "The Free Spirit" and "Religiousness" respectively (*ibid.*, 7:39 ff., 67 ff.). The dominating, concluding aphorisms of these two chapters develop the type of the free spirit, as represented by Nietzsche, and the type of the Christian European, as represented by Pascal.

A nucleus of experiences, and of symbols for their expression, is to be found in a quotation from the First Epistle of John that opens a fragment of the *Pensées*: "All that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, or concupiscence of the eyes, or pride of life." Pascal adds a Latin translation to this passage: *libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi*.⁵³ The translation has its importance as the transitional link in a chain of terms and shades of meaning that extend from the Greek *alazoneía tou bíou* through the *superbia vitae* of the Vulgata and of the Patristic interpretation to modern psychological terminology and ultimately to Nietzsche's will to power. The reduction of the three elements of the "world" to the common denominator of *libido* makes it possible for Pascal to develop a systematic theory of human nature and of the principal character types. To the three *libidines* correspond "three orders of things": the flesh, the intellect (*esprit*), and the will. To these three factors correspond the three human types that are dominated by one or the other of them: the fleshly, that is, the rich and the kings, whose object is the body; the curious and the scholars, whose object is the intellect; and the wise (*sages*), whose object is justice. The three types, finally, are characterized by the ruling passions of concupiscence, of curiosity, and of pride.⁵⁴ If we assemble the third terms of these series, we find that Pascal experiences as closely related the problems of will, domination, pride, wisdom, and justice. The phenomena of will and power are associated with the phenomena of the spirit, and both are opposed to the sphere of the "flesh," that is, of politics and economics. This classification of passions—concupiscence on the one hand, power and wisdom on the other—should be noted particularly because we find it in the same manner in Nietzsche's psychology. A considerable amount of misunderstanding with regard to Nietzsche's ideas is due to the fact that in our materialistic climate of ideas the great tradition of medieval and Renaissance psychology is all but lost; as a consequence, it is too easily taken for granted that the

53. 1 John 2:16; Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 458. Charles Andler, who also quotes this passage from Pascal (in his *Nietzsche*, 1:179), adds a footnote: "E. Havet a démontré que Pascal songe à un passage de l'*Augustinus*, où Jansen commente Saint Jean." I do not have at hand either Havet's study or Jansen's *Augustinus*; the noble vagueness of Andler's footnote makes it impossible to form an opinion concerning the precise relation between Pascal's Latin and perhaps a quotation from Jansen.

54. *Pensées*, no. 460.

term *power* has to have a connotation of violence and institutional politics.⁵⁵

The analysis of pride and domination is further refined by including the social aspects of vanity and self-conquest. "Vanity is so deeply anchored in the heart of man" that even those in humble occupations—soldiers, cooks, porters, etc.—want their admirers. "And even the philosophers want them; and those who write against it want the glory of having written well; and those who read it want the glory of having read it; and I who write this have perhaps this desire; and perhaps those who read it. . . ." "We even lose our lives with pleasure, provided one talks about it."⁵⁶ And, finally, one can seek pain and succumb to it deliberately and find glory in the procedure. To succumb to pain is not ignominious, as it would be to succumb to pleasure. "The reason is that pain does not tempt and attract us; we choose it voluntarily and want to have it dominate us; so that in fact we are the masters of the situation; hence it is man who succumbs to himself, while in pleasure it is man who succumbs to pleasure. And there is nothing but mastery and domination to bring glory, and nothing but servitude to bring shame."⁵⁷ In these autobiographical reflections, the *libido dominandi* is pursued into the innermost recesses of the *contemptus mundi* and of the practices of self-mortification in which Pascal indulged. This sublimation of cruelty in the mastery of one's ego, which occupied Pascal, forms also an essential part of Nietzsche's analysis of the power complex.

Nietzsche's aphorism on "Striving for Distinction" reads like a continuation of the Pascalian fragments. The various aspects of the *libido dominandi* reappear, but they are submitted now to a more systematic treatment. Pascal's vanity, the desire for admiration, becomes divested of its comparatively innocuous character. Nietzsche interprets it as one of the subforms in which man strives

55. For the traditional problem of *superbia*, which forms the background of Pascal's *Pensées*, see the treatment by Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. II-II, qu. 162; particularly art. 1, *ad secundum*, with the quotations from Saint Augustine; and art. 3, *ad primum*, concerning the *superbia* of wisdom. It is one of the curiosities of intellectual history that in Nietzsche's work no trace should be found of any influence of Hobbes. The Hobbesian analysis of pride and power (see particularly *Leviathan* I.11, "Of the Difference of Manners") is a direct continuation of Saint Augustine's analysis of *superbia* as a *perversae celsitudinis appetitus* and as a perverse imitation of God; it closely parallels Pascal's psychology of passion.

56. Pascal, *Pensées*, nos. 150, 153.

57. *Ibid.*, no. 160.

to make his neighbor *suffer*. The man who strives for distinction wishes to impress his own personality on the other; it is a striving to subdue the other man, even if the desire should express itself in subtly mediated forms. It is an open or secret desire to have one's own will overpower the will of the other. The series of forms in which the desire expresses itself runs from barbarian violence to refined and even diseased idealism. As far as the neighbor is concerned, our striving for distinction means to him beginning the series from the most primitive form: torture, blows, terror, fearful surprise, wonder, envy, admiration, elevation, pleasure, joy, laughter, derision, mockery, sneering, then dealing blows, and, finally, application of torture to us. The ascetic and martyr who, at the top of this ladder, provokes torture, experiences the highest satisfaction in receiving, as an acknowledgment of his distinction, what his countertype at the bottom of the ladder, the barbarian, inflicts on the neighbor in order to distinguish himself.⁵⁸ "Happiness, understood as the most vivid feeling of power, has perhaps never been greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetes."⁵⁹

The implications of this passage are richly elaborated on other occasions. We have to trace two or three of the leading ideas. Above all, the aphorism implies an explanation of the "higher" forms of distinction through self-conquest. The question is treated explicitly in the aphorism on "The Origin of the *Vita Contemplativa*." Nietzsche draws a line of evolution from primitive expressions of pessimism in the violent activities of hunting, robbery, attack, torture, and murder, to the expression in "wicked judgments" that must substitute for "wicked action" when for various reasons the individual man is weaker, or tired, or sick, or melancholic, or surfeited. "In this state of mind he becomes a thinker or prophet, or he elaborates further the figments of his superstition and excogitates new observances, or he mocks his enemies." Those who do permanently what at first single individuals do only in certain moods—that is, those who judge wickedly and live melancholically and poor in action—are called poets, or thinkers, or priests, or medicine men. Such people would have been expelled from the community

58. For the highest form of martyrdom and its abysses one should compare Søren Kierkegaard, "Does a Human Being Have the Right to Be Put to Death for the Truth?" in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, 26 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978–), 18:51–89.

59. *Morgenröthe* §113, in *Werke*, 4:110 ff.

because of their inactive life, unless they had been feared because they were suspected of being in possession of unknown means of power. "In such ambiguous reputation, with a wicked heart and frequently with a head troubled by fears, has contemplation made its first appearance on earth."⁶⁰

But what causes respect for and fear of the contemplative man? Nietzsche gives two answers. What fascinated in the phenomenon of a saint was, first of all, the apparent miracle in the transition from one state of the soul to another that seemed diametrically opposed: one believed to see how a "wicked man" all of a sudden became a "good man," a saint. The miracle is only apparent because, indeed, no such change has taken place. The striving for distinction has changed its form, but the belief that the civilizationally "higher" form is morally "better" is unfounded. Still, the belief is held and produces the impression of the moral miracle.⁶¹ The second answer is a complement to the first. Setting aside the question of the moral miracle, the phenomenon of the saint fascinates because it represents the enigma of self-conquest. As such it has always commanded the respect of the powerful in the social sense of the word. They sensed in the saint the superior force that put itself to the test in such conquest, and in the saint's strength of will they recognized their own strength and lust of domination. They respected in the saint what they found in themselves: "The 'will to power' compelled them to halt in respect before the saint."⁶²

We have traced a complex of ideas from the Pascalian fragments into the ramifications of Nietzsche's aphorisms. But we warned at the beginning of this section against the belief that relations of this type can be described exhaustively on the level of a history of doctrine. We have to return now to the level of immediate experiences in order to recognize that the parallels of doctrine are based on parallels of experience. The opening aphorism of the chapter "Religiousness" in *Beyond Good and Evil* defines the hunting ground of the psychologist as "the human soul and its limits, the hitherto reached extremes of human inner experiences, the heights, the depths, and the dimensions of these experiences, the whole history of the soul

60. *Morgenröthe* §42, in *ibid.*, 4:47 f.

61. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §47, in *ibid.*, 7:72 f.

62. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §51, in *ibid.*, 7:76.

up to this time and its yet untasted possibilities."⁶³ But what can a lonely hunter seek in this virgin forest? And where should he find helpers? "In order, for instance, to guess and to establish the history that the problem of knowledge and conscience (*Wissen und Gewissen*) has had in the souls of the *homines religiosi*, a man would have to be perhaps so deep, so wounded, and so monstrous as was the intellectual conscience of Pascal." And even with this asset, there would be needed in addition "the high-tented heaven of a light, malicious spirituality that would survey from on high this swarming of dangerous and painful experiences, which could order it and press it into formulas." Who has the time to wait for such helpers? "In the end he has to do everything himself in order to know anything at all." Nietzsche recognizes in himself the woundedness and monstrosity of Pascal—and in addition the strength and cruelty of spirit that will enable him to find the formula for his experiences.

In a later context of *Beyond Good and Evil*, he offers this formula: "Almost everything that we call 'higher culture' is founded on a spiritualization and deepening of *cruelty*—this is my thesis."⁶⁴ Whenever man permits himself to be persuaded to acts of self-denial and self-mortification, to contrition and the convulsions of penitence, to the vivisection of conscience or the Pascalian sacrifice of intellect, he is tempted and impelled "by those dangerous shudders of cruelty turned against himself." And even the moralist who compels his spirit to inquire and know *against* the inclination of the spirit is an artist and glorifier of cruelty. Every penetration is a violation; it betrays a will to hurt the "fundamental will of the spirit" that incessantly moves toward illusion and surface; "in every will to know there is a drop of cruelty."⁶⁵

We have arrived at the core of the problem that is posited by Nietzsche's interpretation of the *vita contemplativa* as a passion to overcome passion. Aphorism 230 of *Beyond Good and Evil* brings the final formulation of the "fundamental will of the spirit" and its conquest by the "intellectual cruelty of conscience." The conflict of passions is sharpened ultimately to a conflict between two wills of the spirit. It is the first of these wills that Nietzsche calls the "fundamental" will of the spirit. Fundamentally the spirit

63. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §51, in *ibid.*, 7:76; *Drittes Hauptstück: Das Religiöse Wesen* §45, in *ibid.*, 7:69 ff.

64. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §229, in *ibid.*, 7:186.

65. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §229, in *ibid.*, 7:187.

is of a ruling, dominating, compelling character, similar in this respect to everything that physiologically lives and grows. The first of the "physiological" characteristics of the spirit is its tendency to simplify. New subject matter is assimilated by it to old, the manifold of experiences is reduced to classes, the radically contradicting is overlooked or expelled; distortion and typefaction are the instruments of mastering and incorporating the outer world. Simplification is supplemented by a voluntary closure of the spirit against new materials, by a resolve to remain ignorant, a defensive attitude against the knowable, a contentedness with darkness and a safe horizon. A third characteristic is the willingness of the spirit to be deceived, perhaps with a secret knowledge of the deception and a pleasure in the arbitrariness of the perspective, a happy contentedness with disproportions and a satisfaction stemming from the arbitrary exertion of power. And, finally, we can notice the questionable willingness of the spirit to deceive others, to assume a disguise, a pleasure in the mask and its defensive qualities. The "fundamental will" is a will to simplification, appearance, illusion, to masks; it is a will to "surface."

This fundamental will is opposed by the "sublime penchant" of the thinker to penetrate things deeply and thoroughly: "a kind of cruelty in the intellectual conscience and taste, which every courageous thinker will acknowledge within himself." Some will be inclined to cover this passion by giving it names of glittering virtues such as honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, self-sacrifice for knowledge, heroism of the truthful, etc. "There is something in it to make you swell with pride"—but "we hermits" have discovered that under such pleasant colorings there still is to be read "the terrible fundamental text: *homo natura*." To translate man back into nature, to penetrate the interpretations that cover this eternal text and to conquer their vanity, to face man with man in relentless discipline, to deafen ourselves against the tempting voices—"You are of higher origin!"—that is the new task. But why should we choose this curious and mad task? Or, in other words, why should there be knowledge? "Everybody will ask us and we, pressed in this manner, we who have asked this question ourselves a hundred times, we did not find and do not find a better answer"—than the satisfaction of cruelty.⁶⁶

66. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §230, in *ibid.*, 7:187–90.

Nietzsche's theory of the *vita contemplativa* is open to serious misunderstandings. A few remarks will be in place in order to guard against them. First of all, Nietzsche is not a materialist. The interpretation of the life of spirit as a life of passion does not mean that the phenomena of the spirit have to be reduced, by causal explanation, to the physiological sphere. The term *sublimation* was coined by Nietzsche, but it was used later by materialistic psychologists in order to explain the phenomena of the spirit as due to a deflection of libido, understood as the energy quantum of the sexual instinct, from human objects to objects of a nonsexual nature.⁶⁷ An explanation of this type is, however, not Nietzsche's intention. The spirit is for him an independent element in the structure of human passions, just as the lower instincts, and the *libido dominandi*, the will to power, is not an instinct that could be identified with any partial sphere of man, but is the force that pervades all manifestations of human life, the sexual and digestive as well as the spiritual. All effective force, even the nonhuman, is for Nietzsche will to power. "Will to power" is the world, determined as to its "intelligible character."⁶⁸

Nietzsche's conception of the spirit as power bears a close resemblance to Pascal's in his *Discours sur les passions de l'amour*. Pascal distinguishes the *passions de feu* from the lower passions; the *passions de feu* are those of the spirit: "The more spirit (*esprit*) a man has, the greater are his passions. For the passions are nothing but the sentiments and thoughts that belong properly to the spirit, even if they should be occasioned by the body. Obviously they are nothing but the spirit itself and penetrate it completely in all its faculties."⁶⁹ Nietzsche, however, goes further than Pascal. He not only conceives a spirit-passion (Pascal's *passions de feu*) as distinguished from other passions, but he also makes the metaphysical hypothesis of a "will" of which all empirical passions are only particular manifestations. The "higher" strata of human nature are not reduced to the "lower," as they are in the Freudian materialistic metaphysics of the libido, for back of all the mutually irreducible

67. See particularly Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, Modern Library Edition (New York: Random House, 1938), 625 f.; see also the introduction to *Basic Writings* by A. A. Brill, 16 ff.

68. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §36, in *Werke*, 7:58.

69. Pascal, *Discours sur les passions de l'amour* (*Oeuvres de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Prosper Faugère [Paris: Hachette, 1886-1895], 2:50).

manifestations is assumed the nonempirical, "intelligible" will as the *Weltgrund*.

The speculative elaboration of the will to power is an improvement over the *libido dominandi*, and it is not to be found in the same manner in Pascal. Nevertheless, the idea of the "intelligible character" of the world is functionally related to the Pascalian ideas. Nietzsche's "intelligible character" corresponds functionally to the Christian idea of the "world" in which all is concupiscence of the flesh or of the eyes or pride of life. The "world" as the realm of the Fall is the all-embracing assumption behind the manifest, empirical concupiscence in the same manner in which Nietzsche's "will" is the nonempirical assumption behind the manifold of manifest passions. If we recognize the functional parallel between the "world" and the "will," we can determine more precisely the meaning of the "fundamental text: *homo natura*" as a mystical symbol. The *natura* of Nietzsche is not the nature of natural science. It is a symbol that indicates that, for Nietzsche, the life of man is metaphysically transparent in the direction of the roots from which it grows and not in the direction of the purposes toward which it rises. The formula *homo natura* is introduced in opposition to the tempting voice that man might have a "higher origin." The Christian "world," while accepted as to its structure, is reinterpreted with regard to its meaning: in Nietzsche's conception, its lust and cruelty are not the negation of an original perfection, but the positive substance that pervades it to the highest reaches of "the most subtle, most disguised, most spiritualized will to power."⁷⁰ The *homo natura* is, in Nietzsche's immanent mysticism, the countersymbol to the fallen man.

A final misunderstanding may arise from the presence of pragmatic elements in the characterization of the "fundamental will of the spirit." The pragmatic elements are certainly there, but Nietzsche is not a pragmatist. The pragmatic tendencies toward convenient classification, toward the masks, and generally toward the "surface" are opposed by the "intellectual cruelty of conscience," and they should not be isolated from this opposing tendency. Only in the interplay of the two opposing wills does the integral phenomenon of the spirit reveal itself. The fundamental will creates, as

70. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §227, in *Werke*, 7:182.

it were naively, the "form" of the personal existence. It establishes firmly the individual power center in its relation to the surrounding power structure of the world. It determines the "perspectives" of the individual existence looking into the world, as well as the "masks" that it presents to the gaze of the world. The intellectual conscience, on the other hand, is the instance that destroys the perspectives and the masks by revealing them in their pragmatic relativity, and by this work of destruction it leads the individual from the surface back to the core of his existence.

Again, the structure of this conception will become clearer if we relate it to the functional parallel in the thought of Pascal. Nietzsche's creation of the pragmatic surface corresponds to Pascal's pursuit of happiness. "All men, without exception, strive for happiness; whatever means they employ, this is always the aim." They pursue their search of happiness in spite of the fact that nobody has ever reached it. "What do this avidity and this impotence betray if not that formerly man knew a true happiness of which he has today nothing but the marks and empty traces?" The desire for happiness, which can never be satisfied by finite aims, points toward the infinite good that alone can give true satisfaction, toward God.⁷¹ The pursuit of inner-worldly happiness is the "disease of pride" that detracts man from God,⁷² a disease that can be cured only by the Grace uniting man with God.

Both thinkers deal with the finite character of inner-worldly achievements of the spirit, and both agree on the relativity attaching to such achievements, driving man on from one happiness or position to the next. They must part ways only when they come to interpreting the identical phenomenon in the light of their respective religious experiences. For Pascal, whose soul is open to transcendental reality, the persistent search of happiness reflects the anamnestic knowledge of an infinite good; tranquillity can be found through the renunciation of a futile search and a turning of the desire in the right direction, for "there is enough light for those who have the earnest desire to see."⁷³ Nietzsche's immanentism does not permit of a permanent tranquillity. The building of finite positions with their perspectives and masks should not be

71. Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 425.

72. *Ibid.*, no. 430.

73. *Ibid.*

renounced, for it is not a "disease" but the healthy manifestation of the spirit's will to power. Nevertheless, the perspectives and masks achieved are only transitory because they cannot resist destruction through the intellectual conscience. This censorious and destructive authority compels the surrender of every temporary position but casts no light in the direction of the infinite. When its cruelty has destroyed the "surface" and driven the individual back to the source of his existence, the individual can reemerge from his center only to create equally transitory positions; the condemnation of the intellectual conscience is without grace.⁷⁴ For Nietzsche, the reality of his intellectual conscience makes impossible the cheap short circuit to the absolutism of a naturalistic or pragmatistic philosophical position; for the interpreter, it should be a warning not to misinterpret the immanent mysticism of Nietzsche as a system of this type.

VI

From the fatality of the fundamental will there is no salvation; only its specific manifestations can be broken by the dissolving cruelty of intellectual conscience. The tension between fatality and freedom of destruction in the spirit marks Nietzsche's counterposition to the Christian conception of the *vita contemplativa*. From this position Nietzsche undertakes his critique of civilization. The principal instruments employed in the critique are the concepts of *ressentiment* and *nihilism*; they have their functional parallels in Pascal's concepts of *ennui*, *ressentiment*, *divertissement*, and the *moi haïssable*. We shall again follow the procedure of presenting first the Pascalian complex of ideas and then determining the transformations that it experiences in the immanentist anthropology of Nietzsche.

The dynamic of sentiment is determined, for Pascal, by the impossibility of a state of complete quiet or rest (*repos*). "Nothing is as unbearable for man as to be completely at rest, without passion, without business, without distraction, without application to something." In such a state of rest man becomes aware of "his nothingness, his forsakenness, his insufficiency, his dependence,

74. For the problem of Nietzsche's masks see the chapter *Maske* in Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 157 ff.; furthermore, Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 359 ff.

his impotence, his emptiness." Incontinently there springs from the depth of his soul "the ennui, the blackness, the *tristesse*, the chagrin, the spite, the despair."⁷⁵ What Pascal tries to describe with this array of terms denoting the facets of a fundamental mood is what is called in the modern philosophy of existence since Kierkegaard the "anxiety of existence." The intoxication of activity beclouds the reality of human existence; when passion subsides, the experience of a fundamental emptiness and metaphysical forlornness emerges unobscured. The anxiety of existence springs up urging to be assuaged, and the ordinary, "everyday" method of assuaging is the divertissement by new activity. Pascal diagnoses that "we never are in search of things, but always in search of the search,"⁷⁶ because back of all specific miseries of human life is the fundamental misery of our "weak and mortal state." This state is so miserable "that nothing can comfort us if we think of it closely." The anxiety of existence has no specific cause; if man felt safe in every respect, still the ennui would rise on its own account from the depth of the heart. The free-rising, causeless ennui is due to the constitution of man's existence (*par l'état propre de sa complexion*).⁷⁷

The *ressentiment* against the continual misery drives man away from himself into external occupations. The efforts of this "first secret instinct" are not recognized by man as futile because a "second secret instinct"—we discussed it in the preceding section—that is founded on the memory of "the grandeur of our first nature" transforms the finite aim of such occupation into the mirage of an infinite aim that, if achieved, would give eternal rest. Pascal's radicalism in this point should be understood clearly because Nietzsche's profound aversion to Christianity is fundamentally an aversion to Pascal's attitude. Pascal does not condemn the divertissements of the life of passion roundly; he considers them part of man's nature. "It would be unjust to blame them (men); their fault is not that they seek the turmoil, if they would only seek it as a diversion; the evil is that they seek it as if the possession of the things that they seek would make them truly happy." If men would admit that they seek a violent occupation in order to forget themselves, their critic would have nothing to answer. But men

75. Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 131.

76. *Ibid.*, no. 135.

77. *Ibid.*, no. 139.

do not admit the escapist character of their divertissements, and thereby they demonstrate that they do not know themselves.⁷⁸ The sphere of worldly activity thus is deprived of any independent value. While Pascal would admit its diversionary value, he is not willing to admit that the realm of civilizational achievement can be transparent for transcendental reality. Neither objective civilizational creations, like works of art or thought,⁷⁹ nor a style of conduct or a personal relationship can be anything but an escapist diversion. Nietzsche was particularly revolted by Pascal's way of treating his sister with a reserved coolness: the poor woman, who was devoted to him, did not know what to make of it, until after Pascal's death a note was found in which Pascal had fixed the rule for himself that he would not show personal affection to anybody in order to prevent the other person from feeling attached toward him, for the attachment thus formed would be an attachment to a mortal being and thus distract the other person from the attachment that he should have toward God.⁸⁰

The escape into the life of passion is caused by the *ressentiment* against the anxiety of existence. But the consolation about our miseries that is furnished by the divertissements is itself the greatest of our miseries, for it is precisely this consolation that hinders us in thinking about ourselves and advances us on the road to perdition. "Without it we would be in the ennui, and the ennui would drive us to seek a more solid means to emerge from it. But the diversions amuse us, and carry us on insensibly to death."⁸¹ In the worldly dynamic of sentiment man is thus caught between despair, when he visualizes his corruption and weakness, and pride of achievement, when he visualizes his possibilities and considers his nature uncorrupt.⁸² The way out of this dilemma is pointed by the realization of the supranatural status of the soul in its relation to God. The sentiments of this class, however, cannot be treated in a psychology of passions. The dynamic of these sentiments is transcendental. "The first thing that God inspires in the soul that he chooses to touch truly is a quite extraordinary knowledge and

78. Ibid.

79. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 425.

80. See for this and other similar instances the *Vie de Pascal*, written by the sister, and *Pensées*, no. 471.

81. *Pensées*, no. 171.

82. *Ibid.*, no. 435.

view by virtue of which the soul considers the things and itself in an entirely new manner."⁸³ This "new light" changes the appearance of the divertissements: the perishable aims appear as perishable, and even as perished; the world of passion is annihilated as a realm of true happiness in this light. And the anxiety at the core of existence (*la crainte*) also takes on a new color. The soul experiences its own ultimate nothingness and in penetrating to the abyss of this nothingness finds itself in its creatureliness in relation to the infinity of God, the Creator.⁸⁴ As a result of this realization, the soul will be possessed of a sacred humility that God lets outgrow the pride; the soul "will begin to elevate itself over the common run of men; it will condemn their conduct, it will detest their principles and deplore their blindness"; and it will embark on the search for the true supreme good, which is God.⁸⁵

In the perspective of the existence that has been touched by God, the natural ego with its passion will appear as hateful. "*Le moi est haïssable*" is Pascal's doctrine with regard to the worldly ego.⁸⁶ The ego is hateful because it is unjust; it is unjust to the structure of existence because, under the pressure of the experience of death, it erects itself into a "world-all," a total of meaning that blots out the meaning of everything else in the world. "Everything is an all to himself, for when he is dead, all is dead for him. And hence it comes that everybody considers himself all to all."⁸⁷ This fundamental injustice can be tempered superficially through a diversion of concupiscence into public service. But the system of ethics and the moral conduct resulting from such diversion are "a false image of true charity." Pride has assumed in the ethical, social conduct a new form; it is not extirpated. At bottom, there is still the hatred with which man hates the other man's ego as the rival to his own world-filling ego.⁸⁸ One does not hate in the ego only its potential dangerousness but the fundamental injustice that is only covered by just conduct. "Every ego remains the enemy and would like to be the tyrant of all others."⁸⁹

83. Pascal, *Sur la confession du pêcheur* (*Oeuvres*, 2:37).

84. *Ibid.*, 2:39.

85. *Ibid.*, 2:38.

86. *Pensées*, no. 455.

87. *Ibid.*, no. 457.

88. *Ibid.*, nos. 451, 453.

89. *Ibid.*, no. 455.

The central problem of Nietzsche's theory of moral sentiments is indicated by the statement that it is a transformation of the Pascalian complex of ideas just outlined. The conception of slave morality as a system of ethics originating in the *ressentiment* of the weak against the strong and designed to devalue the manifestations of the strong will to power has been understood in the more popular interpretation of Nietzsche as a perversion of true moral values and as the attempt to erect "new tables." The interpretation is supported by such terms as the reevaluation of values and by the presence in Nietzsche's works of formulations, which have distinctly the touch of an *épater le bourgeois*. The "shocking" character of Nietzsche's reevaluation and the indignation at the attack on traditional principles have proved obstacles to an understanding of why it was undertaken. The easy explanations that find the reason in Nietzsche's personal and philosophical immaturity, or in the nefariousness of the German character, have to be mentioned because they have acquired social relevance through their quantitative persistence in the literature, but, for the rest, they can be dismissed. The primary reason that necessitated a reinterpretation of values does not lie on the level of ethics at all; the conflict between two sets of values is only incidental to a reinterpretation of human existence in terms of non-Christian, immanentist anthropology. Pascal's analysis of existence has shown the Christian dualism of the existence within the "world," which has to be interpreted by means of a psychology of passions, and the religious existence, which has to be interpreted in terms of grace and creaturely nothingness. We can now define the Nietzschean problem more precisely as the attempt to interpret human existence by means of world-immanent categories exclusively and to abolish the category of grace.

Neither for Pascal nor for Nietzsche, however, is grace a purely theological problem. As far as the philosophy of existence is concerned, the doctrinal question is of subordinate importance. Pascal was conservative and accepted theologically the canons of the Council of Trent; for Nietzsche, there existed no doctrinal question at all because he denied grace. Both thinkers, however, were profoundly interested in the experiential meaning of grace, individual as well as historical. Pascal was concerned about the first clear symptoms of a crisis in Christianity that reached a climax in Nietzsche and our age; Nietzsche was interested in Pascal's

method of dealing with a crisis that was also his own. By the crisis of Christianity we mean that subsequent to the disruption of the church institution in the century of the Reformation, it became clear that not only an organizational disruption had taken place, but that—partly causing the disruption, partly caused by it—a religious disorientation of man to a socially relevant degree had occurred. The seventeenth century witnessed the magnificent rise of a new psychology of passions because its object—religiously disoriented man—had appeared on the scene en masse. The psychology of the moralists in France, of Hobbes in England, deals with the man whose life is not oriented toward a transcendental *summum bonum* but rather is motivated in its actions by the drive of passions.⁹⁰

In the anthropology of the seventeenth century, nature and grace begin to be dissociated; they cease to be considered as the two status determinants of every man as they are in the high period of medieval civilization and begin to be identified with empirical types of men. In the *Confession du Pêcheur* we could observe the revealing formulation that the man who is touched by the grace of God will gain a view of existence that elevates him over the "common run of men." The "common run of men," whose existence is only natural, is apparently in Pascal's judgment the "normal" case, while the Christian in the state of grace is somewhat of a curiosity. If we use the Tyconian-Augustinian categories, we might say that Pascal sees the *corpus diaboli* around him gaining prodigiously, while the invisible church is dwindling deplorably. The historical situation of Christianity in which he finds himself is no longer that of a Saint Thomas at the height of the militant penetration of the Christian spirit into all the crevices of Western society and of its expansion in the Crusades. The *Summa Contra Gentiles* was written as the instrument of missionary activity against Islam; the *Pensées* of Pascal are an apology for Christianity destined to persuade the infidels within the Western world of the merits of Christianity and to guide them toward the true faith.

In question is not the doctrine of grace but the bewildering historical fact that the number of those who are not touched by the grace of God is so overwhelmingly large. Pascal, as a Christian, cannot

90. The new position is formulated explicitly in Hobbes, *Leviathan* I.11.

dare an explanation, for the plans of Providence are impenetrable; but he is visibly bewildered. The atheists object: "But we do not have any light,"⁹¹ and he can only say: "That is what I see and what confounds me. Wherever I look, I see only obscurity. Nature offers nothing but cause for doubt and disquiet. If I did not see anything that could be a mark of Divinity, I would decide myself for the negative; if I saw the marks of a Creator everywhere, I could rest in the peace of faith. But as I don't see enough for a denial and not enough to assure me, I am truly to pity; and I have wished a hundred times: if a God sustains this nature he should have made his imprint on it without equivocation; and if the marks that nature shows are deceiving, nature should suppress them altogether, Oh! that nature would say everything or nothing so that I could see which way I should follow."⁹² God is a hidden God who reveals himself only to those who search for him with all their heart; the *deus absconditus* is the problem that determines the apologetic endeavors of Pascal.⁹³ The impression that the various utterances of Pascal make in the aggregate has been summarized excellently by Nietzsche: "On the *deus absconditus* and on the reasons why he should keep himself so hidden and reveal himself only in suggestions, nobody has been more eloquent than Pascal, as a symptom that he never felt satisfied on the point; but his voice is so confident as if he had once sat behind the screen. He scented an immorality in the *deus absconditus*, and he was ashamed and shy to admit it: and so he talked as loudly as he could like a man who is afraid."⁹⁴

Nietzsche's own position is that of the man whom the grace of God has not touched. He experiences—as he pronounced in *Zarathustra*—that "God is dead." The formula can easily be misunderstood as the expression of a flat, materialistic, antireligious position, all the more so because Nietzsche stresses strongly his atheism. It can be understood correctly only in the context of experiences that were the concern of Pascal when he related the atheistic argument that "we do not have any light." In Nietzsche's formula the personal argument is generalized to the historical judgment that God is, indeed, silent to so many people as if he did not speak any

91. *Pensées*, no. 228.

92. *Ibid.*, no. 229.

93. On the *deus absconditus* see *Pensées*, nos. 194, 195, 229, 230, 242, 430, 434, and generally Article III of the Brunschvicg edition, *De la nécessité du pari*.

94. *Morgenröthe* §91, in *Werke*, 4:87 f.

longer at all, as if he were dead. In an aphorism "Why Atheism Today?" Nietzsche enumerates the principal reasons for the increasing disbelief in God. Having surveyed the anthropomorphical elements in the conception of God, he continues: "The worst, however, is that he seems incapable of communicating himself distinctly; is he unclear? These are the reasons I have found in many conversations . . . as the reasons for the decline of European theism; it seems to me that the religious instinct is mightily growing, but that it refuses theistic satisfaction with profound distrust."⁹⁵ He refers, furthermore, to the epistemological skepticism from Descartes to Kant as an attack on the presuppositions of Christian doctrine, particularly on the conception of the soul, and again he stresses that this skepticism, though anti-Christian, is not antireligious.⁹⁶ Nietzsche never denies the reality of religious experiences; on the contrary, he sees in their strength one of the causes of the decline of a Christianity that can no longer satisfy a strong religious instinct; but he understands the history of religious experiences and symbols as a theogonic process in the course of which gods can be born and gods can die. Moreover, he is perfectly conscious of the theogonic character of his own work.⁹⁷ With great care he insists, therefore, on the accumulation of empirical proofs that Christianity is, indeed, dying if not dead. The aphorism "At the Deathbed of Christianity," for instance, contrasts the "really active men" of today, who are at the core without Christianity, and the "intellectual middle class" (*geistiger Mittelstand*), who possess a "curiously simplified Christianity." This "middle class" has a God "who in his love sees to it that all comes out best in the end; a God who gives and takes our virtues as well as our happiness so that on the whole all is right and good and there is no reason to take life too seriously or to accuse it; in brief, resignation and modesty divinized." In this type of religiousness, however, Christianity has become "a sweet moralism"; it is "the euthanasia of Christianity."⁹⁸ He observes that formerly one tried to demonstrate the existence of God, while today one tries to explain how the belief in God could originate; as a consequence

95. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §53 in *ibid.*, 7:77 f.

96. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §54, in *ibid.*, 7:78.

97. See for instance in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §56, the confession at the end: "Why, and would that not be—*circulus vitiosus deus?*"

98. *Morgenröthe* §92, in *Werke*, 4:88.

of this evolution it becomes unnecessary to demonstrate that there is no God.⁹⁹

A similar evolution has taken place with regard to Pascal's problem of the wager. Pascal maintained that it would be prudent in the highest sense to be a Christian, even if Christianity could not be demonstrated by reason, because of the *terrible* possibility that it might be the true faith and disbelief lead to damnation. Today we find the other attempt at a justification: that even if Christianity were an error, one still would have for all one's life the benefit of the error. "This hedonistic turn, the demonstration by *pleasure*, is a symptom of decline: it replaces the demonstration by *force*, by that which in the Christian idea causes the trembling, by *fear*." One is satisfied with an opiate Christianity, "because one has neither the strength to stand alone, to search and to risk, nor the strength of Pascalism, of that boring self-contempt, of that belief in human unworthiness, of the anxiety of the 'perhaps—condemned.'"¹⁰⁰

Anti-Christianity does not mean antireligiousness. Like Pascal, Nietzsche acknowledges the crisis of Christianity, but he does not face it as a Christian. From the position of his immanentist religiousness he attempts a non-Christian solution to the problem of Grace. The presentation of this solution, with its consequences for the theory of morality, has its peculiar difficulties, for the earlier discussed reason that the immanent mysticism of Nietzsche has no developed terminology for the designation of those forces that correspond to the Christian supernatural. We said that Nietzsche has no conception of grace, and this is quite true if by grace we mean the Pascalian "touch," or "inspiration," or "light" by which God transforms the natural existence of fallen man. Nevertheless, Nietzsche knows a world-immanent phenomenon of grace without creating a symbol to denote it. We have become aware of this problem in the analysis of his ideas of an immanent *vita contemplativa*, of the passion that overcomes passion, of the victory over force, of the spiritual discipline, and of the infranatural, if not supranatural character of the "will" and of the "fundamental text *homo natura*." We can sense the problem in an occasional remark, as in the praise of Alcuin's definition of "the truly royal vocation of the philosopher":

99. *Morgenröthe* §95, in *ibid.*, 4:89.

100. *Wille zur Macht* §240, in *ibid.*, 15:318 f.

*prava corrigere, recta corroborare, sancta sublimare.*¹⁰¹ But there are a few aphorisms in this work in which he grapples directly with the Christian conception of the *corpus mysticum* and of the state of Grace. These aphorisms again seem to be oriented toward certain fragments of Pascal. For Pascal the natural ego is hateful, one's own as well as that of others. How then is love of oneself and of others in the Christian sense still possible?

Pascal's answer is the Christian one that the ego can become lovable to itself and to others as the member of the mystical body; in loving the spirit that animates the body, we can love each member insofar as it participates in the body. "We have to love a being that is within us and at the same time is not ourselves; and that is true of every individual man. But only the Universal Being is of this nature. The Realm of God is within us."¹⁰² Nietzsche agrees with this condition of the love of man. "To love man for the sake of God—that is the noblest and most remote sentiment that has been reached as yet among men. The love of man without some sanctifying intention is one more stupidity and animality; only from a higher inclination can this inclination toward the love of man receive its measure, its subtlety, its grain of salt." Whoever expressed this sentiment for the first time should be venerable for all times "as the man who has flown highest and who has erred most beautifully."¹⁰³ The sentiment is, for Nietzsche, an error insofar as it introduces the transcendental reality as the order in which sanctification is to be achieved; it is not an error insofar as it does not find the justification for the love of man in the empirical, natural order.

If the problem of grace is thus accepted on principle, and if the recourse to transcendental reality as the source of the order of grace is forbidden, an intramundane source for the transfiguration of nature must be opened, and the only available source is man himself. This is, indeed, the solution adopted by Nietzsche. In an aphorism in *Dawn of Day* he refers to Pascal and his conception of the *moi haïssable*. If the ego is hateful, how could we permit or accept that anybody should love it, be he even God? The following sentence reveals the core of Nietzsche's resistance against the idea of

101. *Wille zur Macht* §977, in *ibid.*, 16:351.

102. *Pensées*, nos. 483, 485.

103. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §60 in *Werke*, 7:85.

supernatural grace: "It would be against all decency (*allen guten Anstand*) to permit ourselves to be loved and to know at the same time quite well that we do not *merit* anything but hatred—not to speak of other repugnant feelings."¹⁰⁴ And if anybody should answer that this is precisely the meaning of the Kingdom of Grace, Nietzsche would suggest: "Then your love of your neighbor is through grace? Your pity through grace? Well, if that is possible for you, take just one step further: love yourself through grace—then you are no longer in need of your God, and you can act the whole drama of Fall and Redemption to its end in yourself."¹⁰⁵ The passage, if isolated, may sound like a verbal joke, but in the system of Nietzsche's thought it is the key to the desperate attempt of the demonically closed soul to confer grace on itself. It is an act of profound despair, necessitated by the inability of penetrating to the "abyss of nothingness" in which for Pascal is constituted the relation between the creature and its Creator. Nietzsche's immanentism is qualified essentially by the vivid consciousness of the Christian alternative, not as an impossibility, but as an inaccessible possibility.

A relation with God that would not be a relation as between gentlemen, preserving the distance and the proprieties, is not acceptable for Nietzsche. But such a relation is impossible; we have to accept God on his own terms. The refusal to descend into the abyss of nothingness does not protect a man of the religious sensitiveness of Nietzsche against the shudder of the numinose; the religious trembling is omnipresent in his work. But "the proud hates to tremble and takes his revenge against him who makes him tremble: this is the origin of his cruelty."¹⁰⁶ He who confers grace on himself has to descend into an abyss not less deep than that of nothingness. In *Dawn of Day*, in the immediate vicinity of the aphorism on grace, we find the note on "Humanity of the Saint." "A Saint had fallen among the believers and he could stand no longer their continuous hatred of sin." Finally he told them: God has created all things except sin; no wonder he does not like it. But man has created sin, and he should disown his only child merely because it displeases God, the Grandfather of Sin? "Honor to whom honor is due!—but heart and duty should speak in the first place for the child, and

104. *Morgenröthe* §79, in *ibid.*, 4:79.

105. *Morgenröthe* §79, in *ibid.*

106. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft (1881–82)* §173, in *ibid.*, 12:88.

only in the second place for the honor of the grandfather!"¹⁰⁷ The problem is elaborated later in *Dawn of Day* in one of the most "Russian" passages of Nietzsche's work. This passage continues the earlier analysis of "Striving for Distinction" to the point of martyrdom. The psychological analysis of the ascetic triumph in contemplating one's own suffering is followed by some reflections on a Hindu conception of world-creation as the ascetic operation of a god. "Perhaps the god wanted to banish himself into a living nature as into an instrument of torture in order to feel thereby his felicity and power doubled!" And if he were a god of love: "What delight would he experience to create a *suffering* mankind, and to suffer divinely and superhumanly in the sight of its continuous torture, and thus to tyrannize himself." It would not be impossible that souls like those of Saint Paul, of Dante, or of Calvin have penetrated into these voluptuous mysteries of power. From these reflections Nietzsche returns to the question of whether the ascetic represents, indeed, the highest degree that can be reached in the striving for distinction, or whether the fundamental mood of the ascetic could not be united with that of the compassionate god. "That is: to hurt others in order to hurt oneself," so that by this self-inflicted pain one could triumph over oneself and one's pity and thus enjoy the extreme of power.¹⁰⁸

This ultimate step in the speculation on power goes far beyond a psychology of passions in the empirical sense; it cannot be considered part of a systematic philosophy of human existence either, for Nietzsche is quite clear on the point that experiences of this type are not generically human but rather the privilege, or curse, of rare individuals.¹⁰⁹ We are faced in these speculations by the theological construction of a religious and, more specifically, of an

107. *Morgenröthe* §81, in *ibid.*, 4:80.

108. *Morgenröthe* §113, in *ibid.*, 4:111 f.

109. The relation of Nietzsche's position to a systematic philosophy of existence appears most clearly in the interpretation of Karl Jaspers (see Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, particularly the chapter "Der Mensch," 105 ff.). In his interpretation Jaspers uses his own system of philosophy as the frame of reference. (For the system see Jaspers, *Philosophie*, 3 vols. [Berlin: J. Springer, 1932].) His interpretation has the advantage over the present one that it elucidates the systematic content of Nietzsche's thought. It is, however, at a disadvantage because Nietzsche did not orient his problems toward a generic philosophy of existence of the type developed by Jaspers, but toward the Christian-Pascalian conception of existence. As a consequence, Nietzsche's historical motivations are obscured in the presentation of Jaspers. The fundamental fact, for instance, that Nietzsche attempts an anti-Christian solution of the problem of grace does not appear in it at all.

anti-Christian rebellion. The tension between the finiteness of man and the infinity of God is abolished through the transposition of the transcendental problem of grace and theodicy into the sphere of immanent human existence. The drama of Fall and Redemption is, indeed, acted to its end within the individual soul through the divinization of the ego.

The sentiments underlying this operation are not easy to describe because of the repeatedly mentioned lack of a developed terminology; nevertheless, it is possible to assemble a comparatively clear picture from some widely scattered notes. The enjoyment of "the extreme of power"—the phrase that appeared in §113 of *Dawn of Day*—is at the core of these sentiments. Later, in *Will to Power*, Nietzsche has found for the designation of its appeal the formula "the magic of the extreme." It is this magic "that fascinates and blinds even our opponents. . . . We, the immoralists, we are the extreme."¹¹⁰ The extreme, as to its substance, is an extreme of "power" or "rule" that replaces the power or rule of God: "To rule—and no longer to be the servant of God—this is the last means remaining for the purpose of ennobling man."¹¹¹ The way of this extreme power is beset with dangers. "Between two dangers runs my narrow path: a height is its danger, and its name is 'hubris'; an abyss is its danger, and its name is 'pity.'"¹¹² The narrow path between hubris and pity is the path of "hardness": "I love him who is so compassionate that he makes hardness his virtue and his God."¹¹³ The difficulties of terminology are almost insurmountable in passages like the one just quoted; if "hardness" would be associated with "inflexibility," or "callousness," or "toughness" in their ordinary meanings, the intention of Nietzsche would be completely misunderstood. The term *hardness* in this context does not carry the connotations it would carry in a system of finite human ethics; its meaning has rather to be determined on the level of interpretation of human and divine existence that is indicated by the following note: "Today I love myself as I love my God: who could today accuse me of a sin? I know sins only in my God, but who knows my God?"¹¹⁴ The divine love with which the ego loves itself has raised it into a

110. *Wille zur Macht* §749, in *Werke*, 16:194.

111. *Sprüche und Sentenzen* (1882–1884) §250, in *ibid.*, 12:282.

112. *Sprüche und Sentenzen* (1882–1884) §261, in *ibid.*, 12:283.

113. *Sprüche und Sentenzen* (1882–1884) §262, in *ibid.*, 12:283.

114. *Sprüche und Sentenzen* (1882–1884) §263, in *ibid.*, 12:284.

state of grace without sin, and the sins, whose reality is not denied, are unburdened on this saving God. Such "hardness" may be hard to bear, and the suffering in overcoming pity may become too strong; for Nietzsche this would mean a backsliding into the Christian position: "Of him who suffers too much, the devil will become envious and throw him out into heaven."¹¹⁵ And, finally, we have to consider the definitions of *cruelty* and *heroism* on this level of religious speculation. "Cruelty is the enjoyment in pity; it reaches its height when pity is highest, that is: if we love him whom we torture."¹¹⁶ Assuming that it is *ourselves* whom we love most, then the highest enjoyment and pity would be found in cruelty *toward ourselves*. The striving for absolute extinction through transition into one's opposite, "the transcreation of the devil into God"—that would be the *heroic* degree of cruelty.¹¹⁷

It would be a half truth to characterize the sentiments revealed in these notes as a "divinization" of the ego. Nietzsche's case is not that of a pantheistic mystic of the Amaurian or Ortliebian type who feels himself possessed by the Spirit of God and thereby divinized. In this type of experience "man can take on the Divine quality without in the least losing his humanity. . . . The Holy Spirit circulates within and carries holiness through the life so that there can be no sin. Sin is the will to offend God, and he whose will has become God's will cannot offend God. . . . A man may become so completely Divine that his very body is sanctified, and then what it does is a Divine act."¹¹⁸ In the case of Nietzsche no such easy sanctification is achieved. In pantheistic mysticism the divinization is experienced as a permeation of the creature by the Spirit of God; the tension between the finite creature and the infinite deity is the presupposition of the experience. In Nietzsche's immanentism the infinite is abolished and the structure of transcendental reality is superimposed over the structure of finite existence. This, however, means that not only are those elements of the structure superimposed that correspond in the Christian conception to the idea of God but also those that would correspond to the conception of a Devil. Hence the transformation of the finite

115. *Sprüche und Sentenzen (1882–1884)* §270, in *ibid.*, 12:285.

116. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft (1881–82)* §179, in *ibid.*, 12:90.

117. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft (1881–82)* §178, in *ibid.*, 12:90.

118. Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1936), 193 f.

ego is as much a diabolization as it is a divinization. In the absence of a more adequate term, we might speak of the "immanent Manichaeism" of Nietzsche. A posthumous aphorism formulates the problem: "Would not the *best* men have to be the *most evil*? Those in whom knowledge and conscience (*Wissen und Gewissen*) are developed most sensitively and strongly, so that they experience as unjust whatever they do, and themselves, as a consequence, as the always-evil, always-unjust, of necessity evil? But he who experiences himself as such, he *is it really!*"¹¹⁹ This aphorism sounds autobiographical, and one should listen attentively to its overtones. The sensitiveness of the intellectual conscience is certainly a personal trait of Nietzsche's; to the man who possesses this conscience *every* act *inevitably* appears evil, and the appearance is not deceptive. Good and Evil are the components of the action of the creative, strong personality. "The highest evil is chained to the highest goodness: this, however, is the creative."¹²⁰ The coexistence of good and evil in creative action and the acceptance of both as necessary make it impossible for Nietzsche to speak of a divinization of the ego. He has to use a neutral term—"beyond good and evil"—for the designation of the transcendental structure that is superimposed over the finite, and he adopts for this purpose the term *fate*. In a formula that paraphrases the Christian of the "God who becomes man," he speaks of the "fate that becomes man," and he accepts this fate as having become man in himself. His "Dionysian nature does not know how to separate the negativeness of action from the positiveness of approval (*Neintun-Jasagen*)."¹²¹ The will to power is the intelligible character of the world; action is the form that it assumes in man; no good can exist that would not be due to creative action; no action is possible without being evil.

Nietzsche calls himself an "immoralist" insofar as in his own personality he has developed the supreme consciousness of the diabolic-divine fate of existence.¹²² The immoralist is beyond good and evil. That does not mean that his actions are neither good nor evil. The code of ethics applies to the actions of the immoralist just as much as to those of the moralist, if we wish to apply it.

119. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft (1881-82)* §169, in *Werke*, 12:86.

120. From *Zarathustra*, quoted in *Ecce Homo*, in *ibid.*, 15:117.

121. *Ecce Homo*, in *ibid.*, 15:118.

122. *Ecce Homo*, in *ibid.*

The "beyond" means only that for the man in whom fate has become flesh the question of good and evil in the moral sense is irrelevant. The immanentism of Nietzsche is a religious state, not an ethical one, and in his "beyond" there is no more room for problems of ethics than in the Christian *unio mystica*. A Latin aphorism formulates this problem most succinctly: "Omnia naturalia affirmanti sunt indifferentia, neganti vero vel abstinenti aut mala aut bona."¹²³ The problems of morality are not absolute but can arise only in relation to a "negative or abstaining" state of man; in the "affirmative" state, evil has by far not become good, but the distinction is irrelevant. Obviously this immanentist mysticism gives occasion for abuses similar to those that have arisen in pantheistic mysticism. The sectarians of the latter type were liable to have an extreme wing that would maintain that crimes were not crimes if committed by men who are permeated by the Spirit because God cannot commit crimes. Nietzsche's mysticism is in the same danger. The idea of creative hardness in affirmative action contains as its essential component the critical authority of intellectual conscience; it is not the purpose of action to do evil, but evil is the accompaniment of goodness, and it reveals itself to its full extent only to him who is creative in goodness. Hence a man is not "beyond" good and evil who simply attacks the established system of values, who calls good what hitherto was called evil, or who indulges in ruthless action for the purpose of realizing dubious ends. "These are my enemies: they want to throw over what exists and do not want to build up themselves."¹²⁴ "They smite the images and say: there is nothing sublime and venerable—because they themselves cannot create an image and a God."¹²⁵ From the fact that by the most sensitive of consciences evil is experienced as the inevitable ingredient even of the best action, no justification of immoral action can be drawn; on the contrary, from the conception that evil in action is inevitable, it would follow that only the highest creative goodness can justify action, with its inevitable evil, at all. The point has to be stressed heavily because Nietzsche's weakness in drawing empirical images of the actions

123. *Aus der Zeit der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft* §181, in *ibid.*, 12:91. There is no indication that the aphorism is a quotation.

124. *Sprüche und Sentenzen (1882-1884)* §237, in *ibid.*, 12:279.

125. *Sprüche und Sentenzen (1882-1884)* §236, in *ibid.*

of the immoralist has fostered the misinterpretations that have made it possible to see in Nietzsche a philosopher of National Socialism.¹²⁶ As soon as the mystical position is relinquished and the attempt is made to imagine the patterns of action that would fulfill the requirements, the mysticism becomes nonsense. The mystical position can be explained only in terms of the religious movements of the soul. What this soul will do in action will depend on circumstance and on its substance as it appears unpredictably in history. In the case of Nietzsche it became a professor of philology and wrote books.

The immanentist transformation of the Christian problem of grace is presupposed in Nietzsche's genealogy of morals. This highly complex subject matter has never been cleared up fully, as far as I can see. An opening wedge for its understanding is offered by the sentence: "Beyond Good and Evil—at any rate that does *not* mean Beyond Good and Bad."¹²⁷ "Beyond Good and Evil" designates the religious position of the post-Christian, immanentist mystic;

126. Even to the most casual observer it should be clear that National Socialists are not the type that are plagued with Nietzsche's sensitiveness of intellectual conscience, nor has anybody as yet maintained that National Socialists are suffering in overcoming their pity when they torture and kill human beings. These more obvious facts alone make it impossible to link National Socialism with Nietzsche's mysticism, except insofar as both phenomena are symptoms of the crisis of Christianity. The connection, however, is hardly tenable for the systematic reason that National Socialism has developed a mysticism of its own that structurally differs widely from the Christian. This is not the place to engage in an extended documentary proof; a reference will have to suffice to a textbook on constitutional law by Ernst Rudolf Huber (*Verfassung* [Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1937]). In the chapter on the plebiscite, the author explains that the people's will is incarnate in the leader. When the leader orders a plebiscite, he does not surrender his power of decision to the people's vote; the plebiscite has only the function of evoking in the people a supporting will and establishing the agreement with the leader. The "objective will" is incarnate in the leader; the people have only a "subjective" conviction (p. 95). The idea of an "objective will of the people" that becomes "incarnate" in the leader characterizes the National Socialist position as a variant of pantheistic mysticism. It substitutes the "objective will of the people" for the Christian God, but the tension between the individual and this finite God is the same as in the sectarian types mentioned in the text. Other totalitarian movements have developed similar symbols for the expression of their mysticism. Mussolini advances the same theory as E. R. Huber in his *Dottrina del Fascismo*, 1:9. The Russian doctrine avoids the incarnation in the leader. The objective dialectical idea is incarnate in the "toilers"; it is more effectively incarnate in that section of the toilers that is called the "industrial proletariat," and still more effective in the "vanguard" of the proletariat, that is, in the Communist Party. None of these conceptions has anything to do with the Nietzschean superimposition of the transcendental structure over the finite human individual existence.

127. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.17, in *Werke*, 7:338.

"Good and Bad" are the classifications of sentiments and actions emanating from a ruling class that designates its own mode of life as good, that of the people, of the nonruling subject population, as bad. The ruling values, however, are not of one type only; we have two sets of ruling values, according to the two historically appearing ruling human types, the aristocratic and the priestly. Hence the genealogy of morals operates with three pairs of concepts: Good-Evil, Good-Bad, Aristocratic-Priestly. The three dualisms are linked systematically by the theory of the *ressentiment*.

The *ressentiment* is a Pascalian concept. With Pascal it meant the state of a soul that resents the ennui but does not, or cannot, overcome the ennui in the search of God but only in the "search of the search," in the divertissements. The man of spiritual strength will, by the grace of God, be able to descend into the nothingness in which the relation between the creature and the Creator is constituted; the *ressentiment* is the symptom of a fatal weakness that does not permit anything but the escape into the diversions. The term has the same function in Nietzsche's system as in Pascal's, though the meaning has changed in accordance with the immanentist transformation. With Nietzsche, the *ressentiment* again designates a state of weakness that necessitates the escape into fictitious satisfactions; but weakness does not have the same meaning for Nietzsche as it does for Pascal. Strength and weakness are now distinguished as the power to act and the lack of such power. The strong man is the man who in any situation is able to *re-act*; the weak man is the man who can only *re-sent*.¹²⁸ In the immanentist system action does not have the negative Pascalian accent of a diversion; it is, on the contrary, the positive manifestation of existence. Impotence to act, on the other hand, compels the escape into the imaginations of *ressentiment*. Hence, action and *ressentiment* become categories of history, while in the Pascalian system the corresponding categories of the state of grace and of the divertissements determined by *ressentiment* concern the orientation of the soul toward God.

The starting point for Nietzsche's analysis of the several dualisms and of the function of *ressentiment* is the assumption of a pre-Christian social state "before" good and evil. The values of good

128. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.10, in *ibid.*, 7:317.

and bad are created in this primary historical state by the ruling class. The political rank of a ruling aristocracy expresses itself in the designation as good of those qualities that characterize the ruling group. The principal qualities that appear in the positive catalog of the primary ruling classes are: the powerful, the commanding, the wealthy, the propertied man, the man who is truthful (because his position permits him not to have recourse to subterfuges), the courageous, and the warrior who can defend himself. The man who possesses these qualities is "good"; the plebeian or slave who does not possess them is "bad."¹²⁹ The warrior aristocracy, however, is not the only primary ruling type; of equal importance is the caste of the priests. The dualism of good and bad reflecting the ruling position of a priestly caste is on principle the same as that of aristocratic. There are only differences of content, insofar as the dualism of clean-unclean prevails and insofar as not the warrior qualities but the elements of a priestly-ascetic discipline are classified as "good."¹³⁰

The presence of a priestly ruling type side by side with the aristocratic is a source of tensions. The priestly is considered by Nietzsche the more "interesting" type; in him the human soul has acquired "depth" and at the same time has become "evil"; and depth and evil are "the two fundamental characteristics by which hitherto man is superior to all other animals."¹³¹ This human and civilizational superiority is offset, however, by the "unhealthiness" of an inactive, brooding mode of life that is given to emotional explosions and physiological difficulties. The more "interesting" is also the more "endangered" type. From the coexistence of these two types conflicts with disastrous consequences may result when jealousies arise between them. The civilizationally superior type is the inferior in sheer physical power. Impotence, however, is productive of hatred, and in the case of priests of a particularly venomous and spiritual hatred. "The really good haters in the history of the world have always been priests, and they were also the most spiritual (*geistreichsten*) haters—against the spirit of priestly revenge all other spirit is practically negligible. Human history would be too flat a thing without the spirit that the weak have injected into

129. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.5, in *ibid.*, 7:307–9.

130. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.6, in *ibid.*, 7:309 ff.

131. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.6, in *ibid.*, 7:311.

it."¹³² This priestly *ressentiment* may resort to "the most spiritual revenge" of reversing the scale of values and declaring as "evil" the qualities that in the aristocratic scale are considered "good," and as "good" the qualities that to the aristocrat appear as "bad."¹³³ On principle this "reversal of values" can occur whenever tensions between the two ruling types arise, but in Western history one specific reversal has achieved decisive importance, the reversal by "the priestly nation" of the Jews, the reversal that has entered the mainstream of Western history through its resorption in Christianity. "Thanks to them (the Jews), life on earth has gained a new and dangerous fascination for two millennia." They have affixed the negative accents to "powerful," "godless," "violent," and "sensual"; and they have used the term *world* for the first time in an opprobrious sense.¹³⁴ This reversal of values through the Israelitic prophets is called by Nietzsche "the beginning of the slave revolt in morals."¹³⁵

At this point it is of the first importance to keep Nietzsche's argument clearly in sight in order not to be misled by his vocabulary. The "slave revolt in morals" is not a revolt originating in a political lower class; it is a revenge born out of the *ressentiment* of the priestly master type against the aristocratic master type. The reversal has its spiritual fascination precisely because it emanates from the civilizationally superior type; and while it can be taken up and used to his advantage by anybody in a depressed position, be he ever so unspiritual, it never loses the imprint of the masterful spirits who originated it. The man of the slave morality may be hated by Nietzsche, but he is not a contemptible opponent; in the person of Pascal he is highly respected, and perhaps even loved as a fraternal soul. "Slave morality" is the product of a priestly attitude, a perversion due to *ressentiment*; but the priestly attitude, while "endangered," is nevertheless in itself the highest and most spiritualized manifestation of the will to power. If we overlook this point, Nietzsche's concern about a new *vita contemplativa* beyond good and evil, that is, about a new, post-Christian "priestly" attitude, becomes unintelligible. If there were nothing to slave morality but

132. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.7, in *ibid.*, 7:312.

133. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.7, in *ibid.*, 7:313.

134. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §195, in *ibid.*, 7:126 f.

135. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §195, in *ibid.*, 7:127; *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.7, I.10, in *ibid.*, 7:313, 317.

a revolt of the lower class against the upper class, which Nietzsche wishes to reverse by reestablishing the "aristocratic" values, his struggle with the problem of grace would be pointless and his critics would be right who can find nothing in Nietzsche but a reversion to barbarian ideals that our civilization has outgrown. But Nietzsche does not yearn romantically for an age of lusty migration aristocracies; he is very seriously concerned about the reestablishment of an aristocratic good-bad scale of values under the guidance of a new priestly type—"we hermits"—without *ressentiment*.

Of this double program, the "beyond good and evil" part could be executed considerably better than the "good and bad" part. The reason is obvious. The position beyond good and evil could be realized by Nietzsche with the resources of his own personality, as far as a position of this type can be realized consistently at all. (In the next section of this study we shall have to deal with the failure of this realization.)¹³⁶ The "aristocratic" position of a new good and bad cannot be realized by an individual in solitude; its realization would require the political revolution of a group. In the absence of any aristocratic ruling group in his, and our, age that he could have recognized as a model, Nietzsche indulged in drawing his examples of the aristocratic type from the past. The most suitable were the Hellenic aristocracies of the Homeric age and the Teutonic aristocracies of the migration period. Here is the origin of his praise of the "blond beast" that is to be found at the core of such aristocracies.¹³⁷ "Here is a point we do not wish to deny in the least: whoever made the acquaintance of the 'good' ones as enemies only, got acquainted with them only as 'evil enemies.' The same men who were bound so rigorously among themselves through convention, respect, custom, gratitude, and even more through mutual vigilance and through the jealousy *inter pares*, these men who were in their conduct toward each other so inventive in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship—they were toward the outside, where the foreign begins, not much better than beasts of prey let loose."¹³⁸ There is nothing particularly lovable about such beasts. The praise accorded to them is only relative; with all their savage, barbarian traits they were at

136. See *Crisis and the Apocalypse of Man*, ed. David Walsh.

137. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.11, in *ibid.*, 7:322.

138. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.11, in *ibid.*, 7:321.

least respectable compared with the men of our own age. "One may be perfectly justified in not getting rid of the fear of the blond beast at the core of the noble races and in being on one's guard: but who would not a hundred times prefer to fear, if at the same time he can admire, than not to fear but in return not to be able to get rid of the loathsome spectacle of the distorted, the dwarfed, the stunted, the envenomed."¹³⁹ "The sight of man nowadays makes us tired—what is Nihilism if it is not *that?*—We are tired of *man*. . . ."¹⁴⁰ These passages again should warn against mistaking the language of wrath for the well-considered argument behind it. Nietzsche is not less afraid of the blond beast than anybody who criticizes him for praising it. But given the choice between the barbarism of a conquering aristocracy and the much less frightful modern man, Nietzsche is willing to pay the price.

But the choice is not given. We are not in danger of being overrun by Homeric or Teutonic aristocracies, however beastly at the core. The immediate prospect is much worse. The age of nihilism, the age that has lost faith in man, is "the age of tremendous wars," of revolutions and outbursts that do *not* establish new aristocracies and hence are not productive of a new stable order.¹⁴¹ The duration of this period Nietzsche estimates at two centuries.¹⁴² The effort to reach the position Beyond Good and Evil has its historical sense only as the development of a new religiousness, of a new spiritual attitude in preparation for the time when a new political order of Western mankind will have become established with a new ruling class, of which at present nothing is visible. For this day in a distant future the intellectual and spiritual preparations have to begin now through the creation of a new image of man.

Nietzsche's genealogy of morals is a philosophy of history. A first stage of history is marked by the emergence of aristocracies of the Homeric type and of priesthoods representing the higher civilizational element because the will to power has reached in them a higher degree of spiritualization. The second stage is marked by the priestly-aristocratic tension that under the pressure of priestly *ressentiment* results in the creation of moral values reversing the

139. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.11, in *ibid.*, 7:324.

140. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* I.12, in *ibid.*, 7:326.

141. *Wille zur Macht* §130, in *ibid.*, 15:235 f.

142. *Wille zur Macht, Vorrede* §2, in *ibid.*, 15:137.

aristocratic order of values. A third stage is marked by the age of nihilism and the beginning of a new transvaluation. This new transvaluation, however, is not a return to the pre-Christian level of good and bad but a reestablishment of the aristocratic values on the basis of a new post-Christian religiousness *Beyond Good and Evil*. It is hardly necessary to stress the close relationship of this three-stage history to other three-stage systems of the nineteenth century, like the Hegelian or the Marxian.

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