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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN IDEA OF THE FUTURE: PROBLEMS AND DILEMMAS OF THE FULL FUTURE PARADIGM

by
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Political Science)
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PREFACE

It well may be, as has often been noted, that disagreements between scholars are so acrimonious because the stakes often are so small. Yet, if one holds to the view that ideas do have consequences, one must conclude that on at least some occasions issues of substance may be detected in otherwise sterile academic arguments. Obscured in the polemic which has too often characterized the "behaviorist" versus "traditionalist" debate in the social sciences and humanities may be found such an issue. I refer to the widespread notion among some political scientists that "predictive models" of political analysis, more or less reliable, are either immanent and ensured by the progressively cumulative impact of political knowledge, or at least theoretically possible and worthy of attempt because even an approximation will be a qualitative advancement for political science qua science. To quote from one of the more authoritative sources on the problem, the requirements of an analytic model of political behavior are threefold--description, explanation, and prediction:

> We may legitimately demand that any analytic model offer the promise of reliable prediction. In mentioning this requirement . . . there is no implication that this is the most demanding or difficult of the

> three. Despite the popular belief to the contrary, prediction demands less of one's model than does explanation or even description.*

The multitude of implications suggested by this statement boggles the imagination. It is not, however, my intention to explore these implications directly, with specific reference to this particular declaration in the behaviorist tradition. It is mentioned by way of introduction to how this study came to be written.

When I first began the serious study of political science as an academic discipline, the above-quoted article was one of the first statements of its kind I encountered. It struck me at the time as a peculiar sort of assertion for a scholar to make. It was, I took for granted then, a rather naively deterministic view of reality, but one that could be challenged, refuted, and disposed of easily, so that the real business of political science could begin in earnest. I soon discovered, however, that none of these steps could easily be undertaken, because the assumptions upon which the statement rested were so widely held that any full-scale attack upon it seemed doomed to failure from the outset. Critiques of any portion of the assumptions were piecemeal at best and did not appear to arrive at the real heart of the problem. In my innocence, I proceeded

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*J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," in James N. Rosenau (ed.), International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 22.

to write several short papers in which I attempted to get at what I believed to be the essence of the problem. The results were meager at best. No one to whom I specifically addressed my inquiries seemed to understand what I was trying to say, nor could anyone see the relevance of my observations to the problem itself. In retrospect, I would have to concede a partial agreement with these preliminary evaluations, albeit for reasons other than those given at the time. It now seems to me that the roots of the inability to communicate a fundamental criticism of the whole idea of predictive models in political science goes far deeper than I had originally imagined. In conjunction with this, the debates between the so-called behaviorists and traditionalists now seems quite different upon further reflection. The debate is more of a polemic because the most basic aspects of disagreement either have been lost, obscured, or forgotten (if, indeed, they were ever remembered) by the very parties to the dispute.

For several years after my first encounter with the idea of predictive models in the above statement, I puzzled over its implications as well as my own inability to make myself understood by the principal parties to whom I had directed my criticisms. The specifics of the statement aside, what did the general thrust of its argument tell me about the aims, goals, and beliefs of modern intellectuals?

What sorts of deeply obscured assumptions, long since forgotten, perhaps, lay at the root of this view? The futuristic component of "prediction" as a goal of the scientific study of politics seemed to me most conspicuous. Why, I thought to myself, should so many contemporary scholars believe that the future is predictable? Furthermore, why did prediction appear to be such a simple requirement for analytic models, when personal experience told me exactly the opposite? There was, for myself, an obvious incongruity between my personal experience and the avowed goals of my chosen profession--political science.

It now seems apparent to me that at issue in this particular debate is a most fundamental question involving the modern world view of the future in general. The statement quoted above is not isolated in academia; it is merely one small component of a much broader view of the future, which has characterized much of Western thought throughout what we call "the modern world." As such, when I set out to explore this problem, I was led so far afield from the specifics of the above quotation that the study that follows may appear unrelated to it at times. But for myself, this particular statement has been in the back of my mind throughout. My objective has been to make explicit some of the assumptions that underlie the notion of predictive models. It seems important to note in this connection that people

believed that they had achieved predictive models of political behavior long before the behaviorist-traditionalist dialogue first appeared in American universities. It is at least two centuries old as a concept. It might, therefore, be informative to see how it evolved as an idea and the consequences it has had in other places and at other times.

At this time, I should like to extend a particular expression of gratitude to Professors Frank Grace, Stephen Tonsor, Joseph Kallenbach, and James Eisenstein for having carefully read the manuscript version of this study. Their comments were instructive and helpful. A particular debt is owed to Professor Frank Grace, who directed this dissertation, for his kind and considerate attitude. With regard to the many fruitful discussions I have had with Professor Stephen Tonsor, I can only say that without his generous and patient assistance, the final content of this paper would be far less than whatever it is. And, finally, I must add a special thanks to Kathleen Malone Prantner, without whose assistance this paper could never have been completed: she typed it.

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CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF THE FUTURE

The Idea of a "Full Future" and an "Empty Future"

The ways in which the world and the events in it are viewed can be as varied as the persons who are the observers. Our perceptions of the reality of things are shaped by a myriad of experiences that stagger the imagination in their complexity. As a result, the natural tendency is to simplify and reduce to the most common denominator symbolic representations of what we believe to be reality. Our language itself as well as our choice of words and their usage form an integral part of the symbolism of our view of the world. In modern parlance, we tend to construct "models" of reality in order to understand better what it is that we imagine to be the essence of reality.

The functional nature of these models and their role in our cognitive process has been the subject of a major essay-study by Thomas Kuhn, which has attracted considerable attention recently. The problems that he has brought into the open regarding the nature of scientific inquiry as it has come to be understood in the West over the past four to five centuries offers the prospect of a significant reappraisal of the entire scientific tradition. This is true not only

of the so-called "hard" sciences such as biology and physics, to which he specifically addresses himself, but of the social sciences and the humanities as well.[1]

The purpose of this inquiry is to take a fresh look at one particular aspect of the Western political tradition, our changing conceptualization of the future and man's place in it, from within the basic framework of analysis provided by Kuhn's study--what he has termed the "paradigmatic" structure of science as a problem-solving enterprise.

Between the time of the Greek polis and the Reformation of the sixteenth century, a profound change occurred in the way in which men placed their idea of the future within a broader world view. The change was between what may be called an "empty future" and a "full future," that is, an unknown future in contrast to a known future. The former is what may be identified as a classical world view, whereas the latter is within the mold of the modern mind. Both may also be said to provide certain paradigmatic assumptions regarding the world, man's place in it, Nature, and certain theoretical limits and absences of limits in human knowledge. An understanding of these two traditions of viewing the future, either as knowable or unknowable, full or empty, is important

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[1] I am indebted for my perspective on this point to two studies: Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); and Sheldon Wolin, "Paradigms in Political Thought," in Preston King and B. C. Parekh (eds.), Politics and Experience: Essays Presented to Professor Michael Oakeshott on the Occasion of His Retirement (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 125-152.

because it is a fatal illusion of any age to accept the model of reality that it has drawn itself, its own theoretical presuppositions, as being in fact the concrete nature of "objective" reality, whatever that might be, rather than a representation of reality. The usefulness of paradigmatic constructions, in whatever sphere of inquiry, is that they simplify the process of description and understanding that would otherwise be unimaginably complex and incomprehensible. But it is a prerequisite of any truthful world view, and essential to the structure of the paradigm itself, that it rest on theoretically valid precepts regarding the nature of reality which does not do violence to our common-sense experiences with the very processes it seeks to explain. It is my contention here that this violence to our common-sense experiences is precisely the problem involved in the transition from an "empty" to a "full" future perspective in the modern era. It is the modern paradigm which postulates the notion of a known or knowable future as "given" that goes to the root of much contemporary political theory and the consequences of that givenness.

In particular, the points to be explored here are the political consequences of a full future paradigm in political thought. In order to understand better the political consequences of this aspect of modern thought, it is important to understand how it was that men came to believe that the future was indeed knowable in any sense and the theoretical foundations

upon which this faith rested. This must necessarily contrast the idea of a full with an empty future world view. What is true of all representations of reality, or events, is no less true of this particular study as a representation of two traditions; it is a partial and simplified picture for the purpose of a clearer focus on the problem at hand--the idea of the future in the modern world view.

In its most radical form, the modern idea of a potentially known or knowable future carries with it the implication of revolutionary political behavior. This is true not only in the philosophical and intellectual sense discussed in this study, but in the practical sense as well. From the French Revolution of the eighteenth century through the Russian Revolution of the twentieth century, the political ideologies and movements associated with them would be virtually inconceivable without their strong futuristic component: the idea that the future either is known in advance or can be molded to fit a preconceived model, which is merely a variation of the former notion.

Modern revolutionary ideologies all seem to share the common attitude toward the future that whatever it may be, it can certainly be treated as an object of knowledge. Marxism may be the most sophisticated of these in its symbolic treatment of a full future paradigm, but many of the assumptions upon which it is built are very much an integral part of the idea of the future in modern thought which often appears

to have little in common with Marxism. In its specifics it has been the most radical of modern revolutionary calls to action, but its vision of a utopian future is by no means unique. Thus, while exploring through the particular case studies of this paper, the broadest implications must be accorded the symbolism, in the context of modern thought, of Marxist authors, or authors who at a point in their lives identified Marxist ideology with their own aspirations. The three case studies--Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and André Gide--deal with contemporary writers of both influence and recognized intellectual standing. As such, they serve to highlight many of the components of the modern world view of the future, Marxist and non-Marxist alike.

The questions involved in any exploration of the idea of the future, full or empty, do not include whether or not men will think about the future, but rather "how" they visualize it. The thrust of this study will be that the idea of the full future paradigm is not only the dominant one in the modern era, but that it is also often filled with peculiarly utopian elements in which what had previously been regarded as inherent limitations of the human condition will be overcome. My thesis proposes that inherent in the idea of the full future paradigm, particularly as it is explicitly expressed in Marxism, is the core idea of revolutionary politics in the modern world. This would seem to be true of those modern revolutionary ideologues from Robespierre to Lenin

and beyond. Communism, in all of its variety, may from this perspective be viewed as a "working-out," as it were, of the built-in paradigmatic assumptions that are present from the beginning in any full future model. I mean "working-out" here in the same sense as that in which Thomas Kuhn has described the normal development of science as the product of "paradigm workers," whose chief task consists of solving the puzzles and comparatively minor problems suggested by the paradigm itself.[2] The observable fact that some of the paradigm workers of the full future model have arrived at what appear to be contrary conclusions does not in itself suggest that the modern revolutionary ideologies are not implicit in the paradigm. Rather, it may simply suggest that those persons who stop somewhere short of Marx have simply not explored all of the ramifications of their basic assumptions. I propose to demonstrate that the logic of the paradigm of revolution in Marx is intrinsically bound up in the larger tradition of which he is but a part, albeit perhaps the most important single part. What we are dealing with,

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[2] Kuhn, pp. 10-22. The author has made a major point of the observation that "normal scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies." Ibid., p. 24. The same points had been made earlier by E. A. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1932), especially Chapter I; and Richard McKeon, "The Empiricist and Experimentalist Temper in the Middle Ages: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Medieval Science," in Essays in Honor of John Dewey (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929), p. 217.

if it is a truthful analysis, goes to the heart of modern political thought.

The notion of the function and utility of paradigms in the political sphere needs further elaboration at this point if we are to understand how the full future paradigm came about and the purpose it serves. As Kuhn has defined it, a "paradigm is the particular theory which characterizes a particular community"--in this case, those seminal minds in the Western tradition who are responsible for the articulation and development of the various theories which bind them together in a common world view. The theory, the paradigm in Kuhn's terminology, then serves as a guide for this community in the choice of the problems it seeks to solve; and by way of implication, it offers a solution. Scientific progress, from this point of view, consists in fulfilling the promise of the paradigm. According to Kuhn, the paradigm is worked out by a community of scientists in three principal ways. First, the scientists seek to establish in a rigorous fashion the class of facts subsumed under the paradigm. Second, they test the predictions of the paradigm with the facts previously disclosed by investigation, attempting in effect to match the theory with the facts in order to discover the degree of correspondence. A strong futuristic element can easily be observed in this stage. Finally, they seek to articulate the theory by undertaking factual investigations designed to clarify problems that already are suggested

by the paradigm.[3] For the scientist, the value of his theory is that it enables him to give reasonable certainty to a rational "bet on the future." The theory derives much of its usefulness from the assumption that knowledge gained in the past will also hold true for the future--that, in fact, it may be identical with the future state of existence. From the point of view of a physicist, for example, an "empty future" theory not only contradicts his habits of mind, it also seems to be the very negation of science qua science.

But the strict adaptation to political theory of the physical scientist's methodology may produce societal consequences that are not comparable with the results of laboratory experiments. The scientist ordinarily conducts controlled experiments, and if these attempts at problem-solving do not fit his theory at an acceptable level of regularity, he either may abandon them as worthless or search for another paradigm under which he can interpret his work in a meaningful way. For those theorists who make political behavior their "facts," however, the response to a lack of congruity between theory and fact may be altogether different. It may lead to an intensified demand for control of the "facts"--in this case the political arena--in order to make the theory work, or the reaction may be one of denying certain observations

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[3] Ibid., pp. 24-30. In this connection, to view such revolutionary literature as, for example, Karl Marx's Das Kapital as the product of a "paradigm worker" may help to place it in the perspective of a full future paradigm as it is discussed here.

of phenomena in order to retain the validity of the theory. Neither of these reactions would be out of line with Kuhn's thesis in that he makes it abundantly clear that facts do not speak for themselves but are interpreted by the basic paradigm; "facts" to a very great extent are what the paradigm says are facts, and other events or phenomena comprise a sort of "non-fact" or simply an event.[4]

The inability to predict the future reliably from an empty future perspective may be taken as a common-sense argument against the contention that the future is knowable. But if the idea that the future is knowable, even in part, is taken for granted at the outset, the argument might be interpreted instead to mean that the tools for prediction need to be more sharply honed. In short, assumptions about the nature of political reality not only shape the approach to political problems and imply their solutions, but these assumptions are themselves a part of political reality, the reliability or unreliability of the paradigm itself notwithstanding.

The problem involved is not whether political theory will take cognizance of the future as a part of the paradigmatic structure of social thought, but "how" that future is imagined. For we can no more avoid thinking about the future per se than we can avoid thinking about the past and the

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[4] Ibid., pp. 77-90.

present. An idea of the future, "full" or "empty," with all that these terms imply, is an integral component of the general process of thinking about society and man's place in it. In another sense, our idea of the future is but a part of the way in which we conceive the nature of the human condition, and indeed of Nature itself. If the future of the human condition is perceived as an extension of the same condition that has prevailed in the past and present, our actions are likely to be quite different than if we imagine the human condition of the future to be radically altered. For the most part, the former represents what may be termed a "classical" world view, whereas the latter is far more representative of the modern world view. Changes in our conception of what the future holds in store is a probable indicator of changes in other areas of political behavior as well. Involved, of course, at its root is our role in the very process of Creation itself. The problem, then, is not a trivial one, nor is it one without momentous consequences.

The "Empty Future" Idea

When Aristotle pointed out that a difference in kind exists between things actual and things potential, he was affirming what was later to develop into one of the most fundamental of objections to the full future paradigm--that the truth of a statement is dependent upon its correspondence to the object described. The closer this congruence, the

closer the description of reality to the truth of the reality itself.[5]

Aristotle had begun his discussion of the idea of the future with the assumption that it did not yet exist and therefore that statements about the future, unlike statements about the past and present, were neither true nor false. He had noted further that no statement which purports to affirm or deny an event in the future, or which requires a future contingency to prove or disprove, can in itself be regarded as either true or false because the future is indeterminate with regard to the existence or nonexistence of such things. He wrote:

> In the case of that which is or which has taken place, propositions, whether positive or negative,

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[5]Aristotle described it thus: "It is not because we think truly that you are pale, that you are pale, but because you are pale we who say this have the truth." Metaphysics, 1051b5, in W. D. Ross (ed.), The Works of Aristotle: Translated into English Under the Editorship of W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928). Hereafter cited as Aristotle, Works. And further:

> "Demonstrative knowledge must rest on necessary basic truths; for the object of scientific knowledge (that which is known by demonstration) cannot be other than it is. Now attributes attaching essentially to their subjects attach necessarily to them: for essential attributes are either elements in the essential nature of their subjects, or contain their subjects as elements in their own essential nature. . . . It follows from this that premises of the demonstrative syllogism must be connections essential in the sense explained: for all attributes must inhere essentially or else be accidental, and their accidental attributes are not necessary to their subjects." Analytica Posteriora, 74b5

In short, the future has no essential attributes; the accidents of correspondence to prior statements cannot be construed

> must be true or false. . . . When the subject, however, is individual, and that which is predicated relates to the future, the case is altered . . . to say that neither the affirmation nor the denial is true, maintaining, let us say, that an event neither will take place nor will not take place, is to take a position impossible to defend. In the first place, though facts should prove the one proposition false, the opposite would still be untrue.[6]

To illustrate this point, Aristotle invoked the example of the future sea battle. If one person should say that a sea battle will take place tomorrow and another should say that a sea battle will not occur, the passage of time will reveal which statement has conformed to the fact of occurrence or nonoccurrence of such a battle. But in either case, the original statements cannot be said to have been based on knowledge, and hence, within the context of Aristotelian logic, neither can be said to have been true or false. Only that which exists or has existed can be said to have an objective nature and therefore to be subject to a true/false categorization. "In the case of that which exists potentially but not actually," he concluded, "the rule which applies to that which exists actually does not hold good."[7]

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as essential elements of the future even though they may verify the truth or falsity of a futuristic statement.

[6]Aristotle, De Interpretationes, 18a28-18b20, in Works.

[7]Ibid., 19b2; see also Donald Williams, "The Sea Fight Tomorrow," in Paul Henle (ed.), Structure, Method, and Meaning: Essays in Honor of Henry M. Sheffer (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951), pp. 280-306; Ronald J. Butler, "Aristotle's Sea Fight and Three-Valued Logic," The Philosophical Review,

In short, what Aristotle wrote about the nature of the future applies to all knowledge in general--that things do not acquire existence by arbitrary declaration and statements affirming the existence of nonexistent things. On a practical level, "potential" things must be kept analytically separate from "actual" things. To confuse the potential with the actual or to blur the distinction between them will result in error. The future to Aristotle could not be treated as an object of knowledge, and factual statements regarding its content could not be made to have meaning.

The Aristotelian concept of an unknowable future was altered somewhat by the rise of Christianity with its faith in a future made specific in the inevitability of a second coming of Christ. This change marked an intellectual transformation of profound importance, which was to foster long-range as well as immediate consequences. The idea of a second coming of Christ at some point in the future gave that future a specific, eschatological content within time, that is, within history. The logic of the Aristotelian sea fight remained compatible with Christian theology, but only insofar as it applied to events that were strictly human in origin.

With regard to the much greater question of a final, ultimate meaning to history, an answer could now be given

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LXIV, No. 2 (April, 1955), 264-274; Rogers Albritton, "Present Truth and Future Contingency," The Philosophical Review, LXVI, No. 1 (January, 1957), 1-28.

within the context of the Christian religion that would have been wholly alien to the classical world view. As Reinhold Niebuhr described the impact of this idea of the future:

> The faith of early Christianity was apocalyptic. It waited for the second coming of Christ. It was in other words a culmination of the whole prophetic movement which regarded human history as meaningful but not as self-fulfilling or self-sufficient. The victory of good over evil was not guaranteed by anything in human nature or human history.[8]

The guarantee of this triumph lay in the revealed Word of God, believed to transcend the boundaries of human existence within time. The Christian future thus emerged as a curious blend of individual free will, which implied an undetermined future, with an ultimate determinism fixed not by man but by God. The two concepts were kept separate through the radical distinction between what Saint Augustine was to express symbolically as Civitas Dei and Civitas Terrena.

It was Saint Augustine who first articulated and made explicit in a systematic fashion this philosophy of history for Christianity. Specifically, he placed the center, source, and fulfillment of history beyond history, in the City of God. His break with the classical theories of cyclic historical patterns and eternal recurrence has been thoroughly documented and needs no further discussion

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[8]Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1938), p. 119.

here.[9] It is sufficient to point out that the notion of an eschatology, or an end to history, could scarcely be imagined in a cyclic theory of history: that it would require instead a linear idea of history with a fulfillment implicit for some time in the future. It does need to be observed, however, that fulfillment in the Christian thought of Augustine--in the City of God--was not an ideal that could become historical reality.[10]

The eschatological content of Christianity had little meaning for Augustine as an event in time. Whatever possibly might happen between now and the end, as both *finis* and *telos*, became irrelevant when he compared it with the ever-present alternatives of accepting or rejecting Christ. The full title, *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos*, serves to illustrate that Augustine's work was very much a defense of existing Church doctrine against the apocalyptic,

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[9] On Saint Augustine's theory of history, see particularly Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 160-173; Theodore E. Mommsen, "Saint Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XII, No. 3 (June, 1951), 346-374; William M. Green, "Augustine on the Teaching of History," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology*, XII, No. 18 (1944), 315-332; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 119-146.

[10] Löwith, p. 166; Löwith goes on to say, "Augustine's *City of God* is the pattern of every conceivable view of history that can rightly be called 'Christian'. It is not a philosophy of history but a dogmatic-historical interpretation of Christianity." *Ibid.*, p. 166.

messianic, chialistic, end-of-the-world expectations within time and history that characterized much of the theological debate of his own time, even as it has characterized the debate over history in our own era.[11] The attainment of perfection in the ideal form of the City of God was not to be construed as a matter of earthly, historical experience.[12]

Augustine's idea of a universal history was a purposeful process from beginning to end but without any intermediate millenium. History as a record of profane existence simply is that time between man's fall from grace and his eventual salvation. But salvation is herein understood to be a gift of God and not something man can fashion for himself on earth: it lies beyond history. Sin and salvation both are understood, furthermore, as purely personal concerns unrelated to group, class, or societal experience. Progress, then, is an individual spiritual pilgrimage toward the City of God that ends with the death of the individual himself and is never linked with the movement of class or nation or history as entities in themselves. Salvation lies in the responsible acceptance of faith in a transcendent truth

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[11] Ibid., pp. 166-169; the Gnostic movements of this period are admirably treated in Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity (2d ed.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

[12] For an excellent discussion of "historical experience" as Augustine most probably understood the concept, see R. A. Markus, Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 22-24.

beyond historical experience and not in one's role or position in the objective, imposed experience of time and history.

The Civitas Dei and the Civitas Terrena symbolized the basic dualism of the human condition which Augustine saw as the essence of man's existence after the Fall. Although the difference between the two was absolute, it was not unbridgeable. Christ symbolized the bridge of faith which united the two. The City of Man was a reflection of the higher City of God which participated in the divine order of the universe by having a rational, purposeful role in the over-all scheme of things. In the thought of the contemporary Gnostic sects, this dualism, which Augustine found rational, was of a wholly different sort; and its contrast with Christian thought is instructive. Hans Jonas has described the basic Gnostic experience in this regard as "an absolute rift between man and that in which he finds himself lodged, the world. . . . It is a duality not of complementary but of contrary terms."[13] In other words, whereas Augustine found rationality in the Civitas Dei, the Gnostics expressed their attitude as one of hostility toward the given order of things and aimed at the destruction of civil society which they regarded as a prison imposed upon them by an evil god. For Gnostics, the dualism of existence was an obstacle to be overcome rather than a "given" to be accepted.

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[13]Jonas, p. 251.

In Christian thought, as typified by Augustine, man's alienation was from God and was a permanent part of existence on earth. The end of the dualism was the union of Christians with Christ in the Civitas Dei beyond history. In Gnostic symbolism, however, this eschaton was made immanent in the future and in a paradox of their speculations, the unknowable, that is, the future, became known. They "knew" that the end of earthly dualism was immanent.[14]

History, as Augustine conceived the term, meant movement in time. Without creation, and movement in and as part of creation, there could be no time and hence no idea of history per se. Continual change was inseparable from the very concept of time itself.[15] But time was an ambiguous concept, difficult to come to grips with. "For what is time?" Augustine asked:

> Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who can even comprehend it in thought or put the answer into words? Yet is it not true that in conversation we refer to nothing more familiarly or knowingly than time? . . . What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know. Yet I say with confidence that I know that if nothing passed away, there would be no past time; and if nothing were still coming, there would be no future time; and if there were nothing

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[14] Ibid., p. 285.

[15] Saint Augustine, The City of God, Book XI, Ch. VI (The Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), III, pp. 447-449. For an examination of differences between Greek and Christian views of time, see Robert E. Cushman, "Greek and Christian Views of Time," The Journal of Religion, XXXIII, No. 4 (October, 1953), 254-265.

at all, there would be no present time.[16]

Time from this perspective is not only the product of God's creation, but the mechanism, or perhaps more properly the prism, through which man observes creation.

Augustine interpreted time in its relationship to the soul, or the nous in Aristotelian terminology. His conception of the future differed slightly, but significantly, from that of Aristotle, in part through the Christian addition of an eschatology, an end of time, but also in his more conscious probing of the riddle of future time. Augustine's experience with time led him to observe:

> It is not properly said that there are three times; a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them.[17]

He then differentiated the various meanings of time so conceived:

> The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation.[18]

Because men in fact always live in what Henri Bergson later called the "eternal present," an observable discrepancy arises between our subjective experience with

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[16]Saint Augustine, Confessions, Ch. XIV, ed. trans. Albert C. Outler (The Library of Christian Classics; London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), VII, p. 254 (hereafter, refer to this edition.

[17]Ibid., Ch. XX, p. 259.

[18]Ibid., Ch. XX, p. 259.

time and our attempts to measure it objectively. Scientific definitions of time--an hour, a day, a month, and so on--will always contradict our subjective experience, and Augustine recognized this full well. Regarding the approach of science to the problem, he said, "We could not measure things that do not exist." We can experience only the present directly, "and things past and future do not exist."[19]

The dualism between subjective experience and what Augustine regarded as objective reality quickly came to an impasse after a few deceptively simple questions. Reason alone could not solve the problem of time and history, so Augustine took refuge in the notion of communes notitias, the universal principle of "common sense."[20] Experience tells us that reason alone cannot solve every problem; by its nature reason is limited in its powers of comprehension. Augustine postulated faith as the guide and "the truths of faith" as answers to questions unanswerable within the limits of reason. Christianity did not necessarily

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[19] Ibid., Ch. XXI, pp. 259-260. In his writings, Augustine considered the concept of "predestination" as a theological problem which, had he developed it further, could have affected his idea of the future. Suffice to point out here, however, that predestination for Augustine had far less significance than Calvin was later to attach to it.

[20] Ibid., Ch. XXIII, p. 261. Augustine was clearly bothered by time so much that he wrote, "My soul burns ardently to understand this most intricate enigma. . . . I thirst to know the power and the nature of time." Ibid., Ch. XXII, XXIII, pp. 260-261.

supply any "reasonable" answers, but it did provide a means of avoiding error.

In contrasting the conceptions of Aristotle and Augustine regarding the future, the latter can be considered to be more a modification of the former, albeit a significant one, than a radical break with it. Taken together, they may be said to constitute a "classical" conception of future time: that the future does not exist as an entity knowable in any objective sense. For want of a better name, this classical conception might also properly be termed the "empty future" paradigm--but empty in the sense that its specific content is unknown and unknowable, not empty in the sense of a spiritually void nothingness. For Aristotle and Augustine both formulated their notions of time on the premise of a teleological development in the nature of man over a period of time toward a moral good. Particularly as articulated by Augustine, there was progress in history but no progress of history. The term "progress" was understood as progress of the individual, symbolized by the earthly struggle between the Civitas Dei and the Civitas Terrena as it is enacted in the history of that individual.[21] The terms "history" and "society" were recognized as concepts of transcendence, without material existence.

To have attributed to either term the properties of progress would have been interpreted as attributing to

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[21]Löwith, pp. 166-173; Mommsen, p. 351.

it the properties of a living thing and the reification of an idea--an error of misplaced concreteness. Future-tense statements could not be understood as either true or false, because the existence of the relevant future would have been required to make them true or false. To see the future as history was not only a contradiction in terms; it implied a progress *of* history, which would have violated the "classicists'" perceived experiences with time and history.

The "Full Future" Idea

The "empty future" tradition, which dominated Western thought for almost a thousand years after Augustine, was broken by the religious speculations of Joachim of Fiore, a twelfth century Cistercian monk. Joachim replaced the concept of time in Augustine with what may be called a "full future" theory, characterized by the expectation of an immanent, apocalyptic end, or eschaton, in history.[22] The use of the term "full future" is appropriate because Joachim's writings postulated a specific, knowable future subject to the true/false criterion of *episteme* reserved

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[22]Studies on the impact of Joachim and his influence have become increasingly common in that contemporary scholarship engaged in seeking the origins of modern thought. Perhaps the best brief essay is to be found in Löwith, pp. 145-159; see also Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 110-132; and Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), *passim*.

by Aristotle and Augustine for existent things. The symbolism of Joachim explained history in terms of a series of three progressive stages ending in the third and final stage in which the governing of the world was to pass over into the control of spiritually motivated monks. His own age, the second stage, was seen not only as a transition to the final, highest level of existence, but also as an era drawing rapidly and definitely to a close.[23]

Although Joachim spoke in Christian terminology, many (though certainly not all) recognized his message itself as something new and alien to orthodox theology.[24] A

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[23]On the trinitarian symbolism of Joachim, George Boas has commented:

> "One of the more curious features of the Joachimite outline of history is the progressively more youthful nature of the leaders of civilization. The leaders of the first age were old men, of the second youths, of the third children. Here we have an echoe of that type of pious anti-intellectualism according to which the very young are wiser than the old for the very reason that they have no experience of this world."

In George Boas, "Joachim of Florus," in his Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), pp. 212-213. The idea of childish innocence as the hallmark of the third and final stage of earthly existence has reappeared consistently in the post-Joachimist historical symbolism of progress toward perfection. Perfection within this tradition has often been represented as one of the least developed, childlike features of men in opposition to the Aristotelian notion of the "mature man" as the ideal type.

[24]Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Part II, Question 106, Article 4, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1915 [hereafter referred to as Aquinas, Summa Theologica]). Aquinas objected to Joachim's concept of the progress of

contemporary scholar has interpreted the importance of the message with the stark assertion: "In his trinitarian eschatology, Joachim created the aggregate of symbols which govern the self-interpretation of modern political society to this day."[25] By this he means the conception of history as a progressive sequence of three stages, in which the third stage represents an end of history beyond which there is no further progress. In addition is the symbol of the leader or prophet of the new age who necessarily must know the course of history past, present, and future, as an intelligible whole. Finally, there is the symbolism of the brotherhood of autonomous persons, with its strong overtones of anarchic social existence in which the normal institutions of government are no longer necessary and may, in fact, form an impediment to a spiritually perfect community.

For our purposes here, the importance of Joachim's scheme is the break it makes with the "empty future" model

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Christianity on the grounds that

> ". . . no state of the present life can be more perfect than the state of the New Law: since nothing can approach nearer to the last end than that which is the immediate cause of our being brought to the last end . . . no other state of the present life can be more perfect than that of the New Law, since the nearer a thing is to the last end the more perfect it is . . . the state of mankind may change according as man stands in relation to one and the same law more or less perfectly."

Ibid., II, 106, Art. 4.

[25]Voegelin, p. iii. See also the provocative essay, "Modern Transfigurations of Joachim," in Löwith, pp. 208-213.

of time and history. Although countless later generations of intellectuals would alter much of his symbolism to suit their own needs, Joachim's treatment of time has not basically changed in any speculations by theorists since the twelfth century that have rightly claimed him as their intellectual source. In a similar context, it has been pointed out that a statement, or epistemological assumption, that the future is knowable in a factual sense is logically to say that the knowledge of facts, in general, is independent of reference to a continuum of time.[26] But this contradicts our common-sense association of knowledge with experience, that is, history, either in the personal sense of our own biography or within the larger context of history as the record of man in society.

Our actual experience with the concept of the future is, as Augustine noted, one of anticipation or expectation. The idea of the future state of social existence as knowable and immanent was developed as what one author has termed "the fallacious immanentization of the Christian eschaton."[27]

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[26]Joseph Margolis, "Statements About the Past and Future," The Philosophical Review, LXXII, No. 1 (January, 1963), 84-87.

[27]Voegelin, p. 121. Rudolf Bultmann has associated the consequences of this idea of progress toward an eschaton with the beginnings of modern nihilism. A progressive interpretation of history is inevitably relativistic and

> ". . . history begins to become sociology; and therefore man is no longer understood as an autonomous being, but is seen as at the mercy of historical conditions. His historicity does not consist of the fact that he is an individual who passes through history. . . . No,

While there is no logical necessity that a "full future" idea of history need be seen in terms either of progress or of an impending transformation of the human condition, it is this specific interpretation of the future, represented by Joachim, that stands in need of further attention. This is because the specific political problems of the modern world, insofar as they are linked to a theory of time and history, seem for the most part to be associated with an idea of the future as both immanent and progressive--with a "full future" in the Joachimist sense. The differences between the "empty future" idea and that of a full future are not esoteric; they influence some of the most significant differences not only between modern and classical political thought, but within modern thought itself.

Because Joachim had attached religious symbolism to secular history, the growth of purely secular interpretations of historical progress did not result immediately. Indeed, for some four hundred years after Joachim, the various movements of which he was a part or which he helped to spawn were essentially religious in nature.[28] By the time the

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> man is nothing but history, for he is, so to speak, not an active being but someone to whom things happen. Man is only a process without 'true existence'."

In his History and Eschatology (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1957), pp. 10-11.

[28] Reeves, passim; Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium (rev. ed.; London: Temple Smith, 1970), passim.

eighteenth century philosophes had wholly secularized Joachim's symbolism, the religious strife of the Reformation was already a thing of the past. But certain aspects of Protestant thought in the period of the Reformation added peculiar twists to the full future ideas advanced by Joachim and his followers. In fact, Calvin's particular notions of "predestination," "free will," and "election" altered Joachimism sufficiently to make many of its modern manifestations difficult to imagine without them. While certain aspects of Calvin's thought may have been conceived in the work of Joachim or other individuals, it is significant that they awaited full articulation until the Protestant Reformation. Opposition to the Catholic Church also turned out to mean, not entirely as an accidental by-product, disagreement over the nature of the future. Perhaps it was even central to the conflict.

Certainty for Calvin was still linked to New Testament revelation, and this served to give his thought a certain continuity with the Christian past which was, of course, Roman Catholic. But, as a link in the chain of thought that stretches into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, his observations may be cast rather easily in a secular context, thereby enabling one to see the essentially religious underpinnings of more recent futuristic speculations. "What else," Calvin wrote, "is a certain knowledge of our Predestination than that testimony of adoption which Scripture makes common

to all the godly."[29] Knowledge of the future was reserved by Calvin for the "elect," for whom it would happen that "under the guidance of God they [would] continuously make progress until divested of every imperfection they [would] arrive at the eternal blessedness of the elect."[30] Knowledge of a predestined future could not be a part of common knowledge, because existence in the state of God's Grace was required to perceive it. Calvin denied

> . . . that the reprobate proceed so far as to penetrate into that secret revelation which Scripture vouchsafes only to the elect. I deny, therefore, that they either grasp the will of God as it is immutable, or steadfastly embrace its truth. . . . For He is addressing those who had embraced his teaching and is urging them to advance in faith, least by their sluggishness they extinguish the light given them. Therefore, Paul attributes faith exclusively to the elect.[31]

In the abstract at least, there was no reason why a doctrine of predestination should be any less knowable to the elect than a knowledge of origins as described in Genesis.

Implied in Calvin's theology of predestination was a denial of the idea of man as a being possessing free will as it had been understood in Christian doctrine until the

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[29]John Calvin, John Calvin: Selections from His Writings, ed. with introduction John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1971), p. 201 (hereafter all citations refer to this edition).

[30]Ibid., p. 299.

[31]Ibid., pp. 386-387. Calvin is fully aware that such knowledge is not gained through the senses, which Hume would later assert as the basis of all knowledge: "When we call faith 'knowledge' we do not mean comprehension of the sort that is commonly concerned with those things which fall under human sense perception." Ibid., p. 389.

Reformation. Affirmation of free will meant an "endeavour to overthrow God's eternal purpose of predestination, by which He distinguishes between the reprobate and the elect."[32] Free will as an idea carries with it the possibility of rational choice between good and evil, at least in the relative sense in which they are experienced in the Civitas Terrena. But the fall of Adam, as Calvin interpreted its meaning, ruled out this possibility:

> . . . for the fall of Adam did not take away the will, but made it a slave where it was free. It is not only prone to sin, but is made subject to sin. . . . Let us remember, therefore, that will in man is one thing, and the free choice of good and evil another: for freedom of choice having been taken away after the fall of the first man, will alone was left; but so completely captive under the tyranny of sin, that it is only inclined to evil.[33]

And yet, he observed:

> . . . the doctrine of the gratuitous mercy of God is entirely destroyed, unless we hold that the faithful, whom God has thought fit to choose out for salvation, are distinguished from the reprobate by the mere good pleasure of God; unless this also be established as a consequence, that faith flows from the secret election of God.[34]

In Calvin, predestination became a deterministic conception of historical movement. The future was determined by the fall of Adam into an existence of sin from which no relief was possible save the grace of God as revealed by Scripture.

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[32] Ibid., p. 31.

[33] Ibid., pp. 159, 162-163.

[34] Ibid., p. 54.

The idea of predestination contained not only a strong futuristic implication, but an irrational one as well in Calvin. The status of the "elect" was due not to their own actions but to the unknowable whims of an irrational God. The cosmos itself took on a terrifying aspect since its purposes were not receptive to human reason. As with the Gnostics, a gulf existed between man and the universe, and the destiny of man was basically beyond his control. Men in society were more than ever perceived to be at the mercy of forces beyond their comprehension. The Calvinist future may have been one to which the elect could look forward with confidence, but once the confidence in who the elect were was shaken, an element of desperation could not help but pervade the Calvinist world view. In its secularized form, the sense of desperation eventually came to dominate the still religious Puritan ethic which had stressed the self-assured confidence of a chosen "elect."

Calvin was not concerned with the specific content of the future beyond salvation and damnation. It would not have occurred to him, for example, to take issue with Aristotle's "sea fight tomorrow" as an example of profane history. But on an issue such as salvation and damnation of souls tomorrow, these statements were not without political significance.[35] Calvin had challenged the very

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[35]An excellent brief essay on Calvin's political concerns is contained in Sheldon S. Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), pp. 165-194.

foundation of medieval ideas on Church and State in the totality of his work; and the results, mostly unintended, were due at least in part to his influence. Of primary importance here, he had added further dimension to the idea of a "full future" interpretation of time and history--the idea that only the "elect" can know the content and nature of the future.

The contrasts that may be drawn between the Aristotelian and Augustinian idea of the future, on the one hand, and that of Joachim and Calvin, on the other, represent two conflicting traditions regarding the future rather than an exhaustive discussion of those traditions. Because the "full future" notion has tended, since the era of the Reformation, toward dominating the world view, its varied implications for political thought and the actions that follow such thought must deserve careful analysis.

It is not necessary here to discuss the specific historical factors that have contributed to the modern world view and its concept of a full future: these aspects have been the subject of a number of studies[36] which, in spite of

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[36]See especially Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Scientism," Social Research, XV, No. 4 (December, 1948), 462-494; Burtt, pp. 300-330; R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London: John Murray, 1926), passim; Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. II (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1931), pp. 554-560, 651-650, 688-691; Joseph R. Strayer, On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), passim.

considerable differences among some of them, have added greatly to our understanding of modernity. Of more immediate concern for the purposes of this study is the full future theory in its twentieth century setting, specifically as it has been encountered in those political movements that interpret themselves as "revolutionary" by nature. These modern revolutionary ideologies are remarkably similar in both structure and symbolic substance to certain aspects of the thought of Joachim and Calvin. The roots of modern thought in the medieval and Renaissance worlds are reasonably well established and may be postulated without further discussion.[37] And whether or not a direct and unbroken line of speculation leading to current world views of the future runs between Joachim and the present day is of little concern for this study. It is sufficient to observe that a line of thought could be marked, if not drawn in, by the time of Calvin's last work.

The Relationship of "Subject" and "Object" in the Modern World View

As mentioned earlier, one of the most fundamental objections to the full future paradigm was the contention that the truth of a statement is dependent upon its correspondence to the object described. If, as Aristotle had posited, the

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[37] In addition to those works already cited, see Cohn; from an even longer perspective, the same sorts of parallels are drawn in Jonas, pp. 320-340.

future in fact is nonexistent, no truthful statements describing its substantive content can exist because the future cannot be treated as if it is itself an object of knowledge.

The point was later expanded upon and made more explicit by Aquinas when he defined truth as the agreement of thought with its object. But whereas Aristotle had been ambiguous in the sense that he placed the mind, the locus for the interpretation, at the center of the inquiry,[38] Aquinas recognized that this is only partly true. A thing, as he understood it, can have a relation to the mind either essentially or incidentally. The relation is essential if it is between the thing itself and the mind upon which it depends for its existence--as, for example, the plans for a house in the mind of an architect. The relationship, however, is incidental if it is between the existent thing and a mind by which the thing becomes known--for example, the architect's plans and someone other than the architect himself.[39]

With this distinction clear, he could then agree with Aristotle and observe:

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[38]Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1027b25.

[39]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 16, Art. 1; see also the fine article by Richard McKeon, "Thomas Aquinas' Doctrine of Knowledge and its Historical Setting," Speculum: A Journal of Mediaeval Studies, III, No. 4 (October, 1928), 425-444.

> Truth . . . is, in its primary significance, in the intellect. Now since a thing is true as having the form proper to its own nature, it must follow that the mind, in the act of knowing, is true as having the likeness of the thing known. Accordingly, truth is defined as conformity between intellect and thing. Hence, to know that conformity is to know truth.[40]

A thing is knowable only insofar as it has being, and nonbeing has no intelligibility in itself and is by definition unknowable. Only being, or existent things, can be rendered intelligible and hence knowable. The future, at least so far as man is concerned, is in the category of nonbeing. If the future is intelligible at all, it can only be so to the mind of God. In both the Judaic and Christian traditions, a knowledge of the future is possible only through revelation; man cannot hope to penetrate its mysteries except with divine assistance.

In order to meet the objections raised by the empty future proponents, it was necessary first to alter and later to change the entire relationship between thought and object that Aquinas articulated, as well as the entire cosmological structure that supported his arguments. To make the future either knowable or subject to probability in a mathematical and scientific sense was not the work of a single individual but of a great many distinguished minds for whom the paradigm provided an especially fruitful climate of opinion. In part this process was assisted by the Protestant Reformation--the movement which already had weakened the authority

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[40] Ibid., I, Q. 16, Art. 2.

of the Church. In theory at least, Catholicism had accepted as the guide for philosophical and theological speculation the Aristotelian/Scholastic tradition. Protestantism did not reject this tradition entirely by design although it certainly had an interest in disavowing Aquinas, particularly because his Summa Contra Gentiles proved to be the principal Catholic theoretical assault on doctrines considered to be heretical.[41]

It is important to note in this connection that Calvin never claimed his doctrine of predestination to have been revealed to him by the direct word of God, that is, as Moses had received the Ten Commandments. Rather, Calvin considered the doctrine to be a logical inference from his own interpretation of the New Testament. Both the connection and the break with tradition are thus apparent. Scripture was still the source of knowledge for Calvin, for example, but predestination was a novel interpretation, in terms of prior speculations, which ran counter to over a thousand years of precedent. It is not necessary here to trace the development and relationship to tradition of the full future paradigm

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[41]The usual translation of this work is given the English title, On the Truth of the Catholic Faith. This in itself suggests much of the Protestant aversion to the works of Aquinas. On Calvin's idea of predestination, see Troeltsch, II, pp. 581-587; Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 172, 276-277; Emile G. Leonard, A History of Protestantism, Vol. I (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1965), pp. 46, 301-303.

before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It will be sufficient to note how some of the more influential thinkers treated it and how they prepared the way for later development.

From Aristotle to Aquinas it had been a "given" assumption that man is rational, but that the fact of rationality springs from and implies the fact of an ultimate end or highest "good." In this case, the end was seen as the "First Cause." This could be contrasted with intermediate "goods," described by Eric Voegelin as "second realities" or imaginative constructions apart from the "first reality" of experience.[42] Second realities in this context refer to the concept of a good or an end which stops short of a highest good or final end. Knowledge of a "First Cause" presupposed a logical regression back into historical time to the point described as the beginning of Creation. Creation in its turn presupposed a Creator; and the "human condition" of man on earth, the Civitas Terrena of Augustine, was understood as purposeful existence in accordance with

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[42]Eric Voegelin, "Debate and Existence," The Intercollegiate Review, III, No. 4-5 (March-April, 1967), 143. The term "second reality" is taken from the German novelist Robert Musil. Unquestionably the best discussion of the changed nature of the "subject" and "object" relationship from the medieval to the modern understanding is Ernest Cassirer, "The Subject-Object Problem in the Philosophy of the Renaissance," in his The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), pp. 123-191. Cassirer observes, "There is scarcely a single branch of Renaissance philosophy that did not participate in this work." Ibid., pp. 123-124.

a purposeful universe. Moral behavior meant wilful conformity to an objective criterion for existence that stood apart from man's will. This objective moral reality could be understood as the direct revelation of God--for example, in the Ten Commandments--or, in Aristotelian thought, as the application of innate reasoning faculties to the comprehension of a natural law which could be understood through reason alone.[43]

The fusion of the Christian and Greek traditions produced a fusion of reason and revelation articulated in Medieval Scholasticism.[44] In Aristotle, necessary existence of a First Cause was a product of inductive reasoning from history, which is to say experience. Experience itself affirmed time past as a reference point because the future could not be experienced.

The reliability of experience was challenged forcefully by Descartes in his "Rules for the Direction of Our Intelligence," first published in 1628. He wrote:

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[43]Cicero had separated natural law from man's will when he stated:

> "There is in fact a true law--namely, right reason--which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal . . . binding at all times upon all peoples; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law."

Quoted in John Cogley, et al., Natural Law and Modern Society (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1963), p. 15.

[44]Robert W. Carlyle and A. J. Carlyle, A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West, Vol. I (London:

> We must note then that there are two ways by which we arrive at the knowledge of facts, viz. by experience and by deduction. We must further observe that while our inferences from experience are frequently fallacious, deduction, or the pure illation of one thing from another . . . cannot be erroneous when performed by an understanding that is in the least degree rational.[45]

By "intuition" Descartes meant

> . . . not the fluctuating testimony of the senses, nor the misleading judgement [sic] that proceeds from the blundering constructions of imagination, but the conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives us so readily and distinctly that we are wholly freed from doubt about that which we understand.[46]

Now the only knowledge that Descartes understood to be free from doubt about its conclusions was mathematics. In his own account of his early education he recalled that he was

> . . . delighted with Mathematics because of the certainty of its demonstrations and the evidence of its reasoning. . . . I was astonished that, seeing how firm and solid was its basis, no loftier edifice had been reared thereupon. On the other hand I compared the works of the ancient pagans which deal with Morals to palaces most superb and magnificent, which are yet built on sand and mud alone.[47]

William Blackwood and Sons, 1903), pp. 3, 102-110; Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 235-246.

[45]Descartes, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," in Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (eds.), The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), pp. 4-5 (hereafter referred to as Descartes, Works).

[46]Ibid., I, p. 7.

[47]Ibid., I, p. 85.

Descartes denied as inferior in its results the process of reasoning from experience or history, which had been characteristic of both Aristotelian and Scholastic thought, as compared with the results of a mathematical logic understood as reliable and irrefutable by nature. He maintained:

> Hence it were better not to study at all than to occupy one's self with objects of such difficulty, that, owing to our inability to distinguish true from false, we are forced to regard the doubtful as certain. . . . Thus in accordance with the above maxim we reject all such merely probable knowledge and make it a rule to trust only what is completely known and incapable of being doubted.[48]

To postulate mathematical logic as the basis of all true knowledge could only in effect radically alter the understanding of what precisely constitutes a "fact" itself. The specific "facts" subsumed within the Cartesian framework were altogether different from the "facts" contained in the works of Aristotle or Aquinas, for example. The practical effect was to divorce our common-sense association of political facts from a specifically historical, that is, past, setting. His paradigmatic reference point defined "science" in terms of a specific methodology rather than the substance of the inquiry. In anticipation of Locke and Hume on sensory origins of knowledge, he did observe, but without the elaboration to be found in later writers, that "whatever we clearly and distinctly perceive is true."[49] Mathematics alone was

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[48] Ibid., I, p. 3; this specific point is discussed in detail in Etienne Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), pp. 129-134.

[49] Ibid., II, p. 19.

conceived to be "clearly and distinctly" true.

To display his contempt for experiential knowledge, Descartes opened his "Discourse on the Method" and Essays with the lines:

> Good sense is of all things in the world the most equally distributed . . . it seems to be evidence in support of the view that the power of forming a good judgement and of distinguishing the true from the false . . . is by nature equal in all men. Hence too it will show that the diversity of our opinions does not proceed from some being more rational than others, but solely from the fact that one's thoughts pass through diverse channels and the same objects are not considered by all.[50]

Descartes did not say that "knowledge" per se is impossible, althouth some interpretations have contended that the implication is there. He did maintain that much of what we call knowledge is mere opinion, and that little choice exists among opinions. Hope, however, lay in the ability of all men to reach precise knowledge through the equally shared "good sense" mentioned above. Not for a moment did Descartes imagine that the scientific method was prompted by a disinterested quest for knowledge for its own sake; rather, it had as its final aim in the future to "render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature."[51] If

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[50]"Discourse on the Method," in Ibid., I, p. 81.

[51]Ibid., I, p. 119. For an excellent discussion of the importance of mathematical methodology for Descartes and the modern tradition of philosophy, see Albert G. A. Balz, "The Search for Truth in the Sciences," in Descartes and the Modern Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 3-8; for a defense of the epistemological assumptions of Descartes that takes specific issue with Cartesian dualism,

knowledge in fact had been impossible, Descartes would hardly have been optimistic about the prospects for a future conquest of nature.

This epistemological narrowing of the focus of scientific attention was, in a very real sense, a disfiguration of the full content of consciousness as it had been understood until that time. Although he did not deny innate ideas formally, and even, in fact, affirmed their existence in the mind, his changed conception of them altered their meaning. The reduction of nature to a morally neutral geometrical system constituted a profound change away from the Aristotelian/Christian world view.[52] The famous Cartesian statement, cogito ergo sum--"I think, therefore I am"--was not by itself a reversal of the previously accepted relationship between subject and object. An explicit precondition of Cartesian metaphysics is the admission that we cannot doubt existence without recognizing our existence while

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see Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Revolt Against Dualism: An Inquiry Concerning the Existence of Ideas (LaSalle, Illinois: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 385-386.

[52]Burtt, pp. 197-201; Albert G. A. Balz has argued that the commonplace distinctions made regarding the supposedly radical differences between Cartesian and Thomistic man are overdrawn, if not erroneous: see his chapter, "Man, Thomistic and Cartesian," in Albert G. A. Balz, Cartesian Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp. 274-323; a distinctly opposite view is taken by Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, p. 125. Norman Kemp Smith has asserted that Descartes' "philosophy continued to be colored, and in several of its main features determined, by Thomist teaching," p. 163; Smith, however, recognized that even within this context, Cartesian thought made "a fresh start."

we doubt; that a clear distinction separates the soul and the body, or that which thinks and that which is physical.[53]

In this dualism, he said nothing that Aquinas had not recognized. Descartes was fully aware that the mind, as reflective consciousness reveals it, is both subject and object. But the source of the truth of existence had clearly moved to the purely human mind and away from the idea of a First Cause which had been the preoccupation of philosophy from Plato to Aquinas. The Universe, in Descartes, is unthinking, whereas man thinks. This opens up a rift between the individual and the cosmos. Gone is the immanent Logos with which man can feel a kinship. In its place is an alien force against which human beings must struggle, the "evil genius" of the first and second Meditations of Descartes, who is "not less powerful" than God Himself.[54]

The blurred distinction between subject and object in Cartesian philosophy had been preshadowed in the Renaissance, and the results of Descartes' mathematics had been phrased articulately before by Galileo, who had said:

> For here I say that the human mind understands some things as perfectly and possesses as absolute a certainty of them as does nature itself. And the pure mathematical sciences are of this kind. To be sure, the divine intellect knows the mathematical truths in infinitely greater fullness than does ours, for it knows

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[53]Descartes, Works, I, pp. 22-23.

[54]Descartes, Works, I, p. 148; see also Richard Kennington, "The Finitude of Descartes's Evil Genius," Journal of the History of Ideas, XXXII, No. 3 (July-September, 1971), 441-446.

> them all; but of the few which the human intellect grasps, I believe that the knowledge of them is equal to divine knowledge in objective certainty, since men can see their necessity, and there can be no higher degree of certainty than that.[55]

Descartes easily could have made the same statement that Galileo had made regarding the truth of mathematics. Errors in thought could be removed only if mathematical certainty were made the sole ground of scientific investigation. It was not just that truth was interpreted by the mind (Aquinas had said as much), but that the specifically human mind had come to be seen as the sole basis of certainty. The only object that could be "known" in the truest sense was one's own mind, or the mind of God insofar as the two minds converged on a single object--in this instance mathematics. But the mind's memory could play tricks with the past, and thus even personal experience was basically unreliable and subject to relegation to the same category as history itself. Only pure science, understood to possess the reliability of mathematics, could be accepted as certainty and as a definition of "truth" itself.

With this change, the objects of knowledge underwent a perceptual alteration themselves. The notion of a purposeful universe, considered to be a fact from Plato through Aquinas, for example, was no longer a "fact" but rather an

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[55] Cassirer, pp. 162-163; the contemporary assault on Cartesian thought ranges from Lovejoy, passim, to Karl Barth; see Robert E. Cushman, "Barth's Attack upon Cartesianism and the Future in Theology," The Journal of Religion, XXXVI, No. 4 (October, 1956), 207-223.

unverifiable assumption beyond the pale of science rightly understood. Things external to the mind became shadows, and the locus of truth shifted from the definition given by Aquinas toward a concern with the individual's process of cognition. Objects of knowledge, in other words, were perceived to be less verifiable than had been previously supposed. In addition, this meant that an individual's statement regarding the object was more "real" than the object itself in that more could be said about the statement than the object. The rationality of a description of reality had ceased to be based on the notion of a first cause--that is, on the condition of an "ultimate end"; reason became concerned instead with questions concerning the "second realities" of existence of which Voegelin has spoken.

Although this change was not due to Cartesian philosophy alone, the influence of Descartes' methodology had a profound impact on other thinkers of his own day as well as later. The most obvious examples, perhaps, are Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, although both of these Englishmen were also profoundly influenced by the general tradition of English empiricism after Bacon.[56] Of these two, Locke is of more immediate concern here. His treatment of the subject-object problem as a link leading up to the twentieth century world view of the future illustrates the difficulties

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[56]Norman Kemp Smith, Studies in Cartesian Philosophy (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), pp. 181-183.

encountered in the breakdown of the classical world view of an empty future.[57] As with Descartes, his primary concern was the establishment of "facts," which is to say, his most immediate concern was with questions of epistemology.

On the surface, Locke's epistemology appears to refute the Cartesian denial of experience as a valid reference point for knowledge. Locke speaks very explicitly of "experience" as the source of all our knowledge about the universe and ourselves. But by the word "experience" he means something very different from the "experience" that Aristotle or Aquinas would have recognized. In his Essay on Human Understanding, he asks the most basic question of epistemology: what is the source and origin of knowledge? He answers:

> Let us suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by the vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience: in that

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[57] On the close relationship between the thought of Hobbes and Locke's work, see C. B. MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 1-8; Jason Aronson, "Shaftesbury on Locke," The American Political Science Review, LIII, No. 4 (December, 1959). Aronson has quoted Shaftesbury's statement that

> ". . . it was Mr. Locke that struck the home blow: for Mr. Hobbes' character and base slavish principles in government took off the poison of his philosophy. 'Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world and made the very idea of these . . . unnatural and without foundation in our minds." p. 1103.

> all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself.[58]

The most obvious difference between Locke and Aquinas, for example, begins with Locke's reference to the mind as "white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas." The absence of any concept of innate ideas would have been wholly foreign to the former. In addition, "experience" itself appears to mean something altogether different for Locke. "Experience" in Locke is not a combination of historical and personal experience; it comprises purely personal experiences, those sensory perceived objects which are registered on that blank sheet of paper, the mind. "This great source of most of the ideas we have," he wrote, "depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call sensation."[59] It is not apparent in Locke that any and every experience can rightly be called knowledge, even of that particular experience. As Locke understood it, knowledge seems to have been synonymous with "certainty." For when we have knowledge, in his scheme, we have something which excludes the possibility of both doubt and error.[60] He wrote:

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[58]John Locke, The Works of John Locke: A New Edition, Corrected, In Ten Volumes, Vol. I (London: 1823; Reprinted Scientia Verlag Aalen, Germany, 1963), p. 82 (hereafter referred to as Locke, Works).

[59]Ibid., I, pp. 83, 92-94; Smith, p. 183.

[60]James Gibson, Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), p. 3.

> For with me, to know and to be certain, is the same thing; what I know, that I am certain of; and what I am certain of, that I know. What reaches to knowledge, I think may be called certainty; and that which comes short of certainty, I think cannot be called knowledge.[61]

The problem, then, rests in the question: what can possibly be known with this certainty? The only such certainty that Locke recognized was the Cartesian definition of true knowledge--"science" methodologically defined.[62]

The importance of Locke in the evolution of the idea of a full future paradigm in the modern world view may be summed up both in the changed definition of the word "experience" and in the notion that knowledge is sensory in its origins. He was not the first to point this out. Thomas Hobbes had written earlier that "science . . . is either perception by sense, or the imagination, or memory remaining after such perception."[63] Nor was Locke especially original in the basic assumptions that he articulated. What he did seem to accomplish, as Shaftesbury noted, was

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[61]Locke, Works, IV, p. 145; Gibson, pp. 3-5.

[62]The question of the mathematical foundation of Locke's epistemology is far from clear. Smith has commented on "Locke's ignorance of mathematics," p. 183. Gibson, on the other hand, has said, "His view of knowledge, like that of Descartes, is throughout dominated by his conception of mathematical sciences," p. 5. It should be recalled that science defined simply as a methodology is not necessarily incompatible with either interpretation. That Locke was an "empiricist" there can be no doubt.

[63]Thomas Hobbes, The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, Vol. I (London: 1879; Reprinted Scientia Verlag Aalen, Germany, 1966), p. 66.

to make respectable those ideas "unnatural and without foundation in our minds." He not only helped to make Hobbesian ideas respectable, but also those methodological foundations along with them upon which much of modern political thought came to rest. For if knowledge could be reduced to mere sensory perceptions, the objects of knowledge would lose any discernibly objective characteristics. Because ideas are themselves "objects," which become nothing apart from the explicit thought by which they are perceived, it is impossible that an object can be imagined as other than what it is perceived to be. And even if it were granted that an object could be something else, it would be impossible to verify what that "something else" is. In that Locke still could write, with perfect sincerity, that "the best way to come to truth [is] to examine things as they really are" (implying thereby that things have an objective existence apart from our perception), but given his belief in the sensory foundations of knowledge, there was no logical reason to suppose that this type of investigation was feasible any longer as a question of epistemology.[64]

That such investigations should continue and did is more a testimony to the force of habit than to that of logic. If all we can hope to know rests in the sensory patterns written on our minds, which started out blank, then a

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[64]Locke, Works, I, p. 152; this point is also discussed in Gibson, pp. 14-28.

knowledge of the object itself is excluded virtually by definition, because all we possess is a collection of recorded perceptions. The study of "things," in effect, becomes a study of the way in which our cognitive faculties receive and record these images.

The practical necessity of communication about those things external to the mind seemed to add impetus to the reduction of knowledge to the supposed certainty of mathematical equations. Statements about "things," apart from true scientific propositions narrowly defined, appeared to be arbitrary and irrational. And of all subjects of sixteenth and seventeenth century thought, of which there was an obvious lack of common agreement, philosophy, political theory, and man were considered first.

The relationship of subject and object, although destroyed by the logic of Descartes and Locke, retained a certain validity in that an "object" as such was presumed to exist as the origin of sensory knowledge. It remained for David Hume in the eighteenth century to destroy finally whatever habits of mind remained that still accepted a distinction between the subject of thought and its object as a measure of truthful propositions. Hume began with the basic Lockean doctrine of the sensory origins of ideas and knowledge, and in the introduction to his A Treatise of Human Nature wrote, "All our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions, which are

correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent."[65] His conception of "experience" is a series of atomic impressions registered in the mind, allowing no distinction between impressions themselves and reflections on the sensations.[66] Furthermore, he asserts that a sensation has no necessary connection with the object that inspires the idea of it. "Properly speaking," he wrote, "'tis not our body we perceive, when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions, which enter by the senses; so that the ascribing [of] a real corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind."[67] Hume went beyond Locke in one sense when he argued that we can have no ideas _of_ objects, because having those ideas would imply that both ideas _and_ objects exist; and such a duality of existence he had demonstrated to his own satisfaction to rest on an illusion.[68]

Although at first glance this might appear to be

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[65]David Hume, _The Philosophical Works_, Vol. I, ed. Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Hodge Grose (London: 1886; Reprinted Scientia Verlag Aalen, Germany, 1964), I, 314 (hereafter referred to as Hume, _Works_).

[66]_Ibid._, I, p. 163, "General Introduction," by Thomas Green; Smith, _Studies_, pp. 246-248; Constance Maund, _Hume's Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Examination_ (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1937), pp. 67-91.

[67]_Ibid._, I, p. 481.

[68]Smith, p. 247. Maund, pp. 138-164, has argued, somewhat plausibly, though not always convincingly, that Hume did in fact recognize a duality between thought and object, but did not distinguish between them sufficiently to give a clear account of either.

a fundamental attack on Cartesian dualism, it is not necessarily the case. By admitting to the subjectivity of knowledge in the first place, Hume assumed the truthfulness of Cartesian methodology even while he attacked its dualism.[69] He had accepted the fundamental tenets of the scientific paradigm articulated by Descartes and Locke--the association of true knowledge with mathematical certainty[70] and the origin of knowledge in sensory perceptions. And because knowledge could only be sensory, no genuine "historical knowledge" as such could exist--or even "personal knowledge," for that, too, was unreliable. The only knowledge that remained, then, was the "scientific" rather narrowly defined. On the surface, at least, Hume could be understood to have merged "subject" and "object" into a single concept. Whether or not this interpretation reflects what Hume intended may be a matter for scholarly debate. What cannot be doubted is the fact that he laid the epistemological foundations for this merger at a later date, if indeed he did not accomplish it himself.

As a direct consequence of his epistemological assumptions, a certain irrationality begins to appear in Hume's observations of the external world. After denying the independence of perception from the objects themselves,

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[69] Ibid., p. 250.

[70] Hume, Works, I, p. 374.

he concludes that "as far as the senses are judges, all perceptions are the same in the manner of their existence."[71] Senses, then, are incapable of distinguishing any qualitative differences among various images. On a political level, if nothing is there to choose from between one sensation and another, there is also nothing to choose from among competing forms of government. Indeed, Hume goes so far as to observe in his essay, "Of the First Principles of Government," that in effect, no rational defense of any political order can exist except by custom, for "it is . . . on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as the most free and most popular."[72] What Hume means by "opinion" is "interest" in a managerial sense, and "right" is understood to mean "power" and "property."[73] In no case is there an appeal to "reason" as Aristotle or Aquinas would have used the term, but simply to whatever

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[71] Ibid., I, p. 483.

[72] Ibid., III, p. 110.

[73] Ibid., III, pp. 110-111; Hume did not rest government, as had Locke and Hobbes, on a form of social contract. He understood the state to be the natural condition of man, though with some reservations. He observed, "Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society, from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit." Ibid., III, p. 113. But unlike those organic theorists from Plato to Aquinas, he did not understand civic virtue as "natural"; he thought of it rather as "artificial." On this point, see John B. Stewart, The Moral and Political Philosophy of David Hume (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 105-106.

utility tradition serves. The ultimate power and authority of government, whatever its form, is defended by an opinion that is not in itself subject to rational verification. Hume must be said to side with Descartes and Locke, in spite of certain differences, because he assumes with them that we can never penetrate into the nature of things or know them except by those external properties which are recorded by the various senses.

The Relationship of "Subject" and "Object" in the Full Future Paradigm

Neither Descartes, Locke, nor Hume was personally interested in futuristic speculations per se. Indeed, each of them would have been far more likely to agree with Aristotle on this particular matter than with either Joachim or Calvin. Their importance as representatives of that intellectual movement begun in the Renaissance, which helped to construct the modern view of the future, lies in the close relationship between epistemological assumptions and the modern world view in general.

From the religious writing of Joachim and Calvin to the more secular thought of Descartes, Locke, and Hume, changes in the conception of the truth of things helped to produce as well as to reinforce new ways of seeing the future. New assumptions regarding the very source of knowledge itself could not help but leave a profound effect on what

may seem at first to be unrelated aspects of a general world view. Although it remained for the French Revolution and after to marry the religious fervor--by then in the form of a secular and political messianism--with the scientism of earlier ages, the modern world view of the future would be unexplainable without the epistemological roots found in speculative writings from Descartes to Hume.[74] One of the first casualties to the classical world view was the total alteration of the subject-object view of knowledge by the mid-eighteenth century. Cassirer has rightly placed that alteration at the center of the modern mind, as its most characteristic feature.

The problem of full future interpretation, which has had significant modern-day ramifications, began when Descartes destroyed historical experience as a legitimate source of knowledge. This is not to say that history is the only--or necessarily the most valid--type of knowledge, but that the problem assumed its far-reaching significance because history does comprise one of the three major realms of human knowledge. Michael Oakeshott has observed that knowledge is experience, and that experience is of three

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[74]The messianic origins of modern political movements is fully discussed in Cohn, passim, and in two works by J. L. Talmon, entitled, The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1970), and Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase (London: Secker & Warburg, 1950).

types: scientific, practical, and historical.[75] To eliminate arbitrarily any one of these would be to constrict and, in effect, to deform human consciousness of itself. No less of a modern scientist than Ludwig von Bertalanffy, considered by many to offer one of the foremost theoretical defenses of the application of science to the social sciences, has written:

> What we call scientific experience is a small sector of experience, and not only or necessarily the exclusive and best one. It is chosen for a certain purpose, namely, theoretical description and practical control of nature. What is called "an observable fact" is a certain aspect isolated from the stream of experience for certain intellectual pursuits.[76]

In the name of "science," Descartes, Locke, and Hume had deliberately and knowingly restricted the scope of human understanding to the narrowest possible definition. Not only were certain questions eliminated in the process, questions which had always been crucial to the Western understanding of the human condition, but the answers to the remaining questions either were different or altered sufficiently to enable us properly to speak of a classical and a modern world view.

By redefining the role of the philosopher to make it

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[75]Michael Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), passim; an excellent discussion of Oakeshott's theory of history is William H. Dray, "Michael Oakeshott's Theory of History," in King and Parekh, pp. 19-42.

[76]Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "The Psychopathology of Scientism," in Helmut Schoeck and James W. Wiggins (eds.) Scientism and Values (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 203-204.

identify in every respect with the new meaning of "scientist," the very nature of the philosophical tradition extending back to Plato was changed. The proper task of the new scientific thinker was to lie in the elimination of error, whereas in fact error is the very substance of the philosopher's experiential heritage. The world view of the classic mind, based as it was on experience, was a record of human folly: the modern mind set for itself the destruction of precisely that reference point.

Descartes began with an attack on the very idea of experience and what Aristotle would have regarded as the common-sense "givenness" of the nature of things. The destruction of the past was a necessary ingredient for the full future paradigm because past experience served as a constant reminder of the limitations inherent in human existence and actions. As a reference point for a source of knowledge, experience had helped to clarify the problem of man's identity. In part, individuals knew what they were by what they had been, that is, through an appreciation of their historical experience.[77] There was, in addition, an idea of immutable human nature, but this was also understood to manifest itself in the specific actions of historical men. In the classical world view, no sharp line existed to

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[77]The nature of this experiential knowledge is most profoundly summed up by Eric Voegelin in his essay, "Debate and Existence," 143-152.

separate thought from Being, or the object of thought in this case. From Plato and Aristotle through Aquinas, the problem of Being was clarified by the epistemological question, "What is knowledge?" It would not have occurred to them that there was any other way of looking at things.[78] But the Cartesian destruction of experience marked a decisive break with the understanding of existence that Aquinas had known. The meaning of the "human condition" itself changed. The immediate result was a marked tendency to treat the contingent condition of the present as "all there is," thereby perverting an historically unique event by turning it into an absolute standard. The problem was noticed by Tocqueville, who observed, "As the past has ceased to throw light upon the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity."[79] The severing of men from their history by Descartes was no inconsequential development, for

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[78]In this connection, the following observation by Alfred North Whitehead is as true for the classical world view as it is for the modern:

> "There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them."

In his Science in the Modern World (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 71.

[79]Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 331.

in the process he also removed any real source of knowledge regarding their origins as historical existents. In the absence of experience as an ordering principle, people found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the first reality of experience and the second reality of imaginative construction.

As the brief quotation by Tocqueville suggests, it had been customary before the modern era to imagine the future in the light of past experience, however dim that experience might at times appear. With this reference point vanquished from consciousness, however, the future could be imagined in a wholly new way, that is, without reference to what had been. The future was now an "empty basket," so to speak, into which men could project whatever fancies entered their minds, because no longer did there exist an experiential reminder of "limitations" or "givenness." Furthermore, if objections were raised regarding a specific view of the future, it could be asserted, with the remorseless logic and authority of modern science to support it, that among opinions there was nothing to prove one qualitatively superior to another. This became especially true when speculations about the future became linked with the particularly modern idea of progress.

With no clear distinction made between the subject of thought and its object, the difference between the past and the future as an object of knowledge was arbitrary at

best. The future could be treated as an object of knowledge with roughly the same degree of certainty as the past; at least there was no demonstrably logical reason why this should not be so. The "theoretical fallacy" involved, as Eric Voegelin has pointed out in a similar context, the fact that

> . . . things are not things, nor do they have essences, by arbitrary declaration. The course of history as a whole is no object of experience . . . because the course of history extends into the unknown future.[80]

The fallacy includes what might be termed (awkwardly) the "objectification" of the future; that is, the reification of the idea of the future as a concept. It could be studied as the dialectical opposite of the past and could lay claim to the same degree of epistemological subject matter validity as could history.[81]

A knowable future also involved the destruction of the concept of time that Augustine had recognized as a riddle on two levels; the arbitrary, subjective experience with time as the "eternal present" and the more precise, scientific measurement of time as an objective phenomenon. The problem of time in experience is crucial here if it is kept in mind that although history is subjectively experienced

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[80]Voegelin, New Science, p. 120.

[81]Nicholas Berdyaev has observed on this point that "Our habit of breaking time up into past, present, and future does not entitle us to endow the last with more reality than the first," in his The Meaning of History (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1936), p. 195.

by the individual, it is written from the perspective of science. An error thus is introduced into the study of history in this context when it is interpreted in terms of a past-present-future continuum.[82] "Facts" have come to be understood as independent of a specific, historical reference point. For example, recently A. J. Ayer observed, with a certain air of revelatory discovery, that "the difference between the past and the future is that past events are earlier . . . and future events are later."[83] He had previously concluded that "there is no a priori reason why people should not succeed in making true statements about the future in the same spontaneous way as they succeed, by what is called the exercise of memory, in making true statements about the past."[84]

Regardless of the merits or absurdity of this particular strain of modern thought, it is important to observe here that a position on future knowledge such as Ayer presents could hardly have been imagined by an Augustine or Aquinas. That this modern notion of timelessness is

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[82] Hans Meyerhoff, Time in Literature (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1955), pp. 85-119.

[83] A. J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1956), p. 189.

[84] Ibid., p. 186. A critique of this work may be found in Joseph Margolis, "Statements About the Past and Future," The Philosophical Review, LXXII, No. 1 (January, 1963), 84; an excellent defense of Ayer's basic position on the future is Paul Fitzgerald, "Is the Future Partly Unreal?" The Review of Metaphysics, XXI, No. 3 (March, 1938), 421-425.

associated with a purposeless universe, rendered mechanical by Copernicus and Newton via modern science, has been noticed by Hans Meyerhoff:

> We must therefore consider once more this quest for a timeless existence. . . . For the significance of a timeless dimension in experience, the self, the work of art, or beyond experience can be fully appreciated only when it is placed within the context of the melancholy, gloomy reflections ensuing from the direction of time toward death and nothingness.[85]

Time in Augustine had been inseparable from ontological meaning; for the modern mind it is more apt to signify nothingness or purposelessness. The change could scarcely be more dramatic and significant.

The nineteenth and twentieth century context of "melancholy, gloomy reflections" on the future did not spring fully developed out of the line of thought that ran from Joachim to Hume. Although they had articulated and symbolized the various and component parts of the full future paradigm, their work did not merge, combining all of these strands into a single world view of the future. Such a view had begun to take form in the late medieval period, but the final and necessary ingredients of the full future paradigm were supplied by the general climate of opinion from the French Revolution onward. The progression of paradigmatic ideas was certainly not inevitable, but it was logical. If the last two hundred years can be considered to have been

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[85]Meyerhoff, p. 74.

revolutionary, from the thought of Marx, Darwin, and Freud to the political upheavals of France, Germany, and Russia, it must be observed that all of these ideas and events contained a strong futuristic component. Especially in the political sphere, it would be difficult to conceptualize the meaning of modern revolutionary movements without taking account of its futuristic component.

Revolutions per se are nothing new, but modern revolutions are something quite different from those of the past, in large part because of their particularly modern idea of the future. To the modern revolutionary the future is everything, while the past and present are trivial or nothing by comparison. The modern leader of political mass movements has laid his claim to hold the key to "the book of the future" for the frustrated, for whom "the present is irredemiably spoiled. The greatest frustration is having nothing to look forward to."[86]

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[86]Eric Hoffer, The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), p. 15.

CHAPTER II

HEGEL, MARX, AND THE MODERN WORLD VIEW OF THE FUTURE

From Aristotle through Hume, the most fundamental structure of classical teleology had remained in force--the notion that reality, the relationship between subject and object in the context discussed here, was something external to the subjective preferences of men. Admittedly, Hume had assured his contemporaries that they could know nothing of this presumed reality, but its existence continued to be taken for granted.

After Hume, and beginning with Kant, the idea of the future telos changed dramatically. Aristotelian teleology was abandoned when it came to be asserted that in fact no external reality existed apart from that which men imagined. This transition from Hume is not so far-reaching as it might seem when it is recalled that the rational basis for any objective knowledge had long since been abandoned. If reality, then, was no more than what men said it was, it followed logically that any external, i.e., social, reality was simply a projection of men's will. The future might still be empty for some in the sense that it was indeterminate, as for Darwin; but it was full in the sense that it could be fashioned into whatever shape men might will. It

became an empty basket into which a man's ego could be projected to fill the void with whatever fancies crossed his mind. The future was now filled with a boundless ego.

This secularized climate of opinion also had other consequences which were to affect the idea of the future in political thought; this was the rise of political ideologies as substitutes for religion in what J. L. Talmon has called "political messianism." Religion no longer could be the basis of an ordering principle, for its belief structure no longer had any objective basis aside from the class interests of the elites. If there was no "objective" God who could satisfy some sort of craving for salvation, then men would be forced to take salvation into their own hands in the name of the new god, Society.

Hence it was that political thought began to look more and more like a secular religion--except that now the religious symbolism of almost two thousand years of Christianity was transfigured by the various secular systems of thought competing with one another for men's souls. The Civitas Dei could become the "classless society" of Marxists, to be realized on earth, in society, as opposed to a conception of perfection beyond earthly experience. With no demonstrable difference between man as the subject and society as the object of man's desires, the Augustinian conception of individual progress could then be transformed into an externalized social progress; the City of God, it

could be argued, had been merely a projection of man's own alienation from this world. The theoretical problem to be worked out, then, was to change reality by removing from men's minds the belief that there were any constraints on what was possible. One means of accomplishing this was to demonstrate the progress of society in a direction that ensured the attainment of any particular idea of the future.

In the messianic climate of nineteenth and twentieth century opinion, the dual themes of "progress" and "decadence" have tended to dominate the social and political ideas of the Western world. The idea of progress is so closely bound to the notion of decadence that it is not easy to discuss the two apart from each other. Descriptions of the progress of history and faith in it tend to imply that decadence is the existing state of affairs. In the works of Marx, for example, the idea of progress toward a known future, the classless society, is intricately connected with the existing condition of decadence in bourgeois society. No need for "progress" would exist in Marx, presumably, if it were not for the readily obvious condition of decadence. Thus, the separation of "progress" from "decadence" is more for analytic purposes than for observing the absence of any organic relationship between the two. (An exception is Hegel, who postulated a rationalistic, evolutionary progress of history without placing emphasis on corresponding periods of decadence.)

Decadence as a motivating idea in the interpretation of politics and society became pronounced during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The concept--or awareness of the condition--was most closely associated with the Symbolist movement in literature, for example, in Oscar Wilde; it entered into political thought particularly in the work of George Sorell and Oswald Spengler. The important points to remember are that progress and decadence were twin aspects of a latent nihilism that brought opinion together, and that this common approach was to foster more significant changes in the world view than the many obvious and marked, but ultimately nonessential, differences.

The Impact of Hegel

It would be difficult to overemphasize the influence that Hegel has had on the modern world view in general and on the idea of the future in particular. Together with Marx and Darwin, he must be considered a principal architect of the twentieth century version of the full future paradigm.[87] This is not simply because his theory of history involved a notion of evolutionary progress--evolution had

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[87]Michael Oakeshott has identified Hegel as the real author of one of the three great traditions of European thought: the master concept of Rational Will. The other traditions are Plato's master concept of Reason and Nature, and Hobbes's idea of Will and Artifice. Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction," Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil, by Thomas Hobbes (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1946), pp. xi-xii.

been hinted or implied from the time of Joachim in the twelfth century through Voltaire. Rather, it arises from the particular way in which evolution was articulated as the rational unfolding of the will of the Absolute in history, a way which included the total extinction of the subject-object relationship in the philosophy of Hegel himself.

The futuristic component in Hegel is somewhat blunted by the introduction to his Philosophy of Right, where he observes:

> Philosophy always comes on the scene too late. . . . As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its formation has been completed. The teaching of the concept, which is also history's inescapable lesson, is that it is only when actuality is mature that the ideal first appears over against the real and that the ideal apprehends this same real world in its substance and builds it up for itself into the shape of an intellectual realm. When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's grey in grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.[88]

Hegel's rationalism presumed to understand the history of the world from the time of Creation until his own time, but not beyond. He concluded his lectures on The History of Philosophy with the bold remark: "This is the whole history of the world in general up to the present time";[89] but he

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[88] G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Philosophy of Right, trans. with notes T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), pp. 12-13 (hereafter referred to as Hegel, Philosophy of Right).

[89] G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. E. S. Haldane and Francis H. Simson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), III, 551 (hereafter referred to as Hegel, History of Philosophy).

avoided casting himself in the role of prophet, appearing, instead, to reverse the process, justifying the past as a rational unfolding of the "world spirit." His massive History of Philosophy surveyed and justified the will of the Absolute through the "cunning of reason" at work in history.[90]

The historicized world view of Hegel, however, did not reintroduce the notion of historical experience as a valid source of knowledge as the classical mind had understood it. It is paradoxical that this historicized world view, which has come to dominate most modern thought, including the modern idea of the future, more effectively destroyed both historical and practical experience than did the epistemological attacks of eighteenth and nineteenth century rationalism. The reasons for this are not difficult to determine. Whereas the classical tradition had defined philosophy as "the love of knowledge" and the pursuit of truth, Hegel considered philosophy to be the possession of truth. Philosophy was "Absolute Knowledge," which he defined as "the Truth of all modes of Consciousness, because according to the process of knowledge, it is only when absolute knowledge has been reached that the separation of the Object of Knowledge from Subjective Certainty is completely resolved."[91] The transformation of philosophy from

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[90] Löwith, pp. 58-59.

[91] G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Science of Logic, Vol. I, trans. W. H. Johnson and L. G. Struthers (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929), p. 60 (hereafter referred to as Hegel, Logic).

the pursuit of knowledge to the possession of "Absolute Knowledge" was accomplished when Hegel viewed history from the perspective of God and substituted his logic for that of the Creator of history,[92] a necessary precondition in the achievement of this absolute rationality. In his Logic, Hegel described the process thus:

> Logic is consequently to be understood as the System of Pure Reason, as the Realm of Pure Thought. This realm is the Truth as it is, without husk in and for itself. One may therefore express it thus: that this content shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit.[93]

For Hegel, then, the understanding of the historical process was from the perspective that heretofore had been thought to be accessible only to God.

Hegel went a step further than either Locke or Hume had done in their destruction of the relationship between subject and object; even Hume had conceded the dualism in subject and object, and both had recognized the existence, after all, of a distinction between the two. Hegel was fully cognizant of this argument and in the introduction

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[92]The best treatment of this aspect of Hegel is Eric Voegelin, "Hegel: A Study in Sorcery" (unpublished MS). A brief but excellent treatment is Robert Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 31-69.

[93]Hegel, Logic, I, p. 60; Voegelin, "Hegel," pp. 60-61. As Löwith has phrased it, "Hegel divinized reason after the manner of Aristotle, and determined the divine with reference to Christ!" with himself as Christ. See Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 50.

to his Logic[94] recognized the formulation by Aquinas. His refutation of the classical world view could scarcely have been more complete when he wrote:

> These views concerning the relation of one another of Subject and Object express the determinations which constitute the nature of our ordinary consciousness just as it appears; but these prejudices, translated into the sphere of Reason . . . are errors, the refutation of which throughout all departments of the spiritual and physical world is Philosophy itself; or rather, since these errors bar the way, they must be renounced at the very threshold of Philosophy.[95]

Thought and the object of thought became one and the same for Hegel and for those who followed in the footsteps of his system. Aristotle in the Metaphysics had long before recognized this unity, but as one existing only when the mind reflects upon itself.[96] The union of subject and object when the object is Creation itself, however, can be

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[94] Ibid., I, p. 55.

[95] Idem.

[96] G. W. F. Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), pp. 374, 431; Hegel's acknowledgement of Aristotle as the source of this idea appears at the conclusion of the "Science of Logic" segment in his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences. Aristotle described this point in a general discussion of the manner in which men share certain traits with God, in this case, mind. He wrote: "And thought thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought, i.e., the essence, is thought." Metaphysics, I, 1072b19. Aristotle did not mistake his own mind for that of God. See also Hegel, Logic, II, pp. 343-349; G. R. G. Mure, A Study of Hegel's Logic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 228-230; and George Armstrong Kelly, Idealism, Politics and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 311-312.

valid only for the Author of Creation. Thus, the merging of subject and object in Hegel's peculiarly rationalized interpretation of history would make it appear to interpreters of Hegel that he imagined himself to be Christ.[97] And Christ in this incarnation was the prophet of a new religion--Science.

The dialectical process by which Hegel's "World Spirit" moved through time and space does not necessarily destroy the concept of time itself,[98] although that often has been the interpretation. However, by the combining of subject and object into a single idea, Hegel did alter the nature of time as it had been understood by philosophy. In his Philosophy of Right, he emphasized the inability of any philosophy to leap beyond its own time and express the nature of the world at the end of time.[99]

In two ways, however, he gave the concept of future time a fullness which it had not previously possessed. First of all, according to Hegel, it is the future, actively negating the past, which yields the synthesis of the present. The present is the point in time at which the future is realized and the past is left behind. The future appears in

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[97]Voegelin, "Hegel," 61; Tucker, pp. 45-56.

[98]John McTaggart Ellis, Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic (2d ed.; New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), p. 167.

[99]Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 11.

the present because it has denied the past. That is, the negativity of time exists as an active denial of something, and that something is "space," which is interpreted to mean the "past."[100] Second, by the transformation of this notion of philosophy from a search for truth to the actual possession of truth, Hegel in effect declared his own system to stand at the brink of a new era--one in which philosophy was to become a true "science" with all of the certainty implied. As he phrased it, "To help bring philosophy nearer to the form of science--that goal where it can lay aside the name of love of knowledge and be actual knowledge--that is what I have set before me."[101]

By placing his own mind at both the beginning and end of time, he in effect made the future an object of knowledge, even though the future in his dialectic was a negation of the past and theoretically empty of specific content. The future belonged to absolute knowledge, that is, "science," rather than to the deformed consciousness of either the Catholic or Protestant versions of Christianity. The future for Hegel was empty in the sense that it had not yet occurred rather than according to the Aristotelian concept of

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[100] Alan B. Brinkley, "Time in Hegel's Phenomenology," Tulane Studies in Philosophy, IX (1960), 6-7.

[101] G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie (2d ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1964), p. 70.

unknowability. Hegel knew that the future belonged to "science"; as he defined it: "The realized end is the unity of subjective and objective."[102]

What Hegel had described in his early writings as "this self-elevation of man . . . from finite life to infinite life" also marked the most explicit origin of the "Death of God" movement that characterized later radical theology.[103] It is paradoxical, perhaps, that Hegel's idea of the progress of the "world spirit" or the "cunning of reason" in the rational unfolding of history should also abet a general mood of decadence and nihilism. But in the general confusion of his own ego with Divinity, he thoroughly confused his own imaginative constructions of reality with the reality found in the ordinary person's actual experiences with the external world. The "second reality"

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[102]Hegel, Logic, p. 350.

[103]G. W. F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, trans. T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 311. Robert C. Whitmore has argued that the proper interpretation of Hegel is as a "panentheist," in opposition to the notion that Hegel thought of himself as either God or Christ; see Robert C. Whitmore, "Hegel as Panentheist," Tulane Studies in Philosophy, IX (1960), 134-164. Heinrich Heine, on the other hand, had no doubt that Hegel thought of man as God and wrote, "Many a time . . . I am twinged by doubt whether man is really a two-legged god, as the late Professor Hegel assured me five and twenty years ago in Berlin." Quoted in Helmut Motekat, "Hegel and Heine," A Hegel Symposium, ed. D. C. Travis (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 71. Unquestionably the best single study of this aspect of Hegel is Emil L. Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), especially his chapter entitled, "Human Experience and Absolute Thought: The Central Problem of Hegel's Philosophy," pp. 15-30.

of imagination was as real to Hegel and the Hegelians as was what may be called the "first reality" of experience.

This tendency of German philosophy to proclaim the death of God and to confuse the imaginative construction of second realities with knowledge of reality long ago prompted George Santayana to remark:

> The more profound they are the more content and even delighted they are to consider nothing but their own creations. Their theory of knowledge proclaims that knowledge is impossible. You know only your so-called knowledge, which itself knows nothing; and you are limited to the autobiography of your illusions.[104]

It hardly seems extravagant to observe that the development of the modern idea of the full future paradigm after Hegel became a study in illusions. What for Descartes still had been a duality of individual existence and the cosmos, however restrictive it may have been in contrast to Greek and early Christian thought, was blended by Hegel into a confusion of realities. And whereas the dualism of Augustine had been recognized as an inescapable aspect of the human condition, it became for Hegel a dialectical dualism which was to be resolved by a synthesis of the Civitas Dei and the Civitas Terrena--the "negation of negation" as he phrased it--into a unity of man and God as the same being. The knowledge of man's past for Hegel was a record of the alienation symbolized by writers such as Augustine; but such

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[104]George Santayana, Egotism in German Philosophy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 14-15.

knowledge of history told us only what we had been, not what we were to become. From this perspective, history does not tell us what our limitations are, nor is any permanence attached to our basic condition of being human, because unalterable human nature does not exist. Unable to distinguish truth from untruth, fact from imagination, or reality from utopias, the vast bulk of post-Hegelian political and social thought has betrayed the confusion of realms that lies at its roots.

Karl Marx and the Modern World View of the Full Future Paradigm

The political thought of Karl Marx, more than that of any other single individual, may be fairly said to pull together the varied strands of Western thought that comprise the modern view of the future and articulate its implications. Within this context, it is altogether appropriate that Marx should have termed his system "revolutionary"; it was indeed that in every sense of the word.

That the idea of a "known" future was revolutionary in its very essence had been grasped fully--along with the errors of its assumptions--by Aquinas in his critique of Joachim of Fiore's eschatology of history. Although the epistemological foundations of a full future vision had begun to build in the swirl of Renaissance science, the habits of mind engendered by Aristotelian logic continued to make

their presence felt and helped, through the time of Hegel, to mitigate such a world view.

It was Marx who found reality "standing on its head" in the historicized world view of Hegel and who inverted its abstract idea into materialist reality, whereupon this new-found key to Absolute Knowledge was transformed into a known future of society without classes.

In spite of its revolutionary outlook, however, it seems doubtful that the Marxist vision of the future could have been taken seriously either at the time or later if the classical world view had not been systematically destroyed in the preceding centuries.[105] Although the break with Hegel may have been more apparent than real, Marx was aware of the change induced by a vision of a specific future; and in his famous "Theses on Feuerbach," he remarked, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."[106]

Marx's criticism of Hegel traces its objections in part to the fact that whereas Hegel offered no program to

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[105]Lewis Feuer, in a most perceptive article, has argued for a stronger emphasis on a psychological explanation for the acceptance of Marxism among intellectuals; in Lewis Feuer, "Marx and the Intellectuals," Survey, No. 49 (October, 1963), pp. 101-112. Feuer's observations complement rather than contradict my general thesis, however.

[106]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The Selected Works (2 vols.; Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), p. 405 (hereafter referred to as Marx-Engels, Works).

overcome man's alienation, seeking simply to understand the basis of the alienation, Communism offered a very definite solution. Whatever the roots of Marxist thought in Hegelian thought, Marx was never a Hegelian in the sense that he believed in the Hegelian view of the essence of man as pure self-consciousness.[107] Marx found the Hegelian dialectic to be the reverse of the true world, a mirror image of reality: "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life."[108] The problem of Hegel was its abstractness, which Marx found characteristic of German philosophy in general: "If the Englishman [Ricardo] transforms men into hats, the German [Hegel] transforms hats into ideas."[109] The problem Marx set out to solve in Hegelian philosophy was to make it more concrete and less idealistic. Although Marx never seemed to become weary of pointing out his differences from Hegel, he also was quick to remind others of his indebtedness to Hegel for the general method of science and for what he regarded as truthful insights into the nature of the human condition.

What Marx shared with Hegel is far more important in the development of the modern view of the future than

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[107] Tucker, p. 74.

[108] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The German Ideology, Parts I and II (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1938), pp. 15, 68 (hereafter referred to as Marx-Engels, German Ideology).

[109] Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy (New York: International Publishers, n.d.), p. 87 (hereafter referred to as Marx, Poverty of Philosophy).

those areas, however significant they may be, of disagreement. Marx thought of his system as the material realization of Hegel's philosophy, the true "negation of the negation" in Hegelian dialectics. The abstract principle of Marxism is still what it was with Hegel--the unity of reason and reality, a revolt against the dualism of subject and object.[110] Engels was quick to note that the Absolute Knowledge which Hegel had postulated as the logical culmination of his system was a valid concept with practical consequences; for "what holds good for the realm of philosophic knowledge" holds good also for that of every other kind of knowledge "and also for practical affairs."[111] It is the task of philosophy, in the service of history, to establish the truth of this world. Marx added:

> The outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology and its final outcome is thus first that Hegel conceives the self creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as a transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of labor and comprehends objective

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[110] Löwith, Meaning in History, p. 50. An exception to the interpretation of the fundamental unity of thought between Hegel and Marx is George Lichtheim, who writes, "The transition from Hegel to Marx represents in every respect a radical break in the continuity of nineteenth-century history." George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 33. On the continuity of tradition, see Tucker, passim.

[111] Friedrich Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy (New York: International Publishers, n.d.), pp. 21-22 (hereafter cited as Engels, Feuerbach).

> man--true, because real man--as the outcome of man's own labor.[112]

Marx saw in the abstract consciousness of Hegel the form in which the object of the true man is revealed.

Marx also shared with Hegel and post-Hegelian German Romantics what Arthur O. Lovejoy has termed "the revolt against dualism."[113] This means that both Hegel and Marx saw in the union of subject and object the solution to man's alienation in his human existence. Marx was hostile to all forms of philosophy which postulated any dualism in the human condition; he looked upon such notions as examples of outright charlatanism or, perhaps, stupidity. The source of original alienation--as opposed to original sin--was the dualism of man's labor and the products of his labor. This dualism separated man not only from himself, but also from his natural community of association with his fellow men. As long as a duality existed between the common interest and the individual's interest, "man's own deed be-[came] an alien power opposed to him, which enslave[d] him instead of being controlled by him."[114]

Alienation has its origins in an act which can be

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[112]Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, n.d.), p. 177 (hereafter referred to as Marx, Manuscripts).

[113]Lovejoy, passim.

[114]Marx-Engels, German Ideology, p. 22.

characterized thus: "In the beginning was the Deed."[115] The deed can be overcome only when the duality of existence that it makes manifest is eliminated. Subject and object can be separated only in the form of estrangement for which the "return of the object into the self is therefore the reappropriation of the object."[116]

By "reappropriation of the object," Marx had in mind the image of God in Western religions as the alienated side of man. His political philosophy began with a criticism of religion. Only when man makes himself--or, rather, realizes that he always has been--God, can he be truly human. The end of alienation will be the appropriation of the objects of existence, in this case, God, into man himself: "It is only when the objective world becomes everywhere for man in

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[115]Goethe recognized the significance and consequences of this inversion of the Gospel according to John. In Faust when Doctor Faust utters these same words, "In the beginning was the Deed" (1237), Mephistopheles appears, and scoffs at just that time:

> "The Question seems but cheap
> From one who for the Word had such contempt.
> . . . I am the Spirit that drives!
> . . . thus everything that you call Sin,
> Destruction--in a word, as Evil represent--
> That is my own real element." (1328-1343)

Quoted from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, Parts I and II, trans. George Madison Priest (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941).

[116]Marx, Manuscripts, pp. 177, 179; Tucker, pp. 95-102; Lichtheim, p. 43; for a different view of alienation, see the excellent discussion by Lewis S. Feuer, "What is Alienation: The Career of a Concept," New Politics, I, No. 3 (Spring, 1962), 116-134.

society the world of man's essential powers . . . that all objects become for him the objectification of himself . . . that is, man himself becomes the object."[117] That such a philosophy runs diametrically counter to common-sense experience with our own existence, Marx reluctantly conceded:

> A being only considers himself independent when he stands on his own feet; and he only stands on his own feet when he owes his existence to himself. A man who lives by the grace of another regards himself as a dependent being. But I live completely by the grace of another if I owe him not only the maintenance of my life, but if he has, moreover, created my life--if he is the source of my life. When it is not my own creation, my life has necessarily a source of this kind outside of it. The Creation is therefore an idea very difficult to dislodge from popular consciousness . . . because it contradicts everything tangible in practical life.[118]

How is this common-sense experience with both history and personal experience to be overcome? The answer is clear--the perfect socialist man of the future will stop asking embarrassing questions: "Now I say to you: Give up your abstraction and you will also give up your question."[119]

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[117] Marx, Manuscripts, p. 140.

[118] Ibid., p. 144; Eric Voegelin, "The Formation of the Marxian Revolutionary Idea," The Review of Politics, XII, No. 3 (July, 1950), 278-281; Tucker, pp. 31-56. The Voegelin and Tucker interpretations of Marx's sociology as a neurotic projection of internal psychology onto the external world has been challenged in a number of works. A summary of this criticism may be found in John O'Neill, "Alienation, Class Struggle and Marxian Anti-Politics," The Review of Metaphysics, XVII, No. 3 (March, 1964), 462-471.

[119] Marx, Manuscripts, p. 145.

Philosophical criticism began with criticism of religion as limited in its Marxist context to the experiential understanding of the dualism of existence, between man and God for example, as expressed in the religious thought of an Augustine or Aquinas. For Marx, "the critique of religion ends in the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man; thus, it ends with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being."[120] Less polemically, Marx's critique of religion may be called an act to overthrow whatever reminded him of the finiteness of his human condition.

One of the inconsistencies in the philosophy of Marx rests in the fact that his sensory perception of knowledge undermines his union of subject-object. In order to realize the union of subject and object as he understood the problem of placing Hegel "back on his feet," Marx and Engels postulated the sensory perception of knowledge as the epistemological foundation of historical materialism. According to Engels, previous materialist philosophies had failed to grasp the significance of Hegel's unity of subject and object in existence that their materialism implied:

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[120]Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right', ed. with introduction Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 137 (hereafter referred to as Marx, Critique of Hegel).

> The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism . . . is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively.[121]

Later, Engels elaborated on this basic theme in a discussion of Feuerbach. He wrote: "The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however suprasensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain."[122] But while the notion that our ideas are merely sensory impressions on our brain may leave a theory of materialism intact, it also implies that there is indeed a dualism of existence between subjects and objects. Thus, the holding of the idea of God as merely an alienated image of ourselves as perfectable beings would seem to mean: (1) that there is after all something external to ourselves that causes this image to register in our minds, or (2) that there is a psychological explanation for this estrangement--as an aberration. In either case, an

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[121]Marx-Engels, Works, II, p. 403. One Marxist writer has maintained that this materialist philosophy of sensory knowledge is not only fundamental to Marxism but has been reaffirmed in its role in the elimination of alienation: "The basis for the realization and constant transformation of human nature is found in sensuous practice, by which the objects of knowledge, desire and appreciation, become the progressive embodiment of individuality." Clifford Lawrence, "The Roots of the Marxist Concept of Practice," Science and Society, XIII, No. 3 (Summer, 1949), 242.

[122]Engels, Feuerbach, p. 35.

explanation would require an answer incompatible with the materialist explanation of history that Marx and Engels offer.

Engels, in fact, had gone so far as to state that it was this sensory perception of knowledge that separated "scientific" from "utopian" socialism. Sensory perception was an intrinsic component of "science" as they understood it:

> Not in one single instance, so far, have we been led to the conclusion that our sense perceptions, scientifically controlled, induce in our minds respecting the outer world that are, by their very nature, at variance with reality, or that there is an inherent incompatibility between the outer world and our sense perceptions of it.[123]

An inconsistency between the philosophical foundations of Marxism in an inverted Hegelian system, on one hand, and in the epistemological basis of materialism, on the other, apparently never occurred either to Marx or Engels.[124]

Marx and Engels did not consider simply postulating an end to alienation through discussion in philosophical

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[123]Marx-Engels, Works, II, p. 101; Marx also wrote, "Sense-perception must be the basis of all science." Manuscripts, p. 143. For a brief discussion of epistemology in the early Marx, see Norman D. Livergood, Activity in Marx's Philosophy (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), pp. 44-45.

[124]Lewis Feuer has argued that Marx and Engels abandoned the philosophical premises of The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 in their mature work and that there exist, in effect, at least two "Marxisms"--that of the young as opposed to the mature Marx. Feuer, "What is Alienation? The Career of a Concept," 116-134; cf. Tucker, p. 173.

treatises. The end of alienation at some time in the future was ordained by the inexorable progress of history with Marx as its prophet. Hegel had seen himself as the prophet of the new Age of Science characterized by its possession of Absolute Knowledge, and Marx probably owed his belief in socialism as a science to this philosophical legacy. "Communism is the riddle of history solved," he wrote; "and it knows itself to be this solution."[125]

The idea of history for Marx seems to exist as a change in terminology from Hegel's idea of the World Spirit becoming itself. History, like the World Spirit, "passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these."[126] The appropriation of Hegelian conceptualization of historical process was never in doubt, and the "entire movement of history is, therefore, both its actual act of genesis . . . and also for its thinking consciousness the comprehended and known process of its becoming."[127] This historical process of movement in time and space

> . . . must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject first emerges as a result. This result--the subject knowing itself as absolute self consciousness--is therefore God--absolute Spirit--the self-knowing and self-

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[125]Marx, Manuscripts, p. 135; Voegelin, "The Marxian Revolutionary Idea," 287-291.

[126]Marx, German Ideology, p. 24.

[127]Marx, Manuscripts, p. 135.

> manifesting idea . . . the absolute subject as a process, as subject alienating itself and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process.[128]

Such is the process of historical progress on a conceptual level for Marx. The inability to understand the progress of history, "as matter developing in an historical process," leads inevitably to an "unhistorical view" of the world in which events do not make sense.[129]

To see history as a rational unfolding of events was to see historical knowledge as a science in the paradigmatic sense of the word. Engels compared the discovery of the laws of history to "the discovery of the general laws of motion." With history governed by laws, science, then, "is only a matter of discovering these laws."[130] Upon the discovery of these laws, he wrote later, "socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations."[131] And like all scientific paradigms, its

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[128] Ibid., p. 188. In a passage that reminds one of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" in its regulating of the economic marketplace of free competition, Engels wrote:

> "Men make their own history . . . in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the outer world that constitutes history."

Feuerbach, pp. 58-59.

[129] Engels, Feuerbach, p. 37.

[130] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[131] Marx-Engels, Works, II, p. 136.

statements were very much future-oriented. The official Soviet History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union observes:

> The power of the Marxist-Leninist theory lies in the fact that it enables the Party to find the right orientation in any situation, to understand the inner connection of current events, to foresee their course, and to perceive not only how and in what direction they are bound to develop in the future."[132]

From this perspective, it does not seem to be unreasonable to interpret the work of Marx and Engels, from The Communist Manifesto and Kapital to their lesser writings, as a "working out" of the various implications behind a supposed understanding of the laws of history. This is not only consistent with the idea of science as paradigm-building, a concept elaborated upon by Thomas Kuhn, but it is also a valid description of the work of Marx and Engels as they themselves appear to have understood it.[133]

Simply to understand the whole of history, as Hegel had tried to do, was a pointless exercise in Marx's view. The most important insight to be derived from the laws of

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[132]History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 355.

[133]M. M. Bober, Karl Marx's Interpretation of History (2d ed. rev.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 305. It is useful to recall at this juncture that in the psychology of early Gnosticism, the destruction of the concept of the self, or person, was similar to that found in Marxism. Hans Jonas has observed that this occurs because "the self discovers that it is not really its own, but is rather the involuntary executor of cosmic designs." Jonas, p. 329. If one substitutes "historical" for "cosmic," the same attitude is discernible. The result is nihilism.

history was not so much where men had been as where they were going. It was here, in his conception of the future, that the eschatological component, articulated earlier by Joachim, was introduced into Marx's thought.[134] The end of history was set specifically within the context of time understood as linear movement. The end of class warfare, the basic component of the human condition in time, along with the dualism it exemplifies, would be eliminated by a society without class antagonisms--presumably a classless society. The "false division of labour" which has dominated history and society up to the present would be eliminated.[135] As in the thought of Joachim, the future not only was known but was immanent. Marx and Engels both thought that the revolutions of 1848 would usher in that future, and they expected the transition to Communism to occur momentarily.

"Communism," Marx wrote, "is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future . . . which goal is the structure of human society."[136] Marx left little

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[134]Similarities between the Marxist view of history and essential features of a Christian perspective have been cited many times, but rarely with the brevity and clarity of Will Herberg, "The Christian Mythology of Socialism," The Antioch Review, III, No. 1 (Spring, 1943), 125-132.

[135]Friedrich Engels, Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring) (London: Martin Lawrence Limited, 1934), p. 319 (hereafter referred to as Engels, Anti-Dühring).

[136]Marx, Manuscripts, p. 146. For excellent background to the ideas of Marx and Engels during this period, see Oscar J. Hammen, "The Spectre of Communism in the 1840s," Journal of the History of Ideas, XIV, No. 3 (June, 1953), 404-420.

doubt that in the future those powers, that is, the powers of the bourgeois state, which have "till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them" would be tamed and brought under control.[137] The goal was "freedom," which was understood to mean man's owing nothing to anyone but himself while living in a community of personal creation.[138] The immediate future of Communism was one of a true heaven on earth:

> In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming a hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.[139]

This paradise was to follow the abolition of the division of labor by which class domination is perpetuated.

The means by which history was to realize its destiny, the occurrence that Marx "knew in advance," was what he termed the "revolution of the proletariat." As Engels described this process:

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[137] Marx, German Ideology, p. 61.

[138] Ibid., p. 74.

[139] Ibid., p. 22. In his chapter entitled "Production and Distribution," in Anti-Dühring, Engels also spelled out in some detail the main outlines and characteristics of the future communist society.

> The proletariat seizes the state power, and transforms the means of production in this first instance into state property. But in doing this, it puts an end to itself as the proletariat, it puts an end to all class differences and class antagonisms, it puts an end to the state as state.[140]

The state at this point in history has become an anachronism by which the bourgeois oppression of the proletariat manifests itself. The end of the state will spell the end of oppression and alienation and the beginning of true community, true history. "As soon as there is no longer any class of society to be held in subjugation," Engels wrote, "there is nothing more to be repressed which would make a special repressive force, a state, necessary. . . . The state is not 'abolished', it withers away."[141]

How did Marx or Engels know in advance that the state would "wither away" at some future point in time? For the answer we must return to Hegel. In this regard, Engels quoted the Hegelian statement that the real is rational and the rational is real. But the attribute that renders "reality" meaningful here is the word "necessary." "That which is necessary . . . proves itself in the last resort to be also rational."[142] Since Communism is postulated as the

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[140]Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 308.

[141]Ibid., pp. 308-309; see also the article by Solomon Bloom, "The 'Withering Away' of the State," Journal of the History of Ideas, VIII, No. 1 (January, 1946), 113-121.

[142]Engels, Feuerbach, p. 20.

rational end of man's history, Engels concluded:

> All that is real in the sphere of human history becomes irrational in the process of time and is therefore irrational already by its destination, is tainted beforehand with irrationality and everything which is rational in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict the apparent reality of existing conditions.[143]

And, thus, the future is known, because it stands on the "rational will" of men for whom the idea of a society has a greater reality than the existence of society. Since society, as Plato reminds us, is man writ large, it must also be observed here that the idea of a "new man," an ideal type of Übermenschen, was more real in the minds of Marx and Engels than were the men who existed around them; this view of reality was tantamount to the reification of concepts--of "mankind" as opposed to "men."

The idea of a known future, the full future paradigm, was evidenced in Marx whenever he spoke of the characteristics of the Communist society. Since this society did not yet exist, any statements about it, regardless of the specific tense he used, were necessarily statements about the future. When he said in the Communist Manifesto, for example, that "in bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present, in Communist society the present

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[143] Ibid., p. 21; see also Charles N. R. McCoy, "The Logical and the Real in Political Theory: Plato, Aristotle, and Marx," The American Political Science Review, XLVIII, No. 4 (December, 1954), 1058-1066.

dominates the past,"[144] he was saying in effect that at the time he wrote this sentence, the future dominated the past and present.

Conceptualization of future events within this framework of ideas involves the destruction of our common-sense understanding of time, a problem that Augustine had long grappled with. Marx himself recognized this problem more than once. In his doctoral dissertation he specifically excluded the idea of time from the world of essence, or the world of materialism: "Time . . . is to the world of appearance what the concept of the atom is to the world of essence, namely, the abstraction, annihilation and reduction of all determined being into being-for-itself."[145] Years later he re-emphasized the implications of this exclusion of time from history in his Poverty of Philosophy, when he wrote:

> There is no longer a "history according to the order of time," there is only "the sequence of ideas in the understanding." . . . Hegel thinks he is constructing the world by the movement of thought, whereas he is merely reconstructing systematically and classifying by the absolute method the thoughts which are in the minds of all.[146]

The "method," of course, was "science," which was understood

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[144] Marx-Engels, Works, I, p. 48.

[145] Karl Marx, "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature," trans. reprinted Livergood, p. 97.

[146] Marx, Poverty of Philosophy, p. 92.

to mean the exclusion of time and with it, paradoxically, the destruction of history as it had been viewed up until that time.

The final test of science and scientific propositions lies in the power of prediction.[147] Without the ability to predict the future, Marx never would have considered a method to be scientific. The difference between Augustine's objective and subjective experiences with time was thus rejected by Marx as a pointless debate. Time was eliminated as "abstract," and therefore without the material essence upon which the Marxian metaphysics of realism was postulated. To make the future an object of knowledge, it was apparently also necessary to remove the concept of time from discussion. A consideration of the problems of time in historical knowledge would no doubt have been a poignant reminder of the very real limitations of any notion of "absolute knowledge."

No need for revolution by the proletariat would exist without the existence of a certain level of bourgeois decadence. Indeed, Marx ruled out the possibility of revolution before the necessary stage of bourgeois development has been reached that renders capitalism an anachronism.[148]

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[147] Bober, p. 305.

[148] Marx and Engels cannot always be reduced to simple determinists. They both observed that it was not necessary for Russia to pass through every state in the development of the proletarian consciousness; the final stages of capitalism could be avoided altogether. See Marx-Engels, Works, II, pp. 49-61; Bober, pp. 42-43.

Although Marx applauded the material progress of society under capitalism, he regarded the organization of production by the bourgeoisie--the point at which capitalism becomes anachronistic--as anathema. Under the capitalists,

> . . . society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism . . . and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. . . . The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them.[149]

In Marx's view, the bourgeoisie have created the worst of all cultures or societies which, unlike any previous social organization, is suited only to perpetuate the total alienation of men from the product of their labor: "No individual can say of such products: I made it, that is my product."[150]

The bourgeoisie for Marx

> . . . are beneath the level of history, beneath all criticism; yet they remain an object of criticism just as the criminal who is beneath the level of humanity remains an object of the executioner. . . . Criticism needs no further self-clarification regarding this object, for criticism already understands it. Criticism is no longer an end in itself, but now simply a means.[151]

The ultimate manifestation of criticism, of course, is the execution of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat:

> To revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class, there existed in the middle ages, in Germany, a secret

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[149]Marx-Engels, Works, I, pp. 39-40.

[150]Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 296.

[151]Marx, Critique of Hegel, p. 133.

> tribunal, called the "Vehmgericht." If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the "Vehm." All the houses of Europe are now marked with the mysterious red cross. History is the Judge--its executioner, the proletarian.[152]

The revolution which was yet to take place would not only end the decadence but would transform society into a heaven on earth. Symbolically, Marx saw the proletarian revolution as the movement of history toward the Civitas Dei but realized it to be the same as the Civitas Terrena:

> Man, who has found only his own reflection in the fantastic reality of heaven, where he sought a supernatural being, will no longer be disposed to find only the semblance of himself, only a nonhuman being, here where he seeks and must seek his true reality.[153] [italics mine]

Marx believed in heaven as surely as did St. Augustine, because he lived in a hell which he euphemistically called "capitalist society." If his own life was a living hell, the heaven of his imagination, divorced from the first reality of experience, was the negation of the present--a "classless society." Experience with the facts of history and personal finiteness no longer were distinguishable from the second realities of imagination. He observed that "just as ancient peoples lived their past history in their imagination, in mythology, so we Germans have lived our future history in thought, in philosophy."[154]

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[152] Marx-Engels, Works, I, p. 360.

[153] Marx, Critique of Hegel, p. 13.

[154] Ibid., p. 135.

Marx molded his idea of Communism in his imagination and then projected it out onto the real world around him as the inevitable destiny of man. He expressed the dream-like qualities of this second reality as a sort of categorical imperative as much as a determined destination in which

> . . . the German nation is obliged to connect its dream history [of the future] with its present circumstances. Its future can be restricted neither to the direct negation of its real, nor to the direct fulfillment of its ideal, political and judicial circumstances.[155]

Philosophy, which now meant a dream of the future, blended with a mystical faith in man as God, who would build his own heaven on earth. In contrast to Hegel's associating the role of philosophy with the owl of Minerva--with the mere understanding of reality--Marx saw the role of philosophy as that of prediction: "When all the intrinsic conditions [of the Revolution] are fulfilled, the day of German resurrection will be announced by the crowing of the Gallic cock."[156]

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[155] Ibid., p. 136.

[156] Ibid., p. 142. The myth of Prometheus in the life of Marx has been frequently commented upon and, although it is beyond the scope of the stody, it needs to be mentioned here. No doubt this myth had a decisive influence on Marx's personality; and Marx's strangled cry, "I am nothing and I should be everything," echoed both Prometheus and the emotion of virtually every post-Marxian revolutionary. The theme of Prometheus has been a major inspiration for such modern writers as Goethe, Shelly, and Gide, among others. Ibid., p. 140. See Lewis S. Feuer, "Karl Marx and the Promethean Complex," Encounter, XXXI, No. 6 (December, 1968), 15-32.

The idea of a future heaven on earth was hardly new in itself; such dreams, for example, had inspired medieval millenial movements and the French Revolution. Marx accomplished not only a definite shape for the future, but as important, a means of getting from here to there. In short, Marx's dream was programmatic, that is, political. As J. L. Talmon has pointed out, within the context of early nineteenth century thought, the basic premises of Marxism were widespread among a segment of the intelligentsia that considered itself to be "revolutionary."[157] The ideology was messianic and tended toward an authoritarian form of futuristic utopianism which in later practice came to be termed "totalitarian."

A precise definition of "totalitarianism" has eluded any consensus among scholars; yet a few observations seem worth noting. If we believe that the kingdom of heaven, or something approaching it, can be established here on earth through specific political and economic programs, then no logical reason appears to exist for objections to any form of government that claims to embrace the whole of human life, even when that form of government demands the complete and absolute submission of the individual conscience toward the attainment of a future "paradise." The political thought of Marx, and Engels along with him, clearly appears to point in

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[157] J. L. Talmon, Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), passim.

this direction.[158] In Henrik Ibsen's play, "An Enemy of the People," the major character, Dr. Stockmann, proclaimed his stand in society in terms that could easily have been expressed by Marx:

> The most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the compact majority. . . . The majority never has right on its side . . . I am speaking of the few, the individuals among us, who have made all the new, germinating truths their own. These men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far in the van that the compact majority has not yet reached them--and there they fight for truths that are too lately born into the world's consciousness to have won over the majority.[159]

Doctor Stockmann would have understood the dictatorship of the proletariat and its ramifications.

The revolt against the dualism of existence, which Marx was all too painfully aware of, was, as Augustine would have understood it, a revolt against the human condition itself. Marx presupposed that harmony was the true end of man, whereas man's every experience--historical, practical, and scientific--affirms the opposite. Both historical and practical experience with conflict was sacrificed to a pseudo-science that prophesied peace, justice,

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[158] An especially intriguing essay on this general theme is W. Stark, "The Psychology of Social Messianism," Social Research, XXV, No. 2 (Summer, 1958), 145-157. See also Voegelin, "Marxian Revolutionary Idea"; Tucker, passim; and a very fine article by Melvin J. Lasky, "The Birth of a Metaphor: On the Origins of Utopia and Revolution," Encounter (February, 1970), pp. 35-37.

[159] Henrik Ibsen, "An Enemy of the People," Three Plays by Henrik Ibsen (New York: Heritage Press, 1965), Act IV, pp. 76-77.

and a harmony of interests among men on earth. Such an existence, however desirable some may believe it to be, would be the end of man as we have experienced him. It is no wonder that Marx had to assume a "new man" in history in order to realize his goal, a social order without conflict.

With some major differences, Marx made essentially the same mistake as that of Plato almost 2,500 years earlier; he mistook the ideal order of things for the real order of things. Marx's system, however, lacked the mitigating concept of a highest good outside man himself. If man is the measure of all things, himself a god, to whom will he humble himself? Another man?

Although Marx seems to have been oblivious to the word "pride," used by Augustine to describe such an attitude, it is useful to recall the word here. For Augustine, and for Christianity in general, it is pride that has separated man from God and that is at the root of the dualism Marx was to call "alienation"; the greater the pride, the sharper the alienation will be. The most profound pride is manifested in the Promethean myth of Marx combined particularly with his notion that man himself is a god. One of the greatest paradoxes in Marx and Marxism must lie in the situation where, in fact, the intensity of the revolt against the inherent dualism of the human condition should

increase the sense of alienation in direct proportion to attempts by the revolt to overcome it.

Finally, it must be said of Marx that his system has left a legacy of anti-politics in political theory. In itself, this is not new--Plato did essentially the same thing. But Marx combined anti-politics with revolution, an apparent contradiction because a theory of politics must of its nature be a theory of conflict. Politics means conflict, and the end of conflict is the end of politics--and men as we have experienced them. What Marx has postulated is a theory of ultimate harmony which cannot properly be called a "theory" at all, but rather a "wish" or a "dream." The aim of Marxist revolutionary politics, then, is to end politics once and for all. The past as conflict and the future as harmony are diametrically opposed to each other--dialectically opposed, as Marx would have it.

It is ironic that the most important political movement of the modern world should be opposed at its core to politics. Theory and practice contradict each other in that the theory, the goal of a classless society, is everything that the practice, revolutionary activism as the means, is not. Conflict and harmony are strangely at odds, and the resolution of conflict by a harmonious community in the future must be regarded at best as a tautological argument. Who could doubt that the end of conflict would be harmony?

The Idea of Progress and Decadence

Rudolf Bultmann has observed that the early Gnostics, about whom Augustine expressed considerable concern, conceived of man on earth as in a prison called "the world" and "time," in which the genuine self was incarcerated. True freedom, they proposed, comes in the form of escape from the reality in which men find themselves, that is, their human condition, the ground of their own being.[160] This same Gnostic psychology with its ideas of existence has been noted to characterize a great deal of modern thought, albeit in a secularized form.[161] In the modern context, however, this Gnosticism has been fused with a passion for moral progress and a scientific skepticism that has given it a strong futuristic component.[162]

Whatever other connections Marx and Marxism might have with the particular psychology of third and fourth century Gnosticism, one of the most obvious differences is the idea of the progress of history as a whole. While the idea of progress did not change the nature of Gnostic psychology, it did seem to offer, in its secularized version, a means for overcoming the limitations of the human condition. The idea of progress implied that the most elementary

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[160]Bultmann, pp. 5-6; Jonas, pp. 48-49.

[161]Voegelin, New Science, passim; Cohn, passim.

[162]Michael Polanyi, The Tacit Dimension (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), p. 57.

questions could be settled once and for all so that future generations could dispense with any further discussion of them.[163] Thus, the alliance of the idea of historical progress with a psychology of "secular Gnosticism" was linked closely to futuristic utopias, which in the modern world have ordinarily been described as some form of socialism.[164] Herbert Spencer, together with Marx and other socialists, thought that the great masses of men were crying out to them for a remedy for their condition:

> "Give us a guide," cry men to the philosopher. "We would escape from these miseries in which we are entangled. A better state is ever present in our imaginations, and we yearn after it; but all our efforts to realize it are fruitless. We are weary of perpetual failures; tell us by what rule we may attain our desire."[165]

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[163]Leo Strauss, "Political Philosophy and History," Journal of the History of Ideas, X, No. 1 (January, 1949), 49.

[164]Adam Ulam, "Socialism and Utopia," in Frank E. Manuel (ed.), Utopias and Utopian Thought (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 116; the classic discussion of "progress" as a concept is J. B. Bury, The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry Into its Origins and Growth (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932). Bibliographical discussions of the literature on the subject may be found in Earl E. Eubank, The Concept of Sociology (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1932), pp. 513-518; W. Warren Wagar, "Modern Views of the Origin of the Idea of Progress," Journal of the History of Ideas, XXXVIII, No. 1 (January-March, 1967), 55-70; George G. Iggers, "The Idea of Progress in Recent Philosophies of History," The Journal of Modern History, XXX, No. 3 (September, 1958), 215-226; and Leonard Krieger, "The Idea of Progress," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, No. 4 (June, 1951), 483-484.

[165]Herbert Spencer, Social Statics: or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1865),

The answer was the integration of groups into larger and larger entities combined with a withering away of the state. "It is a mistake," Spencer wrote, "to assume that government must necessarily last forever. The institution marks a certain stage of civilization. . . . It is not essential but incidental."[166] Not only Marx, Saint Simone, and Proudhon among the radical nineteenth century socialists looked for the progress of history to relieve men of the misery of their condition; sociologists such as Spencer, biologists who followed Darwin, and liberals in the fashion of John Stuart Mill also saw this vision.

Under the impact of Darwin, the word "progress" was often replaced by "evolution" which seemed to be more scientific therefore precise. But whether the word was "progress" or "evolution," the general concept was the same--the idea of the movement of history toward some specific telos, or end, which would either see the realization of a utopia or a change in the nature of the human condition

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p. 11. The impact of Spencer in his day was enormous. Jack London, for example, wrote:

> "Here was the man Spencer, organizing all knowledge . . . reducing everything to unity, elaborating ultimate realities, and presenting . . . a universe so concrete of realization that it was like the model of a ship such as sailors make and put into a glass bottle. There was no caprice, no chance. All was law."

Jack London, Martin Eden (New York: Macmillan Company, 195[illegible], p. 99.

[166] Ibid., p. 24; also see Herbert Spencer, First Principles of a New System of Philosophy (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1876; 1st ed., 1857), p. 323.

sufficient to relieve men of their collective anxieties and alienation. The important point in the idea of progress was that the future would be wholly unlike the past in that the wholesale transformation of the entire basis of the human condition would occur. Oscar Wilde viewed the end in socialism as basically a benevolent anarchism freed from the waste of factions, strife, and the constraints upon art that the public inevitably exerts. Socialism and the absence of any restraining authority were for all intents and purposes the same thing.[167] Under the rule of socialism, all present evils found in society would be altered, for "the proper aim is to try and reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible."[168]

Although Darwin himself never made these extravagant claims for the implications of evolution, the claims were simply logical deductions for Wilde. Wilde's contemporary, David Ritchie, went so far as to say that denial of evolution as a concept was tantamount to a denial of "science" itself. He contended that Darwin had scientifically validated what had been mere speculation for Hegel; absolute knowledge was the new science that had found its

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[167]Oscar Wilde, The Artist as Critic: The Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 255-289.

[168]Ibid., p. 256.

methodology in the account of history.[169] Darwinian evolution, Ritchie wrote, had shown us that "the necessity of endeavouring to explain how knowledge is possible compels us to recognize the eternal Self ever demanding realization. May we not, looking back from the standpoint of the Ideal, regard all the blind struggle of Nature as the lower and unconscious phases of this process of the realization of the eternal self?"[170] The futuristic reference point from this conception, of course, is "looking back from the standpoint of the Ideal" which is necessarily in the future. Later, when the realized future seemed considerably less than ideal, the very notion of "progress" was easily reversed into an idea of "decadence."

Nowhere did the foundation for an unquestioned belief in "progress" receive a greater thrust than in Darwinism and the corresponding description of "evolution." As a biologist and therefore a "scientist," Darwin was secure in the social position accorded the new priesthood among the true believers. His was the final stage in the

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[169] David G. Ritchie, Darwin and Hegel, with Other Philosophical Studies (London: Swan & Sownenchein & Co., 1893), p. 6; see Gloria McConnaughey, "Darwin and Social Darwinism," Osiris, IX (1950), 397-412.

[170] Ibid., p. 23. Ritchie and Spencer both were influential in English Fabian socialism. For an account of Ritchie on this movement, primarily with respect to the Webbs, see Shirley Robin Letwin, The Pursuit of Certainty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 340-341.

historical movement of thought that Frazer defined as the trinitarian stages "from magic through religion to science."[171]

What Darwin proposed, in effect, was what Marx had said in a different context about the nature of historical knowledge--that the past could tell us nothing about the future except by the dubious extraction of "laws" of the linear movement of history toward some specific end. John Dewey was right when he wrote, in The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, that The Origin of the Species had

> . . . introduced a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics, and religion. . . . The conceptions that had reigned in the philosophy of nature and knowledge for two thousand years, the conceptions that had become the familiar furniture of the mind, rested on the assumption of the superiority of the fixed and the final; they rested upon treating change and origin as signs of defect and unreality.[172]

As Dewey interpreted Darwin, he arrived not only at a theory of progress; as in Marx, Darwin's theory also im-

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[171]Sir James George Frazer, Man, God and Immortality: Thoughts on Human Progress (rev. ed.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1927), p. 339. The same stages of progress were also articulated by Auguste Comte.

[172]John Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910), pp. 1-2. George Herbert Mead reminds us that "species" means "form" in Latin, and therefore that when Darwin entitled his theory "the origin of the species," he actually was saying "the origin of forms"; this must be seen immediately as a challenge to the oldest notions of Western thought--the idea of "form" in Plato and Aristotle. See George Herbert Mead, Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 157.

plied the prohibition of certain types of questions. He wrote:

> Once admit that the sole verifiable or fruitful object of knowledge is the particular set of changes that generate the object of study together with the consequences that flow from it, and no intelligible question can be asked about what, by assumption, lies outside.[173]

Thus, the logic implicit throughout the Darwinian methodology shifts perceptively from a concern with "first causes" to "second causes" in the social order.[174] It permits, at least as Dewey saw it, no rational questions concerning final purpose beyond that which man himself gives it. The result is that whereas "evolution" was originally viewed as a more or less scientific guarantee of improvement, without a notion of ultimate purpose, it ultimately enhanced the latent nihilism of the age and displayed a remarkable tendency to become a theory of decadence.

This preoccupation with ideas of decadence in utopian futurism may be seen graphically in the development of thought in H. G. Wells. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, his belief in progress and evolution were virtually unbounded. He wrote in 1913, that the

> . . . more modern type of mind thinks constantly and by preference of things to come, and of present things mainly in relation to the results that must arise from them. . . . It [is] constructive in habit, it interprets the things of the present and gives

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[173] Ibid., p. 14.

[174] Berdayev, p. 78.

> value to this or that, entirely in relation to things designed or foreseen.[175]

He went on to say that the "creative mind" would unhesitatingly sacrifice the present to the future, and that, indeed, the creative mind increasingly was becoming the dominant type in the modern world.[176] He observed:

> The imagination, unless it is strengthened by a very sound training in the laws of causation, wanders like a lost child in the blankness of things to come and returns empty . . . in absolute fact the future is just as fixed and determinate, just as settled and inevitable, just as possible a matter of knowledge as the past. . . . The man of science comes to believe at last that the events of the year A.D. 4000 are as fixed, settled, and unchangeable as the events of the year 1600.[177]

The entire thrust of Wells's argument at this time in his life was that people constantly overestimate their knowledge of the past and of history, while they underestimate the possibility of knowing the future. New methods of inductive reasoning have opened a whole new world of the future which makes past knowledge either

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[175]H. G. Wells, The Discovery of the Future (New York: B. W. Herebach, 1913), p. 6. See also H. G. Wells, Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1902). The tone of the latter is optimistic, but there is an underlying tone of desperation that surfaces on occasion.

[176]Wells, The Discovery of the Future, pp. 7-16. The best discussion of this aspect of Wells's work is Mark R. Hilligas, The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[177]Wells, The Discovery of the Future, pp. 21, 23.

worthless or of marginal value. As for the progressive possibility of making accurate predictions in the social sciences, he says, "You must not judge the practicality of this enterprise by the failures of the past."[178] In short, experience is no guide to the future. Science is only science when it is "predictive," as Wells describes it, and nothing else may properly use the term "science." As populations increase, this only serves to simplify the problem of prediction rather than to frustrate it because as numbers increase, individual differences begin to average out. For those who believe in the future, the purpose of present actions is to prepare for that future. Actions must be "creative" rather than "legal." Belief in the future is the psychology of youth: "The creative mind says we are here because things have yet to be."[179]

Optimism similar to that of Wells, of course, was a rather widespread phenomenon, although it was by no means universal, in the period before World War I. Now there was nothing in Darwinism that guaranteed progress--this was the reading into Darwin of a message that simply was not there.[180]

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[178] Ibid., p. 33.

[179] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[180] Compare, for example, the following statement by Julian Huxley, one of the foremost proponents of evolution in the Darwinian sense:

> "No where in all [nature's] vast extent is there any trace of purpose or even of prospective significance. It is impelled from behind by blind physical forces,

In fact, if evolution means "natural selection" and the adaptation of an organism to its environment, not man, but microbes instead, may be among the most adaptive or organisms.[181] The highest development of the species would not be the man who opposes tyranny and thereby loses his life, but the man who conforms to tyranny and therefore survives.

After watching two world wars and the rise of Fascism, the Nazis, Stalin, and Communism, Wells changes his views on progress and the future. The future about which he had been so optimistic became the present--and obviously was something less than paradise. In 1945, shortly before his death, Wells produced his final comments on progress through evolution under the suggestive title, Mind at the End of Its Tether. He began this brief essay with the statement:

> If . . . thinking has been sound, then this world is at the end of its tether. The end of everything we call life is close at hand and cannot be evaded. . . . We are confronted with strange convincing realities so overwhelming that . . . [we] think day and night in a

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> a gigantic and chaotic jazz dance of particles and radiations, in which the only over-all tendency we have so far been able to detect, is summarized in the second law of thermodynamics--the tendency to run down."

Julian Huxley, Evolution in Action (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 5.

[181]Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Viking Press, 1965), is a case in point. Eichmann adapted better than most to the situation in Nazi Germany.

> passion of concentration, dismay, and mental struggle upon the ultimate disaster that confronts our species. . . . The reality glares coldly and harshly upon any of those who can wrench their minds from the comforting delusions of normality . . . a frightful queerness has come into life . . . there is no way out or round or through the impasse. It is the end.[182]

That the idea of "progress" or "evolution" lends itself to an historicism that is apt to end with a sense of decadence is not a novel observation. That "historicism" should itself be destructive of historical experience is perhaps somewhat more paradoxical, but nevertheless it is closely related to the idea of decadence; when history takes the place of God as the reference point for Truth, history must be judged, after all, simply as the record of men. It should not, therefore, be surprising that a historicized world view is exclusively a man-centered world view. Ortega y Gasset, for example, maintained that man has no nature as an essence, but simply a history:

> Man is what has happened to him, what he has done. Other things might have happened to him or have been done to him, but what did in fact happen to him and was done by him, this constitutes a relentless trajectory of experiences that he carries on his back. . . . The experiments already made with life narrow man's future. If we do not know what he is going to be, we know what he is not going to be. Man lives

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[182] H. G. Wells, Mind at the End of Its Tether (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1945), pp. 1-4; the change in the post-World War I climate of opinion with respect to "progress" was noted by Christopher Dawson, "Progress and Decay in Ancient and Modern Civilization," The Sociological Review, XVI (January, 1924), 1-2.

> in view of the past. Man, in a word, has no nature; what he has is history.[183]

But man as the sum total of his historical experiences has not necessarily experienced progress. The sense of decadence throughout Ortega's writings is pervasive and he observed: "The idea of progress, placing truth in a vague tomorrow, has proved a dulling opiate to humanity. Truth is what is true now and not what remains to be discovered in an undetermined future."[184] Historicism introduces decadence into evolution in the sense that it implies relativism in ethical and value judgments. And relativism stands at least at the brink of nihilism, which is the extreme level of decadence.

The links between historicism, progress, and decadence lie in the transformation of historical experience from a type of knowledge to a form of "anti-knowledge." If all knowledge depends on a sensory experience with history alone, and if that experience changes over time, then it follows that knowledge itself is irrevocably married to an

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[183] José Ortega y Gasset, History as a System and Other Essays Toward a Philosophy of History (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1941), pp. 216-217.

[184] Ibid., p. 182; this same perspective of history is implicit in an influential article by Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," The American Historical Review, XXXVII, No. 2 (January, 1932), 235; see also Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Present Standpoints and Past History," The Journal of Philosophy, XXXVI, No. 18 (August 31, 1939). Lovejoy, as a contemporary of Ortega and Becker, took a slightly contrary view, but ultimately within the same tradition: "Light is thrown upon problems only by the extrapolation of the past into the future; planning is retrospection in reverse." Ibid., p. 489.

unfolding of history. It means that a knowledge of truths has a specifically historical character and is relative to a particular time and place.[185] Men defined purely as products of history lose their "nature" as autonomous beings and become simply beings to whom things happen; they are a process without true existence.[186] Knowledge of history has no meaning within this scheme because the future is imagined to be wholly unlike the past. Whereas the future in the works of Aristotle, Augustine, or Aquinas is known by its limits, derived from limitations experienced in the past, this is now no longer imagined to be true.[187] If men believe they are God, there is certainly no reason why they should not also believe that the future can be molded

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[185] Bultmann, p. 9.

[186] Ibid., pp. 11, 155; an excellent discussion of this point may be found in Karl Lowith, "The Fate of Progress," Nature, History, and Existentialism, and Other Essays in the Philosophy of History (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 145-161. Löwith notes:

> "Progress is movement toward something something in the future, but for that reason alone not every becoming and not every development is progress. All organic life develops toward some end but it makes no progress. . . . This natural process of growth and change does not continue endlessly with ever novel variations, but has a specific end in every mature member of the species. A fully developed organism has attained the natural end of its growth; it has become that which it was in germ from the beginning. This end toward which a living creature naturally develops is the final cause of its first changes." (pp. 145-146)

[187] Strauss, p. 45.

to their own wills either individually or collectively.

This would pose a problem if men had a "nature," because they could not then by definition become something which they already were not. But by denial of a "nature" in mankind, men then become a sort of plastic in the hands of other men who would mold their future by changing their history.

Man viewed only as a product of historical forces, however, is a moral void, a vacuum, subject to manipulation at will. Restraints on those political acts which are aimed at changing men, by producing "new men" through the altering of spontaneous behavior patterns, are irrational in their conception and, in the light of reason, are obstacles to be overcome. Governments, then, because they are built on laws which attempt to impose rational standards of behavior on men, are the natural enemy. It is little wonder that thinkers as diverse as Marx, Spencer, and John Stuart Mill all could look with anticipation to the demise of the state. A solid core of fundamental assumptions about the nature of social relationships united them--the idea of "progress."[188]

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[188]As a corollary to the idea of progress, a tinge of anti-intellectual bias also is built in. George Santayana long ago noted:

> "In all ideas of progress there is the very prevalent habit of regarding opinions as justified not by their object but by their date. The intellectual ignominy of believing what we believe simply because of the time and place of our birth, escapes many evolutionists. Far from trying to overcome this natural prejudice of

Decadence as a concept and as a description of the history of ideas is a most difficult problem with which to come to grips. Several years ago, C. E. M. Joad, in a pioneer study, attributed the following meaning to it:

> Decadence, then, is a sign of man's tendency to misread his position in the universe, to take a view of his status and prospects more exalted than the facts warrant and to conduct his societies and to plan his future on the basis of this mis-reading [sic]. The mis-reading consists in a failure to acknowledge the non human [sic] elements of value and deity to which the human is subject. . . . I have called these elements "the object." Decadence, then, consists in a refusal to recognize "the object."[189]

This seems to be a reasonable definition and one that is congruent with the foregoing analysis. The elimination of "the object," or the blurring of the distinction between the subject and object relationship in knowledge, is indeed a distinct characteristic of the intellectual climate of our time.[190] This has been especially true in historical scholarship since Hegel.[191] A fallacy rests in

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position, they raise it to a point of pride."

Santayana, pp. 129-130. See also the comments on "evolution" in G. K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1925), pp. 1-7.

[189] C. E. M. Joad, Decadence: A Philosophical Inquiry (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1948), p. 15.

[190] Ibid., p. 108.

[191] Cf., for example, the statement by Collingwood that the relationship between subject and object which is characteristic of natural sciences has no meaning for history because the subject and object of history (man) do not exist independently of one another, in Robin C. Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 305. For a comment on this, see Bultmann, p. 133.

the notion that experience has a value independent of the source of that experience, its "object." By divorcing the subject from the object of its experience in this sense, a tendency arises for all experiences to assume an equal significance. From a purely sensory point of view, the problem of quality scarcely enters into the discussion. (How can quality be distinguished using only sensory perceptions?) Knowledge may then mean a compilation of "experiences" on a sensory level with no criteria for distinguishing importance among them.[192]

Socrates, we should be reminded, said that all human activity aims at "the Good," which we may interpret here to mean the highest "object." Such a good was understood to have its origins outside of man himself, although it found its realization in part by the actions of men who sought to attain it. When such an object, however, became centered on man himself, man, as the subject and object, became the end in himself as well. If man has no objects of value external to him, we may say that the result is an example of decadence. Socrates fully understood the concept of man as the measure of all things in terms which, in contemporary language, may well be called "decadence." However difficult "decadence" as a descriptive word may be to define, there should be no doubt that it is closely associated in modern thought with the idea of progress.

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[192]Joad, pp. 118-127.

For the most part, it appears that revolutionaries of the modern era link "progress" and "decadence" together in a dialectical relationship. As seemingly irreconcilable concepts, a Hegelian or Marxian synthesis appears to be the means of overcoming the latter by the former. Victor Serge, one of the lesser leaders of the Russian Revolution and its subsequent development of the 1920s, offers a case in point.[193] In his greatest novel, The Case of Comrade Tulayev, one of the characters remarks:

> We must cultivate consciousness. There is sure progress under this barbarism, progress under this retrogression. Look at our masses, our growth, all the new factories. . . . What will that effort not accomplish for the world in half a century."[194]

In an earlier novel on the civil war in Spain, Serge observed that revolutionaries such as himself, "lived in expectation of a catastrophe which would be at the same time a retribution and a renascence, a rehabilitation of human energies and a new reason for believing in men."[195] The future human condition, different from that of the present,

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[193]Serge's memoirs are one of the prime sources in any consideration of the intellectual as revolutionary in the twentieth century. Of his many works of an autobiographical nature, the classic example is Victor Serge, Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941, trans. ed. Peter Sedgwick (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

[194]Victor Serge, The Case of Comrade Tulayev, trans. from French, Willard R. Trask (New York: Doubleday, 1951), p. 69.

[195]Victor Serge, Birth of Our Power (New York: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 69-70.

would justify the misery of the past and present:

> The factory will conquer the hovel, the machines these men--or the men who will follow them, it matters little--an astounding awakening. This unfolding of a world . . . makes up for many things. Why should it not make up for the end of our generation?[196]

Now Serge is fully aware, as he remarks in the context of a counterrevolutionary joke, that "remaking men consists in reducing them, by persuasion, to the condition of corpses."[197]

What Serge does in his novels is to take his reader into the context of revolutionary thought and its "climate of opinion." As was noted earlier, revolutionary thought has much in common with certain aspects of Western religious thought--the steady increase of worldly wickedness that announces the impending apocalypse and second coming of Christ, now in a secularized symbolism, that will establish the Civitas Dei within history. The modern revolutionary appears to share the belief of Joachim of Fiore--that the greater the present decadence, the more certain a glorious tomorrow. If, in addition, an idea of progress seems to assure this tomorrow, it would also appear that the revolutionary has a vested interest in decadence: it serves to justify his own actions. Without a notion of decadence, "revolution," especially in its contemporary meaning, would

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[196]Serge, Comrade Tulayev, p. 74.

[197]Ibid., p. 36.

make no sense at all. The modern idea of revolution depends upon a corresponding idea of decadence. The two cannot be separated without doing violence to an understanding of the phenomena involved.

Marx and Marxism: The Problems of Theory and Practice in the Full Future Paradigm

The changing interpretations of the concept of the future that occurred between the time of Aristotle and that of Marx represented an intellectual transformation of the most serious importance for the practice of politics in the Western world. That ideas should have consequences is hardly a novel suggestion, but that the ideas of German thinkers in particular should be of interest to all mankind was noted in Heinrich Heine's apocalyptic prose in 1855:

> Our remotest descendants alone will be able to judge whether we are to be blamed or praised for having first produced our philosophy and then our revolution. . . . Thought precedes action as lightning precedes thunder. . . . When you hear its crash, which will be unlike anything before in the history of the world, you will know that German thunder has at last hit the mark.[198]

What is of crucial importance in the study of political theory is the nature of the politics, the "thunder," that follows the idea, the "lightning" of German thought. In this connection, Thomas Kuhn's study of scientific

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[198]Heinrich Heine, "The Meaning of German Philosophy," in The Poetry and Prose of Heinrich Heine, selected ed. Frederick Ewen (New York: The Citadel Press, 1948), pp. 759-761.

thought noted:

> The historian of science may be tempted to exclaim that when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them . . . during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. . . . In so far as their only recourse to that world is through what they see and do, we may want to say that after a revolution scientists are responding to a different world.[199]

Now, as Kuhn was fully aware, it is not, of course, that the world itself has literally changed, but rather that the changed perceptions of the world are so radically altered that men may act as if reality itself has in fact changed. On this point, Heine observed, with remarkable insight, "Our philosophical revolution is at an end. Hegel completed its grand cycle. Since then we have had merely a development and extension of the doctrines of the philosophy of nature."[200] This accurate observation by a German poet over a century ago is still basically true.

The modern idea of the full future paradigm, implicit in Hegel, was to be worked out in its greatest detail and implications by Marx and the Marxists. As such, Marxism may rightfully be termed the most radical of the full future ideologies: the most nearly consistent in the relationship between its theories and its practice. Practice is more closely related to theory in Marxism than in most other traditions of the full future world view, and for this reason

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[199]Kuhn, p. 110.

[200]Heine, p. 758.

the study of Marxist politics will give us the most valuable insight into the implications of a full future paradigm. It is here, more clearly than anywhere else, that the problems of theory and practice are most acute and the inherent difficulties of this particular world view are best observed.

In describing the intellectual converts to Communist revolution during the inter-war period of the 1920s and 1930s, R. H. S. Crossman has said, "They had a heightened perception of the spirit of the age, and felt more acutely than others both its frustrations and its hopes."[201] This is a fairly accurate statement if it is understood to mean that the Communist converts he described were very much the products of their era and that they both articulated and absorbed the climate of opinion in which they found themselves. In a secular age, Communism became the "new faith" which filled the spiritual void in their lives after "the death of God." The vanguard of this new faith, the liberal wing of the "intelligentsia," was, as Czeslaw Milosz found it, "warm-hearted and good . . . a friend of mankind. Not mankind as it is, but as it should be."[202] The implication of a love for mankind "as it should be" represented not only the strong futuristic component so characteristic of

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[201] Richard H. S. Crossman (ed.), The God That Failed (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 3.

[202] Czeslaw Milosz, The Captive Mind (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), p. 10.

modern thought, but the equally significant, congruent belief that man, after all, was the creator who would make these "new men." We should not, therefore, be surprised at a tendency toward ruthlessness in a future so imagined.

For those liberal intellectuals who recoiled in genuine horror the overt nihilism of the growing fascist movements and who had lost their belief in a divine purpose, Communism appeared to be the only alternative offering purpose and rational direction for society. But by the twentieth century, "rational" had too often come to bear the connotations that German Romanticism, culminating in Hegel and Marx, had given it.[203] Rational often meant the "necessary" rather than the "good" as Aristotle would have understood the term. "Rational," too, carried with it the connotation of the emotional bond of community and sense of "belonging" that tied the intellectual to the worker and peasant. The intellectual and activist spokesmen for the worker and peasant, many of whom indeed came from working or peasant class backgrounds, all read and referred to the same holy scriptures of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and could

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[203]Gabriel A. Almond, The Appeals of Communism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 258, notes with special emphasis that the Communist Party is more likely to appeal to the person of sentiment than to the one who relies on what Almond calls "rational interest." Although some difficulties may be present in Almond's choice of vocabulary, the emotional appeals of absolute justice in Marxism and frequently in socialism among "intellectuals" deserves attention.

converse with one another in the same terminology and from the same reference point.[204] It was the pull of a better future, away from the corrupted past and decadent present, that propelled so many persons into the political trajectory of Communism in the twentieth century.[205]

If we are properly to understand these converts to the new faith of Communism, that is, to Marxism-Leninism, in terms of the cumulative impact of an idea of the future on the historical climate of opinion, we must endeavor also to comprehend the nature of the political actions that flow from these ideas. Men can no more avoid changing their politics when they change their ideas about themselves and the world around them--that is, about "reality" itself--than they can avoid the consequences of the politics they fashion. The crucial question here, however, is the presumed "reality" upon which revolutionary action in the Marxist tradition has rested. If Marxism was founded upon an error of profound magnitude, as I have suggested, then we should expect Marxist behavior patterns to appear perverse from a genuinely rational perspective. Indeed, there is a growing tendency among some observers to link personal manifestations of neurosis to the prevailing norms in society as a whole, that is, to trace positive relationships

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[204]Milosz, pp. 7-9.

[205]Hoffer, pp. 8-9, 69-70.

between culture patterns and patterns of neurosis.[206] Doctor Karen Horney, perhaps the leading authority on the subject, has noted:

> The fact that in general the majority of individuals in a culture have to face the same problems suggests the conclusion that these problems have been created by the specific life conditions existing in that culture. . . . Hence, in speaking of the neurotic personality of our time, I not only mean that there are neurotic persons having essential peculiarities in common, but also that these basic similarities are essentially produced by the difficulties existing in our time and culture.[207]

When the political actions of a specific cultural environment consciously aim at the creation of a utopian-type heaven on earth, therefore, we are reminded by Dr. Horney that "one of the main characteristics of neurosis . . . is the shift of energies from developing the given potentials of the real self to developing the fictitious potentials of the idealized self."[208] The ideal, of course, in order to be attainable, must of necessity be a future self, and

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[206]The most obvious example of this, of course, is Sigmund Freud. More specifically, however, Dr. Karen Horney has explored this in two principal works, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1964), and Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950). Dr. Horney first set forth her views in summary form in an excellent article, "Culture and Neurosis," American Sociological Review, I, No. 2 (April, 1936).

[207]Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time, p. 34. John Dewey argued essentially the same point--that ideas of freedom may be related to a specific culture and intellectual environment.

[208]Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth, p. 166; Milosz, pp. 106-128.

hence the claims the individual makes on the future can become an indispensable means of actualizing an idealized image of self or society.[209] The idea of a perfect future is central to the psychology of neurotic behavior and is joined tightly and inevitably with the congruent notion of present decadence and corruption.

The idealized image of the self or society that coerces a person toward the "should" is destructive in its very nature, both of the individuals who express such drives, and of the persons and societies with whom they come in contact. For even if a person manages to mold himself into a behavioristic perfection, he can do so only by relinquishing his sponteneity and the authenticity of his feelings and beliefs. "These shoulds aim in fact, like any political tyranny, at the extinction of the individual."[210] For Communists, what Milosz has called "The Method" acts as the vehicle for the coercion of individual behavior, with "the method" defined as the working out of the implications of Marxism.[211] For the neurotic with an idealized image of the future, the mind becomes the supreme reality. Or, perhaps more accurately, he sees in the external world around him the "second realities"--what he imagines about

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[209] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[210] Ibid., p. 118.

[211] Milosz, p. 199; Almond, pp. 258-294.

the world and himself. "The infinite powers the neurotic ascribes to himself are, after all, powers of the mind."[212]

It is no wonder that so many contemporary intellectuals, following in the agnostic or atheistic traditions of Hegel and Marx, believe in heaven on earth. They imagine themselves to be in hell; and a person in hell is most likely to dream of a heaven. As Dr. Horney again relates:

> Man, in reaching out for the Infinite and Absolute, also starts destroying himself. When he makes a pact with the devil, who promises him glory, he has to go to hell--the hell within himself.[213]

This is certainly true whenever men draw into themselves the idea of the Absolute, even as "Absolute Knowledge," and in the process destroy their conception and common-sense experience of the dualism between themselves and perfection. It should not surprise us if the person who is the friend of mankind "as it should be" rather than as it "is," in the process of attempting to create "new men," should destroy real men.[214]

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[212] Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth, p. 91; Voegelin, "Debate and Existence," passim.

[213] Ibid., p. 154.

[214] Arthur Koestler has replied to this line of reasoning with the statement:

> "If on the one hand over-sensitivity to social injustice and obsessional craving for Utopia are signs of neurotic maladjustment, society may, on the other hand, reach a state of decay where the neurotic rebel causes more joy in heaven than the sane executive who orders pigs to be drowned under the eyes of starving men."

In Crossman, p. 17. Arthur Koestler is discussed in depth in Chapter III.

In part, the destructiveness of politics for the full future paradigm can be found in the quasi-religious, messianic nature of Marxism. Frank S. Meyer, himself a one-time member of the American Communist Party, has noted that the religious aspects of Marxist psychology, euphemistically labeled "science," gives its possessor a tremendous feeling of power and freedom of action which can be summed up, to paraphrase Hegel, in "the recognition of necessity."[215] The coercive nature of the "should" is destructive of the concept of personality, as Dr. Horney has noted, in that the necessity of molding a "new man," who is different, presumably, from the "old men," destroys sponteneity at its source; the "recognition of the necessity" of a harmonious future leaves little room for anything but consistent homogeneity. Gabriel Almond is correct in noting that Communist converts form a remarkably heterogeneous collection that may be studied in its diversity. But what he fails to appreciate is the valid distinction Meyer makes between Communist types, and the Communist type. Meyer has maintained that although many different types of persons may decide to become Communists, only one Communist type exists: the ideal model by which

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[215]Frank S. Meyer, The Moulding of Communists: The Training of the Communist Cadre (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1961), p. 16. Meyer goes on to observe, however, that despite the quasi-religious nature of Marxism, it lacks the most intrinsic characteristics of religion--piety, humility, and love.

all individuals are judged.[216] The "ideal Communist," as Meyer relates from first-hand experience, is the one who has subordinated his intellect to "the concept of History as an inexorable god whose ways are revealed 'scientifically' through the doctrine and method of Marxism-Leninism."[217] The process of "moulding Communists" by an essentially neurotic personality type would be all the more surprising if it did not tend to be violent. Victor Serge inadvertantly captured the spirit of this violence when he wrote:

> Individual destinies scarcely count in the drama in which the future of the world is at stake. Like nature itself, history in the making is neither just nor unjust: it is necessary. Sometimes it grinds down those who fervently seek to make themselves its instruments. That's not very important, provided the right road is found, the end reached and that marching men clear the bar.[218]

Writing in the middle 1920s, Beatrice Webb, one of the most notable members of the English Fabian Socialists, described her initial conversion to socialism in terms of a progressivist vision of the future: "It was this vision of a gradually emerging new social order, to be based on the deliberate adjustment of economic faculty and economic desire . . . that seemed to me to afford a practicable framework for the future cooperative common-

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[216] Ibid., p. 13.

[217] Ibid., p. 16.

[218] Victor Serge, Russia Twenty Years After, trans. Max Shachtman (New York: Hillman-Carl, Inc., 1937), p. 288.

wealth."[219] Not surprisingly, scientific socialism for Beatrice Webb, her husband Sidney, and many socialists of the 1920s and 1930s meant Marxism. Although Beatrice Webb never joined the Communist Party, she was what came to be called a "fellow traveler." After the Russian Revolution of 1917, she spent much of the remainder of her life in an uncritical defense of the Revolution under both Lenin and Stalin; she knew beyond doubt that this was "the wave of the future."[220] During the height of the Moscow trials of the 1930s, she wrote unflinchingly that "tested by the Constitution of the Soviet Union as revised and enacted in 1936, the USSR is the most inclusive and equalized democracy in the world."[221]

By "science," both she and her husband meant "Science the Salvation of Mankind," objective and impersonal in its iron law of behavior: "We must clearly understand that, to the Bolsheviks, the science in which, as an instrument, they put so much faith, is sharply distinguished from metaphysics or theology."[222] But necessity is a far cry from

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[219]Beatrice Webb, My Apprenticeship (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), p. 381. The best discussion of the politics of Beatrice Webb is Letwin, pp. 321-378.

[220]Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 1141-1143 (hereafter referred to as Webb, Soviet Communism).

[221]Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The Truth About Soviet Russia (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), p. 19.

[222]Webb, Soviet Communism, II, p. 949.

"ethics" or "morality," and the Webbs could express the spirit of a cold and merciless "science" of futurology in the starkest of terms:

> Political offenders also need to be convinced that what they rebel against is, if they would only try it, wiser and better and more successful than their own mistaken policy. They may need segregation during the process of conversion; and if persuasion ultimately fails . . . they may (like incurable lunatics) require permanent but kindly seclusion from the world.[223]

Beatrice Webb and many others found in Marxism the natural outlet for the desire to follow a political messiah--to find salvation through political action--and for the acting out of a perverse notion of "science" and human engineering. If she were an intellectual exception to the twentieth century, there would be no reason to remember Beatrice Webb. It is the widespread phenomenon she represents that is important.

In a more academic context, Harold Laski voiced a similar faith, saying that there is "nothing in the nature of the Bolshevik state which is alien from the democratic ideal."[224] He wholly rejected the idea that Fascism and Bolshevism should be two sides of the same coin. Together with numerous other scholars, he saw the choice as one of either Bolshevism or Fascism, with no middle ground, only

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[223] Ibid., II, p. 995.

[224] Harold J. Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1943), p. 265 (hereafter referred to as Laski, Revolution of Our Time).

opposites. He observed, with considerably more accuracy, that

> . . . we can only understand the Russian Revolution in the degree that we recognize it as the first stage in a fundamental transformation of the social principles of Western civilization. If we regard it as less than this, we shall wholly mistake its nature.[225]

Because Laski accepted as irrefutable fact the idea that "the future belongs to socialism" and because Russia obviously was socialist, the drama of events unfolding in the Soviet Union was thought to reflect a vision of the future.[226] Opposition to this progress was nothing less than "counter-revolution which denies the validity of an historical movement."[227] Even after the infamous Moscow trials of the 1930s virtually had become a matter of public record, Laski could justify the purge in terms of the future fulfillment. When he wrote, "The great end of the Revolution remains in being," he meant that its final end was yet to be realized.[228] The Russian Revolution had begun the work of transformation, and "as scientific progress subdues nature to the purposes of man, the idea of the heavenly city of early Christianity gives way to the dream

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[225] Ibid., p. 42.

[226] Harold J. Laski, Faith, Reason, and Civilization: An Essay in Historical Analysis (New York: The Viking Press, 1944), p. 185.

[227] Laski, Revolution of Our Time, p. 261.

[228] Ibid., p. 69.

in which the reward of man's effort is not salvation in the life to come but happiness upon this earth itself."[229] Laski's mature reflection on the nature of the social reality around him, his world view, in effect, was determined in large part by his conception of the future. If the future belonged to the "dream" of science, progress, socialism, and political salvation, how should the past and present be interpreted?

The most momentous political events in Laski's own time were the Russian Communist Revolution and the German National Socialist Revolution. The fact that the latter called itself "socialism" did not appear, in Laski's view, to contradict his observation that "the future belongs to socialism." By his definition, Fascism was not true socialism. The Bolsheviks stood for progress and the Nazis for decadence, and that made the difference:

> The Bolsheviks might stand for a Red Terror; but that was associated with big and creative purposes the common sense of the masses was able to appreciate. The White Terror seemed to have little purpose save terror itself.[230]

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[229]Laski, Faith, Reason, and Civilization, p. 60.

[230]Laski, Revolution of Our Time, p. 46. Laski's comments on the creative uses of terror should be read in conjunction with two works in a similar vein: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), and Leon Trotsky, The Defense of Terrorism (Terrorism and Communism) (London: The Labour Publishing Company, 1921).

Presumably, then, terror could be justified so long as it served some "big and creative purpose," the construction of a heaven on earth.

Laski "knew" that the rough outlines of the future to which this progress was tending lay fully within the tradition perpetuated by the major articulators or a full future paradigm. The future would be anarchical in the sense that man's history was aimed at "emancipation both from the tyranny of nature and the tyranny of authority," which was to say the experienced history of the human condition.[231] Science, conceived purely as methodology, had destroyed the old concepts of authority; hence, for Laski, it was "difficult to see upon what basis the civilized tradition [could] be rebuilt save that upon which the idea of the Russian Revolution [was] founded."[232] As Darwin had destroyed the conception of an immutable human nature, he had also freed men in a manner unimaginable a century before; for now men could "experiment with confidence upon the assumption that there [were] alternatives."[233] Of course, this observation must rest upon the assumption that man has no future, but only history, and that, in fact, there are viable alternatives. The metaphysical basis of this view

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[231] Laski, Faith, Reason, and Civilization, p. 10.

[232] Ibid., p. 51.

[233] Ibid., p. 91.

of the future, however, escaped critical comment.

Because the past represented frustration and despair, Laski appears to have embraced the future as the only alternative; only by imagining the future could the end of decadence and a subsequent realization of harmony be visualized. Thus, whatever hastened this end was justified and whatever retarded it was immoral. Laski wrote:

> Lenin was surely right when the end he sought for was to build his heaven upon earth and to write the precepts of its faith into the inner fabric of a universal humanity. He was surely right, too, when he recognized that the prelude to peace is a war, and that it is futile to suppose that the tradition of countless generations can be changed, as it were, overnight. And he was not less right in his insistence that if the claims of a just and rational society are to prevail, those who believe in its claims must give it the strength and power out of which victory comes.[234]

The "just and rational society" of the future had arrived under Stalin, and in this sense it must be maintained that the futuristic component of Laski's thought was shaped by his vision of the future as present in the Soviet Union. A system such as Stalin's Russia "works well," and he predicted "with some assurance that . . . the whole world will go to school to Russia in the next generation."[235] Much of the world did go to school to Russia both later, as Laski predicted, and during the time in which he penned these lines. An entire generation of Western intellectuals

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[234] Ibid., p. 184.

[235] Harold J. Laski, Law and Justice in Soviet Russia (London: Hogarth Press, 1935), p. 31.

found Russian Communism and German or Spanish Fascism to be the most momentous events of their lives, and they responded in a manner with which Beatrice Webb and Harold Laski could well understand and sympathize.

The God That Failed

In 1949, R. H. S. Crossman edited and published The God That Failed, a collection of autobiographical sketches by six distinguished members of the Western intellectual community who had once embraced and had then rejected Communism. In his introduction, he noted that their common link was a willingness to sacrifice "bourgeois liberties" in order to defeat Fascism. In general, they despaired of Western values and felt what Crossman termed "a premonition of catastrophe."[236] That the authors had embraced Communism because it seemed to offer a hope for the future at a time when they recognized no authoritative substitute also is obvious from a careful reading of the essays. If Marxism was social science, the word "science" alone appeared to offer the promise of authoritative pronouncements. If an all too evident undertone of desperation accompanied their alliance with the future as proposed by Soviet Communism, this was because, for the most part, they had come to place their faith in man's power to

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[236]Crossman, pp. 4-5; the six contributors are: Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, André Gide, Richard Wright, Stephen Spender, and Louis Fischer.

shape his own future even while they harbored secret doubts about that future. As they confessed in Crossman, their zeal in the pursuit of the Marxist millenium was often in inverse proportion to their root confidence in it.

Reasons why such diverse persons as Ignazio Silone and Andre Gide, Arthur Koestler and Richard Wright, Stephen Spender and Louis Fischer should have found in Communism a solution to the decadence of their age makes a fascinating story. Why they ultimately came to reject Communism is a part of the same story. As they all make abundantly clear, their acceptance of the Party's doctrines was based on the shared belief that a rational and harmonious future should be planned by the scientific application of the laws of history to human behavior. Following Party associations that ranged from those of a few short years as "fellow travelers" to those of card-carrying membership for up to ten years, the authors also make it clear that they rejected Communism for much the same reasons that had attracted them in the first place: a hope for the future, but a hope that was crushed by the realities they could no longer ignore of everyday political life in the Party. Curiously, however, when they left the Party, invariably disillusioned but wiser, they did not completely reject the vision of the future that had led them to their predicament, but often only the soiled version of it that had confronted them in Stalin's Russia. They tended to echo the sentiments of Victor Serge that it

was not they who had abandoned the Party, but rather the Party which had left them. "I have lived my whole life for the Party," one of Serge's characters cries out in anguish,

> . . . sick and degraded though it may be, our Party. That I am loyal to the Party, whatever it may be, whatever it may do, that if I must perish, crushed by my Party, I consent. . . . But I warn the villains who are killing us that they are killing the Party.[237]

Visions of a heaven on earth continued to motivate many of the authors for years afterward, but they were visions made all the more hopeless because, outside the Party by choice, the authors recognized that they lacked the efficient means to attain their dream.

The writings of these ex-Marxists provides us with an excellent microcosm of the idea of the full future paradigm in the modern world view. Because Marxism itself stands or falls largely on the basis of its explicit notion of a future classless society, their acceptance of Communism can provide us with insight into the appeals of this type of future, and it can serve to articulate the meaning of this future view in terms of personal psychology. The authors' subsequent rejections of Communism in practice can provide us with further insight into the persistence of the full future notion in the modern world in spite of certain obvious difficulties inherent in the concept. So persistent

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[237]Serge, Comrade Tulayev, pp. 178-179. See especially Serge, From Lenin to Stalin, for a fuller development of this theme of degradation of the Revolution at the hands of an unresponsive, bureaucratized Party.

is the idea that the future can be known and therefore predicted with scientific certainty and precision, that as a concept it must be considered to be one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the modern world view. A discussion of part of it must therefore reveal some of the most important components of contemporary political theorizing.

The individuals to be discussed in depth with respect to their experiences with the problems encountered in a full future paradigm are Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and André Gide. Others could have been selected, but these three have been chosen because of the completeness of their work on the problem of the future and the insights to be derived from their illustrations of specific points. Common threads of thought do exist, to bind these diverse literary-political types together. It is this unity within diversity that requires explanation.

The primary purpose of a detailed study of the creative works of these particular authors will not be strictly to gain an historical or biographical perspective, although such a perspective does provide an indispensable backdrop. Rather, this study will focus on significant aspects of their respective world views relative to the political activity of their time. As members of the Communist Party during the 1920s and 1930s, they viewed the worldwide political arena as one of revolution. Thus, this inquiry into

their ideas of the future will be concerned with a revolutionary future--within the tradition that I have identified as the development and articulation of the full future paradigm.

As is true of most fiction in literature, the created works cannot be construed simply as biographical accounts projected onto a fictionalized setting. The personal experiences of the authors, especially with revolutions, no doubt explain much of the creative impulse itself; but as with all works of creation, only a portion of the creator's thought is revealed in the thing created, and it is not always the most important part. The fiction of Koestler, Silone, and Gide is not always the undiluted view of a camera; often it is a prism or even a view through the wrong end of a telescope. The composition of the work in these cases has become as much a part of the reality to which the authors address themselves as are the sources of the inspirations from which they developed. An appreciation of these factors will help us more fully to evaluate the modern world view of the idea of the future as it appears in the work of these authors. They have not only received and recorded the modern idea of the future; they have also helped to articulate it and, at their best, to probe its implications. My purpose here is to explore it with them.

CHAPTER III

ARTHUR KOESTLER: BETWEEN THE YOGI AND THE COMMISSAR

"East of the Rhine, in 1930," wrote Arthur Koestler in his autobiography, "there was no escape from the choice between Fascism and Communism. Western Europeans have never understood the compulsory character of that dilemma and the historical fatality behind it."[238]

Whether or not other alternatives can be shown to have been open, it is crucial to observe that Koestler at the time experienced the conflict, as he has ever since, within a dialectical context of "either-or"; there was no middle ground for him, and the extremes, at least when he wrote his autobiography, were both of questionable value to him. As he has described it, "The eternal predicament of man, the tragic conflict inherent in his nature . . . is the conflict between expediency and morality" in which "both roads end as blind alleys."[239]

This problem of ends and means in political action is inherently insoluble; it offers no prospect of solution

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[238]Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 270.

[239]Arthur Koestler, "The Dilemma of Our Times: Noble Ends and Ignoble Means," Commentary, I, No. 8 (June, 1946), 1-2 (hereafter referred to as Koestler, "Dilemma of Our Times").

by Hegelian synthesis. As Koestler perceives the question, "It is not an invention of the philosophers, but a conflict which we face at each step in our daily lives."[240] When the dilemma is followed ruthlessly to its logical conclusions, as Koestler is prone to do, there apparently can be no extraction of men from their predicament. And herein lies the origin not only of the most powerful and creative expressions of Koestler's thought, but also of his own spiritual agony.

The eternal struggle between "noble ends and ignoble means" has been symbolized by Koestler in the images of the yogi and the commissar. The yogi believes that means alone are justified, whereas the commissar places his belief in ends. Opposed as they are to each other, the gray area between them is a static no man's land of political inactivity.[241] Within such a framework, political action becomes the monopoly of these two types; never is it conceived of as representing any third alternative. Social movements between the yogi and the commissar philosophies are simply points along the arc of a pendulum that favors first one and then the other, with neither direction representing a

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[240] Ibid., 2; Arthur Koestler, The Trail of the Dinosaur and Other Essays (London: Collins, 1955), p. 13 (hereafter referred to as Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur).

[241] Arthur Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar and Other Essays (New York: Macmillan Co., 1946), pp. 3-4 (hereafter referred to as Koestler, Yogi and Commissar).

permanent ethic of social action.[242] Political arguments of whatever persuasion, in the final analysis, are all meaningless: ". . . the argument will lead nowhere, for the real issue remains between the Yogi and the Commissar, between fundamental conceptions of Change from Without and Change from Within."[243] The means either become subordinated to the end, or they effectively undermine it. "Theoretically you may build up elaborate liberal or religious halfway houses; but if burdened with responsibility, and confronted with a practical decision to be taken, you have to choose one way or the other."[244] Choice implies action, positive or negative, and inaction is to lend passive support to one side or the other. Inaction is therefore a practical impossibility for man in society, since passive support is itself a form of action.

Although both positions are pictured as unsatisfactory, it does not therefore follow that they are unsatisfactory for the same reasons. The dilemma of the yogi is quite different from that of the commissar, and Koestler is noticeably less sympathetic with it than with the latter. Gandhi of India presents himself to Koestler as the model of yogi thought and behavior in political action. Koestler's

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[242] Ibid., pp. 12-14.

[243] Ibid., p. 4.

[244] Ibid., p. 5.

hostile attitude toward Gandhi is reflective of the lingering traces of Marxist ideology in his writing, especially that of his earliest period. The political path of a leader such as Gandhi is strewn with practical consequences that extend beyond his own person and immediate followers. Politics in the context of the Gandhian ethic means in reality a "passive submission to bayoneting and raping; to villages without sewerage, septic childbeds and trachoma." Nor does the problem end here, for when the yogi does decide to take up arms against injustices, the decision "leads to a naive, amateurish, and often crankish approach to social problems. Such dilettantism is fraught with dangers; the most obvious among them is the danger of quietism, escapism, of sinning by omission."[245] Symbolically the yogi represents the wisdom of the Orient, whose notion of tolerance without charity has produced, according to Koestler, "as much misery and suffering as the Christian philosophy of charity without tolerance."[246]

If the yogi is damned by sins of omission, the commissar is damned at the opposite end of the spectrum for sins of commission. For the commissar and the yogi are not simply situated at opposite poles; they are mirror images of each other. The bond that unites them is their very

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[245] Ibid., pp. 6, 243-244.

[246] Arthur Koestler, Drinkers of Infinity (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 91.

existence as opposites. The yogi is motivated by tolerance without love; therefore, the commissar acts out of a feeling of love without tolerance. And, as Milosz has rightly observed, the love is not for men as they are, but for men as the Commissar imagines them to be. His motives may be unimpeachably pure, but he invariably becomes corrupted in his efforts to get from here to there (wherever "there" may be). The context of the commissar's view of the end is an idea of utopian "destiny," as opposed to the yogi's ideal of "freedom," and it represents "the need to find some organizing principle, a universal order behind the threatening chaos of the natural world."[247] For the commissar, men achieve this highest expression of their nature whenever their actions, reasoned or not, correspond to their inevitable destiny as citizen-builders of a future heaven on earth. The problem, however, as Koestler rightly recognizes, is that the ordering principle for the commissar has no connection with anything higher than himself.[248] In the phraseology of Arthur Lovejoy, the link in the Great Chain of Being has been broken. For Koestler himself, the result is a catastrophe, for "the seat of the organizing power [has] shifted. . . . Destiny which had operated from above now operates from below."[249] The commissar,

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[247] Koestler, Yogi and Commissar, p. 219.

[248] Ibid., p. 9.

[249] Ibid., p. 219.

in other words, establishes and becomes the measure of the ordering principle. His end justifies his means.

The response to the alternatives symbolized by the yogi and the commissar is compounded further, in Koestler's view, because it is a neurotic response. Koestler makes the point repeatedly in virtually all his writings: "The evidence suggests that twentieth-century man is a political neurotic . . . [who] . . . carries his private Iron Curtain inside his skull."[250] The problem of European politics cannot be understood, then, exclusively in political terms --this psychological dimension also exists to exacerbate further the dilemma of ends and means. As is characteristic of neurosis in general, this particular psychological factor within the field of politics results in a falsification--a compulsive, arbitrary categorization or compartmentalization--of reality, which Koestler points to in "the European's obsessive preoccupation with the alternatives of 'Right' and 'Left'. His real dilemma is, of course, the

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[250]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, pp. 215, 217; Arthur Koestler, Invisible Writing (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954), p. 191. During World War II, Koestler wrote:

> "The relation between the intellectual and neurosis is not accidental, but functional. To think and behave independently puts one automatically into opposition against the majority . . . and to belong to a minority is in itself a neurosis forming situation. From the nonconformist to the crank there is only one step."

In Arthur Koestler, "The Intelligentsia," Partisan Review, XI, No. 3 (Summer, 1944), 274.

choice between West and East, between relative freedom and total unfreedom."[251] The symbolism of the words "Right" and "Left" appear to Koestler to have taken on a contemporary meaning which is not only at odds with its original usage a hundred years ago, when the terms represented reality rather than a substitute for it, but have also acquired the characteristic of a "second reality" in themselves. As he states the problem:

> . . . the term "Left" has become a verbal fetish whose cult sidetracks attention from the real issues. It is at the same time a dangerous anachronism, for it implies the existence of a continuous spectrum between liberal progressives and the worshipers of tyranny and terror. And such is the magic power of words over the mind that European Socialists who think of themselves as "men of the Left" were unconsciously led from a fallacious verbal identification to a real feeling of solidarity with the Communists.[252]

Both the yogi and the commissar as ideal types, then, are neurotic in their actions. Their differences in behavior spring from an all-pervasive problem in European civilization which is characterized by certain distinctive

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[251] Arthur Koestler, "Appalling Alternatives," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIV, No. 2 (January 13, 1951), 19.

[252] Ibid., 19-20. In a critical review of this article as it was reprinted in Trail of the Dinosaur, Hans Meyerhoff has attacked Koestler's analysis with the remark that had he probed deeper into the causes of this modern decay of language, "he might have discovered that bigger issues are at stake than emotive language and neurotic behavior patterns. Behind the failure of words--or the neurotic response to political symbols--lies a failure of theory." In Hans Meyerhoff, "Farewell to Politics," Commentary, XXI, No. 6 (June, 1956), 597.

traits common to both. Koestler has identified seven such examples, which he considers crucial and has discussed at length in his novels. Briefly stated, this neurosis consists of: (1) a "mental curtain" which screens out unpleasant alternatives; (2) repressed "guilt feelings" which Marxism in particular has been able to exploit effectively; (3) a "collective amnesia" which has resulted in (4) an "escape from reality" in theoretical speculations regarding political actions (as Koestler says, "One of the outstanding features of neurotic behavior is the patient's inability to learn from his past experiences.")' (5) "fetishism" which Koestler describes as the worship of "symbols" for reality in politics rather than the reality itself; (6) submission to the influence of those persons, such as Sartre, whom he characterizes as "the eternal adolescents"; and (7) "the desire to belong" to something larger than one's self, which is a very human response in everyone, neurotic or not.[253] The recurrence of these responses as themes in his novels constitutes the core of his theoretical discussions on ends and means in revolutionary ethics.

The Pull of the Future

The problem of ends and means, the question of ethics in political action, never would arise in the first

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[253]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, pp. 215-231.

place if the future were not in doubt. Within the context of Koestler's dialectic of political ethics, whenever the outcome of any series of actions is presumed to be "known" in advance, the commissar's mentality is likely to prevail. If, on the other hand, the future is either completely opaque or merely an extension of the present, the yogi ethic is more likely to be dominant in society.

In the revolutionary dynamics of the modern world, the sharpest horn of the dilemma for Koestler is not reserved for yogi-inspired principles, which he tends to regard as self-evidently unworkable, but rather for the commissar's challenge. The reasons for this are twofold: first, the commissar is a far more common personality type in the modern world; second, and considerably more important, his principle of the utopian end absolutely justifying the means of arriving there reflects "our own weakness that though we reject it, we have not found a complete answer to it."[254] The commissar is future-oriented and defines purpose in life as any activity that works toward the utopian ideal ordained by God, History, Übermenschen, or whatever. "Devotion to pure Utopia, and revolt against a polluted society, these are the two poles which provide the tension of all militant creeds."[255] In this view, it

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[254]Koestler, Drinkers of Infinity, p. 188.

[255]Arthur Koestler, in Crossman, p. 16. For a further discussion of this point, see John Atkins, Arthur Koestler (New York: Roy Publishers, 1956), p. 47.

is true of all action that is not merely a variety of yogi ethics that "the pull of the future is as real and sometimes more important than the pressures of the past."[256] The symbolism attached to the second reality of a concept of the future becomes crucial at this juncture, because it guides the commissar, and those who accept the symbolism, with respect to the legitimacy of his behavior.

The utopian end accepted as either implicit or explicit in the commissar's justification of action has reached its contemporary crescendo due to the decadence of present society. Although his actions in fact serve only to compound the modern problem of the human condition, his motivation originates as a striving to overcome this decadence by the action of his own will. Koestler phrases it in this manner:

> If on the one hand oversensitivity to social injustice and obsessional craving for Utopia are signs of neurotic maladjustment, society may, on the other hand, reach such a state of decay where the neurotic rebel causes more joy in heaven than the sane executive who orders pigs to be drowned under the eyes of starving men.[257]

But the utopianism of which Koestler speaks is not true of utopias in general as they have been discussed since Plato; rather, it evolves from particular notions that are peculiar to the twentieth century. This is true

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[256]Koestler, Drinkers of Infinity, p. 273.

[257]Koestler, in Crossman, p. 17.

because from his perspective, the symbolic objects of the natural instincts in human psychology that dispose us to accept utopian thought are relative to the particular time and society in which they are found. Koestler notes that "all Utopias, even horror-Utopias, tell us more about the time when they were written than about the future they purport to predict.[258] This not only gives the commissar's utopian symbolism a relativistic psychological cast; it also ties his neurosis to the particular cultural and social order in which he finds himself.

For Koestler personally, as well as for almost all the characters in his novels, this particular situation lies always within the context of the twentieth century Communist and Russian Revolutions. The symbolism of the future is Marxian and the commissar's interpretations of the symbols are directed by Marxist thought, at least as

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[258]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, p. 148. John Dewey, in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 235, discussed this concept as a problem of historicism:

> "If the fact of selection is acknowledged to be primary and basic, we are committed to the conclusion that all history is necessarily written from the standpoint of the present, and is, in an inescapable sense, the history not only of the present but of that which is contemporaneously judged to be important in the present." (p. 235)

That which is judged to be important in the present has a futuristic component for Dewey since the present is really concerned with the effects of today's actions on tomorrow. See also Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth.

Koestler understands it. He is quick to add, however, that "it is not Marxist theory itself which turns people into rebels but a psychological disposition which makes them susceptible to revolutionary theories."[259] The chain of causality, in other words, begins with neurotic psychology rather than the specific ideas of Marxism. It is after an acceptance of Marxist symbolism that these symbols assume a reified status and then become a reference point for political action. In order to understand more fully Koestler's critique of the commissar-type morality, it is important to keep this sequence in mind.

It is not necessary, of course, that any idea of the future be either "determined" or "indeterminate" as these terms are generally understood. Within the context of the commissar's dilemma, however, the source of his morality does imply an a priori notion of historical determinism. And it is precisely this implication that Koestler both rejects and simultaneously cannot refute. It would be a mistake to restructure Koestler's thinking on the subject in such a way that it appears with greater consistency and clarity than it possesses in fact. The dilemma of ends and means stands out sharply and in stark contrast to every other consideration, but not as an answer.

Caught between the extremes of political ethics, life for Koestler can only be purgatory or hell; there is

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[259]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 33.

no heaven. The closest thing to heaven is the commissar's notion of a determined, earthly utopia, which, when realized, has become a living hell. To say the end justifies the means is to say in effect that the end is "known," and therefore that the choice of means is optional because they will all result in the same "end." If the end indeed does justify the means, therefore, the argument against the commissar's means invariably sounds far less convincing than if the reverse were thought to be the case. This is all the more true if the present is conceived simply as a way station to the "known" future. The commissar's neurotic attachment to a futuristic symbolism thus has perverted political ethics in part because he sees this symbolism as "determined" in the sense that his end, a future order, is "known" beforehand.

Koestler's rejection of determinism is based upon his exceptionally knowledgeable and sensitive insight into the philosophical awareness that directs and guides modern science. Modern physics has destroyed the concept of a determined universe as it was understood before the latter half of the nineteenth century. But an abandonment of determinism does not necessarily mean the acceptance of free will. Instead, Koestler observes, science has replaced the laws of causality with the laws of probability and has interpreted the latter "in a smugly rationalistic manner."[260]

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[260] Ibid., p. 295.

Science thus has accepted neutrality in ethics rather than having assumed the burden of responsibility implicit in a notion of free will. It has been the fate of communist revolutions in the twentieth century that the symbolism of the future and the legitimacy that attaches to its ethics were conceived by Marx at a time when a determined physical universe was accepted scientific coinage. In this way the seeds of the corruption of the Russian Revolution had always been inherent in the works of Marx.[261] As with any deterministic philosophy, Marxism is "a system which, once you have stepped inside its magic circle, deprives your critical faculties of any ground to stand on."[262]

Because Marxism is a completely closed system of thought, there is no logical escape from it. Facts are deprived of their value as evidence by a scholastic process of dialectical argument, while objections are invalidated by a shifting of the argument to the psychological motive behind the objection.[263] This excessive rationalism by which Marxian determinism is defended by the commissar mentality has become a dangerous anachronism in the twentieth century. But the results of this outdated mode of thought have been partly redeemed in that, as a

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[261] Ibid., p. 27.

[262] Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 260.

[263] Ibid., pp. 260-261.

consequence of its political ethic, "science has been forced by its own development to recognize its limitations, and thus to make room again for the other way of knowing, whose place it usurped for almost three centuries."[264] By "other way of knowing," Koestler seems here to mean a sort of intuitive mysticism which he describes as an "oceanic feeling."[265] For Koestler, this "oceanic feeling" is experienced midway between submission to a Lockean theory of knowledge and an Aristotelian epistemology. It is never explicitly defined but is assumed to exist somewhere.

If the commissar indeed believes in determinism and the certainty of a future utopia, he does not necessarily act as if he believes in them. Both destiny and freedom, Koestler believes, are rooted in our experience with the world and universe around us. The conflict between them on the existential level is not between "objective" versus "subjective" thought and feeling, but between two instinctual primary experiences. The former is concerned with the need for an "explanation" of nature in the face of its apparent chaos, the latter with ethical systems. Even for the commissar, whether or not he acknowledges it, "the concept of free choice is implicit in

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[264] Koestler, Yogi and Commissar, p. 245.

[265] Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 105. Koestler attributes his use of this term to Sigmund Freud, for whom it meant a mystic or religious experience.

all systems of moral values and ethical imperatives."[266] The conflict between destiny and freedom admits no final solution, and any pragmatic solution can only be temporary. Part of the answer lies, as Koestler puts it, "first to realize that a certain admixture of ruthlessness is inseparable from human progress."[267]

Although Koestler never specifies what is meant by "human progress," his acceptance of the notion of "progress" in the first place shows his recognition of the strength of the commissar's program for action to achieve the goal of a heaven on earth. Our experience with the world may be symbolized only in terms of hell or purgatory, but the hope of achieving heaven cannot be stilled and is in fact "experienced" as a psychological longing for it: there can be no concept of "progress" unless there is progress toward something, either existential or transcendental. For the commissar it is obvious that this progress is of an existential nature to be realized in time. Furthermore, stemming as it does from a very real primary instinct, the fact that there is much truth to the commissar's claims has been tacitly acknowledged by Koestler. The result might well be described as an unresolved ambivalence toward the actions of the commissar and the conflict between

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[266] Koestler, Yogi and Commissar, p. 220.

[267] Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, p. 13; italics mine.

destiny and freedom.[268]

On the scientific level of rational discourse, Koestler is satisfied that the question of determinism versus indeterminism has been safely laid to rest with the presumption in favor of the latter. But in the world of politics, Koestler seems far less certain that his arguments carry much weight. To reject the commissar is to embrace the yogi, along with all the sense of impotency that the exclusive reliance on means characterizes in him. To vacillate between the two means paralysis. When confronted by the need to act, the yogi is always on the defensive against the commissar. The "unwarranted, dogmatic belief in the rationality of the individual is the ultimate reason why democracies are always on the defensive against totalitarian opponents."[269]

The commissar symbolizes the darker side of the human personality that mixes into the equation a certain,

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[268] In his autobiography Koestler wrote, "Astrology is founded on the belief that man is formed by his cosmic environment: Marx held that he is the product of his social environment. I believe both positions to be true." Arrow in the Blue, p. 3.

[269] Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, p. 215. Robert Gorham Davis, "The Sharp Horns of Koestler's Dilemma," The Antioch Review, IV, No. 4 (Winter, 1944-1945), writes that in Koestler's argument with the commissar he has

> ". . . a sense of coming off badly, of not being able to find the terms in which his truth could prevail against the cool logic of the party liners. In his work he rehearses this argument again and again, with a compulsive need to win it. But . . . he never does. (p. 504)

necessary ruthlessness for progress. The difficulty appears to rise whenever the ruthlessness in the mixture becomes excessive, although we never know except by experience what "too much" means. For the end can justify the means, at least sometimes and on a very small scale, "when the results are predictable with reasonable certainty."[270] The industrialization of Russia under Stalin, for example, is defensible as an end, even if the means are not.[271] Where, then, is the line to be drawn?

Within this web of his own approach, Koestler cannot answer the question in the abstract. Rather, it must be considered with each set of circumstances each time the problem arises anew; it is a real and not an abstract problem without consequences. The choice, as he said, represents "a conflict which we face at each step in our daily lives."

The Repentant Sinner

The story of Arthur Koestler's personal experience with the Russian Revolution and its intellectual backwash most likely lies somewhere between the unique and the universal in biographies of twentieth century European

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[270] Ibid., p. 237; Koestler, "Dilemma of Our Time," 2.

[271] Ibid., p. 20.

intellectuals.[272] Both his acceptance and subsequent rejection of the Communist Party were repeated by others many times over during the 1930s under both similar and differing circumstances. From his own personal perspective, part of the uniqueness of his rejection of Communism lay in his having returned to the fold as a prodigal son, and his discovery that he was no longer welcome back. As he observed of the liberal intellectual community's reception of Whitaker Chambers, "For though it is said that one repentant sinner causes more rejoicing in Heaven than ten righteous men, here on earth the public spectacle of a repentant sinner causes at least a feeling of embarrassment, at worst a feeling of revulsion."[273] This is due, he believes, to the curious fact that an ex-Communist or an ex-Catholic is despised because he has "lost faith," whereas the convert is hailed because he has "embraced a faith."[274] The content of whatever is accepted by faith thereby is judged to be

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[272]Meyerhoff has commented, "Koestler is not, as he would like us to believe, the lone prophet crying in the wilderness; he is like the rest of us. His talent has always been to dramatize his own life as if it were the march of history." p. 596. Koestler entered the German Communist Party through the elaborate inter-war Party system organized by Willi Münzenberg. An excellent treatment of this Party network and its operation is Helmut Gruber, "Willi Münzenberg's German Communist Empire 1921-1933," The Journal of Modern History, XXXVIII, No. 3 (September, 1966).

[273]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, p. 56; Invisible Writing, p. 189.

[274]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 391.

less important than the acceptance of "faith" itself.

If it is the fate of the ex-Communists to be despised upon their return to civilization, it is also their duty to inform others of their experiences in the promised land of the Party. The obligation is much like that of the Platonic philosopher who returns to the cave to tell others of his experience with the light of truth, but in the case of the "ex," the urgency appears greater. Since Koestler tends to see his own autobiography as a miniature version of the spiritual and political aberrations of the European soul and society in general, we should do well to keep in mind his dictum regarding any analysis of the body of European politics: "One cannot arrive at a correct diagnosis if one starts with the assumption that the patient is sane."[275]

Koestler's description and analysis of the opposite pulls of the yogi and the commissar are not simply the fanciful creations of his imagination. He has related as an early and continuing sensation an internal conflict between the activism of politics as a vocation and the more quiet

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[275]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, pp. 215-216. Atkins, p. 42, concludes that "in his heart Koestler remains a Communist, but his Communism is the pristine variety of the theorists, not the distinct sample displayed by Soviet Russia." This seems to be a bit strong, although there do remain certain similarities; these, however, may or may not necessarily be attributable to Marx or Marxism per se.

life of scholarly contemplation.[276] He has experienced both at different times, but he relates that originally he saw the problem as one of combining the two attractions at the same time. Reflecting on this conflict in later years, he describes the experience as an ego-dictated, compulsive need to "achieve identity between the subject who knows and the object of its knowing."[277] As a Marxist, he saw the resolution of the conflict in the unity of theory and practice--a united relationship between ideas and their implementation in practice. He experienced within himself a raging moral torment from which he could find no inner relief. It was the recognition of what he regarded as morally unacceptable instincts in his own person that led him to an early obsession with utopian visions of the future.[278] Rebellion against the existing order and faith in a utopian future were both firmly implanted in the very fiber of his being long before he ever considered Communism to be a way out. It was, however, these early experiences that guided his conversion at a later date.[279] It would no doubt be inaccurate to suggest that they "caused" the conversion, but they did make it easier when the opportunity arose.

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[276] Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 104.

[277] Ibid., p. 79.

[278] Koestler, Invisible Writing, pp. 217-220.

[279] Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, pp. 271, 348.

When he joined the Communist Party in 1931, Koestler relates that his knowledge of the universe was "an open book, printed in the language of physical equations and social determinates."[280] He

> . . . still regarded happiness as a problem in social engineering. Russia had undertaken the greatest engineering experiment in history. . . . Marxist theory and Soviet practice were the admirable and ultimate fulfillment of the nineteenth century's ideal of Progress, to which [he] owed allegiance.[281]

Progress through engineering was to be the result of properly applied scientific technology, which included, of course, the scientific analysis of society itself. The determined universe was ethically neutral as was science qua science. Free will, meaning the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions, as he phrased it, was not absent from his equation; but he rejected it precisely because, as he said, "I was not yet ready to accept the burden of freedom."[282]

If neither choice, between that of the yogi and that of the commissar, is particularly desirable, Koestler nevertheless leaves no doubt about which one he prefers when confronted with the necessity of choice. As he puts

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[280]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 15.

[281]Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 279.

[282]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 295. Erich Fromm has suggested that it is a dangerous illusion to presume freedom to be a common human aspiration. "Is there not also, perhaps, besides an innate desire for freedom, an instinctive wish for submission?" In Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1941), p. 6.

it some years later, "In the face of revolting injustice the only honorable attitude is to revolt, and to leave introspection for better times."[283] The revolutionary impulse from which the commissar's ethics springs is itself a noble quality in men, if the results are not always so desirable. Koestler defends his earlier associations with the Party on the grounds that

> . . . to be attracted to the new faith was, I still believe, an honorable error. We were right for the wrong reasons. . . . There is a world of difference between a disenchanted lover and those incapable of love.[284]

He discounts those who would condemn his decision simply because it turned out to be wrong. The "fallacy of the perfect cause," he contends, is an ill-informed notion that does not take into account the genuine situational realities and predicament inherent in the human condition. A belief that only the perfect cause is worth fighting for is absurd; "to live, even to die for a perfect cause is a luxury permitted to few."[285]

That faith in the mission and the purpose of the Party filled a spiritual void in Koestler's life there can be no doubt. He experienced his youth and early manhood before joining the Party as an "age of longing" for

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[283]Koestler in Crossman, p. 17.

[284]Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 274.

[285]Koestler, Trail of the Dinosaur, p. 51.

absolutes in the absence of God.[286] He found the meaning he had been searching for in the movement and became the "true believer" he had always wanted to be. He said:

> A faith is not acquired by reasoning. . . . Reason may defend an act of faith--but only after the act has been committed, and the man committed to the act. . . . Devotion to pure Utopia, and revolt against a polluted society, are the two poles which provide the tension of all militant creeds. To ask which of the two makes the current flow--attraction by the ideal or repulsion by the social environment--is to ask the old question about the hen and the egg.[287]

If God is dead, in the sense that Nietzsche meant it, and the need for a faith is inherent in man, as Koestler believes it is, then the embarrassment and revulsion with which the "ex" is received is at least understandable. In an age of longing, one god may seem to be as good as another at first, and this may have been the case with Koestler: in the case of a choice between Fascism and Communism in 1930, even a man-made god must have looked better than a pact with a man-made devil.

When he looked back on his association with the Party in later years and sought to assess his subsequent attitudes toward it, Koestler concluded that, after all, he had perhaps been more a rebel than a revolutionary. He

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[286] Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, pp. 51-52.

[287] Ibid., p. 271; Crossman, p. 15. Aristotle, it should be remembered, suggested that the hen came first because a thing is that by which its nature tends it to become in its most developed form. The point is relevant here because a more systematic probing of the problem by Koestler might have revealed a deeper comprehension of all that is involved in rebellion and faith.

seemed to make the same sort of distinction that Albert Camus made later in The Rebel, but without the precise, systematic and careful lines between the two that characterized the thought of Camus. Rather than seeing the conflict in terms of revolt against God by a refusal to accept the limitations inherent in the "givenness" of the human condition, however, Koestler saw the distinction as different levels of passion developed in seeking the ultimate purity of the cause:

> The rebel is an enthusiast; the revolutionary, a fanatic. Robespierre, Marx, Lenin were revolutionaries; Danton, Bakunin, Trotsky were rebels. It is mostly revolutionaries who alter the natural course of history; but some rebels leave a subtler and yet more lasting imprint on it. At any rate the rebel, for all his tiresome fulminations and enthusiasms, is a more attractive type than the revolutionary.[288]

The revolutionary from this perspective is simply a fanatic rebel, but the difference in degree is somehow sufficient to Koestler to constitute a difference in kind. Intellectually he still pictures himself as a rebel, but his is more in the nature of an academic, politically passive rebellion than an active participation in the rebel vocation.

After he left the Party in 1938, Koestler for all intents and purposes bade farewell to activism in politics. He spent some ten years passionately writing political novels and essays, spoke on the BBC, served in the British army during World War II, and maintained membership in at

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[288] Ibid., p. 272.

least one organization which futilely attempted to aid victims and refugees from totalitarian countries.[289] By the time the final volume of his autobiography was published in 1954, any remaining traces of the rebel in his soul served contemplation and were quite divorced from active politics.

The question whether or not Koestler remained a Communist or Marxist after he formally left the Party is less important than the emphasis he attached to motivation in relating his experiences and the significance he subsequently attached to certain symbolic references. By his own admission he remained a rebel who considered his motives in the first place to have been noble in purpose largely because of the attractiveness of the utopian future involved in Communist thought. If he later rejected the methods of his comrades, perhaps it was because, as he said, "It seems to be a general law in politics that hatred increases in proportion to the amount of shared convictions and interests."[290] The loss of faith in a god that failed left him for some years afterward with a feeling of spiritual emptiness. The Party had served a necessary function which

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[289]Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds.), In Front of Your Nose, 1945-1950: The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, Vol. IV (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp. 76-77, 120-122. Also involved in this group were George Orwell, Bertrand Russell, and Victor Serge.

[290]Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, p. 257; Invisible Writing, p. 28.

was not easily replaced.[291]

To fill this vacuum has required a major intellectual effort on the part of Koestler. If he has fallen short of complete success and consistency, he should not be faulted too severely. Merely to see the dilemma clearly in this era is no small task. How is one to reject the commissar without embracing the yogi? Between them is only purgatory.

In his few brief allusions to what he has described as the "oceanic feeling," Koestler comes near to belief in God, but he does not quite make it. He is something akin to a sympathetic agnostic who would like to believe, having ceased to be an outright atheist, but who cannot quite do it. Although he does not know if God exists, "only a fool would deny dimensions of reality unknowable to man, which may add up to a coherent whole; but . . . only a saint would attribute it to the qualities of benevolence and love."[292] "Ultimate reality," whatever it may be, is not open to knowledge by human reason. It is instead a "text written in invisible ink; and although one could not read

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[291]Koestler, in Crossman, pp. 66-75. A French Communist, Roger Garaudy, perhaps quite accurately described Koestler's feelings in a scathing attack on him when he wrote, "A world is being born, and I have been shut out--I have shut myself out. Can there be any greater despair?" In Literature of the Graveyard: Jean Paul Sartre, François Mauriac, André Malraux, Arthur Koestler (New York: International Publishers, 1948), p. 55.

[292]Koestler, Drinkers of Infinity, p. 172.

it, the knowledge that it existed was sufficient to alter the texture of one's existence."[293] The contradiction involved here--that an ultimate reality is unknowable, yet is "known" to exist--is not apparently obvious to Koestler. As a result, he never asks how it is that his reason has established for him the existence of an "ultimate reality" which he has elsewhere said is unknowable by reason. It would seem that he is on the verge of an epistemological discovery of substantial proportions. But he falls back instead to an argument for morality in those political decisions not guided by a reasoned faith but by a "leap of faith," as Kierkegaard put it, or an irrational faith unsupported by reason.[294] "I am not sure," Koestler says, "whether what philosophers call 'ethical absolutes' exist, but I am sure we have to act as if they existed."[295]

Without a clear conception of social ethics informed, at least in part, by reason, Koestler has no alternative but value relativism with certain values arbitrarily raised to the level of an absolute, which, since the values have no intrinsic worth in themselves, must in essence be justified irrationally. What he seems to be attempting is a cure for value relativism, implicit in the scientific method as

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[293]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 354.

[294]Koestler, Drinkers of Infinity, p. 213.

[295]Koestler, "Dilemma of Our Times," 3.

he understands it, by value relativism divorced from its scientific methodology. The new, arbitrary values must be supported by faith alone since he has ruled out reason as a defense. In part, this is no doubt a reaction against the heavy rationalism encountered in his experiences with actual commissars. But in spite of his experiences, it must be judged unlikely that value relativism is a satisfactory cure for itself; if it is a source of the modern dilemma in ethics, more of the same is unlikely to do anything other than compound the problem. An ethic of political action rooted in irrationality is not likely to inspire the sort of faith Koestler really seems to want.

To point out inconsistencies, however, is to say only that Koestler is like most other persons. It is important to note that Koestler's leaving the Party fractured and ultimately broke any unity of theory and practice between his intellect and political activities. He certainly did not react to Stalin's purges of the 1930s as if he were a value relativist. Rather, his reactions were very much what we probably would expect of any genuinely civilized person under the same circumstances. The dilemma in his writings is not focused on the actions that should be taken to counter the commissar's justification of ends over means; it is to challenge the very structure of the commissar's basic thought, the pattern of ideas which has led modern man to the edge of the abyss.

The Law of Detours

Koestler's first novel explored the dilemma of revolutionary ethics, the problem of ends and means, in a setting that was essentially allegorical. The Gladiators tells the story of the Spartacus uprising in the Roman Empire and its eventual failure. It is his only novel in which the setting is outside of European civilization in the twentieth century. But, of course, the problems he seeks to highlight are contemporary. He is not concerned really with Rome, but with revolutions and why they fail. The work is interestingly un-Marxian in its fundamental sense--a distinction noted at the time by a number of Marxist-oriented reviewers.[296] Koestler is concerned, as he is in all his novels, with the ideas of elites rather than the actions of masses. He appears to presume that whatever the great bulk of people actually do in politics is more likely to reflect some leader's ideas than a class consciousness in the Marxist sense. The Gladiators lacks what was termed at the time "socialist realism." Not only do the followers of Spartacus lack a genuine class consciousnessness; whenever they do manage dimly to perceive their social or political situation, they instinctively follow

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[296]Robert Gorham Davis, wrote:

> "The Gladiators is not a proletarian novel as that term was used during the 1930's. Its central interest is not the situation and struggles of the masses . . . and the effect of the book is not to move the reader to active identification with the mass struggles of his own time." (p. 506)

a choice of action that is scarcely in their best interest. The theme of The Gladiators is revolt that turns into revolution in quest of a utopia and ultimately fails.[297] The central question Koestler asks is: Why did it fail, especially when Rome was so obviously corrupt?

Spartacus is portrayed as a victim of the "law of detours" which dictates that the leader on the road to utopia must be "ruthless for the sake of pity."[298] The idea of the "law of detours" is the closest Koestler comes in any of his writings to a systematic attempt to explain revolutions in general. The concept is vague in The Gladiators, and he never again picks the terminology up in his subsequent work. What he seems to be saying is that the revolutionary must be willing to perform surgery, removing from the political community those diseased elements that would undermine the revolutionary dream. A true revolutionary leader must harden himself against the suffering of others. He must not show compassion for his fellow men lest he betray The Cause for the sake of concrete morality. "He will have to make detours whose point is lost on others; for

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[297]The only review of The Gladiators to note this distinction between "revolt" and "revolution" was the full-length study of Koestler by John Atkins, p. 117. However, Atkins then turned around and challenged the view that Spartacus should be seen as a prototype of the modern revolutionary. Ibid., p. 118.

[298]Koestler, Invisible Writing, p. 267.

he alone can see, while they are blind."[299] It is a cross which the just man must bear in leading his people into a promised land; "the worst curse of all is that [a revolutionary] must tread the evil road for the sake of the good and right, that he must make detours and walk crookedly so that he may reach the straight goal."[300] It is a harsh law imposed upon the just man by the necessity of progress.

The failure of the revolution led by Spartacus is attributable to his misplaced compassion. The pull of the future is not strong enough for some of his followers, who begin to question the value of the utopia: "What kind of justice is it that we are to go on swallowing but our own spittle, drinking our own sweat, always gazing into the future instead of embracing today," they complain.[301] Dissident elements begin to surface, with different visions and the desire to choose a different path to the future than Spartacus intends. They create discord among the followers and cast doubt on the wisdom of Spartacus.

The logical step in the law of detours would be to purge these elements that weaken the purity of the leader's faith. But instead of slaying the leaders and followers of this rebellion within the revolution, Spartacus compromises. He heals the fission, saves many lives, and dooms

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[299]Arthur Koestler, The Gladiators (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939), p. 192.

[300]Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[301]Ibid., pp. 300-301.

the revolution.[302] In effect, he compromises the future with the present, in favor of the latter.

The results prove fatal, because the revolution has depended upon unswerving faith in a more nearly perfect future. For revolutionaries, the lesson of The Gladiators is clear--conventional morality that substitutes the worth of the individual for the good of mankind has no place in revolutionary ethics; the end must not be made subordinate to the means.

Darkness at Noon

Without a doubt, the best-known and most powerful work by Arthur Koestler is his masterpiece, Darkness at Noon. The physical action of this second novel is slight; it consists of the arrest, interrogation, trial, and execution of Commissar Rubashov during one of the Moscow purge trials of the 1930s. Rubashov's eventual end is known to the reader from the very beginning, the time of the arrest. The central problem of the novel, as well as its exceptional drama, is presented not in its physical detail, but as a psychological study of Rubashov and his reaction to Ivanov and Gletkin, his interrogators. Revolutionary ethics in Darkness at Noon are guided by the lessons of Spartacus, who failed because he made the end subordinate to the means and failed to follow the law of

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[302] Ibid., pp. 300-301.

detours. Now Ivanov, Gletkin, and Rubashov himself are set at the opposite end of the spectrum; Rubashov is witness to the failure of revolution when it does follow the law of detours and the means are always subordinate to the end.[303] He sees the failure of the Russian Revolution, the revolution he helped make and which now demands his life as a sacrifice, as a failure rooted in pure reason that has kept its vision of the future clear and thereby has so corrupted the present that even the noble end will never justify what has happened.

Following his arrest, Rubashov is one of the purge victims who has been selected to make a public confession at an open trial. There will be no unobtrusive, backroom demise for one of the highest ranking commissars in the government. His will be different; he is a true believer who has made the revolution his very life. He can be

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[303] N. L. Rothman, "Three Stages of the Soviet Mind," Saturday Review of Literature, XXIV, No. 5 (May 24, 1941). In an excellent review, Rothman described the novel as three stages in the unfolding of the Russian Revolution, personified in Rubashov, the protagonist, and Ivanov and Gletkin as his interrogators:

> "Rubashov, now imprisoned and under questioning in one of the famous Moscow trials, seems clearly to represent the Communsit of Time Past. Ivanov, his first interlocutor, is a transitional figure, the Communist of, shall we say, Readjustment. And then the admirably inhuman Gletkin, first Ivanov's assistant and then his successor, holds the stage triumphantly as the Communist of the Present." (7)

It might also be accurate to describe Gletkin as the Communist man of the future.

trusted not to betray everything he has lived for by some foolish aberration in public. Between his arrest and the public trial, the very heart of the novel, Rubashov's great task in the interrogations is "to work his thoughts to a conclusion, to come to terms with the past and future."[304] How he works his thoughts to a conclusion within the closed system of thought that Marxism has structured for him deserves careful scrutiny.

Rubashov is one of the original Bolshevik revolutionaries who knew Lenin long before the eventual Bolshevik triumph. But by the 1930s, Lenin is long since dead, and most of his original followers are either in exile, with the other heretics, or dead following some sort of public trial or hidden assassination. To Number One, a euphemism Koestler reserves for Stalin, Rubashov has become "soft and sentimental" and is no longer useful for the task at hand, of putting theory into practice. So he is to be "pushed out of the movement, into solitude and the outer darkness."[305] This is simple enough for Rubashov to accept. He has always adhered to dictates of his own reason, which are synonymous with those of the Party. He thinks to himself:

> The movement was without scruples. . . . Her cause had many twists and windings; such was the law of her being. And whosoever could not follow her crooked

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[304] Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941), p. 108.

[305] Ibid., p. 37.

> course was washed on the bank, for such was her law. The motives of the individual did not matter to her. . . . The Party knew only one crime; to swerve from the course laid out.[306]

Hiw own task is to fill in the blanks of this grand theory and make them amenable to the specifics of the situation in which he now finds himself. For he has no serious doubts about the "principle that the end justifies the means," a principle which remains the only rule of political ethics:

> Anything else is just vague chatter and melts away between one's fingers. . . . Whoever is burdened with power and responsibility finds out on the first occasion that he has to choose [between the opposite poles of human ethics] ; and he is fatally driven to the . . . basic principle that a collective aim justifies all means, and not only allows but demands, that the individual should in every way be subordinated and sacrificed to the community.[307]

If it is now Rubashov's turn to make the ultimate sacrifice, he is ready as he has always been.

The Revolution is Truth and Truth is the Revolution for Rubashov, as it is for any true believer. But something has obviously gone wrong. What is it? Approvingly, Rubashov concludes, "We have replaced decency by reason."[308] Is that not what science is all about?--to substitute the decadent tradition of reason in nature for one of reason in man? In

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[306] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[307] Ibid., pp. 156-157.

[308] Ibid., p. 175.

mulling it all over, Rubashov writes in the notes he is making in his cell:

> Premises of unimpeachable truth had led to a result which was completely absurd. . . . Perhaps it was not suitable for a man to think everything out to its logical conclusion. . . . Looking back over his past, it seemed to him now that for forty years he had been running amuck--the running amuck of pure reason. Perhaps it did not suit man to be completely freed from old bonds . . . and to be allowed to tear along straight toward the goal.[309]

The failure of the revolution, if indeed it is a failure, lies somewhere in a defect of reason.

As Rubashov contemplates his personal dilemma within the context of the Marxian Revolutionary Idea, he knows from the beginning, in his own mind, that he can never renounce the movement. By basically accepting the Marxian paradigm, Rubashov has already committed himself to a logic and philosophy of history which the Party claims to represent legitimately. "The horror which No. 1 emanated, above all consisted of the possibility that he was in the right, and that all those whom he killed had to admit, even with a bullet in the back of their necks, that he conceivably might be in the right."[310] There is no certainty outside the Party. This means that his own personal motivations are of no consequence whatever. The greatest fear is of the sheer nothingness that exists outside the revolutionary movement.

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[309] Ibid., pp. 258-259.

[310] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Number One could never dream up a horror that would make that vacuum preferable to his cause, no matter how it might look to unfortunate outsiders. Rubashov mulls over in his mind, repeatedly:

> And what if, after all, No. 1 were in the right? If here, in dirt and blood and lies, after all and in spite of everything, the grandiose foundations of the future were being laid? Had not history always been an inhumane, unscrupulous builder, mixing its mortar of lies, blood and mud?[311]

Manipulation by the Party of the Marxist symbol of the future is probably the strongest pull on the mind of Rubashov. He is caught in a tangled web of historical determinism informed by reason run wild. It is reason without "ethical ballast," and therefore is not properly reason at all. Reason in the hands of the Party is the enemy of any and all forms of subjectivism, and good intentions are of no consequence:

> He who is in the wrong must pay; he who is in the right will be absolved. . . . We have learnt history more thoroughly than the others. We differ from the others in our logical consistency . . . we concentrated all our efforts on preventing error and destroying the very seeds of it. Never in history has so much power over the future of humanity been concentrated in so few hands as in our case. Each wrong idea we followed is a crime committed against future generations.[312]

Although everyone in the Party started from the same point of intellectual departure, the works of Marx, the only defense against heresy when divergent interpretations

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[311] Ibid., p. 127.

[312] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

arise is to look to the Party as the official interpreter. What it says on matters of faith and morals is ex-cathedra. The justification for confidence in the Party turns out in the end to be based on the same irrational faith that Party converts think they have escaped through science.[313]

Pure reason, without limit, is an ancient attribute of God; whoever would imagine he possesses reason without limits must, it seems, be mistaken or make his own mind synonymous somehow with that of God. If a single individual's mind cannot be imagined to fit the mold, then "the people" may be substituted to fulfill the function previously assigned to God, and some variation of "the voice of the people is the voice of God" may be a logical influence. For Rubashov, of course, the Party represents the voice of the people, and Number One is the voice of the Party.

Languishing in his cell, Rubashov recalls the time when his faith in the Party was unshaken. He once criticized a young Party worker who had likewise questioned the ultimate wisdom of the Party in certain programs. His rebuke was

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[313] Ibid., p. 100. Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), has observed in this connection:

> "When reason cannot speak of its own goodness but must have recourse to convention, sentiment, or ideology, it strengthens the indictment of reason as evil. If good and evil are equally unreasonable, then it is impossible to discriminate among the various senses in which reason may be said to be 'beyond good and evil'. And the result is nihilism." (p. 57)

harsh, but captured the essence of what the Party stood for.

> The Party can never be mistaken. . . . You and I can make a mistake. Not the Party. The Party, comrade, is more than you and I and a thousand others like you and I. The Party is the embodiment of the revolutionary idea in history. History knows no scruples and no hesitation. Inert and unerring, she flows toward her goal. At every bend in her course she leaves the mud which she carries and the corpses of the drowned. History knows her way. She makes no mistakes. He who has not absolute faith in History does not belong in the Party's ranks.[314]

The instrument of progress is the reason embodied in the Party. Rational means toward the end of history, symbolized as a classless society, are the exclusive property of the Party; whatever it does is right and just, and whoever opposes it is by definition wrong. The reasoning of the Party is faultless:

> All our principles were right, but our results were wrong. This is a diseased century. We diagnosed the disease and its causes with microscopic exactness, but wherever we applied the healing knife a new sore appeared. Our will was hard and pure, we should have been loved by the people. But they hate us. Why are we so odious and detested? We brought you the truth, and in our mouth it sounded a lie. We brought you freedom, and it looks in our hands like a whip. . . . We brought you the promise of the future, but our tongue stammered and barked.[315]

Ivanov, Rubashov's first interrogator, is something

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[314] Ibid., pp. 43-44. Because the vision of an ideal society on earth is dependent upon movement in time, it is irrevocably linked to a theory of the progress of history. For an essay on Darkness at Noon in this context, see the excellent article by Frederick J. Hoffman, "Darkness at Noon: the Consequences of Secular Grace," The Georgia Review, XIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1959); see also Voegelin, The New Science of Politics, passim.

[315] Ibid., p. 58.

of a transitional figure in the novel. Like Rubashov, he is one of the original Bolsheviks; he can talk with Rubashov of shared experiences. Their concept of the Party is determined by their devotion to the same noble principles that attracted them to the movement in the first place. The appeal Ivanov makes is as a comrade to a fellow comrade who is still a true believer. "The greatest temptation for the like of us," he says, "is to renounce violence, to repent, to make peace with oneself."[316]

There are two concepts of ethics for Ivanov, and they are at opposite poles; he has opted for the role of the commissar rather than the yogi. His challenge to Rubashov leaves no doubt regarding the stakes of the interrogation--why a public confession is necessary in preference to a quiet murder. The future of humanity is intimately woven into the fabric of Rubashov's opposition. He says:

> In the old days, temptation was of a carnal nature. Now it takes the form of pure reason. The values change. I would like to write a passion play in which God and the Devil dispute for the soul of Saint Rubashov. After a life of sin he has turned to God--to a God with the double chin of industrial liberalism and the charity of Salvation Army soups. Satan, on the contrary, is thin, ascetic and a fanatical devotee of logic. He reads Machiavelli, Ignatius of Loyola, Marx, and Hegel; he is cold and unmerciful to mankind, out of a kind of mathematical mercifulness. He is damned to do that which is always most repugnant to him: to become the slaughterer, in order to abolish slaughtering, to sacrifice lambs so that no more lambs may be sacrificed. . . . To strip himself of every scruple

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[316] Ibid., p. 152.

> in the name of a higher scrupulousness, and to challenge the hatred of mankind because of his love for it--an abstract and geometric love.[317]

The abrupt disappearance of Ivanov from the narrative does mitigate his influence on Rubashov. The Party has seen fit to liquidate Ivanov, even before Rubashov, quietly and without the bother of a public trial. His removal, however, serves only to isolate Rubashov even more from his own past; in effect, he no longer has the physical link with the past that Ivanov provided.

Gletkin, Ivanov's successor, is a different kind of person from either Rubashov or Ivanov. He is the "New Man" that Marx spoke of, the man of the future--perhaps even Nietzsche's Übermensch. To Rubashov,

> . . . Gletkin was a repellent creature, but he represented the new generation. . . . That was the generation which had started to think after the flood. It had no traditions, and no memories to bind it to the old, vanished world. It was a generation born without umbilical cord. . . . And yet it had right on its side.[318]

This is the generation of the "modern Neanderthalers," who look at Rubashov and the old Bolsheviks much the same way the first man must have looked at the monkeys who preceded him. For the new man, previous generations are less than human and simply do not count in the new equations. The morality and ethics of the future are so different from those

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[317] Ibid., pp. 149-150. Elsewhere Koestler said, "The worst of madmen is a saint run wild." In Insight and Outlook, p. 200; Atkins, p. 186.

[318] Ibid., pp. 184-185.

of the past that no rational communication is possible between them and what remains of the older, bourgeois morality. "One can deny one's childhood, but not erase it. . . . The Gletkins had nothing to erase; they need not deny their past, because they had none."[319] Gletkin is a product of the political-cultural climate created by the Rubashovs and the Ivanovs; they can no more remounce Gletkin for his hard and cruel behavior than they could a son for adhering to the traditions of his progenitors. They have created Gletkin and filled his mind with their doctrines; to turn back now in acknowledgement of their own individuality would be a denial that the end in fact does justify the means. Gletkin <u>is</u> the union of theory and practice.

When Rubashov finally confesses at the public trial, it is not because Gletkin has triumphed over him, but rather because he has persuaded himself, through an inner debate on the necessity of the end justifying the means, that Gletkin has right on his side. "For those who have changed the face of history, there [is] no other duty than to stay here and be ready," he thinks. Silence will only give comfort to the counterrevolutionaries, as will denunciation of the movement--a reversion to "petty bourgeois morality."[320]

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[319] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 189.

[320] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 126-127.

When Gletkin appeals to his sense of duty as a fellow "comrade," Rubashov's last barrier breaks down. He cannot resist rejoining the movement, to fulfill its destiny and his own, even if it means publicly confessing to crimes he did not commit against the cause and sacrificing his own existence to this higher calling. If he regrets anything, it is only that he will not live to see the new future which, he still believes, will come to pass--at that time when the modern Neanderthalers will themselves ultimately give way to the new species of man. "It will probably be several generations," he writes in his diary,

> . . . before the people manage the new state of affairs, which they themselves created by the revolution. . . . Until then, our leaders are obliged to govern as though in an empty space. . . . Woe to the fool and the aesthete who only ask how and not why?[321]

When Gletkin finally puts a bullet into Rubashov's head at the end, it is ironic that the question "why?" is precisely the point Koestler raises--with a changed meaning. Rubashov would answer, "Because of the future"; Koestler himself is silent because he cannot accept the future at that price and cannot himself find an answer adequate at a philosophical level to that of the Rubashovs and Gletkins. The death of Rubashov is greeted by "a shrug of eternity," and the answer to "why?" is only silence.[322]

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[321] Ibid., pp. 169-170.

[322] Ibid., p. 267. See Rosen, pp. 28-55, for a discussion of the relationship between "silence" in this context and nihilism.

The compelling terror of Darkness at Noon lies in the complete hold which the Party ideology exercises over Rubashov's mind. Its manipulation of the symbols of the meaning of history is total in its comprehensiveness. As such, it is fair to say that Rubashov and Gletkin as the representatives of the Party exist in what might be termed a symbiotic relationship with each other. Rubashov needs the Party in order to ensure his own salvation in history and would be lost in a pure nihilism without it. The Party, in its turn, needs Rubashov's sacrifice as a further confirmation of its own unique place in history.

This relationship of mutual dependence holds true until the time of the public trial and Rubashov's confession. At that point, the symbiotic relationship of Rubashov to the Party is changed to a parasitic relationship precisely because he has fulfilled the particular ideological need of the Party. He has voluntarily converted himself into a historical parasite as an act of his own will, which is itself the consequence of his debate with himself, Ivanov, and then Gletkin. The results of this transformation of dependence are known beforehand by both parties to the dialogue, who accept without question the consequent logic implied in the change--the physical destruction of the parasitic partner.

From the beginning, Rubashov completely accepts the authority of the Party to make such a determination;

his task is to rationalize the ends of the Party and himself and somehow to make the two synonymous. His acceptance of the final solution in his own demise is itself proof of his continuing need for the Party even after he has been consigned to the scrap-heap of history.

The Elaborate Schizophrenia

After the publication and exceptionally strong reception accorded Darkness at Noon, Koestler published two minor novels, Arrival and Departure and Thieves in the Night, neither of which achieved the power, stature, or acceptance of his earlier works. Their lack of literary as well as intellectual acceptance was not entirely without justification. The general quality was less than that of either The Gladiators or Darkness at Noon. However, as illustrations in a further exploration of Koestler's presentation of the dilemma of ends and means, the works have merit and deserve at least a brief discussion. Between them, they do present some additional insight into Koestler's thought, and they reveal certain strains in that thought which are often quite opposed to one another.

Arrival and Departure is the story of Peter, a disillusioned ex-Communist who has somehow managed to survive the Party bloodletting of the 1930s in spite of having "lost his faith" in the cause. Literally washed ashore in a neutral country early in World War II, he is the personi-

fication of the homeless intellectual in twentieth century Europe. He has lost his faith in the absolute purpose of the Party, and his personal outlook, bordering on nihilism, has combined with a desperate and relentless search for meaning in a life that has become purposeless in the extreme. Like the Hobbesian man he has become, he is motivated by avoidance of evil rather than pursuit of good. His political experience has left him with a feeling of betrayal, and now he recognizes the world he knows as existing without a visible trace of moral, political, or ethical authority. There is no one who can tell him what to do or what to believe--he must discover unaided any answers that may exist. Every day has become for him the "Last Judgment," but with the peculiar irony that "there [is] no one to tell him whether he [has] succeeded or failed, and no scale to measure the value of his deeds."[323]

While recovering in Neutralia (Portugal), Peter is engaged in an intellectual debate by former Communists, a Fascist, and a psychiatrist, each in his own way attempting to return him to "faith" in a certain philosophy of existence. The Communists still employ the symbolic workers' paradise of the future in their arguments with Peter; although strongly tempted, he rejects their faith because he sees it as a sham, based on his actual experiences with the living

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[323]Arthur Koestler, Arrival and Departure (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 180.

paradise of Russia. Although Bernard, the Fascist, justifies a Fascist utopia on the same grounds as the Communists, that the end justifies the means, Peter can never become a Fascist--the evil inherent in the Fascist commitment is too obvious.

Although the Party has become evil, Peter's motive for joining it did not betray a tendency toward evil; rather, he was driven by a passion for justice without limitation. It was the perversion of this original purpose that led to his disillusionment with the reality. Nor does the psychiatrist, Sonia, offer any answers to the problem of totalitarianism. Instead, she offers "psychological adjustment" through the scientific revelation that all notions of meaning and purpose are groundless. On the analyst's couch, he is made to believe that his crusading zeal for justice has derived from unconscious guilt. The end of his method is to make the reality of Hitler acceptable by removing any consideration of the "ought" in ethics.[324] The flaw in value relativism is that the result is a sort of philosophical anarchism that results inevitably in nihilism, for "had she not torn out of her garden the true knowledge of good and evil? Was not her aim to go back to the time before the fall, when man and woman were naked and not ashamed?"[325] His rejection of the compelling arguments

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[324] Ibid., p. 190.

[325] Ibid., p. 145.

of modern science come apparently from an unexplainable, innate sense of right and wrong.

Peter does reject neutrality in the face of Hitler, but the reason in the final analysis is irrational. There is no "reason" given for joining the army in active opposition at the risk of his life. It is simply the avoidance of a great and malignant Evil. The closing scene is a romantic image of Peter parachuting into enemy territory at night on some unspecified secret mission. The act itself, of opposing evil, has engendered some moderate renewal of "faith," as he has written in a letter to his sweetheart:

> I'll tell you my belief, Odette. I think a new god is about to be born. . . . Praise to the unborn god, Odette. Don't try to divine his message or the form of his cult--this will be after our time. . . . For we are the last descendants of Renaissance--Man, the end and not the beginning.[326]

Presumably this new god will not fail as did the old ones.

Thieves in the Night may well be Koestler's least known and most unsatisfactory novel from almost any perspective. Basically, it deals with the birth of Israel in the creation of settlement villages among hostile Arabs. The story is confused at most points and seems to lack any unifying structure other than an attempt to show that in some cases the end does justify the means, however distasteful the means may be. In the face of overt danger, "a race which remains objective when its life is at stake

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[326] Ibid., p. 188.

will lose it."[327] The Jewish settlements face the threat of physical liquidation by a hostile Arab population equally intent on preserving what it regards, not unreasonably, as its own heritage.

Despite a certain sympathy for the position of the Arabs, Koestler's heart is with the Jews; they are not portrayed, however, without flaws. As a persecuted minority, the Jews have developed an instinctive will to survive in the Holy Land that they lacked in Europe. On the Continent they were intellectuals, businessmen, and professional people. Their social pattern was that of an upside-down pyramid; there were no farmers, unskilled workers, or soldiers in the European communities. But in Palestine, all of that is reversed. Their very survival depends upon themselves, which means that they must assume the burden of their own defense as well as build a workable society from the ground up.

In terms of means versus ends as a reference for political action, what Koestler appears to be saying in Thieves in the Night is that in practice, on a relatively small scale, the problem becomes one of ambivalence. In the case of Israel, the end is not utopia or absolute justice, but simply the creation of a state, much like any other, in which a relatively homogeneous people will govern

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[327]Arthur Koestler, Thieves in the Night (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 157.

themselves. To this extent, the forceful, often unscrupulous means used to take over territory seem moderately justifiable. The end here is just, in a context of limited justice, but the political ethics behind the action is "but an elaborate form of schizophrenia."[328] The dualism between ends and means seems unbridgeable, and whoever would act with the foreknowledge that his actions inevitably will cause some injustice to someone becomes a conscious neurotic. There is no way out.

The Age of Longing

Koestler's final novel, The Age of Longing, marks an end to his active concern with the problem of revolutionary ethics and the dilemma of ends and means. As such, it may be said to represent his final thoughts on the subject and, in addition, to answer some critical objections to his earlier works. As a novel, The Age of Longing does not compare dramatically with Koestler's first novels, nor does it convey the sense of urgency found in them. However, it does represent a controlled treatment of the human condition in a revolutionary situation far better than do Arrival and Departure or Thieves in the Night. The ideological positions of the several characters are more varied, subtle, and believable than in either of the two works that immediately precede it. Further, as an answer to many of his critics

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[328] Ibid., p. 276.

for whom the Communist god had not yet failed, his polemical exchange with Communist critics in this novel is no less important than the revolutionary setting itself.

As with virtually all of Koestler's novels, The Age of Longing is not held together by the story, which is secondary, but by the highly politicized conversations between various characters. The setting is Paris sometime in the late 1950s. In the background is the ever-present strength of the Soviet Union continually threatening to engulf what remains of a weak, sterile European civilization, which is reduced now to the endless chatter of coffee houses and meaningless debates between academicians. Governments appear impotent or deliberately blind to the consequences of their politics, intent on a "peace at any price" policy of appeasement toward the USSR. To those few persons who correctly perceive the true danger, such as Julien and a few other ex-Communists, the situation is one of utter frustration and helplessness before impending disaster.

Julien has much in common with Koestler personally, and on the surface at least he appears to be a partially autobiographical figure in terms of political philosophy. Like Peter in Arrival and Departure, he is motivated to avoid evil rather than to pursue good. He has lost his faith in "the Good," except as the simple absence of Evil, but he has found nothing to replace the former object of his need to believe. In his confrontation with the dynamic

revolutionary visions of the Communist Fedya, he can only respond in anguish, "I have no program to offer."[329]

Fedya is a true believer, confidently and eagerly awaiting the "Great Change" that Communism at a single stroke will bring to an imperfect world. Koestler's characterization of Fedya gives substance to the author's idea that psychological superiority is on the side of those who fight for any form of change rather than those who, like Julien, resist it. Unlike Julien, who is tormented by doubt and disbelief, Fedya knows no ideological turmoil. A model product of the Communist state, he sees man as the state writ small and behaves accordingly: change the state and you will change mankind. It is Julien's great misfortune that his opposition to Fedya, a representative of a revolutionary ethic he despises, stems from a love-hate relationship. Julien, too, accepts the idea that a change of the state will result in a changed man; it is simply that the price Fedya asks is too high.

Contemplation of the consequences of his actions serves to paralyze Julien's will to act. He has ruled out certain means of defeating Fedya which Fedya is willing to use in defeating him. Consequently, Julien considers his arguments to be those of defense against the superior,

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[329]Arthur Koestler, The Age of Longing (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 354.

offensive strength of active Evil.

A parallel is drawn here to the vulnerability of the West, brought about through trust in arms against the revolutionary's trust in words.[330] The idea of the future is the ultimate power symbol in the arsenal of revolutionaries--whoever has control over its manipulation has might, if not right, on his side. The thoughts of men and the acts they inspire continually move like pendulums between the significant and the trivial; flashes of tragic insight have inspired men, saints and revolutionaries, to remake history. But the trivial can be the work of the Devil, able to undo the work of saints.[331] Both Julien and Fedya have been inspired by the same "tragic insight"; only Julien understands the full effect of his actions in practice. In effect, contemplation becomes defeatist propaganda. There must be a way, he thinks, to weld thought and action together morally.[332] An integral part of his political frustration is his inability ever to discover a unity of theory and practice that meets the criteria of morality and justice on the one hand, and practical effectiveness on the other.

Julien diagnoses the internal decay of Europe in the face of an external threat by Russia as the result of a loss

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[330] Ibid., p. 113.

[331] Ibid., pp. 307-308.

[332] Ibid., pp. 138-143.

of faith in God. He says, "The reason why Europe is going to the dogs is of course that it has accepted the finality of personal death. By this act of abdication we have severed our relations with the infinite, isolated ourselves from the universe, or if you like, from God." This in its turn has led, not just in the totalitarian state but in any state, to the worship of false gods, to the new Baal, a reified "Society." The consequence of this act of will has been the deification of society. "We no longer aspire toward goodness and charity: we aspire toward 'social integration'."[333]

It is in the nature of a definition of "society" that "economics" is involved--what Julien calls a "cult of logistics"--and "expediency," which academicians refer to under the euphemism of "decision making." There is a loss of knowledge of the Good. Why, then, persist in the neurosis? Julien muses, "When one has acquired a perversion, one always despises the normal."[334]

Koestler is especially harsh toward those intellectuals who still believe in the future that will inevitably follow the "Great Change"; such persons live in a closed system of thought, usually an ivory tower of some sort. At a rally of sympathetic supporters of the Soviet Union,

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[333] Ibid., p. 136.

[334] Ibid., p. 90.

Julien remarks about one of the speakers (who bears a striking resemblance to Jean-Paul Sartre), "He is a Professor of Philosophy. He can prove everything he believes, and he believes everything he can prove."[335] He has a faith, but it is the most peurile kind--faith in his own intellect to solve the riddles and insoluble dilemmas of his own existence and of the human condition as well. It is the sort of faith that Koestler finds beneath contempt.

When Hydie, Fedya's American lover and an ex-Catholic, asks whether it is not better to believe in a mirage than to believe in nothing, Julien answers, "No," because mirages lead people astray.[336] But he is not able to say for certain what a mirage is or why it is in error. His reason is ineffective against irrational faith, and he himself, therefore, must rely on irrational reasons for opposing Fedya. The "Great Change" believers have the future on their side, whereas Julien can appeal only to the polluted past and an imperfect present.

It is significant that Hydie, the closest thing to a heroine in The Age of Longing, is herself an ex-believer. Her fall from faith, however, is from religion and Catholicism rather than from the Party. She was attracted originally to Fedya and his faith in the future because he seemed

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[335] Ibid., p. 81; Arrow in the Blue, p. 288.

[336] Ibid., p. 91.

more "real" than those others who lacked such faith. He provided the necessary substance to fill the void she experienced most painfully--the loss of her own faith. Her association with Julien and the few others who correctly assess the situation leads Hydie to the sudden realization of the terror that Fedya represents in his role as an instrument of a revolutionary ideology which has subordinated means to an end. It is precisely because he is more "real" that he must be fought, because the evil in his actions is also real and takes form in him.

But to save someone from drowning you must know how to swim yourself. To save Europe it would seem that a viable substitute for Fedya and revolution must exist. But Koestler offers none. Hydie joins Julien in the end as they prepare to return to the underground to fight the Russian invasion as others had done before against Hitler. The revolution is an evil to be fought, as was the earlier Third Reich, but with less specific reason. It simply has to be done--an act of faith itself.

Chemistry and Salvation

In his first novel, The Gladiators, one of Koestler's characters decried his condition with the anguished statement of what seemed to him to be incontrovertible fact:

> God created the world in five days, and He was in too much of a hurry. Many things went wrong in all this

> hurry, and when He arrived at the making of man, on the sixth day, He was irritable and tired perhaps.[337]

Almost thirty years later, the author repeated the theme in a work which was written to appeal to the scientific-academic community rather than to a philosophical, or literary-academic readership:

> I would prefer to set my hopes on moral persuasion by word and example. But we are a mentally sick race, and as such deaf to persuasion. . . . Nature has let us down . . . and time is running out.[338]

Between these two statements lie thirty years of thought and reflected experience with the problem of the human condition. This notion that somewhere in the process of evolution something has gone wrong with the human species is one of the themes appearing consistently in Koestler's work, from The Gladiators through the most recent. Nature, he observes, has made mistakes before: witness the dinosaur. But the defect in man, an apparently predisposing instinct toward self-destruction, is, without doubt, Nature's greatest error.

Koestler's diagnosis of this most important defect in human nature has not changed noticeably since he first began writing. What has changed is his interpretation of

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[337]Koestler, The Gladiators, p. 163.

[338]Arthur Koestler, The Ghost in the Machine (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1969), pp. 338-339; see also Arthur Koestler, The Act of Creation (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1964), for a complementary work on the same general theme.

the dilemma of ends and means in human experience, manifested in an ever-increasing anxiety that appears in his reflections on the ultimate solution to the dilemma in society. Perhaps signs of concern indeed were perceptible in his early writing; but it is a fact that in his most recent work he is prepared to explore the psychological nature of man in an effort to improve the human condition through scientific discovery.

He notes that we cannot expect to witness in the foreseeable future what he regards as the rising of necessary changes in human nature by way of evolutionary mutation. Biological evolution ceased after the Cro-Magnon epoch, and current or future change must be induced by artificial means.[339] Objections no doubt will arise in some quarters, but these are based on prejudices which must be overcome by education.[340] Koestler writes:

> I do not think that the idea of a cure for homo sapiens is utopian. It is not inspired by science fiction, but based on a realistic assessment of recent advances in several convergent branches of the life sciences. . . . We can only hope to survive as a species by developing techniques which supplant biological evolution.[341]

Our age is unique, Koestler says, both in terms of the quantitative increase in population, which only exacerbates

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[339] Ibid., pp. 326-327.

[340] Ibid., pp. 327-328.

[341] Ibid., p. 327.

ancient problems, and in the qualitative changes in our scientific ability to cope with them. "No generation of man ever before has witnessed in its lifetime such changes."[342] He says repeatedly that because evolution has failed badly, we must apply our reason, that is, science, to correct it.

It should be noted that Koestler, in his furtherance of the use of reason in science, is not referring to a scientifically oriented value relativism. On the contrary, he pictures the application of science in extracting men from the limitations of the human condition as the insertion of very specific values in the scientific ethos. The behavioral purge of words such as "purpose, sensation, image, good," and so on, from the vocabulary of a new and emasculated conception of "science" predates the ideological purges of totalitarian politics;[343] and, in fact, Koestler has noted the existence of a link between these two phenomena. Regardless of the merits of the proposed solution, it is not an offspring of "value relativism" as the term is commonly used. Koestler is opposed to the "chemical" solution put forth by Huxley and others, and sees his alternative as qualitatively different.

Koestler proposes the introduction of pharmacological

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[342] Ibid., p. 320; see also Arthur Koestler, "Evolution and Revolution in the History of Science," Encounter, XXV, No. 6 (December, 1965), 38.

[343] Arthur Koestler, The Ghost in the Machine, pp. 5-9.

pills that will create in the individual "a state of dynamic equilibrium in which thought and emotion are reunited and hierarchic order is restored."[344] The pills will not be forced upon anyone, but their beneficent results will be so obviously desirable that everyone will soon want to partake of them.[345] An equilibrium between thought and emotion is expected to nullify the defect of aggression which must be regarded as the principal evil to be avoided.

The idea of a "good" to be followed in this scheme is less important than the "evil" to be shunned. Koestler has said:

> Aggression may not be beyond our reach to correct. . . . Any condition that can be expressed in psychological terms should be accessible to physiological remedies. I don't think it is Utopian at all to hope that out of our laboratories will come a breakthrough in neuropsychopharmacology.[346]

For Koestler, the continuation of society without conflict is the highest ambition of man. The negation of this evil is a kind of inverse good in itself.

The idea of the absolute value of nonaggression is

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[344] Ibid., p. 336.

[345] Ibid., pp. 337-338.

[346] Arthur Koestler, "A Conversation with Arthur Koestler," Psychology Today, IV, No. 1 (January, 1970), 84. The utility of psychological integration through chemistry, or any other means, appears to be at odds with Koestler's prior critique of psychology, in Arrival and Departure, on precisely this point. In the novel, Koestler had criticized Sonia for her attempts as a psychologist to persuade Peter to "adjust" to the world as it is through essentially the same integration of "thought and emotion."

accepted by Koestler as a result that follows, he believes, from his concept of purpose in the act of creation. The difficulty with the modern world is that the hierarchical ordering of life in society has collapsed; the pills he has described will reestablish this essential requirement. He begins with the observation that "wherever there is life, it must be hierarchically organized."[347] From this point of departure, he notes that "the first universal characteristic of hierarchies is the relativity, and indeed ambiguity of the terms 'part' and 'whole' when applied to any of the subassemblies."[348]

The hierarchical construction of life in society gives Koestler's later work an implied teleology and conception of the future which is more ambitiously explored than in his novels, even though the concept remains somewhat confused or contradictory.[349] An essential characteristic of hierarchies is the fact that controls at the higher level meet their own "demands" and determine in part the "demands" to be met by processes at the lower level.[350]

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[347]Koestler, Ghost in the Machine, p. 47.

[348]Ibid., pp. 47-48. Koestler seems not to have noticed or to have become aware of the fact that in his discussion of hierarchies in the organization of society, he is following in the ancient footsteps of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, for example.

[349]Arthur Koestler, Act of Creation, passim.

[350]Ibid., pp. 287-288; Carl R. Hausman, "Understanding and the Act of Creation," Review of Metaphysics, XX, No. 1 (September, 1966), 109, in an essay review of The Act of

Koestler's implied teleology is to be found in this discussion of the concept of levels of understanding. Each stage of this understanding is like a component which at least partially satisfies the demand for intelligibility by virtue of a whole to which it belongs. The construction of hierarchies terminates ideally in one all-embracing law.[351] Koestler proposes this all-embracing law to avoid a mechanistic or deterministic view of the process of creation, but he does not wholly succeed. The apex of his hierarchy stops short of the highest Good, or the notion of God. Although Koestler notes the idea of God in passing, he does not make Him an integral part of creation itself; the creation that concerns him is human creation as a process of discovery. As a result, Koestler's concept of creation is oriented toward man, and is centered exclusively on man and his role in the process.

Because the demands of the higher direct the needs

Creation, adds to Koestler's reasoning the idea that "insofar as the component is explained by the whole upon which it depends, the explanatory scheme includes ends or results that make the dependent thing intelligible." Koestler never makes this important point.

[351]Hausman puts it this way:

> "If a process develops by realizing or actualizing what is potential, it develops toward a purpose or end. In changing according to that which is latent, it is given its way of change and its terminus by that which would be actual in the future if the change reached completion. In short, potentiality implies a final cause." (107)

of the lower, it follows that the highest attribute of man must be reason. It is through the use of reason that we are able to comprehend the defect in man and the breakdown of the evolutionary process. Given that this is the case, the rational course of action is to make perfect or at least to improve "man," the tragically defective creature that Nature has created.

From this, Koestler makes the leap of faith into a science, discovered by man in the act of creation, that is capable of solving the problem of human aggression, that is, the universal human failing that is a product of man's own will. In Koestler's hierarchical order, man stands at the apex and saves himself through the chemical engineering of modern science. The purpose of the pills is to ensure the affirmation of the values man creates through his own highest level of understanding.

Several aspects of Koestler's prescriptions for salvation through chemistry need to be observed in their contrast to his earlier work. First of all, it may be said fairly that Koestler still is looking for the "Great Change" which, at a single stroke, will solve the problem of the human condition as a dilemma of ends and means. The greatest difference, however, is that whereas he rejected the Communist Revolutionary myth--that of changing man by changing society, he subsequently has chosen to change society through changing radically the nature of man. In lieu of

faith in the Party, or in God, Koestler has embraced faith in Science, although Science is now infused with values created by man's own ingenuity. Science is a new god, perhaps one that will not fail this time.[352]

It has been argued plausibly elsewhere that the "dynamic equilibrium" between thought and emotion which Koestler has argued for has a built-in bias against change in the existing structure of society.[353] If this is an accurate assessment of the implications of Koestler's pills, then an ironic conclusion may be drawn: that Koestler, after having abandoned the ethics of Communist Revolution because of a conflict of ends and means, has once again become a revolutionary, but this time with the aim of preventing revolution! Through a revolutionary change in men, revolutionary change in society will no longer be necessary. Second, it ought to be observed that Koestler's emphasis on the desirability of social harmony for its own sake is a theme that George Orwell noted shortly after Koestler's first novels appeared. In a remarkably penetrating essay, Orwell described the basis of Koestler's thought as a hedonism "which leads him to think of the Earthly Paradise as desirable.

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[352]Arthur N. Gilbert, "Pills and the Perfectibility of Man," The Virginia Quarterly Review, XLV, No. 2 (Spring, 1969), 323. In commenting on Koestler's pills, Gilbert observes, "Nowadays we seek salvation on this earth and ideal pills are merely a reflection of that fact."

[353]Ibid., p. 326.

Perhaps, however, whether desirable or not, it isn't possible."[354] If Orwell is correct, that hedonism directs a great deal of Koestler's thought, it may be that the idea of pills as a solution for what ails mankind is not so far removed in spirit from the substance of his earliest thought.

Ends and Means Reconsidered

The impact of Koestler's commentary on revolutionary ethics and the dilemma of ends and means is understood better, perhaps, when it is contrasted specifically with the furious responses his work provoked. The real nature of the issues involved and the systematic structure of revolutionary thought which Koestler described so forcefully in Darkness at Noon were brought into sharper relief by many of his critics.[355] The frankness of many of the attacks is in itself revealing, but the criticisms also serve to indicate that his creations of Ivanov, Gletkin, and Rubashov are not solely figments of his imagination. The revolutionary

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[354]George Orwell, Critical Essays (London: Secker and Warburg, 1946), p. 141. Orwell went on to point out that what Koestler failed to see in his works is that although "all revolutions are failures, they are not all the same failures."

[355]Simone de Beauvoir, The Mandarins (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956), an example of an interesting, if highly unreliable portrayal of actual events, is a novel that purports to deal with a series of real dialogues and conversations among Koestler (Sacriassine), Sartre (Debreuilh), and Camus (Person) over the meaning of the Moscow trials. In Beauvoir's novel, Camus reverses his attitudes toward Communism and begins to oppose the Communist political doctrine as a direct result of Koestler's revelations.

philosophy expounded by both Gletkin and Rubashov as archetypes was echoed repeatedly by Koestler's harshest critics. They deserve at least a brief mention, not necessarily for their own sake, but as an extended commentary on Koestler's elaboration of the problem of ends and means. How far, after all, can people be prepared to strive toward revolutionary goals?

John Strachey, an English Marxist, was perhaps as mild in emotional response as any of Koestler's critics when he termed the effects of Darkness at Noon as "reactionary." Strachey did not deny, and even admitted, that everything Koestler said was true about Stalin's regime; however, he added that it never should have been committed to print, where the susceptible public could ponder its implications. Shortly before his death Strachey wrote:

> This was the first book to begin to reveal the far reaching consequences upon the mind and spirit of the West of the rejection of Communism. It revealed that Communism could not be rejected without re-emphasizing just those aspects of life which had been least emphasized and not only by Communism. And that might mean calling into question the whole rationalist tradition. The values which the book began to preach were subversive of much more than Communism.[356]

Strachey is certain that he represents the rationalist tradition that he correctly identifies Marxism as a

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[356]John Strachey, The Strangled Cry (London: Bodley Head, 1962), p. 14. Koestler replied to Strachey's rationalism with the observation that he "identifies 'reason' with the materialistic and mechanistic philosophies of the last century. Now these, of course, are as dead as mutton." In Drinkers of Infinity, p. 285.

part of.[357] Rejection for him means reversion to the barbaric Middle Ages and to metaphysical speculation. In effect, it is antiscientific and hence by definition irrational.

By far the most bitter attacks on Koestler in Western Europe have come from France. Roger Garaudy, a member of the French Communist Party, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a Party sympathizer and Marxist-oriented philosopher during the 1930s and 1940s,[358] can be singled out as particularly virulent--and comprehensive--critics. Garaudy describes Darkness at Noon as "that detective story with a metaphysical plot." His criticism begins with the premise that "the problem is abstract, that is, false."[359] He sees correctly that the ultimate aim of Koestler is the destruction of the Soviet Union, which Garaudy equates with the true democracy. To accept Koestler's philosophy of ends and means "robs us of the virile and positive joy of adherence

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[357]Michael Oakeshott, in his essay on rationalism, has remarked that the two general characteristics of rationalism are the politics of perfection and the politics of uniformity. The former predisposes the rationalist toward utopias and the latter toward a stultifying totalitarianism. "Political activity is recognized as the imposition of a uniform condition of perfection upon human conduct." In Michael Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 5-6. This would appear to characterize Strachey quite well.

[358]In later years, Merleau-Ponty retreated somewhat from his earlier uncritical acceptance of the Communist Party; however, he never renounced it completely and remained pro-Marxist to his death.

[359]Garaudy, p. 50.

and creation."[360] Koestler is a reactionary to the Marxist way of thinking, because he questions the proposition that the end will justify any means. He is decadent and irrational because the Party alone is the embodiment of the idea of History. The revolution has begun, and there can be no turning back or shrinking from the costs its success entails. Garaudy offers an able defense of Stalin and Gletkin in his criticism.

The most sophisticated attack on Koestler and defense of the implications of the Moscow trials, however, comes from the brilliant pen of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Only two categories of men exist in his world view: reactionaries and revolutionaries; Koestler is one of the former and Merleau-Ponty is one of the latter. As a revolutionary, he freely accepts the

> . . . common assumption of all revolutionaries . . . that the contingency of the future and the role of human

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[360] Ibid., p. 55. Leon Trotsky made a similar observation some twenty-seven years before Garaudy on the necessity of the end's justifying the means and on the rationale of Party terror. There is a difference, he wrote,

> ". . . between the White Terror and the Red . . . which in the eyes of a Marxist is of decisive significance. The White Terror is the weapon of the historically reactionary class. . . . The Red Terror is a weapon utilized against a class, doomed to destruction, which does not wish to perish. The White Terror can only retard the historical rise of the proletariat. The Red Terror hastens the destruction of the bourgeois. . . . One must be blind not to see this, or a swindler to deny it."

In Leon Trotsky, The Defense of Terrorism (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921), pp. 60-61. This rationale for a defense of terrorism is echoed also by Merleau-Ponty.

> decisions in history make political divergences ineducible and cunning, deceit and violence inevitable.[361]

It is a "necessity" in the purest and strictest sense of the term that there be no deviation in constructing the future in terms of the revolutionary vision. "The present and the future," he wrote, "are not the object of science but of construction or action. . . . The future is only probable but it is not an empty zone in which we can construct gratuitous projects."[362] As such, Merleau-Ponty rejects out of hand Koestler's idea that the Party ideology has led to some of the greatest crimes in history. He explains that "a revolution does not define crimes according to the established law but in accordance with the law of society it wishes to create."[363] In other words, the only valid criticism of Gletkin would depend on whether or not the public trial and execution of Rubashov advances or retards the future society the Party is creating. Because the Party by its actions has decreed that Rubashov has become a parasite to the cause and can return to the good graces of the Party only by accepting its terms of his own death, the case cannot be debated seriously except by a reactionary.

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[361]Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969; First French edition, 1947), p. 96.

[362]Ibid., pp. 94-95.

[363]Ibid., p. xxxii.

To Merleau-Ponty, the fatal flaw in Koestler's work, particularly in Darkness at Noon, is his rejection of the Marxist distinction between subjective and objective consciousness. "Gletkin," Merleau-Ponty wrote,

> . . . stands for humanity conscious of its own material roots; he is the realization of what Rubashov had always spoken. . . . Once humanism (Gletkin) attempts to fulfill itself with any consistency, it becomes transformed into its opposite, namely, into violence.[364]

Institutionalized humanism, that is, revolutionary government, is the embodiment of an objective consciousness but not the perfected consciousness of the future; hence, the love of mankind will appear, to the outsider, as irrational. He went on to say:

> The trials remain on a subjective level . . . because they bear upon facts still open toward the future, which consequently are not yet univocal and only definitively criminal in character when they are viewed from the perspective on the future held by men in power.[365]

By definition, this excludes both Rubashov and Koestler.

> The Moscow trials only make sense between revolutionaries, that is to say between men who are convinced that they are making history and who consequently already see the present as past.[366]

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[364] Ibid., pp. 11, 13.

[365] Ibid., p. 27.

[366] Ibid., p. 29.

"The Moscow trials are . . . but a phase in the political struggle and an expression of the violence in history . . . and they necessarily had an arbitrary look. It is always that way. . . . Since, in respect to the future, we have no other criterion than probability, the difference between a greater or lesser probability suffices as the basis of political decision." (pp. 30-31)

What Koestler has done in his work has been to give meaning to words which Merleau-Ponty rejects out of hand as subversive to the objective reality of Communism. To give meaning to words is to introduce the subjective element into a rational analysis of history. In his criticism, Merleau-Ponty points this out:

> Honor, dishonor, sincerity, falsehood--such words have no meaning for the man of history. There is only objective treason and objective merit. The traitor is he who in fact deserts the country of the Revolution as it stands, its leadership and its institutions. All the rest is psychology.[367]

As Merleau-Ponty describes Koestler's failings, Koestler's inability to accept the "objectivity" of Gletkin's actions springs from his fundamental bourgeois liberalism, which is in direct contrast to revolutionary ethics. Koestler is an unreliable guide to a discussion of violence because "all discussion from a liberal perspective misses the problem since it professes to be relevant to a country which has made and intends to continue a revolution whereas liberalism excludes the revolutionary hypothesis."[368]

Bourgeois liberalism cannot stand in judgment of the acts of revolutionaries because it is the product of a decadent and historically doomed class. The source of the violence is not to be found in the actual perpetrators of terror, the Gletkins or Stalin or the Party; rather, the

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[367] Ibid., p. 4.

[368] Ibid., p. xvii.

cause lies in the reactionaries who refuse to accept the historical place of the proletariat in society, that is, of course, liberals such as Koestler. The violence, however, will "be transcended in the violent creation of a new order."[369] In the choice between Burke's "rights of men" and Paine's "rights of Man," Merleau-Ponty accuses Koestler of holding to the former, while he, in the name of a higher truth, has embraced the latter. This may mean that certain men will have to be sacrificed for the sake of mankind, because "either one wants to make a revolution, in which case one has to handle what it involves, or else one seeks at every moment to treat every man as if he were an end in himself."[370] A characteristic of bourgeois liberalism is the treatment of "man as if he were an end in himself."

A future reign of humanism requires terror in the present; to the outsider who cannot understand this, the future is opaque and can be but a nightmare. This is what Merleau-Ponty views as the future for Koestler--a nightmare.

Although Merleau-Ponty concedes that the future is not "clearly defined in any sort of programmatic way," there can be no doubt that it will be radically different from the present. Furthermore, it will be rational "because it is the extrapolation and conclusion of the logic of the

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[369] Ibid., p. 35.

[370] Ibid., p. 85.

present."[371] Knowledge of the future can be reconciled only with probability from absolute knowledge at the end of History. According to Merleau-Ponty,

> . . . The dictatorship of the truth will always be the dictatorship of a group, and to those who do not share it, it will appear purely arbitrary. A revolution, even when founded on a philosophy of history, is a forced revolution and it is violence; correlatively, opposition in the name of humanism, can be counterrevolutionary.[372]

Thus, the end will always justify the means for the true revolutionary, because the end will always be the rational reconstruction of a second reality out of his individual will.

Clearly, the various criticisms of Koestler are of uneven caliber, reflecting various levels of understanding regarding what he is all about. The most comprehensive of these have been given above. It is one measure of the force and power with which Koestler presents the revolutionary dilemma of ends and means that the response to him has been what it is. It would not stretch the imagination to say that the frankness of the ideological criticism from Marxists is the highest tribute that can be paid. If Koestler had not touched a raw nerve among his critics, their commentary would no doubt have been far less bitter. In addition, the boldness of the critics in making explicit

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[371] Ibid., p. 36.

[372] Ibid., pp. 92-93.

what all too often has been merely implicit in their thought may eventually be as valuable in the refutation of Marxism as anything Koestler has written himself.

Epilogue

No doubt there is a difference between the Koestler of Darkness at Noon and the later Koestler, after the publication of his memoirs. But it would be easy to focus on superficial differences and miss the underlying continuity of his thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. Both the older and the younger Koestler are essentially pessimists, but the mature author calls himself an "optimistic pessimist," if such a thing exists. Translated into some sort of social philosophy, what this seems to mean is that although he no longer believes in the perfectibility of men, he does believe in the perfectibility of society. Exactly how imperfect men are going to build this heaven on earth through modern chemistry simply pushes the old question of ends and means back one level to who is going to administer the pills; wisely, however, Koestler avoids another discussion of ends and means in this context. Unable to solve the eternal problem earlier, there is no reason to believe that he would be any more successful now.

In essence, I would have to argue that there is less difference between Koestler in later life, as opposed to his days in the Party, than might at first seem to be the case.

He still seems to believe that the future will be different, except that now there is a note of desperation, because the future is not ensured by the laws of history but must be the fruit of these imperfect men in whom he has so little trust. What probably has always been a latent nihilism in his Marxism surfaces here to some extent, and the prospects of a future as chaotic as the past seem to offer positive proof of the meaninglessness of the whole course of human development. If there is no "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow, no heaven on earth, what can it all mean?

Having long ago disposed of the idea of a morality of existence external to men's will, Koestler seems to have spent his later years in search of a god that will not fail. But it is still to be a god created out of the egotism of men's own will: a projection into the future of existence of a pattern that is radically altered from the "givenness" of things. To this extent at least, Koestler remains a rebel in the sense that Albert Camus has used the word; he is the enemy of things as they are, of the givenness of the most fundamental aspects of the human condition.

CHAPTER IV

IGNAZIO SILONE: PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN REBEL

"The people who are born in this district are really out of luck," a doctor in a village near Silone's boyhood home is known to have said. "There's no halfway house here; you've either got to rebel or become an accomplice."[373] What he meant, of course, was the choice between rebellion against the local government, the land owners, and the state, or the joining of forces with this establishment.

Silone chose to rebel. To his mind, all other avenues were effectively closed. "According to circumstances," he wrote,

> . . . rebellion can lead to the foreign legion, to simple delinquency, to the art of the cinema, or equally to a monestary or to political extremism. What defined our rebellion was the choice of companions. Outside the Church there were the cafoni.[374]

Silone described his rebellion as a combination of hatred and love: hatred for things as they are and love

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[373] Crossman, p. 96; "Ignazio Silone" is the pen name of Secondino Tranquilli.

[374] Ignazio Silone, quoted in R. W. B. Lewis, "Fiction and Power: Some Notes on Ignazio Silone," The Kenyon Review, XVII, No. 1 (Winter, 1955), 34-35. The cafoni are the peasants of Italy; see also Iris Oriso, "Ignazio Silone: A Study in Integrity," Atlantic, CCXIX, No. 3 (March, 1967), 88.

for things as they should be.[375] The explanation of his motivations, Silone has written, lies in the nature of the social and intellectual environment of his youth, in the rugged, mountainous Abruzzi of Southern Italy. The conventional attitude in the Abruzzi toward the state and regular governmental authority has been one of "reinforced distrust, diffidence, and skipticism in the peasants' minds."

> For them, the State became the irremediable creation of the devil. A good Christian, if he wanted to save his soul, should avoid, as far as possible, all contact with the State. The State always stands for swindling, intrigues and privilege, and could not stand for anything else. Neither law nor force can change it. If retribution occasionally catches up with it, this can only be by the dispensation of God.[376]

But rebellion in such an atmosphere is far from an expression of hopelessness. In Silone's district the heroes are St. Francis of Assisi and Joachim of Fiore, and the cafoni live in perpetual anticipation of another saint or prophet to lead them, if only temporarily. According to Silone, "The ashes of skepticism have never suffocated . . . the ancient hope of the Kingdom of God on earth, the old expectation of charity taking the place of law, the old

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[375] Crossman, p. 97.

[376] Ibid., p. 92. A Christian state, Silone has written, is a contradiction in terms. In a truly Christian society, "love would replace law." In Ignazio Silone, "Self-Portrait in Questions and Answers," Partisan Review, XXI, No. 6 (November-December, 1954), 697 (hereafter referred to as Silone, "Self-Portrait").

dream of Gioacchino de Fiore."[377] To be a rebel, then, means to follow in the footsteps of saints and prophets; to become an accomplice of the powers that be is to make a pact with the devil. The good Christian has no choice; rebellion is the only honorable path of existence.

The dilemma of ends and means, as Silone expresses the concept, is a tension between theory and practice, between unreality and reality, and between personal ethics and the laws of expediency. In all of his creative writing this single theme, in a variety of manifestations, reappears consistently. The pull of the future is symbolized as "socialism," as a theory of social and economic organization guiding personal ethics, but at conflict with the harsh realities of social existence. Silone writes:

> The phenomenon which most impressed me when I arrived at the age of reason was the violent contrast, the incomprehensible, absurd, monstrous contrast between family and private life--in the main decent, honest, and well-conducted--and social relations, which were very often crude and full of hatred and deceit.[378]

It was not that "Truth" and "Justice" were terms foreign to the people of the Abruzzi--they were often discussed at

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[377] Crossman, p. 97. Michael Harrington, "The Political Novel Today," The Commonweal, LXIII, No. 4 (October 28, 1955), cites his interview with the author to the effect that Joachim of Fiore has been one of Silone's most consistent heroes. Silone has remarked that in all of Italian history, Joachim of Fiore, together with St. Francis of Assisi, is the person most stimulating to him; in Ignazio Silone, "Self-Portrait," 696.

[378] Crossman, p. 82; see also Walter Allen, "Ignazio Silone," The London Magazine, II, No. 1 (January, 1955), 64.

school and church and during public celebrations, but the discussions always appeared to lack reference to the "real" world as Silone experienced it. Such abstract concepts did not appear to reach the daily social intercourse of the persons he observed.

The tension was symbolically crystallized for him in his recollection of a catechism class he attended for boys who were being prepared for confirmation. The class was presented in the form of a puppet show which depicted the adventures of a child who was being persecuted by the devil. Frightened by the devil, the child hid under a nearby bed. At that point, the devil unexpectedly turned to the confirmation class and asked his audience where the child had fled. The horror-struck boys replied that the child had left the village. Their reply, of course, was not true, but their lie had been motivated by a simple desire to save the child in the play. They were very much surprised, therefore, when the parish priest was not altogether pleased with their deception of the devil. They had told a lie for good ends, he told them, but it remained a lie. He responded to the situation with the admonition that one must never tell a lie. "Not even to the devil?" the boys asked in astonishment. "A lie is always a sin," the priest replied. No end, however noble, will ever justify corrupt means.[379]

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[379]Crossman, pp. 84-85.

Although, at the time, Silone did not accept this answer to the problem of ends and means, to the already growing spirit of his rebellion were added the seeds of doubt that institutionalized ethics could ever be made compatible with the everyday realities of social existence.

According to Silone's dialectics of the human condition, one cannot be a good Christian and a good Catholic nor, at a later date, a good Socialist and a good Communist. A fundamental incompatibility exists between the ideas that originally foster ethics and their practical organizational manifestation. As a result, individual morality can be practiced only through rebellion against society. The young men of southern Italy like himself, "if they have a minimum of sensitiveness in human relationships, tend toward anarchy and rebellion."[380] It is significant to note that rebellion for Silone, as contrasted to that of Arthur Koestler, is an act of necessity due more to physical, that is, social circumstances than to anything else. Koestler's man revolts because of the logic inherent in a particular ideology, whereas Silone's fictional characters revolt because of their social and economic situation, regardless of ideology; whatever path they may follow in terms of a theoretical justification for revolt--Christianity, Communism, simple anarchy, or whatever--the initial impulse is the incongruity betwee

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[380] Ibid., p. 95.

the person himself and what his environment demands of him and takes for granted about him.[381]

The absence of an integrative community in the sense of the Greek polis suggests the essence of Silone's man. The intellectual quest of Silone and of the characters in his novels is a ceaseless, and fruitless, search for a genuine community in society.

It is a characteristic of the modern, bourgeois state system that the individual does not experience an organic relationship between himself and society as in fact it is ordered. The individual person of conscience always experiences the state as an antagonist to be overcome by the act of rebellion. For Silone, then, the spiritual community is the ideal which, though not realized as fact in the physical sense, is nevertheless the inspirational source of values and the goal toward which the political activist strives.

Genuine political activism, directed by the quest for a dominance of the spiritual over the physical, is radical; but although it may give the outward appearance of anarchy, it in fact is motivated at its fundamental level by a search for a higher degree of order. In his youth, at least, Silone regarded this higher order not only as desirable, but as attainable. "Why can the will of the people

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[381]On this point, see Elaine Hoisington Johnson, "The Political Novels of Ignazio Silone," The Personalist, XXXIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1953), 42-43.

only express itself sporadically?" he asked; "Why can it not become a permanent and stable basis for the reorganization of public life?"[382] He concluded that the organization of society was at fault. "There is an abyss between the nature of man, his destiny and what society makes of him."[383]

The society that molds men, of course, is determined whereas man's nature is not. In the modern setting, it is a bourgeois society that shapes men, at least in the Western world. Hence, the form of the rebellion is dictated by the actual order of the peculiarities of the bourgeois state. The state's two most devious features are capitalism and a society that is the very opposite of "community" as it is properly understood. The ideal spiritual community, therefore, is one built on a combination of socialism and community, which may take the place of society or may be a higher form of society.

Socialism and Social Consciousness

Although as a matter of practical necessity it may be necessary, from time to time, to make concessions to the present social order, it does not thereby follow that it is necessary to make "peace" with it. True social consciousness

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[382] Crossman, p. 89. On the Hegelian-like unity of the opposites of "order" and "anarchy" in Silone, see Francis Hope, "Ignazio Silone," The New Statesman, LXVIII, No. 1741 (July 24, 1964), 120.

[383] Ignazio Silone, "The Fox," in John Lehmann (ed.), Italian Stories of Today (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 51.

is directed by an idea of a more perfect future under socialism, and it expresses itself through rebellion. "Prudence may condition our acts," Silone concedes, "but not our consciences."[384]

By "socialism," Silone does not mean the exclusively secular socialism that was expressed in nineteenth century thought by such figures as Lasalle and Marx; he is referring to a more nearly medieval idea of socialism that takes as its symbol the life of the Christian in a primitive Christian society.[385] To Silone, socialism means group adherence to the example of Christ as opposed to the example of bureaucracy typified by the Soviet Union. Thus, to the author, social consciousness must wage perpetual war with things as they are and will continue to be until the attainment of a genuine spiritual community in the form of a non-bourgeois society built on a foundation of socialism.

The theory and structure of socialism differed for Silone from that of the Communist Party with its bureaucratic organization. The idea of the former was the spark that prompted his association with the Italian Communist Party and gave him reason for leaving it after ten years.

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[384]Ignazio Silone, Emergency Exit (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 104.

[385]Long after he had left the Communist Party, Silone defined socialism as "the elimination of the economic and social obstacles which at present impede human freedom." In Silone, "Self-Portrait," 697.

It is necessary, then, to keep the concept of socialism, on one hand, and that of Communism, on the other, distinct in Silone's thought. By keeping them separate, it will be easier to observe the permanent as well as the transient aspects of Silone's political activism.

Long after this experiences with the Party and his rejection of the means employed by Communism to achieve its ends, he was able to write:

> My faith in socialism has remained more alive than ever in me. In its essence, it has gone back to what it was when I first revolted against the old social order: a refusal to admit the existence of destiny, an extension of the ethical impulse from the restricted individual and family sphere to the whole domain of human activity, a need for effective brotherhood, an affirmation of the superiority of the human person over all the economic and social mechanisms which oppress him.[386]

The problem of socialism, as Silone reflected after his experiences with Communism, lay in its organization. The implementation of socialism required organization, but the organization of socialism into the bureaucratic responsibilities established by Communism had doomed the Russian experiment.[387] As he phrased it, "The seeds of socialism which bloomed in the October Revolution had been smothered by a bureaucratic totalitarian state."[388]

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[386]Ignazio Silone, "Farewell to Moscow," Harper's Magazine, CXC, No. 1194 (November, 1949), 99; Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 98; Crossman, pp. 113-114.

[387]Nicola Chiaremonte, "Return to Fontamara," Partisan Review, XXI, No. 3 (May-June, 1954), 308.

[388]Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 104.

Socialism failed to survive in Fascist Italy because it was purely rhetorical, "backed by words rather than force, which filled the political vacuum with organization."[389] It is one of the tragedies of the movement that it cannot succeed without organization; yet once it is organized, the bureaucracy takes it over and cynically manipulates its goals to suit its own purposes--normally, to make peace with the present. Silone wrote:

> Socialism reminds me of the hunter who went to shoot quail and found wolves instead; he had the wrong ammunition. Socialism and Communism have lost much of their contact with reality. They have suffered their worst defeats from forces which they thought had nothing to do with dialectical materialism or the class struggle, and which, for that reason, they refused to take seriously.[390]

The rescue of socialism requires the toughness of mind always needed to battle apparently impossible odds. At times faith alone is all that sustains the true believer; "socialism, seeking its mighty goal, wanders in the labyrinth of ideological ism's and often goes astray, loses its strength or is untrue to itself by assimilating false and completely alien elements."[391]

The future does belong, however, to socialism, and

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[389]Ignazio Silone, "Rhetoric or Life," The Nation, CXLIV, No. 17 (April 24, 1937), 459.

[390]Ignazio Silone, "Things I Stand For," The New Republic, CVII, No. 18 (November 2, 1942), 582.

[391]Ignazio Silone, "Marxism from Another Angle," The Commonweal, XLVIII, No. 22 (September 10, 1948), 523.

indeed, the present also, if people only will see what plainly lies before them. "For the Socialist," Silone says, "the main cause of the historical crisis which humanity is now undergoing originates in the strident contrast between the real development of society and its political organization."[392] In other words, the structure of the state and society are preventing and aborting man's attempts to realize his fullest potentiality in a socialist order. As a consequence of this contrast, no organic relationship exists between the individual and bourgeois society; the net effect is alienation and nihilism. As Silone surveys his native Italy, he finds it in "an advanced state of exhaustion" due to its inability to bridge the gap between man and his spiritual community in socialism.[393]

The greatest danger posed by the decadence of capitalism is that its materialism borders on nihilism which, in turn, is the root of the decadence of our time.[394] It is important to keep this point in mind, because when Silone joined the Communist Party in 1921, his motivation sprang in large part from what he considered fascism to be--the incarnation of nihilism. Years later, he repeated the

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[392]Ignazio Silone, "Catholics and Socialists," The Commonweal, XLVIII, No. 4 (May 7, 1948), 70.

[393]Ignazio Silone, "Fiction and the Southern Subsoil," Italian Quarterly, I, No. 2 (Summer, 1957), 33.

[394]Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 112.

lifelong conviction that "fascism in its various forms meant . . . the elevation of nihilism to power."[395] As with the materialist ethic of capitalism, "nihilism is the deep conviction that there is no objective reality behind faith . . . and that the only thing that counts is success."[396] Nihilism is less an ideology than a condition of the spirit which is at the opposite pole of socialism in a genuine spiritual community.[397] So pervasive is this corruption of the spirit that it has prevailed, thus far, in all efforts to institutionalize socialism. In 1942, he wrote:

> It may well be that fascism will be conquered by force of arms, and nevertheless will develop in the victor states--perhaps even with a democratic or socialist mask, under the form of 'Red fascism'. History is made by men, not by social determinisms.[398]

In the battle against nihilism, the importance of arms and modern weaponry is less important than the meaning of words. If words are considered meaningless, according to Silone, then nihilism is the result. In no small measure, it may be said that Silone conceives one of his major tasks to be that of explaining and interpreting the meanings of

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[395] Ibid., p. 113. Silone's close personal friend Iris Origo argued that he never considered fascism to be a logically consistent ideology, but rather a doctrine of personal power which Mussolini shifted at his own convenience. Origo, pp. 89-90. This interpretation of Silone lacks justification in the light of Silone's own statements on the subject.

[396] Ibid., p. 112.

[397] Ibid., pp. 113-114.

[398] Silone, "Things I Stand For," 583.

words. This is no less true for "socialism" than for Christianity. To make words mean something requires a commitment against those forces that would rob them of the value they represent.

The Road to Communism and Back

"It is really true," a revolutionary acquaintance of Silone has remarked, "that any road can lead to Communism nowadays."[399] In later years, Silone recalled the inevitability inherent in his conversion to Communism. Rebellion in Italy after World War I meant membership in the Communist Party; the choice of companions defined the scope and nature of the rebellion. Social conscience dictated rebellion, and to be an organized rebel meant to become a member of the Party. Like Koestler's experience, Silone's conversion to the new faith was rooted in his previous existence and was not the result of Party indoctrination. He wrote, "One usually learns the new ideology later in the Party schools, after having already embraced it in an act of faith."[400] No doubt young Silone would have been a rebel regardless of the existence or nonexistence of the Party, but the Party was there, to shape and direct the course of his rebellion until 1930, when he finally left the movement.

Joining the Party was an emotional commitment for

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[399] Crossman, p. 81; Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 44.

[400] Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 118.

Silone in which the promised goal was redemption of the poor cafoni. As a Marxist working for the proletariat revolution, Silone considered the revolution to be neither determined, in the sense that one need not work for it to happen, nor a game of chance--it rested in an intellectual twilight between certainty and probability.

> I know that winning my bet doesn't depend on chance, but on the skill and strength of the players. . . . And that's why I participate not only as a bettor, but as a player as well, as a player entirely absorbed by the game and who has wagered himself. All of himself . . . except his eyes.[401]

In 1921, Secondino Tranquilli became editor of Il Lavoratore, a Communist daily newspaper in Trieste. During the next year, the paper and its premises were burned by the Fascists, and his brother was arrested and finally beaten to death in a Fascist prison. After that, Tranquilli went underground with the Italian Communist Party and adopted the pen name Ignazio Silone. Ironically, it is the name he has used exclusively ever since.

In spite of what he regarded as the "horrid atmosphere" of Russia under Lenin and Stalin, an approach to socialism that differed substantially from what he had expected, Silone stayed with the Party long after he rejected what he saw. The reason was simple and was shared equally by Koestler and others. What if Stalin, after all, were right? What Silone described as total commitment toward "the

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[401] Ibid., p. 44.

creation of a new world" in Russia, to be the springboard for a new world everywhere, took primacy over what his reason rejected.[402] How much the philosophy of Lenin and Communism influenced his thought on the nature of political development as a fundamental part of his total perspective can be seen in a statement made many years after leaving the Party:

> There is no road sign on the path of progress which forces the peasants of the South to pass through the phase 'national middle class' before going ahead. It is ridiculous to demand that history, like nature, not permit any jumps.[403]

He admitted as much when he reflected on his experiences in the Party:

> It is not easy to free oneself from an experience as intense as that of the underground organization of the Communist Party. Something of it remains and leaves a mark on the character which lasts all one's life.[404]

In 1932, when Silone finally detached himself from organized Marxism in Italy (he had formally left the Communist Party in 1930), most of his contemporaries in European intellectual circles were beginning to take Communism more

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[402] Crossman, pp. 100-106. Silone later described his own attachment to the cause when he wrote that "Marxism is the opium of the people," in "Things I Stand For," 583; see also Jürgen Rühle, Literature and Revolution: A Critical Study of the Writer and Communism in the Twentieth Century (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 473.

[403] Silone, "Fiction and the Southern Subsoil," 33-34; see also Alfred G. Meyer, Leninism (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), especially pp. 262-269.

[404] Crossman, p. 113.

seriously than they had before. His timing is worthy of further note in that it occurred before the time of the mass public trials that so revolted Koestler. Silone left, in part because he believed that the bureaucratic apparatus had thwarted the socialistic impulse of the original movement and had perverted it to its own purpose.[405] Socialism qua socialism was not only distinct from the Communist Party, but, Silone went on to argue, the Marxists in Western Europe were not, in many respects, very different from members of other political parties.[406] In point of fact, the decadence of the Party lay in its transition from a noble idea to the application of that idea, which reflected the conventions of any other political party. To that appraisal Silone added, "From method to ideology: therein lies the decadence of Marxism."[407]

A passionate commitment to social justice was the impetus for Silone's joining of forces with the Communists, and the same commitment determined his decision to forsake

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[405]It is interesting to compare Silone's views on reasons for the decline of socialism in Russia under the bureaucracy with those of Victor Serge, a fellow fallen-away Party member. Serge wrote that the Party workers who corrupted the system they inherited from the Bolsheviks did so because "at bottom they cared exceedingly little about the future . . . desiring only to live in comfort and without complications"--that is, in the present. In Victor Serge, From Lenin to Stalin (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1937), p. 66.

[406]Silone, "Marxism from Another Angle," 521-523.

[407]Ibid., 521.

the Party. Justice for Silone meant "socialism" within a strong spiritual community, binding men together in harmony. It was a vision that others would have called utopian, but one that he would have termed "Christian realism." The corruption of Marxism, as he experienced it, was in the incongruity between ends and means. He had joined because he envisioned within Communism a just "end" to the problem of the poor. The purity of Party doctrine, however, had become fouled by its contact with reality. In the final analysis, Party activity, as he experienced it, contrasted sharply with its professed morality. If the ideology was true, then the reality had to be false. "Was the life in the Abruzzi," he asked rhetorically, "any less real than the historical process?"[408]

He left the Party not so much because of an opposing ideology as because the same motivation directed both his own radicalism and, as he saw it, the radicalism of the original Marxism. The difference for him was embodied in the additional element of Christ in his part of the equation. He wrote, "The rediscovery of our Christian heritage in the midst of the social crisis of our time remains the most important acquisition of our conscience in the last few years."[409] One of the most significant differences between

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[408]Chiaremonte, p. 309.

[409]Silone, "Fiction and the Southern Subsoil," 36.

Silone and Koestler regarding their attitudes toward the Party and Communism lies in the fact that for Koestler the problem is more of the nature of pure ideology--it is a debate of the contemporary intellectual with himself. For Silone, the problem of Communism is the Party's promise to transform the world according to justice and to redeem the poor. For him, leaving as he did before the Moscow trials of the mid-1930s, the problem is not one of an abstract philosophy of history and human nature, but of pragmatic criticism of the Party's failure to fulfill its original promise. He measures the viability and "reality" of its programs by the extent to which life in the most backward villages has improved as a result of its work.

After Silone left the Communist Party altogether, and had the time he needed to reflect on his long association, he began to perceive the menace of the Party as part of a larger political problem--the decadent spirit of the age, which turned all politics, whether Right or Left, toward totalitarianism.[410] He saw the intellectual refugees from Communism as an entirely new social group in the European political tradition, better able to understand the

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[410]During World War II, as an exile in Switzerland where he resided after fleeing Italy in 1930, Silone considered the Allies to be fighting "a private war against Fascism," while he and his cohorts had concluded that whatever the outcome, "the fight against the danger of totalitarianism [would] certainly not end with this war." In Emergency Exit, p. 105.

menace of totalitarianism--its true nature as well as the most effective means of combatting it--because once having been enmeshed in the web of its dialectics, they knew what it represented as only insiders could. Silone wrote:

> Ours is no isolated case. Our number is a growing legion. . . . It is like an encampment of refugees in no-man's land, a camp that is exposed to the elements. What do you suppose refugees do from morning to night? They pass most of their time telling each other stories. They are not very entertaining stories, but they tell them, more than anything else, in an effort to understand.[411]

To have been a part of the movement is like having been vaccinated effectively against its disease. Outsiders lack such immunization, for the most part, and are too apt to be fellow travelers or to sympathize with the aspirations of the Party to achieve an earthly city of God.[412] In the end, "the final struggle will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists."[413]

The Political Novels of Ignazio Silone

The political novels that Ignazio Silone has written are quite different both in their substance and style from those of Arthur Koestler. A number of reasons for this can

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[411] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[412] In commenting on the gullibility of "outsiders" such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Silone wrote, "We Italians are astonished at the admiration the Italian Communist Party enjoys in France. Stupidities are, of course, more bearable if they are expressed in a foreign language." *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[413] Silone, "Farewell to Moscow," 99; Crossman, p. 113.

be advanced, but one of the most significant surely must be the different images of men that are conveyed by the use of certain carefully chosen words as well as the manner in which social reality is structured. For Koestler's characters, dialogues and conversations are all-consuming ideological debates in which the souls of the participants are involved. These debates assume their crucial significance because no matter how abstract they seem to become, the ideas involved have consequences. The debates are literally a matter of life or death for the participants. By contrast, in Silone's work, whatever the stakes involved are, the reactions of the characters are more emotional, and even poetic, than rational. Silone's men tend to "feel," whereas Koestler's characters "think." The difference is subtle, perhaps, but it is quite important if we are to gain a proper perspective on Silone, his political views, and the particular manner in which he places his concept of the future within the context of his creative writing. Because his writing has far more symbolic significance than that of Koestler, it is more important to keep in mind his use of symbolism and the way he manipulates it for optical effects. Silone is less obvious than Koestler about what he has to say; he relies more heavily on hidden meanings, interpretations, and implied constructs.

Silone always has considered himself at least as much a European as an Italian, and his fiction reflects

this. He has denied strongly that anything but the weakest link exists between himself and any previous Italian writers. He does not see himself as a representative of any particular literary "school." In this regard, he has written:

> In my development as a writer, even in my technique, far more than schooling and reading, the experiences of life have had a decisive influence. . . . If I had had a different life . . . I should not have written what I have written.[414]

This statement appears to mean that although Silone is aware that he is a product of his experiences, those experiences in turn are a product of historically conditioned circumstances. In the mountainous Abruzzi of Silone's childhood and young manhood, the only symbolism that had universal significance among the people was that of the Bible and Christ. Nothing else existed by which they could relate the meaning of their lives to the events of the world around them.[415]

As a novelist, Silone tends to search for types rather than individuals. He is interested in demonstrating the species homo sapiens within the individual about whom he writes, rather than concentrating on the characteristics of individuals within the species of man. As a result, many of his characters often seem rather abstract and unreal,

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[414]Silone, "Fiction and the Southern Subsoil," 35.

[415]Paul Potts, "Not Since Dante: Ignazio Silone--A Footnote," New Road: Directions in European Arts and Letters, No. 4 (1946), p. 78.

lacking the flesh-and-blood reality of a Rubashov or a Gletkin.[416] It is important, however, to remember that in Silone's work as a political novelist, the process of bringing out the dominant characteristics of men in a particular man also serves to emphasize his principal concern with politics--the ethics of political action. The search for the "type" rather than the individual also reflects a basic supposition that the individual is essentially shaped by his society and particular historical circumstances. His characters represent a sort of Universal Man because they share the same awareness of the dilemma of the human condition as all of their contemporaries. And in Silone, the additional element is offered of the immutability of the condition of the poor. Their condition never changes, except perhaps for the worse from time to time, and this has made the dilemma of the human condition, up to the present at least, the same now as in the past. Silone's characters live in a labored social setting which is artificial and yet quite natural--artificial because it fails to conform to the exacting standards of Christian justice and natural because the peasants have never experienced another order and can only imagine it.

The portrayal of what Silone regards as the "universal" in man also reveals another characteristic that

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[416]Sidney Alexander, "It is Still, Alas, Good Friday," The Reporter, XIX, No. 3 (September 4, 1958), 44-45.

needs to be made explicit in that it clarifies his concept of the future. This is the distinction between "prediction" and "prophecy." Properly understood, prediction in its most common usage implies some sort of knowledge about the future, although such knowledge need not be precise. The more nearly precise the prediction the greater the congruity will be between the experienced event or object and the foreknowledge of it. But "prediction" per se is not a part of Silone's concept of the future. Instead, his work conveys a spirit which more properly may be classified as "prophecy." Prophecy differs from prediction in that the prophet does not disclose knowledge of the future, but knowledge of the Absolute. In short, the prophet satisfies a longing for knowledge of the Good or God.

Silone's heroes form an unusual blend of radical individualism and everyman. Unlike Koestler's principal characters, the protagonists of Silone's novels convey no tension between the seemingly contradictory aspects of their character. Rubashov, for example, is at war with himself; his mind wavers between sanity and insanity. Pietro Spina, Silone's archetypal hero, represents a more integrated personality and is anything but neurotic. But Pietro is alienated against society--what some would call "reality"--and is at war with the world. Truth for Pietro is the knowledge of how a person should live and only incidentally how the world should be transformed.

The source of Pietro's alienation is the incongruity between his ideas about reality and his experience with it. The future, conceived of as a rather vague notion of socialism, is arrived at not so much by a knowledge of the advance of history as by a knowledge of the right order of spiritual and material priorities as God intended it.

At this point, prophecy and prediction begin to blend together somewhat, but the emphasis remains clearly on the former. The right order of the future is seen through the eyes of a prophet who structures it in accordance with an eternal, universal essence of things which we most commonly refer to as God, or the Creation of God.

As noted earlier, when Silone broke with Communism it was because of the sharp differences between the professed morality of the Party and its actual practices, the disagreement over ends and means and the priorities emphasized. The Party had substituted Silone's longing for the satisfaction of knowledge of the absolute with a vulgar prediction that was becoming more manifestly false with each passing month. Communism had become an ideology like many others and had lost its social consciousness by its betrayal of socialism.

Silone's literary work in its most immediate form, then, became an effort to restore to revolutionary political ethics that most important element, the spirit of prophecy. He wrote some time later, "If my poor literary work has any meaning, in the ultimate analysis, it consists of this:

> . . . a time came when writing meant, for me, an absolute necessity to testify, an urgent need to free myself from an obsession, to state the meaning and define the limits of a painful but decisive break, and of a vaster allegiance that still continues.[417]

His novels and short stories should be read as an effort to define the nature of the rebel's ethics and his role as a social reformer.

It is worthwhile to remember, while attempting to interpret Silone's political novels, that history forms more than a background to the dilemma confronting the characters: it <u>is</u> the dilemma. History establishes the moral climate of the time and thereby dictates the expression of social consciousness in the rebel.[418] But history in Silone is not considered to be a force of spiritless nihilism. What Silone experienced and rejected as a member of the Communist Party was the myth of social salvation through political activism.[419] He discovered that the manifestations of social consciousness in this activism are not ends in themselves, but often instead are unwittingly misdirected individual actions toward a higher end. This end is one of spiritual salvation more often than not, in spite of the sordid realities of politics.

Silone's characters, from <u>Fontamara</u> through <u>The Fox and the Camellias</u>, move through the eroded wasteland of

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[417] Crossman, p. 81.

[418] Elaine Hoisington Johnson, 41.

[419] Lewis, 26-28.

their time, revealing a collective evolution of thought away from an analytical vision of society and toward a poetic social view. What this means for the rebel is that, in Koestler's terminology, political ethics moves from the commissar to the yogi, from the active to the contemplative end of the spectrum. The views reflected in Silone's work, early in his writing and later, use the same imagery, Christianity, and appear to move toward the same end, socialism. But Christianity and socialism both assume significantly different meanings or connotations for Silone in the 1950s than they had had early in the 1930s, when he first began to publish.

What Must We Do?

The narrative of Fontamara tells a simple story--the fate of the village of Fontamara under Fascist rule. But the simplicity is deceptive, for a subsurface tension erupts finally in the end, between the conscious awareness of the peasants toward politics and what may be called the "objective" development of events.[420] The daily lives of the people of the village are controlled by outside forces that they perceive only dimly, if at all, and then only in the most grotesque forms. Their patterned, traditional

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[420]Ignazio Silone, "Return to Fontamara," The Reporter, XXXI, No. 7 (October 22, 1964), 27-28. A different version appeared earlier; cf. Silone, "Return to Fontamara," Tomorrow, VIII, No. 2 (1949); see also Chiaremonte, 307.

values act as a prism that distorts what they see into something unrecognizable. The point that Silone is attempting to make in Fontamara is the often brutal disparity between reality for the peasants and the theories or ideologies that attempt to explain that reality.

In its most elementary sense, the novel traces what may be called the growth of a collective social consciousness among the cafoni in the poorest section of Italy. Although the fact should not be overly drawn, neither should we neglect to point out that this first political novel by Silone has a strongly Marxist flavor in its over-all social orientation. The impact of Marxism as a paradigmatic construct recedes in his later writing, although we can argue that it never disappears entirely. The problem of the cafoni, and most important, Silone's analysis in depth of the problem, bear the unmistakeable imprint of an author who has served for some ten years within the ranks of the Party. This is not surprising, even in view of his departure from formal Communism, if we remember that Silone evaluated his writing at the time both as a "decisive break" and "a vaster allegiance that still continues." What his writing reveals, then, is a tradition of change within a broader framework of continuity.

Insofar as it is the purpose of theory to change practical reality, a notion that prompted Silone both to accept and to reject Communism, the reader is to measure the

impact of an ideology on the Fontamarans by the magnitude of change it brings to their daily lives. Neither Christianity nor Communism affects the lives of the people to any significant extent. "The things that go on keep changing every day," says one of the cafoni, but "the one giving the orders is always the same. The law is always the same. Sometimes it changes its name, but it is always the same."[421] The reason for this is simple, and the symbolic comparison of the law to Marxian ideology is obvious:

> The law is made by city folks. It is administered by judges who are all city folks. It is interpreted by lawyers who are all city folks. How can a peasant ever be right, then?[422]

The question is essentially rhetorical, because, of course, the peasant can never be right. The law, the theories, are made by men who have lost their awareness of the realities of the poor, if indeed they ever had any contact with those realities. Fontamara is a grotesque little village, buried in the squalor of the most abject poverty in Italy. But how much more grotesque, Silone implies, is the "historical world" of the intellectuals who have convinced themselves that their theory both explains and changes the structure of society when in fact it does neither. We are reminded here of Koestler's professor of philosophy who

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[421] Ignazio Silone, Fontamara, trans. Michael Wharf (New York: Harrington Smith & Robert Haas, 1934), p. 22.

[422] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

can prove everything he believes and believes everything he can prove.

The truth of an ideology for Silone is to be measured by the degree to which it corresponds to the reality it intends to describe or explain. The modern proletariat, he has written elsewhere, belies the myth that it has some sort of sacred liberating mission. The contemporary worker has become "the deus ex machina of modern politics."[423] Why does the worker not conform to the Marxist ideal of class consciousness? "Why don't onions grow from sunflower seeds?" asks Elvira in Fontamara; "Naturally if the seeds are real sunflower seeds, then sunflowers are the only things you can grow from them."[424]

In Fontamara, Silone marks a major deviation from Marxist thought. The poor cafoni, the rural proletariat in a very real sense, lack a class consciousness; they have never understood what is going on around them and they behave in some very un-Marxian ways. Their situation indeed may conform to Marxist theory in that it is determined wholly by their economic condition. The difference lies in the nature of this economic condition rather than in whether or not it is in fact the crucial aspect of their existence. The tragedies that befall the people of Fontamara

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[423]Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 121.

[424]Silone, Fontamara, pp. 150-151.

are the result of their total dependence on their limited means of livelihood. Thus, the Fontamarans can make choices only in the most minor and peripheral areas.[425] The cafoni represent uncritical and unreflective innocence. They have not yet acquired a true social consciousness.[426] The acquisition of consciousness is determined by the unfolding of specific historical events.

The lack of reality that pervades the political discussions of the Fontamarans is juxtaposed to the Italian Fascist state, but it could as easily be that of any totalitarian state, Red or Black. A series of dialogues and conversations takes place between the cafoni and representatives of the government, but the discussions are devoid of meaning. The only conversations that make sense are among the cafoni themselves. No vertical communication can occur because no shared beliefs or experiences exist to guide in interpreting and clarifying various meanings of words held in common by superficial definitions. Talk derived from pure reason, as typified by that of the "city folk" does the peasant no good, serving only to enslave him further. As the Fontamaran Berardo puts it:

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[425]For an excellent discussion of this point, see Nettie Sutro's "Epilogue" in Ignazio Silone, Mr. Aristotle, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1935), p. 217.

[426]Lewis, p. 37.

> The farmer he reasons. The farmer can be persuaded. He can be persuaded to work beyond the limits of his physical capacity. He can be persuaded to go without food. He can be persuaded to give his life for his boss. He can be persuaded to go to war. He can be persuaded that hell is in the next world. You can see for yourself how it works out. Look around you and you can see how it works out.[427]

It is impossible for the farmer, the worker, to relate to the ideas of the educated, sophisticated city man. In relating their experiences with such a man, the peasants note that

> . . . whenever he talked he was a city man, he couldn't help from being a city man, he couldn't help talking like a city man. But we were farmers. We understood everything like farmers, that is, in our own way. . . . We hold conversation and we don't understand each other. . . . We talk the same language but we don't talk the same language.[428]

Given this situation, the complete breakdown of reason must occur in communications between persons representing different layers or segments of society. The result is that social consciousness, whenever it comes, can manifest itself only as an emotional outburst which, despite Silone's denials, must be considered to represent the very antithesis of reason. The only legitimacy that eventually prevails rests with the side holding the greatest coercive power--the "biggest stick," so to speak.

What passes for law in Fontamara is a travesty of the word; but in its arbitrary application by the Fascist

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[427] Silone, Fontamara, p. 94.

[428] Ibid., p. 13.

state, it initiates its own destruction. After the land owners have stolen the village's supply of water, Berardo cries:

> If there is no law against robbers, then we have reached the very end. . . . When the laws of the government are not valid any more and those who should make them respected are the first to violate them, then there must be a return to the law of the people . . . God helps those that help themselves![429]

It is the "age of the Bank," as Berardo puts it; the "AntiChrist" has been made manifest.[430] And the time has come to rebel.

It is significant that the first peasant actually to rebel is Berardo. Although he never fully understands the meaning of its mysterious "city folk" doctrine, he joins forces with the Communist Party to right the wrongs done to the Fontamarans by the land owners. Berardo is the most alienated of all the _cafoni_, the poorest of the poor, a totally landless and propertyless peasant. He is the only one to argue for violence, because he has "sunk a level below other farmers." He is shunned completely by the others: "no practical man would listen to him, not even to contradict him."[431] But by the end of the novel, Berardo has become the character closest to a full grasp of the situation. His is the most nearly developed social consciousness

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[429] _Ibid._, p. 229.

[430] _Ibid._, p. 228.

[431] _Ibid._, p. 74.

in the village. He understands that the Fascisti enforcement of will, which they call "law," can be their undoing. When Innocenzo, a government lackey, posts the warning, "All Discussions Forbidden," Berardo asks him pointedly what would happen if the farmers obeyed the letter of the Fascist decree:

> What's there to keep us from simply cutting you down right in your tracks? . . . All that keeps us from doing it is our reasoning about what a murder can bring down on us. But you, Innocenzo, have written on this placard with your own hand that from now on all discussions, that is, all reasoning, is forbidden. You have broken the thread your own safety hung by.[432]

As a result of his own total alienation, Berardo has struck upon the fatal weakness in all totalitarian regimes. (In 1934, when Fontamara first appeared, Silone was not overly optimistic that the mere articulation of this flaw was sufficient to bring down the Fascist regime. The future that he had projected from Berardo's awareness of a social consciousness was hardly promising.)

Berardo's social consciousness develops slowly at first, but it gradually gains momentum and intensity. As it unfolds, a pattern appears and begins to take shape in his mind; in time, the appeals of the Communist Party prove to be irresistible--not ideologically but emotionally. Berardo understands neither the abstract reasoning nor the complicated dialectics, and such understanding

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[432] Ibid., p. 95.

never becomes necessary. Communism alone in all of Fascist Italy "recognizes" the farm and city poor.

But although the Party fills the longing in his soul to combat the injustices he has experienced, it also proves to be his personal undoing. Arrested by the Fascists in a case of mistaken identity while in the company of fellow Party workers, Berardo, like Silone's own brother, later is beaten to death in prison. Before his death, the meaning of his social consciousness reveals itself to him as a quest for unity among the Italian poor.

> . . .It means solidarity. It means strength. It means liberty. . . . We need just one thing: Unity. All the rest will come of itself.[433]

Berardo's social consciousness has reached its particular maturity together with the transformation of his earlier fatalistic idea of the future, conceived as an extension of the miserable present, into the concept of a qualitatively better future. His future of social awareness is one free from conflict, where farmer and worker are united by common human bonds into a community which, however imprecisely articulated in the present, approaches a social condition that may reasonably be termed a utopia or earthly paradise.

Berardo's death is not entirely in vain. Raffaele Scarpone has inherited Berardo's mantle of leadership

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[433]Ibid., p. 287.

and has helped to organize an anti-Fascist, Communist Party newspaper in Fontamara, called What Must We Do?[434] The symbolic meaning of the death of Berardo with regard to the welfare of the poor is likened in the minds of the peasants to the meaning of Christ on the Cross. Combined with the activity of the Party organization in Fontamara, the "martyrdom" of Berardo suddenly galvanizes the people into action.

But before they can act, the full wrath of the Fascist state is brought down on them. The town literally is destroyed, and the people either are killed or scattered into the hills. The end is sudden, but not altogether unexpected; the discrepancy between the Party's ideology regarding the role of the proletariat in an uprising and the actual sources of proletarian strength and power has proved to be fatal. The Fontamarans had a newspaper and the Fascists had guns. The very act of regaining their souls cost them their lives, and neither they nor the Party can offer an explanation of what actually went wrong. For the survivors the future looks hopeless, and Silone concludes Fontamara on a note of despair for a better future:

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[434]The similarity between this title and Lenin's famous polemic, What Is To Be Done? is more than coincidence. But note also that the changed verb form substitutes a somewhat fatalistic present tense for the more optimistic futuristic component of Lenin's work.

> After all this suffering and all this fighting, all these tears and all this anguish, all this blood, all this hate, and all this hopelessness, what must we do?[435]

But no answer is forthcoming.

How Can You Condemn the Future?

Without question, Pietro Spina is the most complex and interesting of Silone's fictional characters. The fact that his experiences are strikingly similar to actual occurrences in Silone's life adds an autobiographical element to the scholarly quest for significance in Pietro's view of the future of his social and political environment. Pietro is the protagonist of Silone's second and third novels, Bread and Wine and The Seed Beneath the Snow.

At its basic level, Bread and Wine is the disarmingly simple story of the miserable failure of Pietro's attempt to change his social environment. He has a positive effect on the lives of the people with whom he comes in contact, but the society and government he opposes remain as arbitrary and cruel at the end of the novel as they were at the beginning. Pietro appears, to the peasants and authorities alike, as a law unto himself; but this is only partly true, and is deceptive of the truth. In commenting on the meaning of his protagonist's life, Silone

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[435]Silone, Fontamara, p. 299; see also Irving Howe, "Again, The Bitter Fountain," The New Republic, CXLIII, No. 11-12 (September 12, 1960), 27-28.

has remarked that "Pietro Spina is not seeking God . . . he is pursued by Him."[436]

Like Silone, Spina is a former Communist who has remained devoted to the ideals that prompted his rebellion and Party affiliation long after the Party has betrayed its corruption. Pietro, however, always has been more pragmatist and Party worker than Marxist and theoretician; "actually, theory had always bored him."[437] Silone introduces Pietro as a person who is physically ill and attaches symbolic significance to his weakened condition. Pietro's sickness is wholly physical, a result of his life in the city. At this early stage in the narrative he is a loyal Party member. His disease is curable, because at heart Pietro is a "country man," and his return to the Abruzzi countryside to recover marks the beginning of his cure. Although Pietro's illness is physical, its progress through his body is related to a sickness of soul and spirit. When Pietro begins to recover his social consciousness through direct contact with the cafoni rather than through Party ideology, his soul is restored and he begins to recover

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[436]Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 106; Origo, 92.

[437]Ignazio Silone, Bread and Wine, trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1964), p. 48; the edition used throughout is a revision of the original work that first appeared in 1937. Silone made a few, essentially stylistic changes that did not alter the nature of the book. The best critical review and analysis of Bread and Wine is James T. Farrell, "Ignazio Silone," The Southern Review, IV, No. 4 (Spring, 1939), 771-783.

physically. His formal relinquishment of Party affiliation later on marks symbolically the restoration of his health.

The narrative of Bread and Wine proceeds on two levels, the secular and the spiritual. Pietro Spina's activities unfold on the first level; God pursues the soul of Pietro on the second. The mixture of bread and wine comprises both the staple diet of the peasants and the sacramental food of the eucharistic feast. Thus it is that the very diet of the poorest peasant leads Pietro daily into communal union with Christ outside the formal Church.

The peasants in Bread and Wine surpass the Fontamarans in subtlety and complexity, but as peasants, all share the same basic dilemma. Their world is determined by the active economic forces that surround and engulf them. They are apolitical and uncomprehending of the message of salvation that Pietro is urging them to embrace: "To them, Socialism just mean[s] being together. To work and eat as much as they [can] hold [is] their most radical idea--to work and sleep in peace, without catastrophe the next day."[438] Their lack of response does not represent an outright rejection of Pietro's message; it is simply that "politics is a luxury reserved for the well fed."[439]

In time, Pietro leaves the Party; however, he does

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[438] Ibid., p. 177.

[439] Ibid., p. 239.

not abandon the poor. Indeed, his rejection of Communism marks an affirmation of his concern for the peasantry. Their Party--the former organ of proletarian salvation--has become corrupt and unworthy.[440] Pietro never wearies in his attempts to build bridges between his quest for an ideology and the activities of his former Marxist allies, but he does not succeed. His failure to find spiritual renewal in the Party brings him closer to the peasants around him. He cannot communicate with them by appealing to class conflict or the arguments of dialectical materialism; he can speak meaningfully with the poor only to the extent that he abandons formal Marxist doctrine and submits to the humanitarian impulses that first directed the young Marx and outraged his conscience.[441]

Marxist ideology reflects an estrangement from reality--in Silone's world, from God. The rejection of such unreality is the first step toward discovering and doing the will of God. Don Benedetto, Pietro's boyhood teacher and the retired village priest, admonishes him:

> You're the only one in this part of the world who can save the honor of the Church. . . . This would not be the first time that the Eternal Father felt obligated to hide Himself and take a pseudonym. As you know, He has never taken the first name and last name men have fastened on Him very seriously.[442]

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[440] Ibid., pp. 218-219.

[441] Edmund Wilson, Europe Without Baedeker: Sketches Among the Ruins of Italy, Greece and England (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1947), pp. 100-101.

[442] Silone, Bread and Wine, pp. 273-274.

The God Who pursues Pietro is similar to the God of early Christian thought. He is shorn of the worldly ornamentation that is characteristic of the organized churches. Christian organization for the worship of God has succumbed to an emphasis on present means for proximate ends, a fate similar to that of Party organization for the perpetuation of Communism; consequently, it has suffered the same type of corruption. And the corruption is manifested in the increasing incongruity between doctrines of the "Absolute" and the actions that doctrinal interpreters consider to be necessary in times of restlessness or crisis. Pietro asks:

> Is it possible to take part in politics, to serve one party, and to remain sincere? Hasn't truth become for me the party's truth? and justice, party justice? Has not the organization ended up by extinguishing in me all moral values, which are held in contempt as petit bourgeois prejudices, and has not the organization itself become the supreme value? Have I then not fled the opportunism of a decadent church to fall into the Machiavellianism of a sect?[443]

His separation from the Party is difficult because he has loved too deeply.[444] But in the recovery of his spiritual health and his social consciousness, he finds not the end but renewal and a new beginning.

The turning point in Pietro's relationship with the Party comes, significantly, when the implications of his conception of the future are challenged and he recognizes

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[443] Ibid., p. 110.

[444] Ibid., p. 206.

the validity of the attack. A former revolutionary comrade scornfully throws down the gauntlet:

> What are you? A future bureaucracy. You aspire to totalitarian power, too, but in the name of different ideas, which means just different words, and for different interests. If you people win . . . we'll just go from one tyranny to another.

Taken aback by the forcefulness of this verbal assault, Pietro trembles as he asks the most fateful of all revolutionary questions: "How can you condemn our future?"

He means, of course, the Party's idea of the future, and within himself he already knows the answer. But the actual reply crystallizes his thoughts and prevents his ever again serving the Party as a good Party man. The former comrade makes the reply:

> Our future is other countries' pasts . . . the present black inquisition will be followed by a red inquisition. There'll be red censorship instead of the present one . . . your future bureaucracy will identify itself with labor and Socialism and will persecute anyone who continues to think with his own head. . . . It's not your ideal, but it is your fate. There'll be no escaping it.[445]

Pietro's vision of a future social order under Communism which corresponds to his own conception of a just socialism has been destroyed. Its loss signifies the end of his vocation as a professional revolutionary. Without this one sustaining concept to justify all of the "necessary" acts of the past and present, Pietro cannot remain in the Party. He must contrive now to be a rebel against

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[445] Ibid., pp. 210-211.

injustices, that is, against society as he experiences it; he can no longer call himself a revolutionary--a professional worker within a specific political party of revolutionaries. As a revolutionary he has lived psychologically in the future, but as a rebel he is fated to live in an eternal present. The difference can hardly be overemphasized.

But Pietro's fall from the Party causes only a momentary emotional pain; more significant is the restoration of his social consciousness and, symbolically, his physical health. Another former Party worker reflects Pietro's awareness of the failure of the revolution:

> Why have all revolutions, every single one of them, ended as tyrannies? . . . Every idea is crystallized into formulas for the purpose of propagation; it is entrusted to a body of interpreters for its presentation . . . the job of resolving doubts and repressing deviations. And thus every new idea ends up as an obsession, immobile and regressive. When this idea becomes the state's official doctrine, there's no escape.[446]

Apparently, then, "justice" cannot be organized without becoming injustice in the very process of organizing. Bureaucracy has killed the revolution.

With his awareness of this to sustain him, Pietro can begin to recover his intellectual and spiritual strength. He goes in search once again of "the idea of good" and for the highest good, God. "I didn't believe in God anymore," he said, "but I began to want God to exist with all my being.

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[446] Ibid., pp. 211-213.

I had need of Him to escape the fear of chaos."[447] His former faith in the Party has been all that has kept him from nihilism, and now, with it gone, he needs to restore his faith in an eternal Absolute if he is to escape the fear of nothingness. Betrayed by a Judas-figure at the end of the novel, Pietro is forced to escape capture by the Fascist police through flight into the fury of a midwinter storm. As he runs from his predators, the snow, which here symbolizes purity and Nature's protection of hunted innocence, covers his tracks, making him impossible to follow. Nature, or God, welcomes his return to reality, and offers him protection.

The School for Dictators

Between the publication of Bread and Wine in 1937, and The Seed Beneath the Snow in 1942, Silone wrote a book on Fascism, patterned after the Dialogues of Socrates. Entitled The School for Dictators, it stands out among his works as the only truly systematic attempt he ever made to understand modern totalitarianism in all its complexities. It is not one of his better works, and his method of presentation, a series of "Socratic dialogues," clearly is one in which he is not comfortable.

Although, as a whole, the book tells us little about totalitarianism that has not been said better by others, it

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[447] Ibid., p. 291.

nevertheless provides valuable insights into Silone's perception of the nature of Fascist totalitarianism. For all its weaknesses, it is a better political tract than André Gide or Stephen Spender, for example, could have put together.[448] The underlying pessimism and despair of the work reflect accurately the thoughts of Silone on the eve of World War II.

As a whole, the book does not require exhaustive analysis; however, it does shed additional light on Silone's thoughts about the future and about the direction in which Western civilization is headed. Silone's material is developed in a series of dialectical propositions regarding the nature of politics. The two principal discussants are an American professor and an intellectual theorist who probably is intended to represent the rest of the Western world. Professor Pickup is a would-be dictator who is touring Europe in search of the Machiavellian keys to power; and Thomas the Cynic stands prepared to answer any of the professor's questions, or at least to engage in discussion about them.

"Today's democrats no longer have any ideal to work

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[448] The School for Dictators has not received the extensive reviews that have greeted most of Silone's works, particularly his early novels. The best critique, perhaps, is Francis Hope, in The New Statesman, 119-122.

for," remarks Thomas the Cynic.[449] They have no future, only a past; and that is the source of their difficulties. Marxism has taken over modern democratic theory with the result that we now have the supreme confusion of "democratic totalitarianism," where "in due course the end is replaced by the means."[450] By "means" in politics, Silone is referring to "power." To a great extent, this is essentially what Fascism is and what Communism has evolved into with the growth of the Russian bureaucracy.[451] Thomas observes:

> The true political man wants power for power's sake; all voluptuousness lies, for him, in the exercise of power. . . . Since all his faculties are concentrated on this one point, to the masses he easily appears as an extraordinary man, and thus becomes a leader. In the same way, those who concentrate completely on God become saints, and those who live only for money become billionaires.[452]

This observation is significant, for it gives voice to Silone's contention that the difference between sanity and madness lies in the quality of the object. The very opposite of concentration on power, concerned as it is with "this-worldliness," is concentration on God and the will of

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[449] Ignazio Silone, The School for Dictators, trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (2d ed.; London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1964), pp. 43-44. This edition is a slight revision of the original, which was published in New York by Harper & Brothers in 1938. Together with the cutting of topical references to the 1930s, the new edition contains a Preface to the Second Edition which is considerably more optimistic in tone.

[450] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[451] Supra, p. 255.

[452] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

God before that of men. From this point of view, saintliness is at least apolitical and often is antipolitical; in its pure form it is situated at the contemplative rather than the activist end of the political spectrum.

The most significant omission in The School for Dictators reflects Silone's failure to consider the union of saint and power-seeker in a single individual. Silone never fully takes it into account in his writing; in contrast to Koestler's representation of this theme, Silone's silence is a notable shortcoming. The dilemma that the good man in Silone must confront is that of living in a world of power-seekers while he longs for a world of God. The two worlds can be united only in ideology, never in practice.

Pessimism in The School for Dictators is partly the result of a loss of faith in "progress" as an ordering principle. Says Thomas:

> Nobody believes that any more. Every thinking person now knows for certain that the alternative--decline and destruction--is also possible. This is the spiritual plight of the elite in almost every civilized country today.[453]

Indeed, how does the disappearance of progress as a viable social and political principle affect the future? Despair of social improvement, Silone suggests, is the forerunner of totalitarianism. "When . . . everyone is at the

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[453] Ibid., p. 33.

end of his tether, the totalitarian party bursts upon the scene."[454] On several occasions, Thomas the Cynic admonishes Professor Pickup to remember that politics cannot be reduced to mere technique for the manipulation of power. But it is doubtful, perhaps, that he fully convinces himself, let alone anyone else.

The two points he most forcefully emphasizes are that external, historical forces ultimately shape men's actions, and that abstract theorizing tends only to confuse specific issues. On the first point he states that "the efforts of the best propagandists [to establish totalitarianism] would be as harmless as the buzzing of flies, were it not for the decisive collaboration of wartime holocausts and unremitting poverty."[455] And abstract ideologies are worse than useless--they are dangerously fraudulent:

> The only way to eliminate concrete problems is to solve them, not to ignore or disguise them . . . [to take] refuge behind the emblems of a distant age in which social contradictions are 'symbolically' resolved, men are 'symbolically' brothers, and capitalist profits are 'symbolically' eliminated is a fraud.[456]

To avoid fraud in political action requires genuine familiarity with the "realities" of evil. It means seeking

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[454] Ibid., p. 42. The parallels between this analysis and that of H. G. Wells, Mind at the End of Its Tether, are obvious. Wells also attributed the disorders of the modern world to the fear of nothingness and the absence of an ordering principle behind the various ideologies. Totalitarianism is nihilism incarnate.

[455] Ibid., p. 100.

[456] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

goodness rather than power. Silone agrees that social consciousness requires activism; but after the publication of The School for Dictators, his writing reflects more acutely than before the awareness that activism itself necessitates some sort of compromise between manifestations of Good and Evil. The Good cannot be pursued without somehow becoming tainted. Pietro Spina, as he appears in The Seed Beneath the Snow, is far less politically active than in Bread and Wine, and as a result he is more saintly. But by avoiding activism, he has acquiesced in Evil and thus has sinned by omission.

With a sophistication that has grown as his work has evolved, Silone portrays the basic dilemma of the good man of social conscience as a human predicament that is impossible to reconcile.

There's No Way Out

In The Seed Beneath the Snow, published in 1942, the reader finds Pietro Spina where Silone left him at the close of Bread and Wine. Pietro survives the blizzard by taking refuge in a cave that serves as a stall for animals. The symbolic allusion to the birthplace of Christ, a shelter in which Pietro's "presence . . . seemed perfectly natural,"[457] is not lost on the character development of the

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[457] Ignazio Silone, The Seed Beneath the Snow, trans. Frances Frenaye (2d ed.; New York: Atheneum, 1965), p. 58. The original edition was published by Harper & Brothers in 1942. All citations herein refer to the Atheneum edition.

protagonist. His physical recovery after he has survived the rigors of the snowstorm symbolizes his intellectual rebirth following the experience of purification by the snow. The corrupting influences of the Communist Party are behind him now, and he is ready to begin again with a more highly developed social consciousness.

He is saved from the cold outside the cave by Infante, a peasant who is physically unable to speak, and who represents the most lowly of the cafoni. It is Infante who is there for the other peasants to abuse and to exploit. His lowly status contrasts sharply with that of Pietro, who is revered among the poor farmers as something of a mythical hero. Pietro's family represents the old nobility of the area, and his grandmother, who lives in a nearby village, is possessed of genuine noblesse oblige in the finest tradition of her class.

The contrast between Pietro and Infante is symbolic of the difference between Christ and man. The affection that develops between Pietro and Infante produces the underlying tension of the novel. Pietro is torn between the love of one man for another in whom he sees his own humanity, and the greater love for all mankind. The theme of this novel is the crisis in political activism that results for Pietro when he is confronted with the choice between one man and mankind. Whom shall he serve?

As a Communist, Pietro discovered that the Party dictated activity in every area of the individual member's life. He was possessed by the Party. Now he becomes aware that his spirit is possessed by God: men do not mix God into their lives; rather, "it is He who mixes Himself in."[458] The will of God now directs Pietro's actions: "No one's free any more," he says; "Don't you understand? Even if I didn't want to have anything to do with politics, politics would have something to do with me. There's no way out."[459]

Pietro's life among the villagers of the Abruzzi has the often unintended effect of upsetting their regular activities. His very presence is a threat to the powers that rule the countryside, and they wish to punish him for antigovernmental activities during his period in the Communist Party. The political task that he has set for himself is to arouse the people to claim their rightful heritage as productive citizens of the area. But he puzzles them. To these nonideological farmers, "he makes a truly contradictory impression, of a man at home and at the same time a wanderer, almost an intruder."[460] God has mixed Himself into Pietro's life in the form of social consciousness, and Pietro cannot escape his destiny.

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[458] Ibid., p. 238.

[459] Ibid., p. 14.

[460] Ibid., p. 191.

The collective portrait of the peasants that emerges from The Seed Beneath the Snow differs noticeably from that of Fontamara and Bread and Wine. These cafoni are far more aware of political ideologies and of their subtle differences. To be sure, their outlook on the future remains pessimistic; they believe that tomorrow "everything will be like it was before. . . . As long as there are carcasses, there'll always be vultures."[461] They have always been conscious of being poor and of being peasants, but in this novel they are also cognizant of the negative aspects of having a saviour, even an honest one like Pietro, in their midst. Some would echo the sentiments of Donna Maria Vincenza--that "the cures nowadays are worse than the illness."[462] Silone gives the peasants a curious mixture of sophisticated class consciousness, which was lacking in his previous novels, and an individualism that also was absent before. Whereas before, Silone's peasants were usually portrayed as mere objects or as pawns in the hands of an ideologist, the farmers in The Seed Beneath the Snow come to life more as people, even to the extent of showing some of the natural failings of human nature.

Sciatap, for example, opposes Pietro's attempts to free the peasants from their economic and spiritual bondage

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[461] Ibid., p. 232.

[462] Ibid., p. 123.

because their freedom will interfere with his own power to strike fear into their hearts. Sciatap, a peasant himself, is also a police informer who works not for money or greed, but for the increase of his own personal power. "Why can't you understand," he says, "what it's like for me, a poor peasant, to be able to make these people afraid, to see them turn pale, without being able to call the police and have me arrested."[463]

The struggle to free the cafoni from the forces that oppress them is not strictly between Pietro and the poor on the one side and the government on the other. Wills clash also within the peasantry, and not all disputes are motivated solely by ideology. Sciatap cynically dismisses ideologies with the remark, "Aren't ideas, whatever they are, a luxury? Sure they are . . . they're just another rich man's toy."[464] It is perhaps more difficult to sympathize with these peasants than with those of the earlier portraits, but a basis exists now for a great deal more empathy.

The overlapping aspects of competing ideologies and historical complexities mitigate and weaken the impact of Pietro's message of deliverance. Pride, greed, and spiritual blindness obscure the significance of his social message in their eyes. Pietro eventually fails, as have the other

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[463] Ibid., pp. 292-293.

[464] Ibid., p. 296.

saviours over the past two thousand years. Donna Maria exclaims, "How can I be so confused that I can't distinguish good from evil?"[465]

When Infante is mistaken by a peasant for Christ personified, another asks, "Why can't we see Him?" The reply comes back that the elaborate doctrines built up to defend or identify goodness serve only to hide it, because its essence is simplicity.

> They taught us to tell a donkey from a mule, a corporal from a sergeant, and a priest from a bishop, but not to recognize Jesus in the fields or on the road. The priests taught us to imagine Him in the wrong way . . . so that seeing Him on the streets no one would recognize Him.[466]

Goodness, in whatever form it takes so that men may see it, is not always recognized. How can Pietro help these people if they do not understand him? The answer is academic in one sense, for Pietro never has the opportunity to carry on his mission. Infante accidentally kills his father, who has returned to claim him and to use him again as a virtual slave. When the police arrive, Pietro confesses to the crime to save Infante from prison. In the end, Pietro has chosen one man over mankind as his highest expression of personal ethics. But it is the universal quality

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[465] Ibid., p. 125.

[466] Ibid., p. 436. Silone's disdain for the formal trappings of the Church is portrayed further in another peasant woman who exclaims, "How can I be a Christian if He appears before me and I don't even recognize Him? What good were baptism, catechism, christening and communion?" Ibid., p. 433.

of man in Infante that has made the choice meaningful.

And He Hid Himself

The spirit of man, like the person of Christ during Holy Week, is forced still to save itself by hiding in a variety of disguises. This is the theme of Silone's short play, And He Hid Himself, which appeared in 1945. The soul of man, more than ever, seeks socialism; and socialism, in order to save itself from the wolves of cynicism, Communism, and Fascism, "has gone beyond the narrow boundaries of the bourgeois spirit and has rediscovered its Christian ancestry."[467]

In this play we meet the character of Pietro Spina for the final time. Rather than beginning the play at the point where The Seed Beneath the Snow ended, however, Silone returns to the time of Bread and Wine to re-explore Pietro's soul as a more complex entity than it had appeared to be earlier. Although the principal character is the same, and we are reintroduced to some of the minor characters, the story itself is altogether different.

Theoretically, Pietro Spina has not aged since Bread and Wine; but Silone has aged, and his creations reflect this fact. Not only is Pietro more complex and mature in his thought; his break with the Party is even more

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[467]Ignazio Silone, And He Hid Himself: A Play in Four Acts, trans. Darina Tranquilli (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1945), p. vi.

decisive, as is his commitment to the larger cause, that of socialism. The imagery of Christ and the pursuit of Pietro's soul by God assume added significance. More than ever, Pietro represents the recurrent possibility of goodness in man regardless of the political labels that may be attached to him. He is one of the elect, pure in spirit, with a rough exterior that hides his inner goodness.

Although the ever-present cafoni are represented in the play, they are pushed to the background of the story. They are commented upon extensively by the principal characters, but usually from second hand and always at a distance. And He Hid Himself presents the world of Pietro's conversations with other intellectuals and professional people; it is a universe away from the peasant society. To the local farmers, "the Spina's have always been a bit mad."[468] Sanity, when surrounded by insanity, always appears to be unusual and irrational. Although the ideas which Pietro represents and fights to achieve are as old as Christianity, they appear novel in the modern age. His landlady believes that "he has made himself a special law. . . . He has taken for himself the right to do it. He has made himself a new standard of right and wrong."[469] In spite of his surface radicalism, Pietro does not represent a new ordering

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[468] Ibid., p. 3; Silone emphasizes this point repeatedly throughout the play.

[469] Ibid., p. 42.

principle; rather, he represents a return to the cornerstone of Western civilization.

Silone's break with the Party takes on an increased significance when we consider it together with his rediscovery of Christianity. In the play he is careful to emphasize not only that Christianity is impossible within the Party framework, but also that the new generation of rebels against injustice has not shared Silone's experiences and therefore has not had the opportunity to learn what Silone knows about the Party. This makes Pietro's confession of his Communist past all the more important to the protagonist, and to his creator as well. Pietro says:

> When you've been through hell and you come back to the land of the living, it's your absolute duty to tell the others what you've seen. If you go through hell the flames scorch your hair and it stays scorched forever afterwards, but that mustn't stop you from telling what you've seen.[470]

Part of what Pietro has experienced and has been compelled to bear witness to has been the corruption of ends and means by the Party: "A revolutionary party . . . a revolutionary movement, if it's not to betray its mission, in certain cases has got to be merciless to the point of cruelty."[471] The more theories of socialism attempt to be "scientific," the more they become a dogma that threatens

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[470] Ibid., p. 96. It is worth noting that The God That Failed appeared just four years after the publication of this play.

[471] Ibid., p. 93.

to destroy the very men whom the idea is supposed to serve. It is the values of socialism that are permanent and able to resist the transitory character of dogma.[472]

Previously, freedom for Pietro meant social freedom to liberate the poor from the bondage of their economic condition. Although this has remained his goal, his definition of freedom has acquired a certain depth that it lacked in Bread and Wine and that came into view only dimly in The Seed Beneath the Snow. This new interpretation offers a freedom that is not determined by specific historical conditions. Pietro explains it:

> Men have always been unhappy, humiliated, downtrodden and exploited in the same way; but all right, what if it were? Why shouldn't it be possible to have done with it once and for all? Isn't the struggle to be free--just think this over--isn't the struggle to be free already, in itself, a kind of freedom?[473]

In general, the future for Pietro is not quite as bleak as it appeared in Bread and Wine. Whatever the circumstances, the goodness in him will be able to emerge from hiding. To a large extent, this conception of freedom has helped Silone break Pietro Spina away from the determined universe in which he previously resided. The change is decisive also in that Silone's characgers since And He Hid Himself have never completely returned to a world where freedom depends entirely on social environment. As Pietro

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[472]This point is elaborated in Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 99.

[473]Silone, And He Hid Himself, p. 10.

concludes in the play:

> You can live under a dictatorship and be free, provided you struggle against the dictatorship. Even under a dictatorship, the man who thinks with his own head is a free man. . . . On the other hand . . . you can live in the most liberal state on earth, but if you are inwardly slothful, callous, compliant, you are not free at all; despite the absence of any violent coercion, you are a slave.[474]

Future in What Sense?

In A Handful of Strawberries, more than in any of his other novels, Silone has attempted to come to grips with the relationship of his conception of the future to his association with and separation from the Party and to his notion of social conscience.

The principal figures are Rocco, a high-ranking member of the Italian Communist Party, and Don Nicola, an unconventional village priest and Rocco's boyhood friend. The central drama concerns Rocco's withdrawal from active participation in Party activity and subsequently from formal association with the Party. During the process, in which Don Nicola acts as a spur to his conscience, Rocco is forced to separate the transitory aspects of Party ideology from the enduring, permanent values that led him to join. In the end, Rocco discovers that one of the strongest bonds between Party line and social consciousness lies in the idea of a "future liberation." But for Rocco, future liberation has

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[474] Ibid., p. 23.

come to mean a future unencumbered by the apparatus of the Party and free from the corrupting influences of an inhuman bureaucracy. Most important of all, it is a future which is no longer imagined to be immanent. In Bread and Wine, Pietro Spina had been motivated by the immanence of future social liberation.

Rocco and Don Nicola are more than just boyhood friends. They share the same social conscience.

> Their schoolmates called them "the absolutists." They were indeed fanatical about the few things to which they were not indifferent. For a while it looked as though Rocco too would choose the path of theology. . . . But politics suddenly and secretly, like some violent disease, took hold of Rocco.[475]

Politics for Rocco is linked irrevocably to a mixture of theology and a "violent disease" that possessed him like a demon. Like so many others who rebel, he has done so from a conviction that has led him to expect the Kingdom of God on earth.[476] The purpose of striving to comprehend the Absolute is to change the world in accordance with it rather than simply to understand the world as it is. And this view is compatible with the Marxian-Party articulation of the function of philosophy as Rocco understands it. Thus, although the origins differ, Rocco's goal and that of the Party appear to mesh perfectly, and Party ideology becomes

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[475]Ignazio Silone, A Handful of Blackberries, trans. Darina Silone (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1953), p. 76.

[476]Ibid., p. 75.

synonymous with Rocco's preconceptions. Don Nicola has much the same view of the function of Christianity, but despite being in disagreement with most of his superiors in the Church, he has found his fulfillment in the role of a parish priest.

Rocco's major problem, and the source of his spiritual torment, lies not in joining the Party but in leaving it. His period of withdrawal takes place during the closing days of World War II; the Fascist government is collapsing, and the Communists are working to fill the void. The similarity in practice between the two ideologies discourages Rocco and brings out his long-suppressed doubts. Because his defection from the ranks of the Party is causing a growing scandal, the Party attempts to suppress him by sending various functionaries to appeal to his faith in the Party's future. "The Party is History," says Oscar, the first of the inquisitioners; "How can you limit its powers? History is always heartless!"[477] "The Party is History on the march," says another; "Outside the Party there is nothing."[478] Rocco has committed heresy, the Capital Sin. He has passed judgment on the ethics of Party activity, and as Ruggero, the final inquisitor, puts it, "No one has the

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[477] Ibid., p. 119.

[478] Ibid., p. 141.

right to pass judgment on the acts of the Revolution."[479]

Rocco perceives the Party argument that the end justifies the means as a fatal compromise with the "present." It enshrines bureaucracy rather than the future as the standard of truth. By "bureaucracy" Rocco means the Party as it actually operates--the Party as an end in itself rather than as the agent of the liberation of the poor.

> The Party is our true family. Father, mother, son, ancestor, unborn child. It's our tribe. Our rule, our sublimation, our supreme salvation from the individualistic frivolity of bourgeois life. . . . It's the hair shirt with which we discipline ourselves. It's our communion with the martyrs of our causes. Our fortress . . . our task . . . our playground . . . Egypt and Promised Land.[480]

The infallible criterion of Truth has become the statement, "Anything that harms Russia is false . . . especially if it is true."[481] Rocco leaves the Party because it has become a clique of persecutors rather than a haven for the persecuted. Fascism has given way to a terror of equal intensity.

Rocco experiences the emotional difficulty of severing Party associations. To quit the Party means

> . . . an immediate break, even of personal relationships, with all the other imprisoned comrades, total isolation,

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[479] Ibid., p. 220.

[480] Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[481] Ibid., p. 218. Stella, Rocco's mistress, says bluntly, "The Party is the best part of ourselves. It is the Truth. Why resist the Truth?" Ibid., p. 211.

> more painful than the official kind, and the impossibility of defending oneself. The "system" is merciless, but it [has] a certain cruel grandeur.[482]

Rocco finds it morally impossible to remain in a System that has taken part in so many horrors; but the longing to believe remains after the object of faith has betrayed its unworthiness.[483] What can be salvaged?

In the end, the vision of the future which motivated him originally saves him from nihilism. When he raises his glass in a toast "to the future Liberation," Don Nicola responds with raised eyebrows: "Future in what sense? Imminent?"

"Whenever it comes," answers Rocco; "Next year, or sixty or even two thousand years from now."[484]

The Liberation is not imminent in the sense that we "know" it will happen at a specific point in time; it is not so much a part of our daily calculations in politics. But it is an idea of progress, rather vaguely stated, toward a specific goal at some point in time. For Rocco, this is enough to sustain a faith that gives him a sense of personal liberation in the present and a confidence to face the future, outside the Party, unafraid.

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[482] Ibid., p. 116.

[483] Ibid., p. 140.

[484] Ibid., pp. 308-309. Earlier Rocco has commented on the Soviet Union: "The trouble is that the new world already exists, and it's there that the tragedies are happening." Ibid., p. 140.

Beyond the Middle Years

The two most recent works of Silone are comparatively short and can easily be treated together without doing violence to either. The Secret of Luca[485] is shorter than The Fox and the Camellias[486] and is less "political" than the latter. The theme might be described as the eternally recurrent possibility of goodness--that "goodness" is not an exclusively aristocratic trait.

Luca Sabbatini, which in Italian means "Light of Sabbath," is released from prison after serving a sentence of forty years duration for a crime he did not commit. Among the villagers he is known to be innocent. Andrea, an outsider to the town, sets out to discover why, under the circumstances, Luca went to prison. As Andrea questions the knowledgeable witnesses in the village, the picture that emerges is that of Luca sacrificing his freedom to preserve the honor of the woman he loved, a woman who was married to another man. In a larger sense, Luca went to prison because the wielders of formalized power, albeit for the purest of motives, invaded his moral and intellectual being without comprehending his individuality. Luca was treated merely as an object--a stupid peasant without feeling and without

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[485]Ignazio Silone, The Secret of Luca, trans. Darina Silone (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958).

[486]Ignazio Silone, The Fox and the Camellias, trans. Eric Mosbacher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961).

sense enough to realize what was happening to him.

Silone's task is to strip away the myths that the official ruling classes have perpetuated regarding the poor, and to show that the poor, too, can have the noblest--and the basest--human qualities. Luca's true secret is that he has manufactured his own fate, despite what appear to be overwhelming difficulties, in the face of the immense powers of the modern state.[487] Insofar as a vision of the future appears in The Secret of Luca, it lies in "goodness" in people rather than in "society." Silone does not give up his larger vision, a future built around a better society, but he does appear more realistic in his assessment of where the greatest possibility lies for achieving good--that is, in people rather than society.

The Fox and the Camellias appeared only three years after the basically apolitical novel, The Secret of Luca. Silone returned here to the familiar ground of political commentary which had characterized his earlier writing.

It is the shortest of his novels, and the political dialogues that are presented in it are far less lengthy and complex than in any of his earlier work. It is as if he already has said everything necessary and sees no point to be gained by repeating himself. The story takes place in

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[487] Anthony West, "The Bitter Truth," The New Yorker, XXXIV, No. 30 (September 13, 1958), 143; this essay review by West is the best critique of The Secret of Luca that appeared.

Fascist Italy, and Daniele, the principal character, has taken up arms against the state by joining the Communist Party underground. Unlike Silone's earlier Party workers, however, Daniele does not share the Party's vision of the future and was not motivated to join because of it. He is not a "revolutionary," but simply an opponent of Fascism, and the Party is the only vehicle available to combat it. Communism is accepted as the lesser of two evils rather than as a good in itself. "Don't ask for too much," he says of his Party activities; "After all, we're men, not angels."[488]

His Party activities are of a clandestine nature, and his daughter Silvia, completely unaware of his association with the Party, falls in love with Franz, a young Fascist student. During a visit to Silvia's home in Daniele's absence, Franz accidentally discovers the Party activities of her father. Torn by conflicting loyalties to Silvia and to the Fascists, Franz resolves the tension by killing himself to avoid betraying Daniele to the authorities.

The significance of The Fox and the Camellias does not lie in the thought developed in the brief dialogues, but rather in the character of Franz who, although peripheral to the dialogue, is central to the theme. The qualities of loyalty and self-sacrifice can be found in the individuals of any movement, regardless of the moral structure of the

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[488]Silone, The Fox and the Camellias, p. 61.

movement itself: goodness is an individual quality.

Re-Thinking Progress

Among other things, Marxism is a theory of progress--progress from the decadence of bourgeois capitalism to the utopian classless society. To be a good Marxist and a good Party worker, the true revolutionary created by Silone must believe in progress and in the Party as its vehicle. Disillusionment for Pietro Spina, Rocco, and the others begins when the Party becomes cynical, losing its vision of the future classless society, and compromising itself with the present. If the revolutionary himself avoids becoming cynical, and all of Silone's revolutionaries have, then he can assert his belief in the future and in progress only outside the Party. Perseverence in following a vision is the source of their disassociation from the Party and the basis for the regaining of their liberty and social consciences.[489]

For many years after he left the Party, Silone kept his basic faith in the progress of history toward the eventual goal of a genuine socialism as he understood it. As a member of the Italian Socialist Party after World War II,

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[489]When Silone discussed the idea of "liberty" with a fellow Party worker in Moscow during the 1920s, he defined liberty as "the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake . . . the possibility of saying 'no' to any of the authorities." Horrified, his companion gasped, "But that, that is counter-revolutionary!" In Silone, "Farewell to Moscow," 93.

he worked toward the reconciliation of the anti-Communist socialist elements in Italy for the purpose of presenting a united, majority front that would usher in the new Age of Socialism. The attempts failed, and he left active politics in 1950, never to return as a participant again.

Exactly when he began to question the concept of progress is uncertain; hints of it appear in A Handful of Blackberries. But his first truly systematic exploration of the meaning of progress waited until 1968, when his series of articles on the subject first appeared in English in Encounter.[490] The articles deserve a careful consideration for their perspective on the evolution of Silone's conception of the future. They offer an insight into what is enduring and consistent in his thought as contrasted with the more temporary aspects that are attached to particular circumstances.

Silone describes himself among the exiles in Switzerland:

> [We] had reached the point of disillusionment at which many ideals in which we had formerly believed, foremost among them the myth of Progress, had lost all meaning for us. . . . But we still felt an instinctive revulsion against any concept that ruled out, a priori, the chance to resist or to rebel.[491]

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[490] They were also published in book form in Silone, Emergency Exit, the same year.

[491] Ignazio Silone, "Re-Thinking Progress," Encounter, XXX, No. 3 (March, 1968), 5. See also Silone, "Self-Portrait," passim.

To rebel was to reaffirm the existence of a social conscience that extended beyond Fascist demagoguery.

> Political ambition, on any level beyond that of mere personal ambition, must necessarily aim at shaping the future. The revolutionary lives in a state of perpetual expectation.[492]

For himself, as well as the other exiles, the first task of spiritual recovery has been to restore a meaning to politics that would shape the future in the desired direction. The future challenge, as he sees it, will be between the state and society in which "society will attempt to reclaim those of its functions which have been usurped by the state."[493] By "state" Silone appears to mean the bureaucracy and those formal institutions which superimpose a layer of artificiality over a citizenry. There is no organic relationship between the state and society, because the former is imagined as an artifact rather than as a natural extension of the people who compose it. To continue to believe in a better future means disentangling the Marxist-Communist view from the genuine socialist concept.

Part of the problem with socialist views of progress in the past has been the fact that economic improvement in the lot of the ordinary citizen has not produced a "new man." Far from it. "All this does not mean, of course,

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[492] Ibid., 4.

[493] Ignazio Silone, "Re-Thinking Progress (II)," Encounter, XXX, No. 4 (April, 1968), 40.

that the old Adam is insensible to environmental pressures. It is simply that, in many respects, he reacts to new conditions differently from what had been anticipated."[494]

The purely economic, or material, prosperity of the modern age has brought with it an unparalleled spiritual and moral decadence. The problem is the result of a threefold misconception. First, it is not a function of society to ensure individual happiness:

> [If people] complain of being unhappy, that is their affair, but they have no right to expect that prosperity should bring them happiness. What we call happiness is a personal thing . . . well beyond the power of any social order to grant or to guarantee.[495]

Second, a distinction must be made between progress in science and progress in morality:

> We may still talk of progress in the natural sciences and technology, but not in the humanities, at any rate not if progress is assumed to be inevitable. . . . The "progress" of civilization will always be something to be fought for and never to be taken for granted.[496]

Third, and closely related to the other two, is the fact that the mass consumption of modern technology has changed the very nature of the word "progress" itself; in the countries which we assume to have experienced "economic progress," "social relations tend increasingly to be dominated by consumption rather than progress."[497] The hedonism this

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[494] Ibid., p. 27.

[495] Ibid., p. 38.

[496] Ibid., p. 39.

[497] Ibid., p. 31.

denotes then is made even more onerous by the depersonalization of life by insensitive bureaucracies.

The picture of the future that emerges from Silone's "Re-Thinking Progress" is notably different from his earlier views in many essential details. There is less emphasis on happiness as a group or class phenomenon; there is a subdued realization that the state cannot do everything, or perhaps even very much, to ensure a workable future. But by far the most significant detail reflects Silone's view of the future as "de-imminentized"; the new world of socialism is pushed back further and further. Silone cannot bring himself to say that it will not come, but he has stopped preparing for it. The emphasis on individual happiness may signal a retreat from the public arena inward toward himself.

Silone's man in 1968 is considerably more of an introvert than was Pietro Spina of Bread and Wine. Spiritual fulfillment seems more personal now--unique even--and less communicable to the outside world. A future that is no longer imminent differs entirely from that of the early Silone. The de-imminentized future resembles an extension of the present into an indefinite future. One cannot help but wonder if Pietro Spina or Rocco would have joined the Party if, at the time, they had imagined the future to be merely an extension of past and present experience.

CHAPTER V

ANDRÉ GIDE: AN INTELLECTUAL'S PERCEPTION OF THE FUTURE

Of the authors considered in this study to be representative proponents and articulators of the modern view of the future, none has been more influential in international arts and letters than André Gide. Winner of the Novel Prize for literature in 1947, Gide alone among the three possesses stature sufficient to rank his work with that of major authors in this century. He has been highly influential in the twentieth century French world view in literature and in the literary style that has accompanied it, combining an often startling boldness and originality with an instinct for acting as a catalyst for diffuse moods and opinions. For many of his contemporaries, Gide undoubtedly was, as Archibald MacLeish said of him, "la vie de son temps."[286]

Because of the subtle complexities embodied in the vast collection of his work, André Gide presents a number of challenges not present in either Koestler or Silone. First of all, unlike the other two, he was not launched on his literary career by an inspirational spark provided by

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[498]Archibald MacLeish, in "Hommage à André Gide," La Nouvelle Revue Française (November, 1951), p. 29.

Communism. Gide was an established and recognized writer for well over thirty years before he felt the attraction of Communism and the need to participate in its political movement. When he finally did associate himself with the Communist Party, his most productive and significant literary and artistic achievements were behind him. Hence, it is easier to speak with some assurance about continuity and change in Gide's thought and to trace a clearly definable "conversion" to Marxism through an examination of his novels, essays, and diary.

In addition, unlike the novels of Koestler and Silone, those of Gide are not "political novels" per se, and thus they require a slightly different method of analysis. They must be viewed in terms of the moods and impressions they convey and the feelings they invoke rather than as plausible dialogues among individuals expressing a heightened sense of political activism. This does not mean that Gide's creative writing, if it is studied closely, is without political connotations, but simply that the political implications are somewhat disguised in their presentation and perhaps less obvious than those of Koestler or Silone in their content.

Finally, it must be noted that Gide, unlike the others, reflects a greater awareness of the depths of the intellectual currents of his time and thus manages to touch upon more of the themes previously developed than either

Koestler or Silone. Hardly a point examined in the previous chapters escaped his conscious attention.[499]

The Neurotic Basis of Gide's World View

The central factor in Gide's work, the one element that dominates all others, is the often noted neurotic personalities of his characters. This appears to stem directly from Gide's own neurotic personality.[500] His personal disorientations were nurtured by long-suppressed homosexual tendencies together with the influence of a strict and pietistic French Huguenot upbringing on an already introverted personality. As the biography of his childhood discloses, this neurosis made it difficult at times, if not altogether impossible, for him to distinguish the real nature of the world around him from the unreal in any reasonable sense.[501]

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[499]See the fine biography of Gide by Justin O'Brien, Portrait of André Gide: A Critical Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953). These aspects are particularly well brought out in Chapters I and II of O'Brien. A good and brief contrasting interpretation may be found in Gerhard Masur, Prophets of Yesterday: Studies in European Culture, 1890-1914 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), pp. 148-156.

[500]Jean Delay, The Youth of André Gide (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963). This excellent work is undoubtedly the definitive study of Gide's life until 1895, a period which includes the works of his very important formative period. Delay approaches his subject as a clinical psychologist whose personal friendship with Gide enables him to include numerous, lengthy conversations, as well as Gide's own published and unpublished work and letters.

[501]Ibid., p. 82; O'Brien, p. 11.

Yet, however vexing this neurosis was from a personal standpoint, it formed the creative impulse that directed his artistic achievements.

Reflected in his fictional characters are subsurface struggles through imaginative reconstructions of reality which in fact are projections of his own raging inner turmoil. In his first work, The Notebooks of André Walter, his alter ego reacts thus to the real world: ". . . disgust bordering on nausea on looking at life, the life that must be lived! I prefer my dream. My dream."[502]

In order to construct an imaginary world to suit his own intentions, Gide recognized early that one of his primary tasks was to redefine the structure of reality itself. Nature, in this context, came to mean that which is "natural" for the individual as opposed to that which is "natural" for the world as a whole. For example, in the case of his own homosexual inclinations, if this is "unnatural" for man as a whole, it then must become "natural" by the elevation of the particular to the stature of a general proposition. What Gide construed to be natural for the individual in solitude, here meaning himself, must

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[502]André Gide, The Notebooks of André Walter, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1968), p. 35. The published date given here is the first English language edition. The work was originally published in 1891. Citations of all of Gide's work will be the first English edition with the first French edition noted whenever appropriate. (This book is hereafter referred to as Gide, André Walter.)

also, of compulsive necessity, become the universal standard for all mankind. Such a goal was raised to the level of an ontological proposition and became for Gide the core of his own brand of religious symbolism.[503]

Furthermore, by having rejected as corrupt "the life that must be lived," he came to identify the essence of "natural man" as pure soul or spirit, uncorrupted by external necessities. The moral man in this scheme resembled very much the Platonic or Kantian man for whom the ideal must take precedence over the real or physical man. Again speaking through André Walter, Gide exclaimed:

> The flesh corrupts the soul. . . . New wine cannot be put into rotting vessels! The flesh lays claim to the soul unless the soul can win control at the outset. The soul must be the master and not the slave.[504]

The object of the dominion of soul over flesh was the achievement of what Gide referred to as his "primary vision" of the future by means of an "intuitive knowledge" that such a future indeed existed.[505]

It seemed to follow naturally for the development of Gide's thought that, given the naturalness of homosexuality, the conventions of society must be artifacts blocking the realization of a genuinely natural society. Gide considered the personal experience of a struggle between the

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[503]Kenneth I. Perry, The Religious Symbolism of André Gide (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), pp. 55-57.

[504]Gide, André Walter, p. 34.

[505]Ibid., pp. 19, 92-93.

soul and the flesh in its external manifestation to be a problem in reconciling natural man with artificial society. Thus, one of the first consequences of Gide's homosexual behavior was that it placed him on the outer margin of society as a rebel against all that society regarded as normal.[506] There on the periphery, the creation of an imaginary world as a substitute for the real world, in which he felt deficient, was favorable to the creation of a certain type of literature. Within its context, he felt not only normal, but superior.[507] Part of the price he paid for this confusion between real and imagined experience lay in his inability, within his "primary vision" of a future social existence, to distinguish the first realities of experience from the "second realities" of imagination, as discussed earlier.[508] As Delay has observed, the malady which André Gide interpreted as a struggle between soul and flesh,

> . . . can also be considered from another angle, that of psychological narcissism and the struggle between dream and life. . . . To prefer one's dream to the world and to contemplate oneself rather than to live is characteristic of Narcissus.[509]

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[506]George Israel Brachfeld, André Gide and the Communist Temptation (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1959), p. 52.

[507]Delay, p. 242.

[508]Delay, pp. 69-70, provides an excellent discussion of "second realities" in Gide's psychological make-up, using the term "second realities" as I have used it here.

[509]Ibid., p. 229.

To overcome the dualism of his experienced existence--the conflict between the flesh and the spirit--Gide sought to join the poles of this experience into a single, unified whole. To do this required the conscious creation of a "new man" who by his very nature differed from the "old man" of Gide's experienced past. Gide described him thus:

> I would fashion a soul, shape it deliberately. . . . I would tie such intricate knots, weave such a network of sympathetic bonds, the separation would be impossible and shared patterns would for ever keep them side by side.[510]

The rift in Gide's personality, exacerbated by homosexual tendencies, opened up in him the antagonistic dualism of the real and the ideal, and pitted them against each other. The intensity of his emotion was strengthened further by the influence of a Calvinist home life that embodied a stronger than usual belief in sin. Growing up in this Protestant tradition, the child Gide had learned early to judge moral behavior for himself through his own conscience. Encouraged by this very systematic self-examination, doubt with regard to the sincerity of feelings and beliefs began to creep into Gide's consciousness. And, as Delay notes, "So began the experience of hypocrisy in the very course of the most truly moral effort."[511] This constant introspection by such a harsh self-examiner as Gide opened up

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[510]Gide, André Walter, pp. 22-23.

[511]Delay, p. 123. Delay, however, is quick to point out that introspection "makes no one sick unless he already is; it strengthens the strong and weakens the weak." p. 124.

the rift in his personality which led his ego (soul) to assert itself by rebellion.[512]

His first novel, Straight is the Gate, attracted wide popular and critical acclaim; it revealed what one critic termed "Protestantism's most insidious revenge on its renegade child."[513] The novel is a bold attack on the entire tradition of Gide's own religious heritage, the Christianity whose puritanical discipline had predisposed him toward "virtue" rather than "happiness."[514] Whereas at first it may appear to be paradoxical that Gide should consider virtue to be decadent and worldly happiness to be the highest good, he did not see it from this perspective. Indeed, in this case, he reversed those characteristics traditionally ascribed to the soul and the flesh respectively. For the "natural man" of his primary vision, the attainment of the happiness he described would carry the individual beyond mere good and evil in the puritanical sense. The attainment of happiness was the goal of the ideal man, whereas virtue was shaped by custom and not by nature. What organized religions considered to be virtues were for Gide mere customs that stunted the spiritual growth of the

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[512] Ibid., p. 124.

[513] Ibid., p. 483.

[514] André Gide, Straight is the Gate, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), p. 33; Perry, p. 95.

individual and would result in eventual tragedy, as it had for Alissa, the heroine of Straight is the Gate.

Gide and His Art

One of the first problems confronting the interpreter of Gide in examining his rich and varied creative writings is the disentangling of the artist from his work. In the literature on Gide, there have been two basic approaches. First, Gide himself has been viewed as an interpreter of literary situations in which the thoughts, deeds, and words of his principal characters are not to be construed as the articulation of his own values and beliefs. Justin O'Brien, his major biographer and the English translator of many of his novels and the Journals, falls into this general category.[515] The second approach, and by far the more numerous in advocates, is to see in Gide's writing what Delay has called "psychobiography," or the development of Gide's artistry as "a consideration of the events of his life in relation to his psychological evolution."[516] From the perspective of this second approach, the body of Gide's work is interpreted best as symbolic versions of events or situations in his own life, with his characters as "splinters of himself."[517] It would appear from a careful reading of

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[515] O'Brien, pp. 11-13.

[516] Delay, p. 10.

[517] Thomas Cordle, André Gide (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 49; Harold March, Gide and the Hound

Gide that the second approach is the more logical; it is the one upon which I will base my study.

In Gide's own words, the relationship of himself to his work reflected his life, which was the imitation of his art. The artist, he wrote,

> . . . must live his life as he will recount it. In other words, the portrait of him formed by his life must identify itself with the ideal portrait he desires . . . he must be as he wishes to be.[518]

There can be no doubt that for Gide his works were the product of a prior moral order in his own soul as well as the articulation of that order.

Throughout Gide's creative work, three dominant themes--religion, morality, and hedonism--prevail. In order to appreciate more fully his relationship to his work and the importance he attached to it, it is important to discuss these themes briefly before they are more completely discussed with respect to their influence on his idea of the future. All three of these themes are closely interrelated for Gide, and to explore fully the meanings he attached to them, they must be viewed as complementary

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of Heaven (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), p. 383.

[518]André Gide, The Journals of André Gide, Vol. I, trans., intro., notes Justin O'Brien (London: Secker & Warburg, 1947), pp. 18-19 (hereafter referred to as Gide, Journals). See also Klaus Mann, André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought (New York: Creative Age Press, 1943), pp. 48-55; James C. McLaren, "Art and Moral Synthesis: Gide's Central Focus," L'Esprit Créateur, I, No. 1 (Spring, 1961), 5-6.

parts of a much larger world view.

In his religious views, Gide rejected all organized Christianity, Protestant and Catholic alike; he argued for a return to a more primitive and "original" Christianity, which he understood to be a "state of mind" as opposed to a substantive doctrine.[519] The organization of religion, with its bureaucratic corruptions, was anathema to him. Regarding his wife's devout Catholicism, he wrote in his diary about "the slow progress of Catholicism in her soul; it seems to me that I am watching the spreading of a gangrene."[520] Although it is not doubt partly true that Gide's stance on religion "simply mirrored the theological revolution taking place around him,"[521] more than this was involved. By tradition, at least, Gide was a French Calvinist. This factor alone served to place his social status on the fringes of French culture. One of the most lasting consequences of his religious education, therefore, became the intensification of his propensity for feeling estranged

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[519]W. Wolfgang Holdheim, Theory and Practice of the Novel: A Study of André Gide (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1968), p. 66.

[520]André Gide, Et Nunc Manet in Te: an Intimate Journal, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952), p. 78. He wrote earlier in his diary that Calvinism can be an excellent school of psychology ". . . on the condition that one get away from it." In Gide, Journals, I, p. 306.

[521]H. J. Nersoyan, André Gide: The Theism of an Atheist (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), p. 4.

from the everyday reality of the society around him.[522] He experienced in his creative works a conflict between the disciplined ethic of Calvinism and the self-assertion of his own ego which rebelled against such restraints.[523]

Rebellion against Protestantism reached its creative height in Straight is the Gate. The principal character, Alissa, is a childlike creature who must be protected from life itself. When confronted with the choice between a real life in marriage with Jerome or a spiritual, inner withdrawal in search of perfect Christian asceticism, Alissa chooses the latter. The result is tragedy. Alissa's seeking of perfection through love for God turns her will away from the acceptance of true love for Jerome. On the other hand, Jerome's love for God only hinders his love for Alissa, and hence he has abandoned God.

The story itself is simple but the meaning is complex. In seeking God, Alissa has assumed the role of a fictitious, idealized self which has meant abandoning her true self. If God were in fact the same as the religious conception of Him, no problem would exist. But it is precisely the absence of this likeness that constitutes the source of the problem for Gide. The surrender of Alissa's love is not to an object outside of herself (God), but to

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[522]Brachfeld, p. 16.

[523]March, pp. 54-55, 95.

a subject--her own intellectual construction.[524] Gide does not condemn Alissa's initial aspiration, which is to conform to the will of God, nor does he intend that the reader do so. At the outset, we have a basic character in which is experienced the very human urge to expand beyond the limits of the self, and we have an environment which gives to the goal of aspiration the name "God." It is this environment, purely an invention of society, that directs the development of a young girl so that her true nature is deformed.[525] What society calls "God" is simply, in this context, an inner voice as opposed to an external duty: there is no object which is "God." Hence, it is concluded that when man thinks about God, he is in reality thinking about himself.

Morality, then--true morality as opposed to social custom--emanates from the individual alone. The institutional notions of good and evil which thwart the free play of individualism are to be construed, therefore, as the sources of corruption of the soul. Society as it is also is the enemy of natural man. In the place of religion, "altruism" should prevail, in which men are expected to sacrifice themselves for their fellow men.

This sacrifice of the individual man for the abstract

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[524]G. W. Ireland, André Gide: A Study of His Creative Writings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 213.

[525]March, p. 159.

man later came to be the basis of Gide's morality within his Communist affiliation. His code of conduct was radically individual, especially after the time of his public advocacy of homosexuality; and therefore it was profoundly antisocial. His concept of morality, unconventional in private, eventually broadened to apply to society at large and to contain the seeds of revolution.[526] Gide fully understood that he advocated anarchy when he wrote:

> Laws and rules of conduct are for the state of childhood; education is an emancipation. A perfectly wise city or state would live and judge without laws. . . . The wise man lives without a rule of conduct, according to his wisdom.[527]

His concept of morality, then, as perhaps with most anarchic moralists, was to live an existence as if no one else were involved; it was, in effect, a morality for the "overmen" that Nietzsche foresaw.[528]

Gide's morality, individualistic and antisocial, was bound to produce certain results in society. We have seen this before, in Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon, but in Gide its transcendent significance is even more

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[526]Brachfeld, pp. 35, 113.

[527]Gide, Journals, I, pp. 41-42.

[528]For an excellent discussion of precisely this point, together with Gide's relationship to Nietzsche, see Montgomery Belgion, Our Present Philosophy of Life (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1929), pp. 169-174; Theseus, in Gide's play of the same name, exclaims, "Liberty above all things! My duty is to myself!" In André Gide, Two Legends: Oedipus and Theseus, trans. John Russell (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 81.

apparent. It is expressed once again in the dilemma of ends and means. "Never lose sight of the end," he wrote in his Journal; "Never prefer the means. . . . Look upon oneself as a means; hence, never prefer oneself to the chosen end."[529] When we recall that the end of his "primary vision" is the "natural man" discussed above, the significance of his concept of morality increases. The character, André Walter, records in his diary:

> We live in order to manifest, not in order to live. Ends and means: there is the difference. Morality consists in identifying that which should be sought after for its own sake and the means of attaining it. . . . Life is merely a means, not an end.[530]

In the case of Gide, this end, it must be remembered, was a conception of perfection shaped in definite neurotic origins. Given the perceived deformity of reality, it meant in practice that morality consisted of the destruction of reality and the frank substitution of a dream world for it.

The sensuous hedonism that appears to cloud all of Gide's morality resulted directly from his radical individualism and homosexual behavior. Insofar as external factors influence men's actions, they should be overcome if the attainment of pure pleasure and happiness are to be achieved. "We are shaped by our influences," Gide wrote.

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[529]Gide, Journals, I, p. 8.

[530]Gide, André Walter, p. 102; Belgion, pp. 141, 147-148.

"We must therefore discern them. Let will be dominant everywhere: we should do as we please. We should choose our influences."[531] Clearly, he did not envision these influences as the prevailing social customs. Instead, they were to be a projection of the individual ego onto society as a whole. Once this goal was attained, happiness would result, because the individual would no longer be alienated from a world he did not create himself. As Gide interpreted it, this was the true message of Christ. "The first duty of the Christian is to be happy; and so long as he has not achieved happiness he has not put into practice the teaching of Christ."[532]

In Straight is the Gate, Jerome is portrayed as one who desires nothing beyond the earthly, sensual happiness of union with Alissa--to the point that it becomes an obsession. Alissa, on the other hand, in sacrificing sensual pleasure to heavenly rewards after life, had given up the only true happiness. For Gide, Alissa has destroyed herself in the quest for a pitiful illusion. Happiness, which includes sensuous pleasure as its most important component, can be realized only in an earthly, that is, social existence. With ideal society viewed merely as a projection of an individual's own will, such a model must of necessity

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[531] Ibid., p. 33.

[532] Gide, Journals, I, p. 344.

be an elite as well as hedonistic morality.

Romanticism, Classicism, and Symbolism in Gide

Gide regarded himself as a "classicist" in the tradition of Flaubert and Stendhal in French letters. The goal of classicism, as Gide defined it, was the "broad integration" of everything which is genuine in the modern world. "All that classicism refuses to integrate threatens to turn against us," he wrote.[533] As with so many other observations by Gide, this statement cannot necessarily be taken to mean "classicism" in the sense used in this study.[534] The key distinction to be made for my purposes closely relates his definition of true literature as "integration" to the entire structure of his body of work; it has implications in his approach to the relationship between subject and object, and in his view of the nature of knowledge, second realities, and the general problem of decadence and vitalism.

To begin with, Gide's notion of integration was integration without selection or discrimination. It tended to reduce all forms of human experience to the same common

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[533]André Gide, Pretexts: Reflections on Literature and Morality, selected, ed.,intro. Justin O'Brien (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959), p. 202.

[534]Jean Delay has written, "The meaning Gide gave to the word 'classicism' is open to discussion; 'paganism' would probably be more exact." In Delay, p. 331.

denominator with no qualitative distinctions. This feature of his conception of literature was itself a direct consequence of his identification of the "real" with the sensuous part of his own ego; experience was itself defined as sensory experience. Life, as Gide defined it, was the rejuvenating "vitalism" of all of man's sensations, and this view itself reenforced the reduction of sensory experience to an undifferentiated unity.[535]

From this it logically followed that the proper ethical distinction for men to make was not between "good" and "evil," but between the "authentic" and the "false."[536] Authenticity demanded "sincerity" from the individual above all else. "Oh, to be utterly and perfectly sincere . . ," he wrote in his Journal; for sincerity was the virtue most effective toward realizing the true self.[537] The exaltation of sincerity as the supreme test of knowledge itself was thus closely related to the sensuous aspects of Gide's world view.

The search for authenticity in feeling and the elevation of "sincerity" as an ordering principle in Gide's work established certain significant corollaries. The most

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[535]Holdheim, pp. 69-73; on this point, see also Karl Pfleger, Wrestlers with Christ (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936), pp. 132-133.

[536]Brachfeld, p. 39.

[537]Gide, Journals, I, p. 17; Nersoyan, p. 31.

important was probably the denial of reason and of rational discourse between opposing points of view. Reason was associated with the Devil in Gide's symbolism: ". . . for the Evil One is the Reasoner," he wrote.[538] Gide did not believe in the objective existence of God, nor in an objective Satan; but as a symbol of the imperfection in men's view of themselves, the Devil provided a useful symbol of decadence which was cited often. Gide shared the Romanticist conception of knowledge, which tended to reject science as the source of what is true: "The sciences are dangerous, for they exalt reason, which then speaks up and demands control."[539] By emphasizing sensory knowledge, that is, "intuitive knowledge," Gide thereby consciously raised irrationality to the level of an ordering principle; he imposed second reality upon actual existence.

That this resulted in a latent and sometimes overt nihilism is not surprising. In the absence of reason as a source of order, then, the unreasoned projection of a man's ego outside of himself and onto society should be the source of order. According to Gide's André Walter:

> Everyone is right. Things BECOME true as soon as someone believes in them. Reality is within us; our mind creates its Truths. And the best truth will

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[538] Ibid., II, p. 187; Delay, p. 286; Brachfeld, pp. 39-49.

[539] Gide, André Walter, p. 189.

> not be the one sanctioned by reason. Men are guided by emotions and not by ideas.[540]

To Gide, reason fostered limitations; if men were to become gods they could not admit impotence.

So conceived, reason could not avoid destroying any objective relationship between the knower and the known, the subject and the object of knowledge. For it is in the nature of sense-perceived knowledge to be unable to recognize distinctions unless it also possesses reason as the means of discrimination.

Gide's early work appeared during the period of the strongest Symbolist influence on French literature. He viewed the task of the creative artist to be that of symbolizing, of reconciling appearance and reality--"fleeting forms" and ideal forms.[541] The unity of subject and object in Gide is more appropriately discussed in the context of Gide's conceptions of God and religion, which will be explored later in this chapter. It is enough to point out here that Gide and Hume have much in common in their

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[540] Ibid., p. 43. With more truth than he intended, Gide concluded this statement with "the true is known by its fruit, and a doctrine by what it suggests." Nowhere is this more accurate than in an analysis of Gide's particular world view.

[541] Catherine H. Savage, "Gide's Criticism of Symbolism," The Modern Language Review, LXI, No. 4 (October, 1966), 601-602; see also her excellent article in the same vein of symbolism in Gide, "The Ideology of André Walter," L'Esprit Créateur, I, No. 1 (Spring, 1961), 14-20; and the excellent discussion of symbolism in Gide by Cordle, pp. 33-44, 41-45, 65.

epistemology at least; it was Gide who wrote:

> An atmosphere created by me envelops my soul and unconsciously colors my vision of reality. And, since it is impenetrable it imprisons me in solitude. And, since it is variegated, each vision of reality is individual. A man never sees anything but his world, and he is the only one to see it.[542]

Because reason cannot thereby establish any subject-object relationship, it is presumed that reason was a fiction in the first place. In Gide's The Counterfeiters, Edouard's own neurotic personality wholly dissolves any common-sense relationship between subject and object as he rebels against science and reason:

> Psychological analysis lost all interest for me from the moment that I became aware that men feel what they imagine they feel. From that to thinking that they imagine they feel what they feel was a very short step.[543]

In Gide's particular brand of romanticism and symbolism, as we have shown, the emphasis was away from a truly rational conception of knowledge qua knowledge; "what eludes logic," he wrote, "is the most precious element."[544] His habit of introspection had predisposed him to look for an inner self as the true self, but self-revelation only heightened the disparity between the real and the ideal. The real, empirical self became associated with decadence,

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[542]Gide, André Walter, p. 84; see also the statement in Journals, I, p. 10.

[543]André Gide, The Counterfeiters, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), p. 65.

[544]Gide, Journals, II, p. 404.

as had his real, empirical experience with society.[545] If only the five senses were to be trusted, then the only genuine knowledge came from them.

In his novels, therefore, Gide symbolized this belief by emphasizing the intuitive rather than the rational, the subjective rather than the objective, and freedom rather than restraint. Symbolically, he represented the decadence of the present with terms that suggested darkness or sickness, or physical and intellectual weakness; progress was light, health, and the intellectual courage to face the fact that the individual was God and no one else in the universe existed to aid in his spiritual and social progress.

In The Immoralist, the principal figure, Michel, is stricken by tuberculosis, a disease symbolic of the corruption of his physical self. Although the disease proves to be nearly fatal, Michel overcomes it by an act of pure will and makes a startling discovery--he can will his own physical health. It is a discovery of his primitive, "authentic being," hidden under layers of corrupting civilization. After this discovery, Michel experiences a new source of undreamed-of strength:

> What interest could I take in myself, except as a perfectible being? This unknown perfection, vaguely as

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[545] Cordle, p. 34; Pfleger, p. 134; on decadence in French literature as an influence on Gide, see Koenraad W. Swart, The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), especially p. 209 for Gide's role.

> I imagined it, exalted my will as never before in my longing to achieve it; I dedicated myself to this will utterly.[546]

Michel has experienced what Nietzsche described as a "will to power." This newly discovered will also increases his sensitivity to feeling: "With extraordinary intensity, I felt," he says as his period of recovery ends.[547] At this point, Michel can draw the corollary conclusion that the decadence of past memories derived from society, his history in effect, has prevented the full recovery of his health. A knowledge of the past is deceptive in that it masks the truth. "Culture, born of life, ultimately kills life. . . . Memory is an invention of misery."[548]

In his rejection of the past as a guide and of the present as decadence, Gide quite naturally looked to the future as the ultimate arena for salvation. But he did not look at first to the Marxist conception of a full future. In his early years, the future was a void in the sense that the depths of nothingness, of nihilism, were most fully revealed there.

Nowhere did he symbolize this despair of the future

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[546]André Gide, The Immoralist, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 53; Ireland, pp. 178-198.

[547]Ibid., p. 40; see also the comment by Michel, p. 150; Holdheim, pp. 60-61.

[548]Ibid., pp. 93, 161.

more graphically than in Urien's Voyage.[549] The story is dominated by a sea voyage, heavily symbolic of life, and it progresses through a number of adventures to end ultimately in the purity of the ice-covered North Pole, the end of earthly life. The origin of the voyage and the reason for it are shrouded in historical mystery, out of which has come despair. The narrator recalls:

> Long had I wandered as if in a dream through a tragic valley. . . . Then, since this day had given us a foretaste of all that the future held in store, we ceased to look back and turned our eyes to the future . . . and plunged into the night toward dawn.[550]

The voyage begins with a note of hope in the prospect of "glorious destinies to unfold"; but as the doomed vessel sails onward, the future looks more distant than it did at the beginning. "Since I felt my strength ebbing away and the past returning, I put my head in my hands and cried wretchedly," the narrator exclaims.[551] Life, then, is reduced to a meaningless quest for an illusive perfection at some point in the future; but what happens at the end of life, when the future becomes "now"?

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[549]The double meaning of the title of this work is lost in the English translation. The French title is La Voyage d'Urien; the translation of "rien" is "nothing," and "du" is "of" in this case.

[550]André Gide, Urien's Voyage, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1964), pp. 15-18.

[551]Ibid., pp. 21, 61.

> So far our voyage has been a failure. What does our cheerless plan mean at this moment in our history? Or what is the significance of our being on the plain? Any suspicion of futility will torment our hearts and allow their virtue to be diffused. . . . If we had known at the outset that this was what we had come to see, perhaps we would not have started; that is why we give thanks to God for having hid from us the goal and for having witheld it from us until our efforts to attain it had afforded us some pleasure, the only certain pleasure; and we also thanked God because our intense suffering had made us hope for a splendid end.[552]

The fundamental nihilism in Urien's Voyage is obvious throughout. It is important to call attention to its place in the early work of Gide, because it can be argued plausibly that at this point in his life, roughly before 1900, Gide's vision of the future appears to have alternated between hope and despair. Given the general structure of his neurotic world view, this is hardly surprising. What is perhaps most important is that for Gide, more than for either Koestler or Silone, the title of Crossman's book, The God That Failed, has particular significance. The specific utopian future of Marxism supplied a straw at which Gide could grasp as a counterweight to what otherwise would have dissolved the future into the most abject nihilism. Marxism for Gide was a substitute for God in a very

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[552] Ibid., pp. 62-63, 91. The theme of the pointlessness of the journey through life and of the emptiness at the end of it reappeared later in André Gide, The Return of the Prodigal Son: Preceded by Five Other Treaties with Souls, A Drama in Five Acts, trans. Dorothy Bussy (London: Secker & Warburg, 1953, hereafter referred to as Gide, Prodigal Son).

literal sense, however hopeless the conception might appear to be in retrospect. The passion with which he embraced Marxism was no doubt in direct proportion to the nihilism that formed the basis of his conception of the truth of the future. At about the same time, he also wrote, in "Narcissus," that "the poet is one who looks. And what does he see? Paradise."[553] However, this should not obscure the salient fact that Gide's world view was essentially nihilistic and that however disguised and latent it was in later years, it was obvious in his earlier writings.

Progress, Rebellion, and the Death of God in Gide's Thought

One of the most striking aspects of Gide's novels is their apolitical contrast with his involvement in the Communist movement of the 1920s and 1930s. His are not political novels in the sense that either Koestler or Silone can claim. In tone and content, they appear at first to represent an "ivory tower" intellectualism, divorced from social reality. From what already has been said about the nature of second reality in Gide, this is not surprising. But a problem arises with respect to how he moved intellectually from aloof noninvolvement in social issues to an activist role. Why he became an activist is more difficult to explain than how his work evolved after his Symbolist period, in his mature years preceding the Marxist period.

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[553]André Gide, "Narcissus," in Prodigal Son, p. 13 Ireland, pp. 222-236.

The "how" does not explain "why," but it is an indispensable aspect of Gide's personal evolution of thought after 1900.

The Immoralist, which originally appeared in 1902, acts as a watershed both in the development of Gide's literature and of his intellectual dispositions. Although it remains within the tradition of Symbolism, it is the last of his novels in this genre and shows signs of breaking away from Symbolist confines. To begin with, the primary figure of Michel has a clearly defined existence which Gide's previous fictional characters lacked. Hereafter, his characters possess a more concrete conception of their own existence than Gide did of his own. They represent a means of escape from himself.[554] Now Gide, of course, is neither the first nor the last artist about whom this can be said, but in recalling that he regarded his life as an imitation of his art--that his primary vision regarded his own imagination as its object--it becomes essential to his total development. His characters become more realistic in the psychological sense in that they "know" who they are; but they also become more radical personality types because of it.

Beginning with Michel, Gide set forth hedonism as a positive morality to be aspired to as a source of health, rather than as the symbol of decadence it had oftimes been

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[554]Delay, pp. 131-136; Pfleger, p. 131.

considered to be. Michel asserts his hedonism and will to power with the bold statement:

> I let myself dream of such lands where every force was so well controlled, every expenditure so compensated, every exchange so strict, that the slightest waste became evident; then, applying my dream to life, I sketched an ethic which would become a science of self-exploitation perfected by a disciplined intelligence.[555]

This statement also unveils the first signs of Gide's awareness that his particular concept of morality required a political effort on the part of the individual egoist. But he was fully aware that such a posture would put him in the position of a political as well as social rebel. In commenting on Michel, he wrote:

> Can we accommodate so much intelligence, so much strength--or must we refuse them any place among us? How can a man like Michel serve the state? I confess I do not know. . . . He must have an occupation.[556]

Until Gide discovered Marxism as a political movement in the 1920s, "an occupation" was precisely what his growing social awareness lacked. Although he felt the need for an activist role, without the Communist Party he lacked the mechanism for translating theory into practice.

The preference for moral questions over social or political questions was always evident in Gide's work. Not only did this imply the absence of any organized organic relationship between politics and morals *per se*; but when

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[555]Gide, *Immoralist*, p. 72.

[556]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

he did take up politics, it gave his activism a general air of disorientation.[557] He was never able to translate personal moral convictions into rational politics, even after he became associated with the activities of the French Communist Party.

His characters reflect this problem; unable to reconcile morality to political action, Edouard in The Counterfeiters remarks with mild surprise,

> As I watch myself act I cannot understand how a person who acts is the same as the person who is watching him act, and who wonders in astonishment and doubt how he can be actor and watcher at the same moment.[558]

The symbol Gide chose to represent his solitary rebellion was Prometheus. Prometheus was Gide's reigning deity, and Gide did not hesitate to recast Christ in the Promethean role in order to exemplify his conception of true Christianity.[559] As Gide portrayed him, Prometheus was not a sort of Everyman, but was motivated instead by a Nietzschean self-reliance and will to power.[560] Gide wrote in his Journal, "Understand today that wisdom begins where fear ends, and it begins with the revolt of Prometheus."[561]

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[557] March, p. 323.

[558] Gide, The Counterfeiters, p. 65; Holdheim, pp. 77-80.

[559] Brachfeld, p. 97; on the Promethean interpretation of Christ as a figure against God, see the lengthy discussion in Jonas, pp. 136-146.

[560] Ibid., p. 98; O'Brien, pp. 236-246.

[561] Gide, Journals, III, p. 240; see also the statement in André Walter, p. 19.

In Gide's version of the legend, Prometheus progresses through three stages of development which parallel the history of humanity: a state of innocence, a period under external law, and a final state of second innocence in which the law and God are the products of man's own soul.[562] Rebellion, then, is the primary instinct in man. It is the one aspect of his existence in nature that is eternal. Except perhaps for his significant Communist interlude, Gide did not take the position that rebellion would conquer the dilemma of the human condition; but neither could he bring himself to restrain those who rebel in order to succeed where others have failed. In the Prodigal Son, the returning son has seen the world and realizes its futility and spiritual emptiness. He has returned from his journey weary at heart, but when his younger brother proposes to begin the journey where he has abandoned it, the prodigal can only urge him on.

Promethean characters abound in Gide's work. Over and over again, he portrays men in revolt against different backdrops that highlight various dimensions of the act of rebellion. Theseus exclaims that "the end justifies the means. What must be must be.";[563] Michel rebels against

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[562]André Gide, Marshlands and Prometheus Misbound: Two Satires, trans. George D. Painter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953); Brachfeld, p. 99. For a more general discussion, see Helen Watson-Williams, André Gide and the Greek Myth: A Critical Study (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), especially pp. 40-67.

[563]Gide, Theseus, p. 101.

the conventions of society with the exclamation, "If there's one thing I detest it's a man of principles!"[564] For Lafcadio in Les Caves du Vatican, rebellion is the "gratuitous act," the act without meaning except on its own terms.[565] If a single trait appears that joins together the many diverse characters of his work, it is the personality type of the neurotic rebel. The archetypal man who emerges from the pages of Gide's novels, plays, and essays is the Promethean rebel, at war with things as they are, unbalanced, neurotically maladjusted; he is a man with the will to be God.

Intrinsic through rebellion was to the human condition for Gide, he did not himself see it as rebellion for its own sake. Rather, it was rebellion for the attainment of something; in this case, a man could realize his true potential only to the extent that he directed and controlled his own future. As long as he depended upon God, he would be something less than a true person. In this way, rebellion was linked to a notion of progress in Gide. In his early career, this progress was purely individual--a rejection of the notion of collective progress. "Man's progress

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[564]Gide, The Immoralist, p. 105.

[565]This particular work appeared under several English titles: The Vatican Swindle, Lafcadio's Adventures, and The Caves of the Vatican. The edition cited herein is Lafcadio's Adventures, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925). There is a hint of concern for the "gratuitous act" in The Immoralist as well, but it is not as fully developed as here.

takes place only within himself," he wrote then.[566] But his attitude changed with time. Because Gide was skeptical of the grounding of any reality outside of man's will, and because the patterns of any society were to him merely a projection of men's will, he eventually concluded that individual progress could be made both permanent and cumulative, thus ensuring the reality of a form of social progress. Gide agreed with Nietzsche that progress was not to be the lot of ordinary men but was a purely intellectual phenomenon, confined to elites. Theseus expressed such a preference for "an aristocracy not of wealth, but of intellect." That such an aristocracy would not be tyrannical in its rule was taken for granted; an end to tyrannical personality types was a part of progress itself.[567] Gide's picture of an elitist rebellion, guided by its primary vision of the future and secure in the knowledge that it stood for progress, could well afford a code of morality different from that of the rest of mankind. Prometheus made his own rules, owed his knowledge to no man or god, and was a law unto himself.

The gradual realization of the collective self-consciousness of intellectuals was for Gide a blending of modified Darwinism and decadence. Although he respected and

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[566]Gide, Journals, I, p. 75; Warren Carrier, "The Demoniacal in Gide," Renascence, IV, No. 1 (Autumn, 1951), 65.

[567]Gide, Theseus, pp. 106, 108.

admired Darwin, he was of the opinion that the great biologist had been misunderstood or misapplied in the social context. All too often it was the inferior types who won the battle for survival unless an elite could superimpose its collective will on the "natural" course of events. The idea of "natural selection" needed this special modification. In broken sentences, Gide's Journal expressed this disgust with protean Darwinism:

> Suppression of the fortunate cases . . . inevitable dominance by the average types and even those which are below the average. It is not the happy sports, the results of selection, that win out, but rather the results of decadence.[568]

In effect, the direction of elites was necessary in society to ensure that Darwin's insights could be realized. Gide's statement was a call to action by an intellectual to others of like mind, but until he discovered the Communist Party, he had no mechanism by which to link his growing awareness of the world outside himself to politics. What Darwin lacked, and what Marx provided, was a program.

Gide was fully conscious that rebellion of this sort ran counter to the prevailing traditions of Western thought. He was aware that his rebellion was against the very basis of what was understood to be the human condition in Christian thought. He justified this in part, however, by his

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[568]Gide, Journals, I, p. 261; Gide took this quotation from Nietzsche, The Will to Power. His attitude toward Darwin owed a great deal to the influence of Nietzsche. See also Gide's observations in his Journals, II, p. 189.

radical recasting of God in the process of evolution and progress; God was not the First Cause of Creation, but rather the terminal point in the movement of history. He wrote:

> If I had to formulate a credo, I should say: God is not behind us. He is to come. He must be sought, not at the beginning, but at the end of evolution. He is terminal and not initial. He is the supreme and final point toward which all nature tends in time. . . . It is through man that God is molded.[569]

Gide interpreted this further to mean that man is in the process of becoming God, in a sense very close to Hegel's interpretation of the process of Creation. The effect of this idea on Gide's already neurotic personality was an even deeper erosion of any rational self-identification. Gide was aware, however, of the effects of this identification of himself with God and of the problems it raised; he wrote, "In truth, I no longer know who I am; or if you prefer: I never <u>am</u>; I am <u>becoming</u>."[570]

Gide's concept of God, Christ, and religion was guided in his mature years by a detailed reading of Nietzsche and the German Romantics.[571] His Calvinism survived primarily as a source of symbols rather than as a living faith.

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[569] <u>Ibid.</u>, II, p. 122; see also his entry in <u>Journals</u>, II, p. 294; O'Brien, p. 243.

[570] <u>Ibid.</u>, II, p. 343.

[571] Holdheim, p. 63. Throughout his early <u>Journals</u>, Gide continually makes particular reference to Schopenhauer's <u>The World as Will and Idea</u> as a work of profound influence on his thought. Apparently, he thoroughly read and reread this work.

The god whom he proclaimed to be dead was the Judeo-Christian God who had reminded him that there was indeed a limit to human potential.[572] In Gide's play, Oedipus, Polynices gently admonishes Antigone for her belief in an objective God: "You simply see the reflection of your own virtue," he says.[573] Gide did not mean by this, however, that the future had become present, that man had become God at this time; the full realization of man as God would have to await the end of evolution and history. The tragedy of Oedipus, as Gide constructed the story, lay in his inability to dispose of the inherent limitations of his own personality. He had not yet achieved the god within himself even though he acted as if he had. The mistake of Oedipus was that he believed that he had progressed to the point of Nietzschean self-reliance when in fact he had not; and therein lay the tragedy.[574] Gide did not interpret Oedipus as one to reflect despair about the future. Instead, the play reflected the tragedy of Gide's Christ--realizing he was God

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[572]Nersoyan, p. 2; Reinhold Niebuhr, A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 45.

[573]Gide, Oedipus, p. 28.

[574]Brachfeld, p. 104; Ireland, pp. 343-407. In his discussion of Oedipus, Ireland raises the possibility that because the play was published in 1930, during the height of his Party activity, Gide saw his own position and that of other intellectuals as the tragedy of Oedipus; that the age of the "overmen" had not quite arrived yet, in spite of the Party's assurance to the contrary.

with no one else to grasp the meaning at the time; the full realization of man as God would have to wait until later. It was significant for Gide, however, that the notion of Christ's solitary recognition of this aspect of his nature had become in Gide's day the core belief of a small but influential group of intellectuals. They knew that the Kingdom of God on earth would one day be a reality and that men, acting as God, would build it.[575]

The god that Gide constructed was a pantheistic deity whose "mystery [was] all the greater for being in no way supernatural."[576] The metaphysical pursuit of what Gide called an "inaccessible God," then, was as fruitless as it was pointless. He considered the old God of Christianity to be an outworn concept that needed replacement by the "higher" deity, the "unknown God" of the future.[577] Gide interpreted the silence following Christ's lament on the Cross as the symbolic answer to the search for God beyond the self.[578] Thus, the duty and function of prophets was to preach the adaptation of their own visions of morality in the face of a silent cosmos. As El Hadj in Prodigal

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[575]Perry, p. 118. As a general guide to religious thought in Gide, Perry's analysis should be checked as a rule, against the more definitive sections in Delay and Holdheim.

[576]Gide, Journals, III, p. 164.

[577]March, pp. 123-124; see also his related concept in the Gnostic symbolism in Jonas, passim.

[578]Ibid., pp. 318-319.

Son phrased the dilemma, "But I now know that if prophets there are, it is because they have lost their God. For if He did not keep silence, where would be the use of our words?"[579] Christ should be preserved as a symbol of what men might become, but organized Christianity, with its false prophets who had perverted the original message, was not needed. True Christianity, Gide asserted, was nothing more than a "state of mind."[580] There should be no doubt on this matter that Gide saw himself in the role of one of the modern prophets of this "state of mind." It is also worth noting that the emphasis on duty and asceticism in Gide's conception of the prophet had much in common with his Calvinist upbringing--not in substantive content, but in its furtherance of the same harsh and uncompromising habits of mind.[581]

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[579]Gide, "El Hadj," in Prodigal Son, p. 67; Ireland, pp. 171-177.

[580]André Gide, Dostoevsky, trans., intro. Arnold Bennett (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), p. 150. This essay was the result of a series of lectures delivered originally in 1922. In the lectures he introduced the serious study of Dostoevsky into French letters virtually singlehandedly. After he had become aware of Dostoevsky's work through several excellent translations, the Russian novelist, or at least his own particular translation of him, influenced Gide's subsequent thought almost as much as Nietzsche had. For a brief account of the reception of these lectures, see Holdheim, pp. 65-66.

[581]For an excellent account of the French literary climate at the turn of the century and of Gide's place within it, see Richard Griffiths, The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature 1870-1914 (London: Constable, 1966), especially pp. 54, 77-78, 317.

The Relationship of the Past to the Future for Gide

It is accurate to say, insofar as Gide is concerned, that the emphasis he placed on the future was in direct proportion to his lack of emphasis on the past. In none of his novels do any of his characters have a substantive past or even a genuine recollection of one. Instead, they have only the present and a dream of the future. Whenever a character does express an attitude toward his past, it is invariably to reject it in favor of either an eternal present or a glorious, if sometimes undefined, future. Thus, when Memalque in The Immoralist boldly asserts his hedonistic philosophy of life, he rests it on a rejection of the past:

> I don't want to remember. . . . If I did, I might keep the future from happening by letting the past encroach upon it. I create each hour's newness by forgetting yesterday completely. Having been happy is never enough for me. I don't believe in dead things.[582]

And Theseus further emphasizes this position when he says, "I have never allowed the past to involve or detain me; rather have I been drawn forward by what was still to be achieved; and the most important things seemed to me always to be ahead."[583] In Urien and "El Hadj" the end of the trip is devoid of meaning; the journey itself provides all the meaning there is. Whatever else may be true, it is

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[582]Gide, The Immoralist, p. 111.

[583]Gide, Theseus, p. 67.

accepted that the past is irrevocably spoiled; there are no lessons to be derived from history or experience.

Now it must be pointed out that Gide's philosophy of history owed far more to a sort of existentialist nihilism than to the pseudo-scientific speculations of Marx. With science itself as one of the symbols of decadence, the "scientific" study of history could hardly be expected to elicit Gide's enthusiasm. His own attitude toward experience was best summed up when he recorded in his Journal, "Thus it is that all the events of life . . . serve only to push each person farther in his own direction, so that nothing is more empty or illusory than what is commonly called experience."[584] Gide dissolved the notion of time as a significant aspect of the structure of reality in an existentialist manner. As one of the lessons he said he derived from Dostoevsky, he described the "secret of happiness" as that place "where the notion of the individual and of time is best."[585] Existence, whether it was individual or social, was basically ahistorical. Events, persons, and places were divorced from any meaningful place in time. Furthermore, because of his debasement of reason and his disdain for experience, there remained for Gide no rational ordering principle with which to sort out any

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[584]Gide, Journals, II, p. 321.

[585]Gide, Dostoevsky, p. 143.

problems of historical causality. Indeed, insofar as Gide considered causality to be a problem at all, his disorientation of common-sense experience led him to presuppose that the future could cause the present, much as the pull of a magnet determines the course of metal across a sheet of paper.

If experience can offer no guide, then it follows that ignorance, or lack of experience, is as useful as knowledge, an accumulation of experience, in making decisions. Gide was well aware of this conclusion and carried it to its logical consequences; he identified the best in men as that which is the least developed and the most primitive. He wrote:

> Even more than beauty, youth attracts me, and with an irresistible appeal. I believe the truth lies in youth; I believe it is always right against us. I believe that, far from trying to teach it, it is in youth that we, the elders, must seek our lessons.[586]

As the years passed, Gide increasingly placed his hope for the future in youth; youth was unspoiled, lacking the prejudices of habit that corrupted the present. From roughly his middle years until his death in 1951, Gide expressed a growing confidence in youth and the "newness" of various ideas to solve the problems of the human social condition.

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[586] Gide, Journals, II, p. 281; Gide later wrote that "the best of my thoughts were those of my youth." Ibid., p. 401.

Gide and the Communist Temptation

The youthful writings of André Gide, during the period of his greatest attachment to symbolism as a literary expression, were conspicuously apolitical. During what may be called his middle years, that period between youth and active participation in the Communist Party, his work remained basically apolitical; but an increasing awareness of the need to participate in society began to become manifest. "It does seem," he wrote, "that the evil prosper, while the just are sacrificed--to the shame of this earthly existence and of society as we have organized it."[587]

The First World War had a major impact on his life, as it did for Western intellectuals everywhere. Following the apparent collapse of Western civilization after 1914, many French liberals were drawn to the Russian Revolution. It may be important to observe that Gide discovered Dostoevsky at about the time that the Bolshevik Revolution swept Russia. In his lectures on The Possessed, he contrasted Russia's suffering with the suicide of Kirillov: "Russia is offering herself in sacrifice like Kirillov, and for the salvation, perhaps, of the rest of Europe, and of humanity."[588] At the time of these lectures, Gide had not affiliated himself yet with the Communist movement, but

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[587] Gide, Dostoevsky, p. 93.

[588] Ibid., p. 198; Gide praised not only Dostoevsky, but all things Russian.

clearly he was moving in that direction.

Probably the most important event to awaken his interest in political activism was his voyage to the French Congo in 1925-1926. He was shocked by the virtual slavery that existed there under the acquiescence of corrupt French officials. He noted in his travel diary the effect of this sudden revelation: "Have I been walking hitherto between high walls of falsehood? I must get behind them, but on the other side, and learn what it is they are put to hide, even if the truth is horrible."[589] The truth he discovered aroused his indignation as no other event had. The French officials, he said, are "ugly . . . stupid . . . vulgar . . . they neither meditate, nor read, nor pray--and sleep the sleep of brutes--they are never disturbed by anything."[590]

When he returned from the Congo, he published his travel diary and sought an official redress of the Congo situation. Public opinion was outraged by his discoveries, and the result was a substantial repair of the entire colonial structure in the French Congo. While these positive gains were being recorded, however, Gide became personally involved for the first time in political activism for the purpose of social change. His growing concern for society

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[589]André Gide, Travels in the Congo, trans. Dorothy Bussy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 73; the original French edition appeared in 1927, and the original English translation in 1929.

[590]Ibid., pp. 373-374.

was also reflected in his Journal entries; after the mid-1920s, they tended increasingly to be comments on social problems rather than literary references or musings on personal philosophy. He began to speak less about personal progress and more about social progress.

When Oedipus was published in 1930, Gide was ready to assume the role of dutiful Party worker. Gide presented Oedipus as a man in search of God who, after his realization that no objective God exists, substitutes Man in his place. In the same spirit of the new humanism, Gide embraced Communism as a new god.[591] In Theseus he exclaimed:

> I traced the source of the most evils to the general inequality of wealth. . . . By an equal division of all properties, I abolished at one blow both the fact of supremacy and the rivalries it had provoked. . . . Personal merit is the only thing to which I attach any importance; I recognize no other scale of values.[592]

Gide, the archetypal individualist in twentieth century French letters, had concluded that individualism and liberty without a corresponding adherence to duty was insufficient for an individual's moral health. At about this same time, his Journal recorded the

> . . . immensity of human poverty. In contrast to which the indifference of certain rich people . . . is becoming more and more incomprehensible to me. Concern with oneself . . . is ever becoming more disgusting to me.[593]

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[591]Enid Starkie, "André Gide," in Crossman, pp. 165-167.

[592]Gide, Theseus, p. 104.

[593]Gide, Journals, III, p. 3.

What attracted Gide particularly to Communism was its promise of emancipation from what he regarded as the irrational forces of institutionalized Christianity, and its call to duty and self-sacrifice to the goal of an earthly paradise for man, who was born to happiness. As early as 1925, at the Congress of Revolutionary Writers, he had traced the continuity of this tradition of rejection of the Christian world view from Descartes and Diderot to Marx.[594] He saw himself as a rightful heir to this tradition; perhaps, in his view, he had not joined the Communists so much as they had joined him.[595] Through Dostoevsky he had already come to identify the Russian people with a messianic mission to save decadent Europe--and the whole of humanity.[596] It was something outside of himself to which he could feel a sense of belonging.

The "conversion" to Communism, which Gide likened to conversion to Catholicism, was probably "natural," given the general trend of his writing up to that point.[597] It gave him a definite goal, a full future of certain

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[594]Charles A. Micaud, Communism and the French Left (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 57; Rühle, p. 347.

[595]G. W. Ireland, Gide (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), pp. 75-76 (hereafter referred to as Ireland, Gide).

[596]Brachfeld, pp. 87-88.

[597]Gide, Journals, III, p. 276; Samuel Putnam, "André Gide and Communism," Partisan Review, I, No. 5 (November-December, 1934), 31.

attainment rather than the end of a journey, such as that of Urien or El Hadj, that led nowhere. He wrote:

> To cease advancing aimlessly and to head toward something . . . what an indescribable satisfaction! But was I not won over to the party even before it was formed and formulated its doctrines? . . . Emotionally, temperamentally, intellectually, I have always been a communist.[598]

Now in the strictest sense, even with Gide's assurances, this statement is hardly true and need not be taken to be. His earlier radical individualism is in at least partial contrast to his subservience to the Party under Communism. But it is safe to say that given the structure of his vision of reality up to that time, his conversion to Communism was at least a logical though not inevitable, step.

The greatest change in his thinking stemmed probably from the fact that what he had heretofore regarded as individual-moral questions became social questions. The change was more significant in terms of the programmatic implications of this shift of focus than in the thought that directed it. By making the problems social rather than exclusively individual, he had almost by definition become a political writer of sorts.

Gide's Idea of the Future Under Communism

Gide's formal conversion to Communism forced upon him the need to relate his earlier thought to the various

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[598] Ibid., III, p. 225; see also Ibid., III, p. 237.

categories of Marxist ideology. He was already abnormally introspective, and the process of bringing his previous ideas into agreement with those of the Party was one that came naturally to him.

In rethinking the interrelated aspects of progress, history, God, and the future, he did not reject any of his previous notions. The relationship between political theory and the practice of actual politics was the only new category of thought for him, but this may be viewed from the perspective of a logical "working-out" of the previously articulated paradigm of his thought. This is consistent with the idea of the full future paradigm, as it has been discussed throughout this study. When his ideas on these subjects are contrasted with his earlier observations, the similarity is such that his association with the Party is more suggestive of continuity than of a radical break with the past.[599]

One of the first tasks that Gide had to accomplish was the linking of Russia to the broad idea of social, cumulative progress. The way here had been paved in no small part by the influence that Dostoevsky had come to exercise on Gide. On the ideas of the great Russian writer, Gide

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[599]This interpretation of Gide differs from that of R. H. S. Crossman's introduction to The God That Failed. Crossman sees Gide's affiliation with Communism as a radical break with what he called Gide's "supreme individualism."

exclaimed, "I have made them my own."[600] Among these, Gide cited the opinion that "in Russia, by the very nature of her mission, Europe will be consummated."[601] In the Russia of Dostoevsky's novels, Gide reconstructed an imaginary world of "common brotherhood between all classes. . . . Homes are transformed into hostelries, the stranger of yesterday becomes the honored guest of today."[602] Without ever having traveled to the Soviet Union, there can be no doubt that Gide had formed a very romanticized vision of it. It was a land that he had in effect constructed from his neurotic imagination, and he probably recognized, with more honesty than he was aware of, the relationship between his dream of reality and reality itself: "I know that somewhere my vague desires are being organized and that my dream is on the way to becoming reality."[603]

The French Communist Party of the 1920s and 1930s gave the appearance of internationalism at a time when the Third Republic appeared to have all but collapsed. As such, it is important to keep in mind the chaos of French politics at the time in which Communism made its claim on the allegiance of so many French intellectuals. Only Russia seemed

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[600] Gide, Dostoevsky, p. 45.

[601] Ibid., p. 31; Gide also ominously approved Dostoevsky's observation that "the Russian wanderer has need of world-wide happiness in order to find peace himself." Ibid., p. 32.

[602] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[603] Gide, Journals, III, p. 237; Putnam, pp. 32-33.

to be meeting the menace of Fascism, and Gide considered this to be one of the primary practical reasons for supporting Russia. "In the abominable distress of the present world," he wrote, "new Russia's plan now seems to me salvation."[604] Hence, his defense of the Soviet Union was, paradoxically, that it brought a semblance of order to a world where authority had collapsed.

That this involved sacrifice was taken for granted; the first casualty was liberty. "Tolerance is no longer fitting today," he wrote.[605] Ironically, perhaps, this lack of freedom and tolerance in Russia was the only characteristic of Fascism which he approved, and, more perceptively than many of his contemporaries, he perceived a link between the two ideologies that many considered to be at opposite ends of the political spectrum:

> The notion of liberty, as it taught to us, seems to me singularly false and pernicious. And if I approve the Soviet constraint, I must likewise approve the Fascist discipline. I am more and more inclined to believe that the idea of liberty is but a snare.[606]

The Russian experiment seemed to Gide to offer a total critique of the very institutions and structures of society which he had opposed all his life. The "new man" who existed beyond good and evil was in the process of

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[604] Ibid., III, p. 232.

[605] Ibid., III, p. 50.

[606] Ibid., III, p. 196.

creation in Russia, and for Russia he felt the strongest affection. It was not only Russia's complete reform of systems of production, "but also of the very people and their mentality" that appealed to him.[607]

In 1931, he wrote:

> I should like to cry aloud my affection for Russia; and that my cry should be heard. . . . I should like to live long enough to see the success of that tremendous effort; its realization . . . to see what can be produced by a state without religion, a society without the family. Religion and the family are the two worst enemies of progress.[608]

The total critique of past and present society which the Russian Revolution explicitly articulated in its actions and ideology gave Gide the illusion of progress from the decadent past toward a more perfect future. The central role of Russia in the Communist movement linked it not only to the idea of progress, but to the entire tradition of Marxism as well.

It was after his association with the Party that Gide began to propose systematically the notion of social progress as a cumulative evolutionary process. Because of its progressive character, the Russian Revolution had gone beyond the class-dominated ethics of bourgeois society, beyond "good" and "evil," and therefore it could not be

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[607] Ibid., III, p. 219. He wrote in this regard, "The rather narrow wish for a comfortable victory of 'good' over 'evil' has lamentably retarded the progress of humanity." Ibid., III, p. 60.

[608] Ibid., III, pp. 179-180.

criticized by those unfortunate persons who had not yet achieved this new level of sophistication. He wrote:

> The idea of humanity's progress which now dominates my life leads me to see that the idea of the good invites to stagnation, to sleep. I believe that often evil has greater educative and initiatory value than what you call good.[609]

To progress meant to give up the corruptive influence of false choices implied by the very terms "good" and "evil" in traditional society. "What invites humanity to progress," he wrote, "is precisely not to consider itself as an end, but rather as a means through which to achieve and realize something."[610] Any dilemma of choice between ends and means implied a problem of choice between good and evil, but the Party had taken ethics beyond the necessity of choice. This, as Gide interpreted it, was what Nietzsche had had in mind in his construction of the new morality after the "death of God." Indeed, Nietzsche took on increased stature for Gide, as the true prophet of progress with the subsequent development of the Russian Revolution. No social progress could occur, after all, if men were continually to be presented with problems of moral choice between good and evil. Therefore, such inequities were to be eliminated by declaration.

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[609] Ibid., III, p. 78. This passage was written after Gide had read Belgion's critique of him. Generally impressed by Belgion's scholarship, he took issue with the philosophical foundations of the work, its opposition to the entire mode of social progress that Gide defended.

[610] Ibid., III, p. 79.

One of the intellectual problems that Gide had to surmount if he was to become a successful convert to Communism was his lack of historical sense. He had little sense of historical consciousness, a fact that his defense of progress reveals. The idea of progress for Gide was more in the nature of religious faith than was his approach to the pseudo-scientific speculations of Marxism. Gide did not even attempt to buttress his idea of progress with that of Marxism. Indeed, given the historicized world view of Marxism and Gide's attachment to the Party and its official doctrine, it is interesting to note the degree to which he wholly rejected history, even as a point for debate. Only when the true anti-historical basis of Marx's world view--the rejection of past experiences as a reliable guide to future reality--is recalled, does Gide's attitude begin to make sense. The entire intellectual structuring of the full future paradigm had already destroyed at its roots any concept of history as a realm of experience. He wrote, "Since when has the experience of history been of any use?" The future does not repeat the past and the best lesson of history is to forget it--"everything must be questioned anew and . . . nothing solid can be built on these rotten props" of the past.[611]

Within the context of the chaos of the Third

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[611] Ibid., III, pp. 283, 196.

Republic in its confrontation with the rise of Nazi Germany, Gide saw Fascism as an attempt to perpetuate the past in the face of the promise of the future as represented by the Soviet Union. It was in Fascism, from this perspective, that all of the inequities, injustices, and ignorances of the past became fully manifest. As Gide put it:

> Fascism strikes me as a return to the past, whereas the Soviets seem a tremendous effort toward the future. That costly experience interests humanity as a whole and may liberate it from a frightful weight.[612]

He viewed not only Fascism as reactionary, but any and all opposition to Russia and the Party, on any grounds. The world of the 1920s and 1930s, so it seemed, had divided into two camps with no middle ground between them; one was either for or against the Party and all that it stood for. There could be no compromise.

Gide's depreciation of the past is neatly symbolized in two works of this period, Oedipus and Fruits of the Earth. Oedipus believes himself to be a bastard, a man without a past. When in his youth he mistakenly thought that he had a past, he tried to conform to it. The break with the past has been a revelation that has transformed his every action and makes him the king that he is when the play begins:

> Attentive to the lesson of the past, I looked only to yesterday for approval and advice. Then suddenly

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[612] Ibid., III, p. 197.

> the thread was broken. I had gushed up from the unknown; no longer any past, no longer any father's example, nothing to lean on any more; everything to be built anew . . . all to be invented.[613]

His tragedy, of course, is that he does not escape his past; and this may be taken as a sign that Gide never believed that the past could be escaped entirely.[614] But his heart and sympathies, not to say his every instinct, were on the side of Oedipus. It was possible, Gide believed, to reject the past, but he was realistic enough to know that it could not be escaped--and, to his mind, there was a difference. Much of the past survived in the present; and although the foundations of the new future were being laid by the Party, Gide did not believe that the future had been completed yet. As Oedipus again put it:

> Be persuaded that humanity is beyond question much further from its goal, which we cannot yet glimpse, than from its point of departure. . . . Whatever it is, it lies before us. I can picture the time, far distant from our own, when the earth will be peopled by a race of men . . . who will look back on our civilization of today as we ourselves look back upon the condition of men at the beginning of his slow progress.[615]

This statement implies that Gide did not imagine the future heaven on earth to be imminent; but if we recall that the historical setting of Oedipus was fifth century Athens, the

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[613] Gide, Oedipus, p. 25.

[614] He wrote in his Journal at about this time, "It is absurd to try to condemn, in the name of the future, all the past." In Gide, Journals, III, p. 226.

[615] Gide, Oedipus, p. 37.

future that Oedipus foresaw well may be interpreted as the 1930s. At any rate, the notion of an imminent future within the ideology of the Russian Revolution is completely compatible with the rest of Gide's writing during this period.

The 1935 version of Fruits of the Earth shows a complete rejection of the past, but a wistful note of nostalgia does occasionally surface. The rejected past is an idealized past, a sort of "golden prologue" to the future. As Gide put it:

> I am in bondage to my past. Not a gesture to-day but was determined by what I was yesterday. . . . Oh! to weigh anchor, bound for the wildest adventure. . . . And that it should be without consequence for the future.[616]

Gide gave up his past with a certain resignation; his action appeared to be much like an arduous duty taken up with a strong sense of moral commitment. In the closing lines, he wrote:

> I know best of all that one can only go forward by pushing the past behind one. We are told that Lot's wife, because she looked behind her, was changed into a pillar of salt. . . . Turning toward the future, Lot then lies with his daughters. So be it![617]

It was one of the interesting characteristics of Gide during his Communist interlude that as intensely

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[616]André Gide, Fruits of the Earth, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 184. The original edition of this work appeared in 1897, and the 1935 version varies slightly from it. The earlier version was even more hedonistic and present-oriented than the latter, which reflected Gide's maturity and increased preoccupation with the idea of the future.

[617]Ibid., p. 255; Ireland, pp. 120-142.

personal as his writing had been to him, he was prepared to renounce it all if it did not meet with Party approval; if the future meant even a rejection of his own past in his writings, "so be it!" To turn back to the excessive individualism of his earlier works, he thought, would be to repeat the mistake of Lot's wife. It was a sacrifice, but one which he willingly imposed upon himself.[618]

Gide and the Relation of Theory to Practice

Apparently, André Gide read very little of the theoretical treatises that comprised the Communist tradition--the primary works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.[619] The little contact he did have with them left no permanent mark on his thought. It appears instead that his adaptation of Marxist symbolism was acquired through association with the Party and the sort of informal contacts that it fostered. He was quite right in his own way, probably, when he wrote that "what leads me to Communism is not Marx, it is the Gospel."[620]

Throughout his affiliation with Communism, he

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[618] Gide, Journals, III, pp. 243, 252; see also the insightful observations of Gide himself on this matter, as recorded in a conversation by Klaus Mann, in Mann, p. 256.

[619] In 1937, after his severance from the Party, Gide jotted down his first recorded reflections on the actual writings of Marx and Lenin. He generally found them to be "if not irrational, at least artificial." In Journals, III, pp. 375-376.

[620] Ibid., III, p. 276.

resisted formal membership in the Party and its numerous front organizations.[621] The exact reasons for this are obscure, but the essential fact is that they did not prevent the strongest possible emotional attachment to the Party on his part. He was a member in every respect that mattered. His own emphatic defense of Russia, without formal Party membership, was enough to cause him to be expelled, in an unprecedented move, from the Royal Society of Literature in England. Certainly everyone at the time, within the Party and outside its membership, considered him to be a Communist. In his own way, Gide, too, considered himself to be a member.

Gide's defense of the Soviet Union during this period was so emphatic that some persons, then and ever since, have interpreted it as an attempt to bolster his own misgivings.[622] Although this is probably somewhat true, a broad survey of Gide's writing from the 1890s onward suggests that his capacity to construct second realities from his imagination and to treat them as if they were real was sufficiently strong to render self-deception an ingrained habit. The sophisms and paradoxes with which Gide defended Communism were no more fantastic than the carefully worked-out defenses of his earlier literary theories.[623] Long

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[621] Ibid., III, pp. 237, 250.

[622] Ireland, Gide, p. 74.

[623] Brachfeld, passim.

before he harbored any doubts about Communism or Russia, he recorded in his Journal that on the question of Truth in the Party, "one must first convince oneself of this: whatever one thinks and says that does not go in their direction, that is not in close conformity with what they know in advance to be the Truth, will in advance be considered an error."[624] Gide was quite capable of the mental gymnastics necessary to accept this axiom.

The paralysis of the Third Republic in the face of threats from within and outside of France brought to the fore an intellectual crisis of the first order for Gide--the problem of action. Gide had remained aloof all his life, in a splendid physical isolation from the social problems besetting France. All real problems for him were essentially intellectual problems of one sort or another. Gide's commitment to the Party was a gesture similar to that of his character Lafcadio, who had murdered a man as a "gratuitous act," simply to prove that he could act.[625] Therefore, Gide's sometimes pained attempts to reconcile theory and practice in Marxism were all the more tortured because he had arrived at the theory first and the practice later. (It should be remembered that the sequence had been the same, actually, for Marx and Lenin.) The Party, imperfect though

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[624] Gide, Journals, III, p. 275.

[625] Putnam, pp. 31-32.

it was, was the only tangible political mechanism which was attempting to implement in hard practice the symbols of reality that Gide had taken seriously all his life. His inability to differentiate second from first realities helped make him a perfect tool for the Party.

To begin with, Gide believed that he could stand simultaneously on the side of Christ and Russia. The Soviet attacks on Christianity did not disturb him because the church as an organized body was a reactionary force in the world. Christ, within the context of the Death of God theology, was Himself in opposition to God and religion. Gide saw no contradiction, therefore, between his loyalty to Christ and the statement that "only atheism can pacify the world today."[626] The reconciliation of an elitist notion of individualism with the collectivist ideologies of the Party provided no real hurdle here. As he put it:

> My thesis has always been this: that it is by being the most himself that each individual best serves the community. Another proposition may now be added. . . . It is in a Communist society that each individual--what is most individual in him--may find the fullest and freest development.[627]

His attitude was further maintained by the subtle use of sophisms to explain his definitions of the terms he used; he wrote, ". . . for instance, individualism and communism

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[626]Gide, Journals, III, pp. 231, 236.

[627]André Gide, "Literature and Society," Partisan Review, II, No. 9 (October-November, 1935), 33 (hereafter referred to as Gide, PR).

. . . these words have but the meaning I attribute to them. This is what allows me to reconcile individualism and communism."[628] Gide maintained this idea in the face of collectivism by looking at the present from the perspective of total fulfillment in the future.[629] By treating the future as an object of knowledge, in which the inequities of the present were to be resolved somehow, he found it possible to treat collectivism as if it were advancing a principle of individualism.

The fulfillment of each individual in society, within historical time, was a conscious transformation by Gide of the Augustinean symbolism of perfection in the City of God beyond time. "I like to dream of, I cannot help longing for, a state of society," wrote Gide, "in which happiness shall be the common property of all."[630] And this dream would be transformed into reality by the youth of Russia and the world. They were starting out fresh, in a new society in which all traces of the past were either gone or in transition. The revolution was comparable to the rise of Christianity in the past, with the exception that the religion now would be true to its own idealistic premises:

> It is as a religion that the Communist doctrine exalts and finds the enthusiasm of the young today.

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[628] Gide, Journals, III, p. 274.

[629] Nersoyan, p. viii.

[630] Gide, PR, 40.

> Their very action implies a belief; and if they transfer their ideal from heaven to earth, as I do with them, it is none the less in the name of an ideal that they struggle.[631]

This conscious distortion of one of the major symbols of Western thought, the dualism of Augustine's Civitas Dei and Civitas Terrena, is one of the most important aspects of the full future paradigm in Gide's thought. It is implied throughout his work, but nowhere is it more explicit than in this statement. It is also interesting to note in passing that although he probably was not familiar with Joachim of Fiore, Gide agreed with him regarding the vital role of "youth" in accomplishing this heaven on earth.[632] As late as 1936, when everything else about his faith in Russia was beginning to crumble, he continued to consider the most pleasing aspect of the Russian experiment to be "the youth of the Russian people."[633]

Gide, and most other French Communists, assumed that when Communism did come to France, the worst excesses of the Russian Revolution would not be repeated.[634] They held the paradoxical belief that although history was to be rejected as a source of meaningful experience, they could learn from it in instances of this sort. But because the

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[631] Gide, Journals, III, pp. 281, 242.

[632] Supra; Chapter I, Footnote 23, discusses this aspect in Joachim.

[633] Ibid., III, p. 242.

[634] Ibid., III, pp. 256-257.

future was imagined to be not merely an extension of past errors, they concluded, significantly, that it would differ radically from the present and the past. There was no need to consider the possibility that manifest limitations of human nature would reappear in the future.

Gide's statement in this connection, "let the dead bury their dead," had a double meaning with more irony in it than he then realized.[635]

> I can still wish for communism while still reproving the frightful means . . . for obtaining it. The "whoever accepts the end accepts the means" . . . still puts my heart very ill at ease. . . . I am glad that in Russia at least that sorry chore is done, that at least that is in the past and there is no need to repeat it. Whoever looks back, like Lot's wife . . . runs the risk of being changed into a statue of tears.[636]

Although the crimes of the Revolution troubled him considerably, Gide did not yet look back.

The problem of ends and means in the theory and practice of Communism was a major problem for Gide and one upon which he dwelled for some time. His answer was consistent with his Romantic notions of "good" and "evil" as ethical problems. In Oedipus, he gave his most articulate answer, although he had made the same points elsewhere. The character Oedipus asks, "How can we hope to attain what

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[635] Ibid., III, p. 118.

[636] Ibid., III, p. 202; much earlier he had written, "Often a superior good is obtained only at the cost of a particular injury." In Ibid., II, p. 228.

is good while doing what is evil?"[637] And the answer is unequivocal. What society calls "good" and "evil" are merely "words," with no objective meaning beyond that which people have given them. For Gide, there was no question, then, of innate morality. Therefore, the conventional reaction to Communist revolutions from the perspective of bourgeois society only reflected the class biases of the "reactionaries." The Russian Revolution, from Gide's perspective, had carried mankind beyond good and evil onto a higher plane of existence. "I foresee a time," Gide prophesied, "when ethical problems will interest only a few timid souls."[638] For Oedipus, who was able to act as if he were God, no problem of choice existed to suggest that any moral dilemma could be posed by choice itself. That Oedipus failed because he had not yet become God-like should not obscure the fact that twenty-five centuries later, in the 1930s, Gide was fully prepared to accept the actions of a revolutionary movement which he clearly saw to represent God-like behavior. As a Communist, he was willing to behave as if the day of the "overmen" had arrived.

Perhaps nowhere were the corrupting influences of the Party more apparent on Gide's thought than in this general area of theory and practice. Whereas previously he

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[637] Gide, Oedipus, p. 29; Brachfeld, p. 116.

[638] Gide, Journals, III, p. 216.

had exalted "sincerity" as the most noble of individual virtues, under the impact of Communism he wrote that "there are dangerous truths and useful lies" to be used in describing the Soviet Union.[639] Sincerity, or even ordinary honesty, were no longer associated with revolutionary morality. Instead, "consistency" became the byword for intellectual integrity. He had become influenced by some of this in his treatment of Dostoevsky when he wrote, "His great dread was no longer insincerity, but inconsistency."[640] This was the one great problem in Gide's association with the Party. In virtually every area of ideology he could easily fit his own notions into Marxism with a reasonable congruency; the ideas of his early and middle years meshed with those of Marxist ideology. But the fetish he made of sincerity was what proved in the end to lead to his rejection of the Party. He could not pretend forever that the future he had seen in his "primary vision" had arrived.

Gide's Separation from the Party

Exactly when Gide broke with the Party is a matter of some conjecture. Because he never held formal membership, the break must be assumed to have been as much psychological as it was overt. Beginning in 1934, Gide's Journal was

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[639] Ibid., III, p. 233.

[640] Gide, Dostoevsky, p. 48.

strangely devoid of references to communism in any form; this silence contrasted strongly with the period from 1929-1933, when Marxism was an obsession with him.

In 1935, he was invited to tour the Soviet Union and to observe first-hand the achievements of the Revolution. He accepted the offer, and his subsequent journey marked a turning point as dramatic as any in his life. When he returned and published his travel account in 1936, the result was what may be described accurately as his separation from the Party in a formal sense.

Gide undertook this trip in the same spirit with which he had traveled to the Congo some ten years earlier, but he did not expect to find the same sort of conditions.[641] To his mind, the people of Dostoevsky's novels were the real Russians--the ones he expected to find there after the Revolution.[642] The shock of what he saw must have been all the greater because he had expected to find the beginning of a "new man."[643] The Soviet Union, he said, had "deceived

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[641]Gide, Journals, IV, p. 251.

[642]Brachfeld, p. 88.

[643]Gide's reception in Moscow is well treated in Victor Serge, Destiny of a Revolution, trans. Max Shachtman (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 57. In The Case of Comrade Tulayev, Serge presents a satirized version of Gide as Professor Passereau, a fellow-traveler of the Party living in a dream world without the slightest awareness of what was happening around him in Moscow. See also Mann, pp. 257-270.

our fondest hopes."[644] It was not the appalling destruction of human life that called down his condemnation, but its failure, significantly, to build his dream world.

Instead of a sort of communal anarchy, Gide found an oppressive bureaucracy. It was composed, as he put it, of a "new class" which had all the privileges of the dispossessed bourgeois while the workers still had nothing. The dictatorship of the proletariat had not come to pass; instead, "a dictatorship of the Soviet Bureaucracy" ruled the new Russia.[645] This experience left Gide with a sense of guilt, because he was treated with privilege in the "workers' paradise": "These very favors constantly brought to mind privileges," he wrote; "Differences where I had hoped to find equality."[646] The Revolution had been intended to bring equality, and, he had thought, the disappearance of the state as an institution; for how else could equality be attained except in the absence of social hierarchies? He wrote:

> To feel that one is no longer being exploited is immense, but to realize that one is still being exploited, and not to know by whom, to find no one at whose door to lay one's wretchedness, no one to accuse! . . . is the very acme of horror.[647]

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[644]Gide, quoted in Crossman, p. 195.

[645]Ibid., pp. 182-184.

[646]Andre Gide, Afterthoughts: A Sequel to Back from the U.S.S.R. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., n.d.), p. 60 (hereafter referred to as Gide, Afterthoughts).

[647]Ibid., p. 44.

The bureaucracy spawned the mediocrity that became one of the main characteristics of Soviet society. "From head to foot of the reformed social ladder, the most favored are the most servile, the most cowardly, the most cringing, the basest."[648] The reality of what he saw brought him back to the primary virtue of "insincerity." "It is to the Truth that I am attached," he said; "And if the Party abandons it, then I abandon the Party."[649]

As Gide witnessed it, the truth was that the orthodoxy of ideas was oppressive of the realization of his dream of the future. "I did not escape from the authority of Aristotle or St. Paul to fall under theirs," he wrote.[650] He explained:

> . . . It is essential to see things as they <u>are</u> and not as we should have liked them to be. The U.S.S.R. is not what we had hoped it would be, what it still strives to appear. It has betrayed all our hopes. If we cannot resign ourselves to losing them altogether, we must place them elsewhere.[651]

Far from being an intellectual bastion against Fascism, the Party in fact had become a part of the same phenomenon:

> Three quarters of the Italian inscriptions would be just as suitable to the walls of Moscow. . . .

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[648] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 34.

[649] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 70.

[650] Gide, <u>Journals</u>, III, p. 281.

[651] Gide, <u>Afterthoughts</u>, p. 71.

> Historians of the future will examine how and why, the end disappearing behind the means, the Communist ceased to be opposed to the Fascist spirit, and even to be differentiated from it.[652]

As was to be expected, a public disavowal of the Party by so prominent a writer as Gide brought instant response from the French Left. Their criticism was predictably harsh, and Gide went quickly from revolutionary to reactionary in their evaluation of him. His response was mild by comparison, but not without its own sting. "It is in the heart of the fruit that the worm lies hidden. But when I told you that the apple was worm-eaten, you accused me of . . . not liking apples."[653] What the French Communists overlooked in Russia, Gide pointed out, was the fact that they were being "misled, deceived, and lied to" without their being aware of it.[654] It was the insincerity of the Party, as much as its deformed product, that Gide deplored. The Left, as he correctly perceived, had made his own mistake of confusing the dream with the reality.

Epilogue

Although he left the Party, Gide never abandoned his faith in that same vision of the future that had originally inspired his affiliation. He had been wrong to embrace

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[652] Gide, Journals, III, pp. 358-359.

[653] Gide, Afterthoughts, p. 7.

[654] Ibid., p. 29.

the Party, he wrote, but he had done so for the right reasons: "The U.S.S.R. really did something. Despite the present ebbtide, something will remain of it. . . . I feel a brother . . . to those who leave Communism through love."[655] Russia had made progress, he believed firmly; and in 1951, shortly before his death, he reiterated his belief that the Soviet Union was "a system of unification much closer to 'perfection' . . . than the capitalist system in the U.S.A. at present."[656] Russia was still, he said repeatedly, a youthful member of the family of nations--and the hope of the future rested with youth.[657]

Disillusionment with the Communist Revolution caused Gide once again to return to his lifelong habit of turning inward on himself. He retreated from activist politics back into the comfortable aloofness from society that had characterized his younger days. To outsiders he gave the impression of serenity in old age; but a large part of the outward calm simply may have been fatigue following his activist ordeal. He concentrated, during these later years, on his Journals, which became increasingly important to him, but the political struggles of the emerging Cold War were barely

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[655]Gide, Journals, III, pp. 177-178.

[656]André Gide, "Two Declarations by André Gide," Partisan Review, XVIII, No. 4 (July-August, 1951), p. 400; see also Gide's statement in Mann, p. 320.

[657]André Gide, Imaginary Interviews, trans. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), passim.

reflected in these later Journals and published writings.

His continued faith in the eventual success of the Russian Revolution never wavered; however, it appears that he no loner considered heaven on earth to be imminent. Now it lay far into the future. In effect, his perception of the future shifted slightly to a more elongated time span. Although the change did not affect the basic structure of his thought, it did affect his behavior toward the world around him. He no longer acted as if the future had come; he resigned himself instead to the role of an Oedipus who must accept present constraints even while he knows that the future will hold none. In an interview during World War II, Gide offered his conclusion about the present and his hope for the future in the form of a question:

> How can one despise or hate man for what he is, when he is still in the process of becoming?[658]

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[658]Gide, quoted in Mann, p. 322.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE:

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE MODERN IDEA OF THE FUTURE

Of all the characteristics that differentiate the classical mind from modern thought, none is more dramatic than the disappearance of God from the modern world view. The decline of the importance attached to institutionalized religion may be noted as an indication of this phenomenon. As Nietzsche so boldly pointed out, this has been an event with the most far-reaching meaning and consequences. In theories about the social and political order, the most important of these consequences appears to be the demonstrated inability of secularized intellectuals to distinguish properly between concepts which properly belong to the sphere of religious faith and other problems which may be approached as subjects that potentially, at least, are knowable partly through reason. In the spiritual and intellectual confusion that has appeared since the "death of God," reason itself has been one of the first and most distinguished casualties. It should not be surprising, then, that the peculiarly modern approach to the future as an object of knowledge should reflect the confusion of so much of contemporary thought.

It seems reasonably safe to conclude at this point that the paradigmatic characteristics of modern theories of political and social reality have served primarily to increase the complexity of the confusion. The reasons for this, too, are complex, but they can be described basically. As Kuhn has brilliantly argued, that which we call "scientific knowledge" of itself is not cumulative despite the assumption to the contrary that social scientists and physical scientists have tended to hold. At least this knowledge is not cumulative in the sense that it represents progress from a primitive, prescientific period to a modern, scientific era in which the most recent explanation is necessarily defined as the "best." Rather, what Kuhn calls the "normal development of science" is one in which paradigm workers devote their time to the articulation of the built-in assumptions of the paradigm itself. This process continues until a problem, an "anomality" as Kuhn terms it, occurs for which the paradigm offers no explanation; a new paradigm then is structured to replace the old one, and a "scientific" explanation of the transformation is offered.

In the area of political theory as a paradigm, this same sort of process seems to hold, as it does for the more precise, "hard" sciences. But an important reservation with respect to political, as well as scientific, paradigms must be made. Absolutely no <u>a priori</u> reason exists to support the contention that a new paradigm is in any sense superior

to the old. In fact, if the paradigm changes because relevant questions change rather than because unsatisfactory answers have been supplied by the older paradigm, the new structure may be considerably inferior to the older in its ability to explain certain phenomena subsumed within it. The result in this instance may be a genuine loss of scientific knowledge rather than the assumed gain.

At any particular point in history it must be held open as a possibility that the thinkers of that era may know less about certain things than did those who lived at an earlier time. One of the most obvious corollaries of Kuhn's thesis is its lack of support for any theories of scientific or intellectual progress of the human species as a whole.

Especially important for the viability of social and political theories is the necessity that as paradigms for the ordering of reality, they themselves have some substantive basis in that reality. If a paradigm is built upon faulty premises, it follows logically that the paradigm's articulation will be faulty in like manner. This is not to say that the articulation of a paradigm will not be rational, "given" its basic assumptions; but therein lies the fault. The very rationality of the articulation may appear to reflect madness if the paradigm itself makes no sense. An excellent example of this is Marx's postulation of a future classless society--the City of God on earth as

Augustine would have understood the symbolism. When this notion of the perfectibility of society and man in it is considered a "given," within the context of the entire future process treated as an object of knowledge, then the rationality of a Gletkin becomes unassailable. His methods appear sensible to the paradigm worker who accepts the end toward which he is working, even if the paradigm worker is Rubashov, Gletkin's victim.

To the outsider, Gletkin's rationality is a manifestation of insanity. But this is a mass insanity, which is difficult to detect because neurosis or insanity has come to be defined too often merely as a deviation from a statistical norm; under these conditions, madness has become the norm, and the entire cognitive relationship between a person and reality has become reversed in a nightmare environment. The aura of unreality that surrounds a figure such as Gletkin is all the more terrifying because he is not a dream, but an accurate representation of reality.

A rational critique of the means Gletkin is using to arrive at the end to which he is committed must view the basic paradigm of a "full future" from outside its confines in order to question both the end itself and the tendency to treat the future as if it can be known in advance. As Eric Voegelin has emphasized, things are not things nor do they have essences by arbitrary declaration. Things must be objects of knowledge because they exist in reality;

otherwise, they can be treated rationally only as objects of faith.

The overarching pervasiveness of the modern idea of the "full future paradigm" has intensified the difficulties inherent in approaches to the dilemma of ends and means in politics. In the final analysis, the means of political action can be truly rational only if the end itself is also rational. Neither Koestler, nor Gide in particular, have been able to make that final and most telling criticism of Communism in Russia, because they have not abandoned the precepts of the full future paradigm that anticipates a heaven on earth. Thus, their criticisms, however well-defined they are in detail, never arrive at the essence of the dilemma. In spite of their every experience to the contrary, they continue to believe, with the exception, perhaps, of Silone, that it is possible to build some sort of a Civitas Dei here and now.[659]

This raises the question of their inability to learn from experience in any but the most peripheral way. Here, again, the answer appears to refer back to some of

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[659]Some lines from T. S. Eliot are relevant here:

> Between the idea
> And the reality
> Between the motion
> And the act
> Falls the Shadow . . .

See T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," T. S. Eliot: Collected Poems, 1909-1962 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), pp. 81-82.

the characteristics of any sort of paradigm. The full future paradigm has tended to take for granted the idea that knowledge of whatever kind is propositional--that is, mathematical, rather than experiential, or historical. There is a built-in assumption that history as a realm of experience is no longer valid. It is not entirely by coincidence that Descartes, a central figure in the development of the epistemological assumptions regarding the full future paradigm, was also one of the most distinguished mathematical thinkers of his day.

The refusal even to consider history as a meaningful source of experience has resulted in a sort of inverted fundamentalism that has helped to destroy the idea of science as an open-minded inquiry into reality--admittedly an idea that may be observed more in the exception than the rule. A declaration in advance that no facts will be considered which conflict with a priori judgments, although it is consistent with Kuhn's definition of a scientific paradigm, is hardly a habit of mind that will enable the social and political theorist to learn from experience. No possible way exists, probably, for Koestler and Gide to learn from experience unless they are first of all to reject a paradigm that excludes the experience of history from its assumptions.

The problem of the future as a concept, as stated in Chapter I, is not whether men think about it, but "how"

they think about it. As Reinhold Niebuhr has said:

> Since it is man's nature to be emancipated of the tyranny of the immediate present and to transcend the process of nature in which he is involved, he cannot exist without having his eyes upon the future. The future is the symbol of his freedom.[660]

It is in the nature of things, then, that men should look toward the future for the fulfillment of life. But it does not follow from this observation that any future fulfillment is known in advance or is known to be a part of earthly experience. This is why Augustine placed the destiny of man beyond the state and civil society while he treated the Christian fulfillment of the meaning of life in the City of God as an object of faith. God could know the certainty of men's future, but men themselves could not. What men called "knowledge" of the City of God was a faith in the truth of the word of God as they had received it in Scripture.

Now, because, in the Western religious tradition, only God can "know" the future, it should not strike us as surprising that most of those persons who have treated the future as an object of knowledge also imagine themselves to be becoming a god, or at the very least, proclaim that God is dead. The paradigm of a full and knowable future would make less sense than it does if they failed to take this final step in the articulation of the paradigm.

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[660]Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 305.

The errors that follow from treating the idea of a specific future as if it were an object of knowledge could be avoided more easily if the relationship between subject and object that Aristotle and Aquinas articulated were kept in mind. When subject and object are merged into a single entity, or when the epistemological distinctions between them are not kept clearly separate, the tendency to confuse the first realities of experience with the second realities of imagination becomes more pronounced. The entire problem of human experience cannot be dealt with adequately unless this separation is kept clearly in mind. For the very term "human experience" implies on the one hand a subject and on the other hand an object. Meaningful statements about the human condition must be able to generalize from experiences that are necessarily unique or the statements cease to be meaningful. A rational exploration of anything in the human condition which is expected to result in knowledge, however partial that knowledge may be, cannot avoid making this distinction. As writers, therefore, Koestler, Silone, and Gide must lead their readers into a conscious exploration of this relationship between subject and object in human experience or their work will lose the basis of its meaning in a confusion of first and second realities. They must be aware that the real structure of social reality is something independent of their imagination.

The nature of the full future paradigm within the context of Marxist ideology is highlighted most clearly in these authors by their inability to explore fully the human experience of political reality as interpreted by the basic paradigm itself. Lacking a clear conception of the differences between first and second realities, they were unable to resolve the dilemma of ends and means. This would appear to be because their conception of political ethics was based on a specific notion of the future--in this case, some sort of vague notion of the perfectibility of political institutions. As R. H. S. Crossman has proposed in his introduction to The God That Failed, their decision to join or to become affiliated with the Party was a moral decision, an ethical choice among competing values.[661]

Conversion to Marxism appeared to give support to their values because its futuristic element seemed to offer assurance that their actions made sense in a transcendent and teleological scheme. They were sensitive to the changes in the Western world view as reflections of a decadence that accompanied the changes. When the authors turned to Communism, it was with the expectation that the new ideology would overcome the prevailing decadence and form a rejuvenated society built on entirely new moral foundations--a humanistic morality necessitated (except for Silone) by the death of God.

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[661]Crossman, p. 3.

All of this is mentioned here because it is crucial to any understanding of the dilemmas of modern moral philosophy, especially as it specifically relates to political action. Marxism has been described in this paper as a "latent nihilism" because its nihilism is not obvious at first, as witness the reasons why Koestler, Silone, and Gide became converts to Communism. That the reality of its underlying nihilism is a fact may also be observed in these writers by their rejection of the reality spawned by its implementation.

The question then may be raised, what does this nihilism have to do with the "full future paradigm?" The answer appears to be that any value structure which is not a negation of values--pure nihilism--must be grounded on some conception of a teleological purpose of man's situation in society and perhaps for history as a whole. Both Aristotle and Augustine, as representative examples, understood this; and their ethics and moral philosophy reflected this awareness. The plight of so many modern secular intellectuals has been their entrapment in the conclusion that if God really is dead, no teleological purpose appears to exist in the process of Creation; all of life is "sound and fury, signifying nothing." As Hans Jonas has written in a similar context, it is the absence of any transcendent, teleological purpose in Nature that reveals the greater depth of modern nihilism when it is contrasted

with its classical counterparts.[662] When modern men gaze into a future without divine purpose, the immediate reaction is likely to be dread followed by an utter and abject hopelessness. Here Marxism appears, with its offer of a future of hope to those souls who find themselves adrift in modern times without ethical ballast. The Marxist conception of a known future as a substitute second reality--applicable particularly in the case of Gide--can give some comfort to those for whom God is dead.

The rejection of Marxism by the authors in its specific "means," typified by the Communist Party, is also instructive. When the end itself is built on a falsification of reality--that is, when the future is treated as a specific object of knowledge--the incongruity between the paradigm and the reality can survive, in conflict, only for a limited period of time before some persons will become aware of the falsification in their actions, if not their theories.

It was at this juncture that the latent nihilism of Marxism became manifest, in the dilemma of ends and means, to the authors considered in this study.

The Marxist future basically is not supportable in human experience; it does too much violence to our commonsense approaches to confrontations with reality. If there

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[662]Jonas, p. 339.

is a lesson here, it may be that reality external to our own subjective preferences cannot be ignored for long without serious consequences.

In conclusion, then, I echo the sentiments of Aldous Huxley in his description of a character in Point Counter Point. The analogy is appropriate in dealing with the world views of Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and André Gide.

> He wished to ignore all but here and now, to be as though he had only just entered the world and were destined to be eternal. But his memory survived, even though he never deliberately made use of it; and though the things which had been . . . were destroyed, he could not guard against chance reminders. Chance had found many gaps in his defenses . . .[663]

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[663]Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point (New York: Harper & Row, 1928), p. 145.

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