THE St. John's Review

Spring, 1984

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The St. John's Review (formerly *The College*) is published by the Office of the Dean, St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland 21404. Edwin J. Delattre, President, Samuel S. Kutler, Dean. Published thrice yearly, in the winter, spring, and summer. For those not on the distribution list, subscriptions: $12.00 yearly, $24.00 for two years, or $36.00 for three years, payable in advance. Address all correspondence to *The St. John's Review,* St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland 21404.

Volume XXXV, Number 2
Spring, 1984

ISSN 0277-4720

Composition: Fishergate Publishing Co., Inc.
Printing: The John D. Lucas Printing Co.

Errata:

In Beate Ruhm von Oppen, "Student Rebellion and the Nazis: 'The White Rose' in its Setting," *The St. John's Review.* Winter 1984:

page 4, column 1, paragraph 3, line 12, should read: of a dollar a year later:

page 4, column 2, last paragraph, line 1 should read: Life at school changed greatly . . .

page 7, column 2, paragraph 3, last line should read: officially, in international discourse.

paragraph 4, line 5 should read: he ended a long speech with a long sentence affirming

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ON THE COVER: Athens, Acropolis, The Parthenon. Gallery of The South Peristyle.

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The Inefficacy of the Good

Douglas Allanbrook

The field upon which political actions are played is one of moral desolation. If certain men or cities stand high and brilliant above this field, are remembered and praised in future generations by their countrymen or by the world, this praise, these many political encomia, almost never arise out of the goodness or true virtue of the subject; they are service rendered by words and memory to power, fame, and empire. Caesar's name lives on in the very titles of power and empire—the Kaiser, the Czar of all the Russias—while Cato's suicide is cherished in the memory of a few as a proper failure, and he himself is most marvelously enshrined on the lowest slope of Purgatory as Dante leaves Hell and begins to go up. It is apposite in this consideration to remember Thucydides' words concerning poor Nicias when his life comes to an end at the end of the Syracusan adventure, as recounted almost at the very end of Book VII of the histories. You will recall Nicias' actions against the demagogue Cleon, whom Thucydides detests, and his opposition to Alcibiades in front of the assembly which was to decide upon the Sicilian expedition. He attempted to deter the Athenians from the venture by calling to their attention the enormity of the cost and the vastness of the armaments required. Of course the effect of his speech on the assembly was the opposite of what he had expected, "for it seemed to them that he had given good advice, and that now certainly there would be abundant security."* And soon, "upon all alike there fell an ardent desire (eros) to sail." (VI-XXIV, 2-3).

*The translations of Thucydides are Charles Foster Smith's published in the Loeb Classical Library.

Douglas Allanbrook is a composer and tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis. This article was delivered as a formal lecture in Annapolis in the fall of 1983.

The Spartans in the Pylos affair knew that Nicias was for peace, and indeed the period of relative calm in the midst of the long war was known as the Peace of Nicias. He was a very rich and pious man, and it is a terrible irony that this very piety fatally delayed a possible retreat for the Athenians in the last awful month in front of Syracuse. He knew that the Spartans trusted him,

> and it was not least on that account that he trusted in Gylippus (the Spartan general) and surrendered himself to him. But it was said that some of the Syracusans were afraid, seeing that they had been in communication with him, lest, if he were subjected to torture on that account, he might make trouble for them in the midst of their success; and others, especially the Corinthians, were afraid, lest, as he was wealthy, he might by means of bribes make his escape and cause them fresh difficulties; they therefore persuaded their allies and put him to death. For this reason, then, or for a reason very near to this, Nicias was put to death—a man who, of all the Hellenes of my time, least deserved to meet with such a calamity, because of his course of life that had been wholly regulated in accordance with virtue. (VII-LXXXVI, 4-5).

Many years ago from this platform I lectured on the Spanish Civil War, and I employed a lengthy simile in an attempt to catch the nature of what was revealed in that and perhaps in all civil wars. It struck me in my younger years that the Spanish War crystallized the conscience of the age, and revealed the more enormous civil war that is the perennial fact of our political life. My simile was drawn from Geology. Our landscapes, from sea to shining sea, with their fields of grain and their snowy Rockies, have their origins in vulcanism, in eruptions, in lava flows, in revolutions and the grinding of tectonic plates. The intent of the simile was to focus the attention of students upon the gleaming surface of our

republics, empires, and cities, and to have them note how fragile, temporary, and full of illusion is any appearance of stability. The reality underneath is the force and power of human ambitions, fears, hopes, and desires for fame. In light of this simile any place that lasts for generations with both splendor and decency should be looked at with particular attention. God knows what blood was behind Rome; it still remains a fact that this empire lasted as a place of law for an enormous stretch of time. St. Paul, a Jew from Tarsus, demanded his rights as a Roman citizen, and hence was not tortured. The thousand years of the Most Serene Republic of Venice stand in front of us as a monument of probity and sagacity. It was certainly for an enormous stretch of time the best place to live and work in, and the best place to look at. It was the hub of a commercial empire, as was Athens. Both the Parthenon and St. Mark's Square are the most spendid and shining things to see and to visit. They are long-lived memorials, though the increasing pollution of time has eroded their surfaces. Can the look of them tell us of Venice's long life and Athens' brief glory? As memorials they affect us more than words, and seem to speak to something apart from both them and us, a vision of a place to be cherished. In this they resemble the funeral oration of Pericles. Thucydides, however, puts us on guard against reading too much into such appearances in the famous passage in Book I:

> For if the city of the Lacedaemonians should be deserted, and nothing should be left of it but its temples and the foundations of its other buildings, posterity would, I think, after a long lapse of time, be very loath to believe that their power was as great as their renown. (And yet they occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnesus and have the hegemony of the whole, as well as of their many allies outside; but still, as Sparta is not compactly built as a city and has not provided itself with costly temples and other edifices, but is inhabited village-fashion in the old Hellenic style, its power would appear less than it is.) Whereas, if Athens should suffer the same fate, its power would, I think, from what appeared of the city's ruins, be conjectured double what it is. (I-X, 2-3).

My geological simile came to me in the course of reading Thucydides' account of the revolution, or more properly, the civil war that occurred on Corcyra, the deeds committed in that island's internal eruption bearing every resemblance to the deeds committed in the Spanish War. In his account of the happenings on Corcyra Thucydides regards the larger more general war between Athens and Sparta as the catalyst which releases the convulsions of party and faction. Every city has within it democrats and oligarchs, but now the democrats can call upon Athens and the oligarchs upon Sparta. This fact brings to the surface something which Thucydides dares call human nature:

> And so there fell upon the cities on account of revolutions many grievous calamities, such as happen and always will happen while human nature is the same, but which are severer or milder, and different in their manifestations, according as the variations in circumstances present themselves in each case. (III LXXXII-2).

This sentence has the chilling precision of a scientific appraisal of phenomena, presenting a general rule which may be applied to the variables of the given case. Thucydides then applies it in detail to the particular situation on Corcyra:

> The ordinary acceptation of words in their relation to things was changed as men thought fit. Reckless audacity came to be regarded as courageous loyalty, prudent hesitation as specious cowardice, moderation as a cloak for unmanly weakness. (III LXXXII-4).

Words given as oaths lost all coinage, and under the banners of "political equality under law for the many" and "temperate aristocracy" everyone marched to his own tune. People who joined neither party were immediately under suspicion "either because they would not make common cause with them, or through mere jealousy that they should survive." Another universal statement about human nature occurs almost at the end of this section on Corcyra:

> At this crisis, when the life of the city had been thrown into utter confusion, human nature, now triumphant over the laws, and accustomed even in spite of the laws to do wrong, took delight in showing that its passions were ungovernable, that it was stronger than justice, and an enemy to all superiority. (III LXXXIV-2).

The section concludes with words which the author later puts into the mouths of the Melians in their famous fictive dialogue with the Athenians:

> Indeed, men do not hesitate, when they seek to avenge themselves upon others, to abrogate in advance the common principles observed in such cases—those principles upon which depends every man's own hope of salvation should he himself be overtaken by misfortune—thus failing to leave them in force against the time when perchance a man in peril shall have need of some of them. (III LXXXIV-3).

This lecture cannot have the brashness and passion inspired by an event which roused my conscience in high school, and which I found reflected in my experience as a soldier in Italy during the second world war. In Italy again, when I learned to see clearly, there was a civil war going on under my nose, a country torn internally with horrors being committed under the banners of party, and the whole of the mess fusing and coming to the fore under the catalyst of the great world war between the Germans and the Allies. Instead this lecture is about the book, or rather the memorial, which puts such contemporary events into focus for me.

Thucydides states that this indeed was his intention in writing such a history:

> But whoever shall wish to have a clear view both of the events which have happened and those which will some day, in all human probability, happen again in the same or a similar way—for these to adjudge my history profitable will be enough for me. And, indeed, it has been composed, not as a prize essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time. (IXXII-4).

Such a book and such an attempt intend to make memory for the future. All battlefields and all wars want monuments. It is unbearable to think of all that blood shed and forgotten. Speeches after a battle on a battlefield must assert the worth and the fame of what has been accomplished by the dead. Only too often they are half-lies about the Fatherland, or an invocation to the God of Battles for help in the future or a praise to him for the victory. At their best they call on Providence to help in binding up the wounds so unhestitatingly opened. Thucydides' whole enormous book is a discourse intended to memorialize. It is a landscape with no gods or God or Providence either in the sky above or under the earth in some law court in Hell. The author is enormously fussy about facts, but the book is no chronicle. Certain events are looked at with a particular intensity in view of the purpose of the memorial, and so that the book may be, if not the education of Greece, an aid to the clear seeing of all who read it. About the speeches in the book Thucydides says the following:

> As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seems to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what actually was said. (I-XXII-1).

In this book which lays claim to being a "possession for all time" we must ask ourselves which the speeches are present—what part they play in the artful composition of this book. It is clear that spoken words are of crucial importance to Thucydides when the words are public, when they are directed toward future action, and when they issue from the mouths of certain men. Sometimes, however, the speakers are nameless; they are designated merely as "the Athenians," or "the Corinthians." And once in the book the speeches are part of a fictive dialogue between the people of Melos and these nameless "Athenians." It will be helpful, and it is easy enough, following Aristotle, to divide speeches in general into three types. There are speeches addressed to people who are judging concerning the future; such would be speeches made before a deliberative assembly. There are speeches made before people who are judging concerning the past; such would be speeches made in a court of law by a lawyer in front of a judge or a jury. Finally there are speeches mainly concerned with the present, eulogies perhaps, where the judges often are critics or appreciators of the speaker's words. These three types are formally spoken of a deliberative, forensic, and epideictic rhetoric. The business of deliberative speeches is to exhort and persuade concerning future actions, and the reason for the talking, the end at which it is aiming in its persuasion, is the expedient or the harmful. Will it further the ends of the Athenian state to slaughter the entire population of Mytilene or not? Thucydides gives us two speeches on this matter, one from the mouth of Cleon, a demagogue, which argues for the killing, and one from the mouth of Deodatus, an otherwise unknown man in the histories, which argues against the killing. Both speeches argue from expediency, and as such fall precisely within the definition of a deliberative speech as rhetoric aimed at the useful or the harmful. While we may lament the lack of any talk of justice in the speeches of Cleon and Deodatus, Deodatus' speech saves the lives of the people of Mytilene. It is intended by the author that we take careful note that the best speech on expediency saves the population of an entire city.

The business of forensic rhetoric is to accuse or defend, its time the past, its end the just and the unjust. Was Alcibiades guilty of impiety in the scandal of the desecration of the Hermes? If this were not cleared up, the doubt would spoil his efficacy in the minds of the assembly however much they had been moved by his speech concerning their future. Did Mr. Nixon do the right thing in lying? That again was judged, and the outcome had much to do later with the future. What I mean to say here is that though speeches concerning past actions, which have to do with justice, are distinct from deliberations concerning the future, which have to do with expediency, we all wear two hats in such matters. If in our judgement Joe did lie or did, in fact, steal, we are not going to listen to him with any particular confidence when he advises us concerning the future, however prudently he may speak. Justice counts for something. The business of the epideictic is praise or blame, and it is most generally concerned with the present; its end is the noble or the disgraceful. At the end of this lecture we will examine the most famous of all epideictic speeches, Pericles' Funeral Oration.

In deliberative speeches the judges are immediately concerned with the subject at hand. It is, after all, their lives, their wealth, their fears, and their honor which are at stake in an assembly which is debating a future action. One would expect them to be more critical and suspicious given this fact. Given this frame of mind, the personal character of the speaker assumes a much greater importance than it does in forensic pleading. Who and what kind of a man Pericles is, has much to do with his

persuasiveness. At the conclusion of Pericles' third speech in Book II Thucydides states this with perfect clarity:

> And the reason for this was that Pericles, who owed his influence to his recognized standing and ability, and had proved himself clearly incorruptible in the highest degree, restrained the multitude while respecting their liberties, and led them rather than was led by them, because he did not resort to flattery, seeking power by dishonest means, but was able on the strength of his high reputation to oppose them and even provoke their wrath. (II-LXV-8).

The same holds true, however, for Alcibiades; character counts, both for and against. Once the enthusiasm for his youth and brilliance have had time to cool off, doubts of his virtue enter the assembly's mind, and he is relieved of his command. As a result the disastrous Sicilian campaign begins its downward plunge. Part of the study of power and politics, of things as they are, is the study of how people are persuaded to action. What rhetoric does is part of the truth of the way things are.

The very first speech in the histories begins with the word "dikaion"—it is fair or just. You may remember the situation. The Corinthians are trying to prevent the Athenian fleet from joining that of Corcyra, as this would hamper them in settling the war as they wish to settle it. An assembly is called, and first the Corcyreans and then the Corinthians speak. The first sentence of the Corcyreans, which, as we have noted, begins with the expression "it is fair," is a most complex sentence:

> It is but fair, citizens of Athens, that those who, without any previous claims on the score of important service rendered or of an existing alliance, come to their neighbors to ask aid, as we do now, should show in the first place, if possible, that what they ask is advantageous, or at least that it is not hurtful, and in the second place, that their gratitude can be depended on; but in case they establish neither of these things clearly, they should not be angry if unsuccessful. (I-XXXII-1).

The intent of the Corcyreans, which governs the device they employ in this sentence, is to establish the reasonableness of what they want. Facts must be faced, and dismissed if they prove to be a hindrance. The fact is that the Corcyreans have no existing alliance with, nor have they rendered any important service to, Athens; in fact they are a colony of Corinth, hence the opening section of the sentence. Given this embarrassing fact, it must be shown that what is asked is "xumphora"—advantageous, or at least not harmful—and that the gratitude of the Corcyreans might even offer a certain security. The final reasonable appeal is that if none of the above can be established, no one's feelings are to be hurt. It is clear, even if it is not just, that the important persuasive word must be "advantage," and that other things that might bind a political action, such as an alliance or ties of blood with the motherland, must be glossed over in light of "advantage's" claims. The speech continues with an insistence upon the changed fact of the Corcyreans' isolation in foreign policy. What had been formerly considered discretion is now viewed as unwise and a cause of weakness. They then hold out to the Athenians the pleasing package of both honor and advantage, honor in helping one who is wronged, and advantage in having as an ally a great sea power. They argue that the Spartans through fear are eager for war, and that the Corinthians are abetting this fear. They then brush aside the illegality of an alliance with them (the Spartans and the Athenians are at this point allied, as you may recall) with a legal argument that has a certain petty rigor, and finally end their speech with the strongest set of appeals to expediency that they can muster. First they argue that if they have more strength the Spartans will be still more afraid of breaking the truce; second they appeal to the commercial and imperial passions of Athens by pointing out the convenience of Corcyra, situated as it is so conveniently for a voyage to Italy and Sicily, and third they tote up a calculus of the naval power of Greece. There are three major navies, Athens, Corinth, and Corcyra. Two is more than three. Don't be stuck with only your own.

The Corinthians in their rebuttal take up one by one the arguments of the Corcyreans. They argue that the contingency of a war in which the Corinthians fight with the Athenians is still most uncertain, and that to be stampeded by such fear will be to make a real enemy of the Corinthians; this then will be a fact, and not a contingency. Also, and most pointedly, the Athenians of all people should not tamper with colonies and allies; the whole life of their city depends on its network of rule abroad. After the two speeches the Athenians in a second session of the assembly go along with the Corcyreans, though all during the first assembly they are for Corinth. They make, however, a defensive alliance only, promising mutually to aid each other in case of attack. The Athenians believe that the war has to be faced, and do not want to give up the navy of the Corcyreans. Also they have done a calculus—or gambled on a probability—that the two navies, of the Corinthians and the Corcyreans, will wear each other out, and hence Corinth will be weaker when war comes. And too the island does indeed seem so beautifully situated for a voyage to Italy and Sicily.

Both speeches are made before an assembly of judges who are debating a course of action future to them. The principal word in the vocabulary is certainly expedience as regards future benefits, and this is always contrasted with the harm that would result from not calculating on proper self-interest. Fairness and honor, fear and anger, figure also in this vocabulary, and each person in the assembly must be consulting his own desires and hopes and fears for the future. For us, the readers, these speeches are very different in meaning. We know, as did Thucydides, that the war will go on for more than a generation, that Athens will lose, that the society and world of the Greek cities will be debased by

the war, that words having to do with probity, honor, and justice will be tarnished. We are also perfectly aware that it will not be the end of the world, as can so easily happen to our world right now, but that it will be the end of a kind of world in which certain cherished things somehow maintained themselves by tradition, luck, and guts against the desolation of the barbarian periphery. In other words, for us they are not deliberative speeches in that they refer to a future which we the judges do not know. We judge them not from their expediency or harmfulness to us, but as judges judging a past event. We are concerned with the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and we accuse or defend the Athenians or the people of Melos, the Spartans or the noble defenders of Plataea, as we look back and down upon their speeches, knowing what their future is to be. They are for us writing samples open to our inspection; we are critics or appreciators or unabashed admirers.

Later in Book I the Athenians give a speech which we the readers must closely examine. The occasion is a general council of the allies in Sparta after the hostilities up at Potidea have been going on for quite a time. The Corinthians have been hard at work in a preceding speech, stirring up the Spartans, inciting them to war. In their speech they have praised the Athenians' resourcefulness and derided the Spartans' old-fashioned habits. They have even put forth a general rule, stating it categorically and introducing it with the word "necessity" (anangke): "it is necessary that things coming after other things prevail." A more vivid translation would be "The new must by the nature of things take over." In our role as onlookers and critics of the speech it is easy enough for us to appreciate the reason the Corinthians have for saying this, and even the effectiveness of stating it as a law. The Spartans are stick-in-the-muds, and have to be brought to their senses in a world that has changed and that is more quick in its wits than they. If we, as readers, are more than appreciators, we must ask ourselves if the proposition is true; does it have any validity as a law, or persuasive power because we think it's scientific? On another level of meaning we are aware that Corinth is in many ways the same kind of place as Athens, commercial, rich, a port, and ancient.

The Athenians, who according to Thucydides happened by chance to be present, asked for permission to speak. They wanted to slow down the Spartans and to show the great power of their city, reminding the older men of what they knew, and telling the younger ones what they didn't know, believing that their words would direct the Spartans toward peace rather than war. Their opening sentences should put us, the readers, on guard as to what is being done. The Athenians submit that they are not going to answer any charges or speak to the Spartans as if the Spartans were a jury deciding on matters of justice or injustice, but are only going to speak to them in order to dissuade them from making a wrong decision regarding the future. The record, on the other hand, still must be set straight. "As for all the words against us, we want to show that we have what we have in a manner that is not unseemly and that our city is worthy of being talked about." The next paragraph in their speech brings up the great event of fifty years ago, the Persian War. There is one acid sentence in this paragraph, which employs the perennial pair, actions and words, *erga* and *logoi*. The sentence may be rendered as follows: "When we did these things" (the Athenians are speaking of their part in defeating the Persians) "when we did these things, they were risked for the sake of a common benefit, and since you had a piece of the action, we will not be deprived of the words that give us credit, if indeed there is any benefit in that." The sentence revolves like a snake about the word "benefit." A freer translation might be as follows: "We did these things and suffered danger for a common good; since you received a share of that work, we will not be deprived of the account of what we did, if indeed there is any good or profit in an account." The word *logos*, "account," at the end of this sentence is delivered with cutting irony. Its meaning might be rendered as "lip-service"—the homage that words pay to action. Of course the actions the Athenians are talking about are gone into in detail in the next part of the speech. They are the glorious triumphs at Marathon and Salamis, events which we memorialize as model triumphs of civilization over barbarism, triumphs which the Athenians point to as being a benefit to the Spartans as well as to themselves.

The next paragraph then asks the question of worthiness. "Are we then deserving of hatred and jealousy merely because of empire, or rule?" This is the crucial fact to be dealt with in any dealing with the Spartans. Thucydides has given as the underlying cause of the war the fear the Spartans had of Athens' rule or empire, and now the Athenians must speak to this fact of empire and rule; they must demonstrate that it is natural and inevitable, and hence not blameworthy. They begin by arguing that it was according to the necessity of the work itself that they were driven to extend their rule, and that they were under the push exerted by fear, honor, and lastly self-interest. To quote exactly: "It was under the compulsion of circumstances that we were driven at first to advance our empire to its present state, influenced chiefly by fear, then by honor also, and lastly by self-interest as well." Later in the paragraph they say "No man is to be blamed for making the most of his advantages when it is a question of the gravest dangers." The argument here might be stated as follows: if anyone in the world would behave in a certain way given the appropriate circumstances, no blame follows for an individual who does behave in such a way. Certainly a very familiar and only slightly sleazy inference. The argument then turns to the named individual in a way we are all accustomed to, saying that "you," namely the Spartans, would have done the thing as we had if you had been in our shoes. The next stage is to pull in normalcy of behavior under a more telling name, "human nature." 'Thus there is nothing remarkable or inconsistent with

human nature in what we also have done, just because we accepted an empire when it was offered us, and then, yielding to the strongest motives—honor, fear, and self-interest (the list now begins with honor and not fear, you will note)—we declined to give it up." The next step is to move from normalcy of behavior to a general law, hence the next sentence: "Nor again, are we the first who have entered upon such a course, but it has always been laid down that the weaker are hemmed in by the stronger." The adverb in the argument has moved from "usually" to "always." We have now not an observation of normal behavior but a binding law of universal action.

The next job to be done in this most central of all paragraphs is to eliminate any principle or universal idea which will conflict with the principle of the strong lording it over the weak. This is done slyly and personally, with the intention of shaming any listener who clings to such notions.

> We [the nameless Athenians say] thought ourselves worthy to rule, and you shared that opinion, until you began toting up and calculating your own interests, and, just as you are doing now, began resorting to talk of justice [τό δικαιό λογό], which no one in his right mind ever put in front of force and advantage when opportunity gave him the chance of getting something by sheer strength. (I LXXVI-2).

The grand reversal from blame to praise now follows, encompassing all that has been said, and carefully placing the small hand of justice into the muscular grasp of power:

> They are worthy of praise who, being subject to human nature as ruling over us, are more just than they might have been, considering their possession of power. We believe that anyone else, seeing our power, would demonstrate most clearly, as to whether we are walking a moderate path; in our case, however, from the very fact of our reasonableness, blame rather than praise arises in a most unfitting manner. (I LXXVI-4).

This passage in this speech is of crucial importance to the whole book. The Athenians are explicating their power and rule. Their speech is an apology for empire, and contains an argument based on what is claimed to be a universal law, a law present in human nature, namely that the strong rule the weak. In the immediate context of Book I the speech is unsuccessful. The Spartans decide that the treaty is broken and that the Athenians are to be blamed, and decide to go to war with Athens. There is some doubt that the speech was ever made; it seems clear that Thucydides placed it here and composed it as part of his explication and memorial of the war. Its propositions are present in the words of Pericles in later speechs in the book. They are very much present in the terrifying debate on the fate of the population of Mitylene. They are the substance of the Athenian talk in the so-called Melian Dialogue.

Meaning, in even the simplest of contexts and situations, has as many layers as an onion. This is in no way intended to imply that the situation or the context determines the meaning, but rather that the context or the situation is the occasion for meaning. Who is talking and why? Is it Pericles or Cleon or Alcibiades or Nicias talking, and why do they say what they say about the war or about an expedition to Sicily? What kind of men are they—noble, ambitious, brilliant, or moderate? Are they talking to a popular assembly, or to a gathering of aristocrats? What kind of relation have they to the assembly, or the soldiers, or the aristocratic gathering, or their neighbors? What are they up to? Why does Pericles want the war? It can hardly be for the same reasons that Cleon or Alcibiades are driven by, though both might use the same arguments concerning power and justice. Are any of the sentences true statements of the way things are? In the case of this invented speech we have just examined there are still further layers of meaning for us. We are an audience separated by an enormous gulf of time from the author. Why he has the Athenians say what they say when they say it, and whether what they say is true or not, must be part of the meaning to us. It would be only too easy to nod one's head and, calling a spade a spade, assent to the propositions concerning power and human nature, the strong ruling the weak, and the weakness of the good. Is it that our very nodding our heads in assent to such propositions is part of the truth of the propositions? Does it reveal something of what we are when we do assent to them? Does rhetoric reveal the other side of being, the dark side, the shabby side, the reverse side of the coin? Is part of this dilemma embodied in that famous red-herring of a term, human nature? I have heard persons of good character sagely affirm that the Melians were wrong in not knuckling under to the Athenians. It is a fact that they were all slain and their city extirpated, and the ground it stood on plowed under. The truth is that their deaths only demonstrate the weakness of the good, not that they were wrong. I take this to be Thucydides' meaning, and it is with the darkest irony that he puts into the Athenians' mouths in the speech we have just looked at the harsh reference to just discourse, (dikaios logos), their attempt being to shame the Spartans for resorting to such talk, to taunt them for their lack of manliness. I will read the sentence again:

> And at the same time we thought ourselves worthy to rule, and you shared that opinion, until you began toting up and calculating your own interests, and, just as you are doing now, began resorting to talk of justice, which no one in his right mind ever put in front of force and advantage when opportunity gave him the chance of getting something by sheer strength (I LXXVI-2).

If we can be bamboozled by shame into knuckling under to these propositions about force and power, then the propositions become operationally true.

It is very popular in all ages to dismiss just discourse, and you may recall Aristophanes' bitter satire in the *Clouds*, where just and unjust discourse parade their arguments in front of the audience of Athenian citizens, an audience full of the presence of the endless Peloponnesian War.

Pericles' Funeral Oration in Book II of the histories is the world's most famous speech, and it is in praise of the world's most memorable city. This speech is carefully positioned in front of the most famous description of a disease in literature, the great Plague of Athens. It is so carefully positioned in the structure of the histories that a former tutor, with his customary irony, used to insist that the plague never happened. By this I gather he meant that it was too patently plotted into the literary scheme of the histories. Terrible and terrifying pairs are placed in front of us, a juxtaposition of light, life, and freedom under law next to darkness, death, and anarchy. Both the Funeral Oration and the account of the Plague have been imitated or copied. You will recall Lucretius' Plague, and we are all most familiar with the countless statesmen-like speeches which employ Pericles' oration as a model.

There are in addition two other speeches of Pericles in the book which frame the meaning of the funeral oration. The first one is in Book I, a speech in which he urges the assembly to war. The other occurs after the war has begun, and the city has suffered the plague. It is because of the political aftermath of these events that Pericles finds it necesary to give this speech, a speech in which he urges the assembly to hold firm in its pursuance of the war. These two framing speeches, are of course, deliberative speeches, delivered before the assembly. They urge and advise concerning the future course of action to be taken by the assembly, in contrast to the Funeral Oration, which is a eulogy of the present and shining spectacle of Athens.

The first paragraph of the first speech contains the essence of practical decision-making, and as such comments ironically on a future which we, the readers, know:

> I, O men of Athens, hold to the same judgement as always namely that we must not yield to the Spartans, although I well know that once engaged in the actual work of warfare men are not actuated by the same passionate temper as they are when being persuaded to go to war, but change their judgements according to what happens. I also see that I must give you the same or nearly the same advice I used to give you, and I insist that those of you who are persuaded shall support the common decision, even if we should fail, or, in the case of success, claim no share in the good judgement shown. For it is perfectly possible for the course of events to unfold irrationally and dumbly as it is for the calculations of men; it is for this very reason that we lay the blame on fortune for what turns out contrary to our calculations. (I-CXL-1).

We never deliberate about what we know, but about what we don't know, and we don't know the future, and especially the future of a war. We may hope for a felicitous future, but hope is wishing for what rationally cannot be counted on. There is a piercing logic in the classification of hope as a theological virtue, an excellence beyond nature; for Thucydides, however, the word carries with it an ever-present irony. A political decision is always about the future, and aspires to be a contract. It can't be a contract, however, for who will make it stick? What is the binding rule, and if the rule is binding, who will be the judge? It may be just as well that this is so, for if the decision is for war, sticking to the decision may bleed the city to death, or at the very least debase the spirit and counterfeit the moral coinage.

Later in the speech Pericles goes on to insist that the slightest concession to the Spartans will be read by them as fear, whereas a downright refusal of their demands means that they will treat the Athenians as equals. This is a kind of argumentation that numbs us every day in the discussions of deterrence and equal megatonnage. Pericles throws this at the assembly as an imperative:

> So make up your minds, here and now, either to take their orders before any damage is done you, or, if we mean to go to war—as to me seems best—do so with the determination not to yield on any pretext, great or small, and not hold our possessions in fear. For it means enslavement just the same when either the greatest or the least claim is imposed by equals upon their neighbors, not by an appeal to justice but by dictation. (I-CXLI-1).

You will note the force of the word slavery in the last sentence, though there is no clear logical path to be followed from claiming that between equals the slightest concession means slavery rather than injustice. It is certainly a normal phenomenon that neighboring states hate each other. The nearer they are the greater the hate seems to be, in a kind of inverse-force law whose terms are hate and proximity. In Greece one has only to think of Thebes and Plataea, Sparta and Argos, Athens and Corinth, Athens and Thebes, or Athens and its even nearer neighbors (regarded with even more intense hatred), Megara and Aegina. This is one of the perpetual and damning observations which Dante makes as he looks at all the cities of Tuscany consuming each other in a wrath which he can only describe in bestial terms. In our own age we have only to cast our eyes on any part of the globe to observe this phenomenon: Poland and Russia, India and Pakistan, Iran and Arabia, Bolivia and Paraguay, Chile and Ecuador, Russia and China, Vietnam and Cambodia, England and Ireland. Often the hatred between neighbors grows up between states that are somehow united—this happened between the North and the South in our own United States, and the anguish of Lebanon presents a spectacle of hatred and blood between every tribe and every sect of a variety of religions.

These hatreds are nearly ineradicable, and are a part of the calculus of power. They are present all through the events of the history we are reading, but they are never the cause of a major war. This is left to the fear that exists between equals. While it was under the aegis of the greater war that the Thebans had finally the satisfaction of seeing their nearest neighbors slaughtered one by one, that greater war arose from a fear between equals. Sparta and Athens are not near neighbors, and are enormously different, one from the other. They don't know or understand each other enough to be able to hate. It is the fear between equals and the humiliation of being treated as an underling by someone who is the same height as you are that is behind Pericles' statement. This is the heart of his appeal, and the goad to the assembly's manliness. As Thucydides states over and over again, a man or a state is more humiliated at being treated unjustly by an equal than at being beaten or cowed physically by someone patently bigger or stronger. We ourselves for the past thirty years have seen an obscene proliferation of nuclear arms spring like mushrooms from the ground of fear between equals.

Any hope for the mere existence of the world lies in an untangling of, or an accommodation to, this grotesque calculus. And since the snarls caused by fear between equals have never been untangled in the political affairs of men, to hope for their dissolution may be irrational, and even naive. Given the presence of fear and power, reason staggers and redefines itself. It becomes a calculus, a rationalization arising out of the presence of fear and power, and the word "irrational" comes to mean "imperfectly calculated." It is for this reason that Hobbes, the translator of Thucydides, must redefine the meaning of words, and base all meaning in the new and mechanical psychology with its roots in the fear of war and the presence of power. If I am driven, the forces that drive me must be analyzed, and a machine built to contain their energy and to ensure my life. In talking of Thucydides, who is no systemizer, we must limit ourselves to noting that in his gravest passages, when he discusses and notes the events and writes down the speeches concerning the considerations we have been pointing to, he employs the phrase "human nature."

In the next part of his speech Pericles totes up the power and money of the Athenians. He notes that their ability to act quickly, and to decide things with resilience by means of their popular assembly. This he contrasts with the complicated allied command structure of Sparta. The Athenians' navy will be their security, and should be their hope, as it was at Salamis, and with it they need not fear for their land holdings; their strength lies in their power, their commerce, and their drachmas. Given all of these assets he hopes that Athens will prove superior. This will only happen, he warns, if they do not attempt to extend their empire while they are waging a war, or weigh themselves down with other dangers of their own making—"for I fear more our own domestic mistakes than the calculations of the enemy."

We, the readers, are well aware of the prophecy implied in this sentence, and after Pericles' third speech Thucydides takes pains to point out the disasters that followed Pericles' death. He lived only two years and six months into the war, and without him Athens foundered, just as under him it was great and glorious and entered the path of war. The speech concludes by urging the assembly to adjust in a strictly legal way their affairs with the Spartans, but to do nothing upon dictation:

> This answer is just and fitting for the city—but it behooves us to know that the war is going to happen, and that the more willing we show ourselves to accept it, the less eager will our enemies be to attack us, and also that from the greater dangers the greater honors accrue both to a private man and to a state. (I-CXLIV-3).

At the conclusion to the conclusion Pericles appeals to the memory of their fathers, who withstood the Persians, and who with a courage greater than their strength beat back the barbarian and advanced their fortunes to their present state. Thucydides comments, "The Athenians thinking he was advising them for the best voted as he told them to."

It may be that a statesman has to act as if war were inevitable, and see to it that the state is prepared. But Pericles' argument to the assembly—that not only is war inevitable but that the more we show ourselves prepared to accept war, the less eager will our enemies be to accept it—is specious. To an enemy such as Sparta, an equal in pride and strength, greater acceptance and preparedness on the part of the Athenians will mean greater fear on the part of the Spartans, and thus greater precautions. Out of that fear and preparedness will grow further armament and further marshalling of allies, finally ensuring the truth of the proposition that war is inevitable. It is apt to the point of slyness that the completion of Pericles' complex sentence contains the appeal to the honor and excellence that accrue to a man and a city from great dangers. He proceeds to buttress this by appealing to the memory of the great patriotic war waged against the Persian barbarians. This rhetorical induction from one war to another is false, as a war between Greeks and barbarian invaders has not the same nature as a war between Greeks. It would be like arguing in this century from the nature of the First World War of 1914, which in no way was worth the price of its blood, to a position which would deny the moral necessity of the war against Nazi Germany. An argument closer to the present generation would contain the faulty inference that since the Second World War was honorable to the nation, the war in Vietnam was also, and hence should be pursued with vigor and moral certainty.

After the first speech of Pericles in Book I the war begins. The Spartans invade the land of Attica. Pericles' strategy has been to pull all of the population within the walls, to abandon the countryside to the devastation of

the invading Spartans, and to trust in the navy, the empire, and the wealth of the city. Athens and Attica had been inhabited continously for a length of time that seemed mythical to its inhabitants. They were proud of having been indigenous and co-eternal, as it were, with the soil of Attica. Their habits and mores were attached to the countryside, to their estates. The city of Athens, though the center of Attica politically, was the traditional center of this long-enduring and ancient countryside, and had no existence apart from the land about. Pericles' strategy changed all of this, and the whole countryside crowded within the walls, squatting even within sacred places. The Funeral Oration takes place during the winter which closes the first year of war and the first invasion of the land of Attica. The next summer the Spartans invaded the countryside again, and before they had been many days in Attica, the Plague broke out. I shall quote from Thucydides' account:

> It is said, indeed to have broken out before in many places, both in Lemnos and elsewhere, though no pestilence of such extent nor any scourge so destructive of human lives is on record anywhere. For neither were physicians able to cope with the disease, since they had to treat it without knowing its nature, the mortality among them being greatest because they were most exposed to it, nor did any other human art avail. And the supplications made at sanctuaries, or appeals to oracles and the like, were all futile, and at last men desisted from them, overcome by the calamity. (II-XLVII-4)

Thucydides then proceeds to inform the reader as to how he will treat of this natural disaster:

> Now anyone, whether physician or layman, may, according to his personal opinion, speak about its probable origin and state the causes which, in his view, were sufficient to have produced so great a departure from normal conditions; but I shall describe its actual course, explaining the symptoms from the study of which a persons should be best able having knowledge of it beforehand, to recognize it if it should ever break out again, For I had the disease myself, and saw others sick of it. (II-XLVII-3).

This passage cannot help suggesting to us, the readers, that Thucydides intends to write about the Plague in the same way that he writes about the war. He had the disease and saw others sick of it just as analogously he was an admiral in the war, was exiled, and examined it then from a distance. He next describes in detail the physical nature of the Plague, and finally turns to the moral desolation which resulted from it:

> And no one was eager to practice self-denial in prospect of what was esteemed honor, because everyone thought that it was doubtful whether he would live to attain it, but the pleasure of the moment and whatever was in any way conducive to it came to be regarded as at once honorable and expedient. No fear of gods or law of men restrained; for, on the one hand, seeing that all men were perishing alike, they judged that piety and impiety came to the same thing, and, on the other, no one expected that he would live to be called to account and pay the penalty of his misdeeds. (II-LIII-4).

It is difficult not to compare this passage with the one which details the horror of the civil war on Corcyra, which Thucydides so clinically describes both as to its symptoms and to its progress. The attempt is to describe something so that it may be recognized if encountered again. In comparing the Plague with the civil war that broke out everywhere in Hellas there are differences to be noted—the Plague may have been carried by rats, a natural cause, whereas the civil war arose from human causes. Are human causes a branch of the natural, and are we obligated to employ the term "human nature?" If both are diseases, justice becomes medicine, assuming the meaning so common to it in the dialogues of Plato.

The Athenians now suffered a change of feelings. They blamed Pericles for having persuaded them to go to war. Their land had been invaded for the second time; the Plague had decimated the population. The Athenians even sent envoys to the Spartans pleading for peace, but accomplished nothing. "Being at their wits' end, they assailed Pericles. . . . He called a meeting of the assembly—for he was still general—wishing to reassure them, and by ridding their minds of resentment to bring them to a milder and less timorous mood." Pericles' third speech is then framed to meet this occasion. For us, the readers, it may be the saddest of his speeches. The war which he had argued for has begun. The glorious city which had reached its zenith under his leadership has just suffered the Plague. The anger and fear of the people have to be faced down, and the peace movement quelled. He has to ride the back of his tiger and find words to fit the situation. He begins by saying that he has expected this anger, and will show them that they have no reason to be angry with him, or to give way to their misfortunes. A man's private misfortunes are worsened by the state's disasters, so it would be folly to sacrifice the state's security because of troubles at home. You're blaming both me and yourselves, he says, who voted after all for the war. I am as competent a man as you'll find, free from influence of money, and a good patriot. If you believed me once, believe me now.

Next he waves in front of their eyes the banner of near infinite rule and power, something, as he says, he had been loath to do before, as it is almost unseemly and boastful to do so. Seeing them so cast down, however, he will raise their spirits.

> You think that it is only over your allies that your empire extends, but I declare that of two divisions of the world which lie open to man's use, the land and the sea, you hold the absolute mastery over the whole of one, not only to the extent to which you now exercise it, but also to whatever fuller extent you may choose; and there is no one, either the Great King or any nation of those

> on the earth, who will block your path as you sail the seas with such a naval aramament as you now possess. (II-LXII-2).

That is, of course, Pericles speaking, not Alcibiades urging the conquest of Sicily.

> You can go forth, he says, to meet your enemies not only with confidence but with contempt. For contempt belongs properly to the man who is persuaded by his own judgement that he is superior to his opponent. Such is our case. . . . Fortune being equal, this intelligent scorn renders courage more secure, in that it doesn't trust so much in *hope,* which is strongest when you're at a loss, as in well-founded opinion, opinion founded on the facts of the case, which is a lot surer as far as the future is concerned. (II-LXII-4).

These words of Pericles' find their final home in the mouths of the nameless Athenians as they present their view in the fictive dialogue with the Melians:

> Hope is indeed a solace in danger, and for those who have other resources in abundance, though she may injure, she does not ruin them, but for those who stake their all on a single throw—hope being by nature prodigal—it is only when disaster has befallen that her true nature is recognized, and when at last she is known, she leaves the victim no resource wherewith to take precautions against her in future. (V-CIII).

They later butcher the people of Melos, and existentially demonstrate the truth of their words.

The next words of Pericles follow a kind of scenario that might be summed up as follows: look at the truth, the facts, shiver, and then gird up your loins; don't be so fatuous as to play at being good, rather become famous. Every one hates you because of the empire, but "it is far too late to back off, even if someone in the present hour of danger wants to play the "good man" by shrinking from public actions." The verb in this sentence which carries the weight of the scorn is *andragathídzetai*—from *anèr* and *agathos*—"play the good or honest man." Pericles continues:

> The empire you possess is a tyranny, which it may seem unjust to have taken on, but which certainly would be dangerous to let go of. Such good and honest men would ruin a state either right here, if they could persuade others of their point of view, or if they went to found another city all of their own—men of peace who refrain from politics preserve nothing unless they are accompanied by men of action; it is no benefit in a ruling city but only in a vassal state, to submit for the sake of safety. (II—LXIII).

The speech ends with an exordium to the assembly to act heroically. They are men, and Homer was their mentor:

> Anyone who has aspired to rule over others has been hated; but anyone who, aiming high, accepts this hate, is well advised. (II-LXIV-5).

The Greek adverb in this sentence is *orthós*, "getting things straight." The author then comments: "Speaking in this way Pericles tried to purge the Athenians of their anger towards him and to channel their minds away from the present evils." (II-LXV-1).

We, the readers, have now to attempt to step back and test the meaning of this speech from our numbing distance of over 2000 years, a span approaching the everlasting memory Pericles speaks of to the Athenians. The speech is enshrined in this book designed by the author as a possession for all times. Are there true propositions, bona-fide laws, stated in this or in other speeches in this book, laws which stand and hold as universal laws of power and politics? Or are the statements exposed to our attention by Thucydides merely the sort of thing which is always said and always will be said in order to persuade an assembly or a senate or a prince when he is deliberating concerning a future course of action? Is it true that the stronger rule the weaker, and that he who rules will be hated? If it's true, must Pericles say it to the assembly? If he does say it to the assembly as a means of rousing them to continued warfare, will they then act in such a way as to bring it about that they are hated even if they weren't before? Do words aimed at the heart and passions of a people sink in to such an extent that they become the mainsprings of their actions, and become to all intents and purposes true? If Pericles, certainly as good a politician as one will ever get, finds it necessary to speak scathingly about men wanting to be good and hence not paying attention either to their own or to the state's benefit, what manly man will choose to be "good"? The later shadow of the *Gorgias* and the hero Callicles loom large in our minds as we read these speeches. If at the end of the *Gorgias* justice and right obtain only in the dark underworld court of Rhadamanthus, it is because the good and right do not rule in the desolation of the landscape of power. It would be a shameless naiveté to conceive of any of Plato's political works as arising from any ground other than one of the blackest pessimism regarding human affairs. It is true that he wrote after the Peloponnesian Wars, but that war does not, in itself, account for what he said any more than it accounts for what Thucydides said. The war was an occasion, first for Thucydides and then for Plato, for observing, for reflecting, and for setting things straight. In both of them one feels the ache for, and the absence of, an efficacious good, and while Socrates may speak of himself as the only true citizen of Athens, Thucydides the Athenian has put into the mouths of his Athenians words that fix forever in our memory the inexorable grind of power, time, and moral decline.

It remains now to speak of the most famous speech, the Funeral Oration. As is so with many very famous things, it turns out to be quite peculiar in many of its features. The occasion for the speech is that "the Athenians, following the custom of their fathers, celebrated

at the public expense the funeral rites of the first who had fallen in this war," and "a man chosen by the state, who is regarded as best endowed with wisdom and is foremost in public esteem, delivers over them an appropriate eulogy."

Pericles begins his speech with the usual disclaimer made by speakers on such occasions—who am I to praise such men? Actions speak louder than words. The speaker then attempts to give the best damn speech ever heard. In this case he succeeds. After the customary opening the speech takes on a rather sour note. The gist of what follows is that those who know the dead and what they did will think that scant justice is being done them by the speaker, and those who did not know them and their actions will think, out of envy, that the speaker has committed a gross exaggeration. Despite all this, he says, he will say what he has to say.

Again, as is familiar and customary upon such occasions, the forefathers and the past are mentioned; again the peculiarity is that, despite the enormous age and the weight of custom and tradition in such an ancient city as Athens, the forefathers are quickly passed over in favor of the immediate past, the fathers of those in the audience who acquired the empire, and those alive today who, in the prime of their life, further strengthened this empire so that it is well provided for both in peace and in war. The speech then immediately turns to the City itself, and becomes the most famous eulogy of the most famous city. First the polity is praised; it is a democracy where all are equal under the law in the settlement of disputes, but where those who are distinguished are honored regardless of class and wealth. Pericles then praises the liberality of the town, its freedom from resentment and back-biting, the vigor and pizzazz of its talk. It is also a place with all kinds of relaxations, games and sacrifices, fine buildings and proper houses, and it is so rich and big that all the products of the earth flow into it. The city is stronger now because it is freer in its training and abhors secrecy. The citizen takes an interest at once in both private and public things: "we are lovers of beauty with the proper ends in mind, and lovers of wisdom without softness."

What is of particular interest to us as we reflect on the speeches is the next statement of Pericles, where he praises the Athenians as being the most daring in action and at the same time as believing that debate is not a hindrance to action; for most people boldness means ignorance and reasoning causes delay. "In respect of virtue," he says, "we differ from the many—for we acquire our friends not by recieving good from them but by doing good. We alone confer benefits not by calculating our own advantage so much as trusting in our own free and liberal habits."

If we pause for a moment in the midst of the praise we realize that this speech is of course to be classified, if we follow Aristotle's division, as a speech having to do with the present; its business is to praise or blame, and its aim is the noble or the disgraceful. All the other speeches we have considered, the speeches of the Corcyreans and the Corinthians, the Athenians' speech to the Spartans, and the two flanking speeches of Pericles, had to do with deliberation about future events, and the propositions embedded in them had all to do with the exigencies of rule and power as applied to the benefit of the state.

When we read the glowing praise of Athens' freedom and liberality in this speech of praise, a facile judgement might tend towards cynicism. After all, men of good sense are always wary of exalted speeches, especially when they issue from the mouths of statesmen on solemn occasions. A part of prudence must always agree with Dr. Johnson's dictum that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel. In this century the very name "fatherland" sounds as a nightmare when the memory of what was perpetrated in its name crosses our consciousness.

What is our judgement now, and what are our feelings as the speech continues? One statement rings so in our memory as nearly to preclude judgement. Pericles says, "Putting all this together I say to you that our whole city is the education of Greece." (A more euphonious translation speaks of the "School of Hellas.") The sentence that contains this statement continues, however, as follows:

> And it seems to me that every single man amongst us, could in his own person, with the greatest grace and versatility, prove himself self-sufficient in the most varied kinds of activity. Many are the proofs given of our power and we do not lack witnesses, and we shall be the wonder not only of men of today but of men of after-times. . . . We shall need no Homer to sing our praise nor any other poet whose verses may perhaps delight for the moment but whose presentation of the facts will be discredited by the truth. (II-XLI-1).

This is of course true, as we do all remember Athens 2500 years later.

Pericles then turns to the remains of the dead, and says that it was for such a place that these men died.

> Don't believe, he says, the advantages of such courage by the mere words of a speaker when you yourselves know as well as the speaker what is to be gained by warding off the enemy. Rather you must when you are about your daily work, fix your gaze upon the power of Athens and become lovers of her, and when she appears great to you, consider that all this has been gained by courage. (II—XLIII-1).

This is soon followed by another sentence so beautiful that it is hard to look at it:

> The whole world is the sepulchre of famous men, and it is not the epitaph upon monuments set up in their own land that alone commemorates them, but also in lands not their own there abides in each breast an unwritten memorial to them, planted in the heart rather than graven in stone. (II-XLIII-3).

The eulogy becomes exhortation, and its charge may be paraphrased as follows: "you have more to lose, hence be unsparing of your lives, as the difference between your present beloved splendor and a disaster is enormous. The more you have to love, the harder you should fight; ordinary folk have no place they passionately love, as you do, a place so splendid, which shines in its might and beauty." The speech, whose occasion was the customary eulogy over the first to die in battle, becomes the eulogy of the city, not the city as a repository of old tradition and habit, but the present city, replete with power and beauty, standing in front of the citizen's eyes like the Parthenon on the hill, a love object of incomparable worth, worth so much that there can be no hesitation in fighting for her, as she is worth the price. The adoration of her power becomes the heart of the matter. Beauty and power are exhibited to the citizens, held up to them as love objects. Eros and Ares, Venus and Mars, are linked, and the hope of immortal fame standing beyond the inevitable future blood stirs them to heroic action. They have all been brought up on Homer. The implicit argument may be summed up as follows: major premise—lovers are famous; minor premise—patriots are lovers; conclusion—fight.

And fight they did. After Pericles' third speech Thucydides carefully notes:

> And yet, after they had met with disaster in Sicily, where they had lost not only their army but also the greater part of their fleet, and by this time had come to a state of sedition at home, they nevertheless held out ten years not only against the enemies they had before, but also against the Sicilians, who were now combined with them, and besides, against most of their allies, who were now in revolt, and later on, against Cyrus, son of the King, who joined the Peloponnesians and furnished them with money for the fleet; and they did not finally succumb until they had in their private quarrels fallen upon each other and been brought to ruin. Such abundant grounds had Pericles at the time for his own forecast that Athens might quite easily have triumphed in this war over the Peloponnesians alone. (II-LXV-12-13).

The fact remains that they lost, and in that long swath of wartime the words and arguments which we have examined, which in peacetime might have remained underground, in wartime came to the surface, and became fixed and inexorable. They were used in the assembly which debated the fate of the population of Mytilene; they were present in the hearts of the Spartans as they led out the courageous citizens of Plataea and slaughtered them one by one; they were dramatically composed into the Athenians' dialogue with the Melians before that population was eliminated. In this same swath of time civil war erupted all over Greece, the paradigm of it being the horror on Corcyra, where words changed their meanings, and people became faceless, and words became masks behind which the anarchy of the passions paraded. The habits and customs of the past, the only safeguard to be counted upon, crumbled, and the pure present showed its face like the Gorgon's head.

Can the pure present of power and beauty waved like a banner in the faces of the Assembly in the Funeral Oration inflame nobly? Is the vision seen worthy, and worth such travail as the long years shift and pass? Patriotism is infinitely more difficult for all of us who inhabit these enormous modern nation-states; there's nothing to look at. To be a patriot now one has to love a principle and be willing to die for it, which is so different from gazing upon a place, bounded by its fields, beautiful to look upon, rich and marvelously racy to live in, full of ingenious and sharp-tongued people; a place where clearly one lives a better life than one would anywhere else.

Can the present vision of a shining and glorious city, the love object presented by Pericles, counter that other present vision, the immediate anarchy and horror present in both the Plague and in the civil war on Corcyra? Did Nicias see the same thing as Pericles? Does Thucydides the Athenian see the same thing as Pericles? Perhaps he does, but he frames the Funeral Oration with the two speeches we have considered, and places it, in his composition, directly in front of his account of the plague. He also praises Nicias, dying far from Athens, a failure at the end of a disaster, as the man who "least deserved to meet with such a calamity, because of his course of life that had been wholly regulated in accordance with virtue."

Some students with whom I read these speeches last year felt that the study of them and of this book led to cynicism. This is to read what is intended as irony wrongly. If no solution in human affairs is possible, it is because nothing of heartfelt concern is a problem that can be solved. If no solution is possible, human excellence calls for courage and shrewdness to walk hand in hand with decency and compassion. They don't walk hand in hand usually, and the best you can get is their mutual awareness, one of the other. I was struck recently by a documentary which I saw on television; it seemed to me like an allegory of power and the good. In it two women of extraordinary toughness and calculation were exhibited to us, the viewers. The documentary was about Mother Teresa, and the scene which stuck in my memory was filmed in the grand audience chamber in New Delhi. Mrs. Ghandi, that shrewd, tough, and resilient power-broker, gave a medal honoring Mother Teresa to that shrewd, tough, and resilient nun. Mrs. Ghandi is the ruler of the largest and most populous democracy in the world, a nation-state that came into being in the midst of one of those blood baths which our century is full of, an event of such terrifying barbarity and slaughter that ordinary descriptions of Hell seem painted in pastel, and Corcyra seems a tempest in a teapot, in comparison. For all that, the nation lurches on in its misery, guided and coaxed and dictated to by Mrs. Ghandi. Mother Teresa performs good works, and this is seen by any onlooker

regardless of his faith or lack thereof. It is hard to conceive that either woman, so aware of the way things are, expects anything to change in this world she is so much in the midst of. Mrs. Ghandi, in addition to the parlous state of her enormous nation, lives under the shadow of the two monstrous powers with which she shares the continent, Russia and China. She lives also with the blood-hate of her nearest neighbor, Pakistan. Mother Teresa lives in the midst of the most utter poverty and human degradation in one of the great cities of the sub-continent. In the television encounter one could see the hard, clear glance of Mrs. Ghandi, but even more one could sense the calculation behind the nun's eyes: was the minister on the right good for a couple of ambulances, and was the fat and powerful man on the left to be counted on for a ton of medical supplies for the benefit of her hospital for incurables in the heart of that ultimate human city, Calcutta?

Via Positiva

Back home on a day this time of year
Sharp angled red-trunked trees stand
In a flat green field, new and fruitless,
Each articulate leaf cutting the air clear;

Down cellar where dark and cold are one
Deep baskets fill with roots and gourds,
Mold glitters on the step, damp webs
Softly shawl the ciderjugs and jams;

Past the creek where the hard water
Ducks on the cleaving rock and twists
Into shining braids slit with foam;
There sleep stones and people, slabs and angels;

Further on, after wall and hillside vault
Before mountains crest, a gap opens
Onto a plunging meadow faint with mist
Where rabbits flash amid the warm still grass.

Gretchen Berg

Via Negativa

The freeway inarticulate sea
Draws broken white spine and slurs
The cold haze with a shining edge.
What nimbus dares to charm and ride
From dirt toothed with uncertain traces
Pebbles and their alluvial shadows?

Brittle branches thorn dark streams,
Black ice reflective bridged
With a splintered board or none.
Pursy firs flicker and swerve
Their forked moss matting
An impasse in the blotted sky.

Sharp waters carve the instep's arch;
What name strikes blank air silent
To find no ear, be dumbfound?
I latecomer press my print
With others speechless wonders
Waiting to be spelled out.

Gretchen Berg

Gretchen Berg is a graduate of St. John's College, Annapolis. She lives in Vermont where she pursues her interest in writing and painting.

Logos and The Underground

Curtis Wilson

AUTHOR'S PREFATORY NOTE

The lecture here printed was delivered in September 1960 as the dean's 'opener.' It is largely based on Edmund Husserl's *Erfahrung und Urteil,* which I worked my way through in the summer of '60. When Mr. Sterling recently proposed printing the lecture in the *Review,* conscience told me I should review the text, to determine whether I could still endorse the propositions that I put forward with such somber earnestness 25 years ago. My conclusion has been both a Yes and a No.

For the heroism of Husserl's repeatedly renewed efforts to achieve a presuppositionless 'beginning' in philosophy, my admiration must always remain. And the attempt to carry out phenomenological description—the delineation of how things (tables and chairs, words and sonnets and symphonies, universals like 'justice,' fictional characters like Sancho Panza, beings like my cat, persons like the reader) present themselves in awareness—has a value. In 1960 I considered the Husserlian descriptions as an antidote to the self-defeating relativism that so many freshman brought to the college: the pervasive disbelief in the possibility of improving one's opinions, the bland assurance that your opinion is as good [or as bad?] as mine. Still today I see as desirable an attentiveness to the describable character of the things that present themselves in awareness, just *as* they present themselves—to echo the Husserlian phrase. It is a mode of thoughtfulness that, in an age of reductive slogans, needs to be encouraged.

But concerning the Husserlian enterprise I today have doubts that I had not quite formulated 25 years ago. The descriptions no longer appear to me securely presuppositionless or self-explanatory; and the claim that phenomenological description constitutes "the correct method" in philosophy seems to me far too grand. "Man," says Claude Bernard, "is by nature metaphysical and proud;" and the presumption of certainty seems to me more often illusionary than not. Methods are useful or necessary; but of method that claims to have an exclusive right we must be wary, for any method presupposes more than we are likely ever to know. In short, if I have long known that we must begin *in medias res,* I am no longer prepared to suppose that the mind's improvement or the advance of knowledge will consist in coming to an absolute starting-point. The very process whereby we successively pronounce the words of a sentence while intending a meaning seems to me utterly mysterious, and I think it is a miracle that we can begin at all.

This is not the place to pursue these thoughts. (Let me only mention that today I would look to linguistics and behavioral biology to throw new light on the 'underground' of the liberal arts; and I see it as a task for the future liberal artists to explore with sensitivity the intricate dialectic between genotype and phenotype, between the deep or hidden structures and what appears. This investigation would not presume to avoid hypothesis; but insofar as hypothesizing necessarily involves reduction, it would be cogni-

zant of the dangers thereof. The human spirit is a 'tangled wing,' to use Melvin Konner's figure for it, and I look to linguistics and biology, as to the Bible and all deep literature, for the further elucidation of what we are and how we do what we do.)

And what of the poor freshmen, for whom the opening lecture of the college year is supposed to be a kind of exhortation? I tremble to think how widely my efforts must have missed the mark; years afterward I was informed that it was a standard bit of 'put-down' on the part of upperclassmen to tell the freshmen that they could not expect to understand my lecture. But even today I know not what verbal gestures might count as useful, amidst the profusion and confusion of aims and ideas that freshmen arrive with. How can I say, in one breath: (1) work patiently and hard, for the value of what you acquire will, in general, be proportional to the care that goes into the acquiring; and (2) think! be inventive! for what is in front of you can appear in a new light, and discoveries are possible! but (3) do not expect certainty? If I should say such things, some of the brightest of my auditors would find my sayings impossibly contradictory in tendency, and the only response I could make would be that I hope and believe it is not so. In what puts itself forward as human knowledge, it is by the care and thoroughness, *and* by the inventiveness and the unexpectedness that throws a new light, that I attempt to distinguish the better from the worse. I know no other way.

In Plato's dialogue *Phaedo,* Socrates speaks of having, at a crucial turning-point of his life, *fled* to the *logoi.* Previously, he says, he had pursued the investigation of nature, seeking the efficient and final causes of the things of the visible world. But this investigation having led to nothing that he could trust, he took flight to the *logoi.* What is characteristic of Socrates, the Socratic questioning, takes its start from this flight to the *logoi.*

The Greek word *logos* (plural: *logoi*) has a variety of meanings, but according to Liddell and Scott, its primary meanings are, first, the *word,* or that by which the inward thought is expressed, and second, the inward thought itself. Additional and related meanings are: statement, assertion, definition, speech, discourse, reason.

Now I am not going to give a commentary on this passage in the *Phaedo*; but I wish to take a start from the observation that there is such a thing as *logos*, meaningful speech, speech which expresses the inward thought. And I am going to explore the question: What does this fact presuppose? What underlies it?

I may as well warn you that I shall be attempting the most pedestrian, prosaic, dry sort of description and explication. I shall try to avoid *introducing,* or *constructing,* hypotheses or theories, however attractive, which would account for what is described. I shall try, on the contrary, to describe certain kinds or types of things which are recognizably involved in our speaking, and my effort will be to delineate them just *as* they present themselves to us, just *as* we are aware of them. If there is an assumption in my procedure, I think it is the conviction that the "I" or self on the one hand, and the world on the other, cannot be *thought* of separately. Accurate description of my experience is description of the experience of an "I" or self *in* a situation, of a presence which is essentially *in* the world and bound to the world. I shall have to

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Curtis Wilson is a tutor and former dean at St. John's College, Annapolis. "Logos and the Underground" was originally delivered as the Dean's lecture inaugurating the 1960 academic year.

analyze this experience into certain strata or levels, and because of limitations of time, concentrate on certain fundamental strata which may, unfortunately, seem to you the least interesting.

In one respect I shall imitate the Socratic flight: I shall leave out of account all results of natural science—physics, chemistry, and biology. Over the past 350 years scientists have developed imposing structures of thought which seem to reveal to us a previously hidden world, alongside of or somehow behind or underneath the world in which we live from day to day. Arthur Eddington would say, for instance, that besides the apparent lectern behind which I stand, there is another lectern, the real one, consisting of electrons and protons. I would maintain, on the contrary, that this is an incorrect way of speaking and thinking: there is only one lectern, the one that is before me. What is meant by the electrons and protons can only be understood by considering certain procedures and experiments and the theories built up around them. In seeking the roots of these theories I shall be led back to the world of my everyday experience, and to the language in which I formulate this experience. To ignore the layered or storied structure within and underlying scientific theories, to regard the electron as somehow on a par with and alongside the table, is to commit what Whitehead calls 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness." So I shall begin with the analysis of everyday speech and experience.

Even here I must make a reservation. I am not trying to take account of all aspects of everyday speech. We use speech to praise and to blame, to command and to pray, or even for "whistling in the dark." I shall be concerned only with the rather ordinary and colorless fact that in our speaking we make statements, assertions, which signify states of affairs, the "way things are," as we say.

The statement or assertion is the unit of fully meaningful speech. A single word, outside an assertion, does not have a fully determinate meaning. If I were to look and point in a certain direction, and to shout "Fire!", you would probably recognize that I was asserting something. But the same word "fire" in another context may have a quite different meaning, for instance in the sentence, "The captain ordered his men to fire." There are even subtler differences due to context. The meaning of the word "fire" is not quite the same in the sentence "Civilization depends on fire," and in the sentence, "The fire was burning brightly in the hearth." Precisely what a word refers to depends on the context in which it is used, which may be verbal or non-verbal or both. But in any case, nothing is really *said* until we have an assertion or statement—what traditional logic called the predicative judgment. What is predicative judgment?

The word "predication" comes from the Latin "praedicare," originally meaning to speak out, to enunciate publicly. The word was later preempted by logicians in order to translate Aristotle's term *katagorein*. The Greek word *katagorein* had originally meant to denounce, to accuse in the marketplace or assembly (the root *agora* means marketplace or assembly). Aristotle then appropriated the term to express the meaning: to say something of a subject. What is spoken of, that about which something is said, Aristotle calls the *hypokeimenon*, that is, the underlying; that which is said about or of the hypokeimenon is called the *kategoroumenon*; it is, one might say, what the *hypokeimenon* has been accused of. The corresponding English words, which derive from the Latin, are "subject" and "predicate." Whenever a predicate is attributed to a subject, then we have a statement, an assertion, which expresses a decision regarding the validity of the attribution, or, the justness of the "accusation"—for example, when "this" is "accused" of being a man in the statement, *This is a man.*

Doubts about the universality of the subject-predicate analysis of assertions have sometimes been raised. Consider for instance, the statement "It is raining." It might be suggested, in Aristophantic vein, that the pronoun "it" stands for Zeus. But this is surely not what we mean when we say it is raining. Where is the logical subject—or is there one?

I think this is a case in which we are fairly clear as to what we mean or intend, while the structure of the language fails to reflect the structure of the meaning. I do not believe it is possible to find an assertion so simple as not to involve at least *two* mental signs. One is an *index*, a sign which so to speak points to something; the other will be a sign signifying a characteristic or situation or action which somehow belongs or pertains to that which is pointed to. The assertion as a whole asserts something of something, and therefore necessarily involves a two-foldness. Language may fail to mirror this twofoldness. In the present case, I should say, we have a kind of idea of a rainy day. The indexical or pointed sign is that whereby I distinguish *this day* or *time*, as it is placed in my experience. The assertion "It is raining" asserts that the present time is characterized by raining-going-on.

There is another objection to the usual subject-predicate analysis. When I say "Alcibiades is taller than Socrates," it may be argued that I am talking about two subjects, Alcibiades and Socrates. When I say, "A sells B to C for the price of D," there are four indexical signs A, B, C, and D, which are here connected by the relational predicate: ". . . sells . . . to . . . for the price . . ." The logician may claim that there are *four* logical subjects here, four *hypokeimena*. The objection does not deny the distinction between subject and predicate, but points to cases in which there is not a single axis running from subject to predicate, but rather a relation which relates two or more different things.

Let me pass this objection by for the moment. Because of its greater simplicity, the assertion in which a predicate is attributed to a single subject would appear

to require consideration before relations are considered. I shall return to relations later on.

An assertion, I said, expresses a decision regarding the validity of the attribution of predicate to subject, the justness of the accusation. It presents itself as knowledge; it pretends, so to speak, to be the truth. It may, of course, turn out to be false. For instance, I may have pointed at something and said, "That is a man," and then it may have turned out to be a showcase mannikin. Or the statement may become and remain doubtful or problematic. Nevertheless, I should say that it belongs to the very meaning of any assertion to make the claim to being knowledge. Negation, doubtfulness, probability, or improbability are meaningful only as modifications of this original claim. Even the statements which are used in presenting to us a world of fantasy, say the fantasy-world of a novel or of the *Iliad*, make this claim *within* the context of the unity of the particular fantasy-world. The truthfulness of such a work of fantasy or imagination as a whole is a rather more difficult matter, and lies in the ways in which the fantasy-world imitates, either directly or by analogy, certain features of the world in which we live.

How do we determine whether an assertion is true? Certainly we do this, day in and day out; but how? What we encounter, in asking this question, is the problem of *evidence*. What is an *evident judgment*?

The word "evidence" derives from the Latin word *evidens*, meaning *visible*. The word "evidence" when used in connection with judgments does not always mean visibility, but visibility appears to be its most primitive meaning.

I think I should digress for a moment to point out that most of the terms which we use in talking about thinking depend on visual images. We speak, for instance, of "definition," which means *setting bounds or limits*; of "synthesis" or "composition," which means *putting together*; of "analysis," which means *breaking up*; of "implication;" which means *folding back upon*. All these terms exploit, more or less evidently, an analogy between thinking and certain motor activities which we can perform, which we apprehend visually, and which in turn affect or change what we see.

The assertion itself is something which is apprehended, not visually, but by means of hearing; although, especially in a post-Gutenburg era, we may tend to think of assertions as written out, visually. Now there appears to be a fundamental difference between what is perceived by hearing, and what is perceived by sight. What is perceived by hearing is something that comes to be successively, in time. What is perceived by sight *can* present itself as being there all at once, as a whole. A tone or noise or statement comes to be successively, so that its different parts exist in different times; it is a temporal event. When I see a table, on the contrary, I take all of its parts to exist simultaneously, even although what I see at any one time is only one or two sides of the table. I never see all parts and sides of the table at once, I can only come to see all the parts in the sense that, by moving about, I am able to examine them one by one in succession. But the table is *not* a temporal event.

This is an important difference, which may have important consequences; but the point for the moment is this: A statement or assertion, coming to be in time, makes a *prima facie* claim to knowledge. Knowledge of what? We have to say, I think: knowledge of what is, and of how it is. The judgment has a subject or *hypokeimenon*, about which it is. This *hypokeimenon* must somehow be pre-given, evidently given, prior to any asserting, if the assertion is to be what it claims to be, namely knowledge of what is. But what is evidently given? Many things, perhaps, but first and foremost, what we can all agree upon, the individual, visible objects which are presented to us in the world. The object or thing presents itself to us as being *there*, as a whole, with all its parts, within the visible world. A temporal event, say a sound or a motion, seems, on the contrary, to demand further analysis: we want to know *what* is moving, or what is the source of the sound or other temporal event. The world as it presents itself to us is first and foremost a world of individual objects.

Therefore, I am going to start the discussion of the problem of evidence by discussing the kind of given-ness which a visible object has. Then I shall go on to discuss other kinds of objects of awareness, which can also be made subjects of predicative judgments, and which may have their own modes of being evidently given. These other objectivities, potential subjects of judgments, are in a certain way founded upon our experience of the visible world; they arise for us in connection with our experience, but as Kant would put it, they do not simply arise *from* experience—I think that will be apparent.

How, then, are the individual objects of experience given or presented to us? As I stated previously, I am leaving out of account all that the physical and biological sciences can tell me of the processes involved in sensation and of the objects of experience. I wish to make, in addition, certain further simplifications.

In sense experience I am confronted with individual objects which present themselves as *bodies*, as *corporeal*. But there are many individual objects of experience which do not present themselves *simply* as corporeal. Animals, men, and man-made objects, products of art, are indeed perceived as bodies within the spatio-temporal world, but they differ from rocky crags, rivers, and lakes, in expressing the presence or activity of what I shall call "soul." An ash-tray is not simply a natural body; what it is can only be understood by a reference to human beings who indulge in a certain vice. A human being is not perceived as such in quite the same way as a rock is perceived as a rock; there is involved an *interpretation* of what is perceived, as expressing the presence of soul, the psychic, the subjective, the "I" or self of this other who is before me.

The soul of the other is not simply perceptible in the manner of a corporeal object; but it is understood, through interpretation of the simple perceptions, as being *in* and *with* what is simply perceptible. Now this whole stratum of experience, involving as it does the interpretation of what is bodily as *expressing* the psychic, I wish to leave out of account, so as to attend entirely to what all such experience presupposes, the experience of individual objects as corporeal.

Finally, as a further simplification, you must permit me to imagine that I am a purely contemplative being, examining the individual objects out of a pure interest in finding out about them. It is probably a rather rare occurrence for such a pure interest to govern our activity. Ordinarily we pass over the perceptions to go on to manipulating objects, or valuing them in relation to certain practical aims. The "I" or self, living concretely in its surroundings, and among other selves or persons, is by no means primarily comtemplative. A pure comtemplation of a particular object can occasionally occur; this involves a stopping of normal activity; it need not be especially important. As subordinate to a philosophic reflection which seeks to discover the structure of the world, such contemplation can become serious. My supposition here of a purely contemplative interest may be regarded as a fiction, designed to enable me to uncover a basic stratum of experience.

The object does not present itself to me in isolation, all by itself, nor does it present itself as something completely novel. With the awakening of my interest, it comes forth from a background, in which I take it to have been existing already, along with other objects. Suppose, for instance, that the object which I am about to examine is this lectern; I grasp it as something already existing, something which was already there, in the auditorium, even before I was looking at it. Similarly the auditorium, with its stage and curtain and rows of seats, including the part I do not see because it does not come within my field of vision, was already there, was within the bounds of the familiar St. John's campus, within the familiar town of Annapolis, within the farther and less familiar reaches of Anne Arundel County, and so on, till I say: within the world. This pre-given-ness of objects and of the world in which they are is prior to every inquiry which seeks knowledge; it is presupposed in inquiry. The presupposition is a passively held belief, a belief which I hold with unshakable certainty. It is *doxa*, the Greeks would say. There is a passive doxic certainty in the being of the world and its objects; I cannot imagine it possible *earnestly* to doubt this belief. Every inquiry into an object proceeds on the basis of the believed-in-world. Belief precedes inquiry which in turn aims at knowledge.

The object itself is never completely novel, it never presents itself as something completely indeterminate, about which I can then proceed to learn. The world, for us, is always a world in which inquiry has already gone on; it is a familiar world the objects of which belong to more or less familiar types, with more or less familiar kinds of characteristics. When I examine an object for the first time, I already know, in a sense, something about it. Not only do I perceive the side which is presented to me, but I anticipate, in an indeterminate way, certain of the characteristics of the unseen side. The other side of the curtain here I imagine at this moment as being grey; it is quite possible that it will turn out to be of another color, but I am confident that it will have *some* color. At the very least, the object is pre-given as a spatial object, with such *necessarily* accompanying characteristics as color and shape; probably also as a spatial object of a more particular type, belonging to a more specific category. The progress of the inquiry takes the form of correcting anticipations, or replacing vague anticipations by definite, perceived characteristics. Every advance of the inquiry has the form "Yes, it is as I expected," or "Not so, but otherwise"; in the latter case, the correction is always a correction within a range of possibilities which is not limitless. For instance, I may expect "red"; it will not turn out to be Middle C. To each single perception of the object there thus adheres a *transcendence* of perception, because of the anticipation of the possibility of further determinations. In the succession of perceptions of the object, I am aware of it as an identical something which presents itself in and through its characteristics and relations, but I am also aware of it as a unity of *possible* experience, a substratum about which I can always acquire further information.

As I turn to the object for the first time, there is a moment in which my attention is directed to the object as a whole, before I go on to note particular characteristics, parts not quite perceived of the obvious whole. This moment has short duration; the attempt to make it last turns into a blank stare. But even as I go on to examine particular aspects of the whole, there remains an effect, a precipitate, so to speak, of this first mental grasping of the object, this taking-it-in-as-a-whole. As long as the object remains the theme of my inquiry, the characteristics and aspects are not viewed separately, by themselves, but always as aspects *of* the object. If S is the object, and p, q, and r are characteristics, then my perceptions of p, q, and r are not isolated, but each perception of a characteristic adds to, enriches the meaning for me, of the substrate S; first S is seen to be p, then S which is p is seen to be q, and so on. And always in the background there is the sense of the object S as a temporally enduring something which *has* these characteristics. The persistence of S as an identity in time presents itself passively, in the harmonius succession of perceptions, as though I had nothing to do with it. Yet I must note at least in passing that this grasp of the object as an enduring thing is complex, and presupposes a structure in my inner time, in the flux of changing awareness, whereby the object presented at any moment is grasped as having been and as yet to be.

What I am seeking to describe here is a receptive ex-

perience of the object in which I am first aware of the object and then examine it, noting characteristics, without actually making judgments or assertions; passing from perception to perception, without attempting to fix once for all the results of perception in the form of assertions. But it is apparent that even in this receptive experience of one particular object, prior to all judging, there emerges the basis of the distinction between subject and predicate, namely, in the distinction between substrate and characteristic.

I can of course make anything which presents itself into the theme of an examination or inquiry—the color of the curtain, for instance, or the aggregate of seats in the auditorium, which presents itself in a particular spatial configuration. That with which the inquiry is concerned as its theme then comes to be a substratum or substrate, of which I proceed to ascertain the characteristics. The distinction between substrate and characteristic would thus seem to be relative to the theme of the inquiry. Some of the things I perceive and attend to, however, are of such a kind as to exist *only* as determinations or characteristics of something else—for instance the color here which I take as the color *of* the curtain. Other things I perceive and attend to are not essentially dependent in this way. The curtain, for instance, is not a characteristic of the auditorium in the same sense as its color is *its* characteristic. That the curtain is where it is is in a sense accidental; it could be somewhere else, and if it were, its color would have gone with it. In grasping the curtain as an object of perception, I grasp something which has a certain independence of everything else, which does not present itself always and necessarily as an aspect or characteristic of anything else.

I have been using the word "characteristic" in a vague sense; and some further distinctions will be in order.

An individual object of perception, a body, has parts, into which it could be divided by some process; one part could be severed from another. Such parts are to be distinguished from characteristics which qualify the thing as a whole, for instance the color of the whole, if it is of a single color; its shape or form; its extendedness; its roughness or smoothness. Characteristics of the latter kind may be called *immediate properties* of the whole. The parts, too, may have properties, which are not immediately properties of the whole, but first and foremost properties of the parts: *their* shape, color, and so on. Moreover, there are aspects of the thing which are properties of properties; for instance, the surface of the thing is not an immediate property of the whole, but is essentially the *limit* of its extendedness, and hence a property of its extendedness.

Some characteristics or determinations of a thing involve an essential reference to other things. The other things may be actually nearby and therefore perceivable along with the thing I am examining, or they may be presented in memory or in the imagination. I have already said that we perceive an object as being of a more or less determinate type—it is a kind of tree, or rock, and so on. The recognition of type depends upon a precipitate of past experience. I do not necessarily remember particular objects which were previously experienced and which are similar to the one before me; I do not make an explicit comparison; but past experience, now apparently forgotten, has somehow produced a precipitate of habitual familiarity which operates without my being explicitly aware of it as such.

But comparisons of objects with respect to likeness or similarity can also become *explicit*. The comparison then involves a mental going-back-and-forth between one of the objects and the other, with at the same time a holding-in-grasp of the one I am not at the moment attending to. The object with which I am comparing the one in front of me may be present or else absent; in the latter case it is either remembered or imagined. The similarity may amount to complete alike-ness or sameness, or it may have to do with the whole of each object but still involve difference, as the large bright-red ball is similar to but not completely like the small dark-red ball. Or again, the similarity may relate only to particular aspects of the objects, as the table and chair may be alike with respect to color or ornamentation.

The relations I have mentioned thus far—relations of similarity and difference—are to be distinguished from relations which presuppose that the things related are actually present and co-existing, and not given in imagination or memory. For instance, the distance of one object from another is a relation which requires both objects to be given as present. Again, in order that an object be perceived as part of a configuration of objects, say a constellation of stars, it is necessary that all objects of the configuration be present in a perceptually grasped whole. Such relations I think I shall call *reality* relations, because they require the real, simultaneous presence of the objects related.

All relations, whether comparison-relations or reality-relations, presuppose that the objects related are taken together as a plurality. The awareness of the objects as forming a plurality is, however, only a *precondition* for the grasping of a relation. In order for me to grasp a relation, there must be a primary interest in one of the objects, in relation to which the other objects are seen as similar, or nearby, and so on. I see A as taller than B; the focus of interest is for the moment on A, which thus forms the substrate of the relation. The interest, of course, can shift to B, in which case I see B as shorter than A—in a sense the same relation. All relational facts are thus reversible. The general fact that in relating objects I go from one to the other would be my reason for regarding the simple subject-predicate analysis of assertions as fundamental.

The grasping of a relation presupposes that the plurality of objects related is given; but the given-ness of the plurality can be of different kinds. In a comparison-relation one or more of the objects compared may be an imagined or fictive object rather than a perceived ob-

ject; and in this case the togetherness of the objects is brought about only in my own awareness, in my own inner time, but not in the visible world. The objects related in a reality-relation, on the other hand, stand next to one another in a real duration, in an objective time valid for all objects of the visible world. This objective time is also valid for other persons besides myself. If someone tells me of his past experience, what he remembers has its fixed place in the same public time as does my own past experience. Objective or public time is a form in accordance with which everything perceivable is ordered in succession. Just how such a form comes about is a difficult problem. But the point I am making here is that this objective time, which is presupposed in reality-relations, binds together my own experience and the experience of others, so that it is experience of *one* world.

All the distinctions I have been making—between substrate and characteristic, immediate property and mediate property, part and whole, comparison-relation and reality-relation—are, I am claiming, recognizable as involved in our experience of the visible world, the world of broad daylight, independently of the forms of our speech. The forms of speech, I am claiming, are *rooted* in these distinctions. In our actual lives, the receptive experiencing of the perceivable world, on the one hand, and our speaking, our predicative judging, on the other, are not separate but interlaced. I have separated them in analysis because they *are* separable, and because in separating them I find it possible to discern the ways in which objects present themselves in experience. It is a very simple and obvious thing I am saying. Speech, logos, presupposes a world, the world, in which it is a fundamental fact that there are distinguishable, relatively independent objects which present themselves in and through their characteristics. The world, on the contrary, does not presuppose speech or language.

In calling our experience of the world "receptive," I do not mean to imply that the "I" or self is altogether passive in such experience. Every awareness is an awareness *of* something; there is a polarity here, with the "I" or self at one pole and the object of awareness at the other. The "I" is affected by the object; it attends to or grasps it. Activity and passivity are interlaced in each awareness.

If we turn now to the predicative judgment, we encounter a new kind of interest and activity on the part of the "I" or self. Let us suppose that I have perceived a certain object or substrate S, and then noted a characteristic of it, p. For instance, I may have isolated the curtain as an object and then noted its color. These activities—the grasping of the substrate, the holding of the substrate in grasp while I note the color, which is thus grasped as *belonging* to the substrate—these activities are bound to what is immediately given. The result of such activities, if I do not fix it once for all in a predicative judgment, is not really my *possession.* Perhaps it is not altogether lost, but sinks into the background of awareness and there works to build my general familiarity with the perceivable world. But it is not yet knowledge. We have some way yet to go before we reach anything which can be called, in a strict sense, knowledge.

The predicative judgment presupposes an active will to knowledge. I return to the substrate S, and now grasp *actively* and *explicitly* the fact that it is determined by the characteristic p. The transition from S to p no longer occurs passively, but is guided by an active will to hold S fast by fixing its characteristics. The substrate becomes the subject of a predication. Fixing the gaze on the hidden unity of S and p, I now grasp actively the synthesis of the two which was previously given only in a passive way. I say: "S is p"; or, "The curtain is beige" (if that is the right name for this color).

Having uttered or thought a judgment, my fictional contemplative fellow has for the first time used *words.* Now what does this involve? Let me first distinguish two kinds of words in the sentence "The curtain is beige." First, words like "curtain" and "beige," which could by themselves constitute assertions in certain contexts, for instance as answers to questions. These have been traditionally known as *categorematic* terms. Secondly, there are words which influence within an assertion the way in which the categorematic terms signify what they signify; these have been traditionally known as *syncategorematic* terms. For instance, the word "the" before "curtain" is a demonstrative which makes the word "curtain" refer to *this* curtain; the copula "is" a sign indicating the synthesis of subject and predicate in judgment. But it is the categorematic term "curtain" which tells me what I am talking about, and the categorematic term "beige" which tells me what I am saying about it. These words are *common* nouns and adjectives; verbs are also categorematic. The meanings of such terms are what we call *universals* because the words in virtue of their meanings are able to refer to many particular instances. All predication involves such universals. This fact points back to the fact that every perceived object or characteristic in the perceivable world is perceived as of a more or less known or familiar *type.* The common nouns and adjectives used in predication refer to such types. When I say, "This object is beige," there is implicit in this predication a relation to the general essence *beige.* The relation to the general essence or universal is not yet explicit here, as it would begin to be if I said, "This is *a* beige object," where the indefinite article *a* points to generality. Later on I shall try to discuss the problem of the given-ness of universals. But in assertions about individual objects of the perceivable world, the explicit grasping of universals is not involved; the use of common nouns and adjectives is based on our passive, doxic familiarity with types of things and characteristics.

Assertions about individual perceivable objects run parallel to our receptive experience of such objects. I have already mentioned judgments of the type "S is p," "The curtain is beige." Such judgments express the fact that a substrate is characterized by the *immediate property* p. If the focus of interest passes to a second immediate prop-

erty q, we get an assertion of the form, "S which is p is also q"; or the subordinate clause "which is p" may be replaced simply by the attributive adjective p modifying S. To take another case: if the property p of S is itself characterized by a property α, we get an assertion of the form, "S is p which is α"; and again the subordinate clause "which is α" may be replaced by an adverb modifying p. The use of adverbs and attributive adjectives thus presupposes prior assertions.

There are assertions of the form "S has T," which express the fact that an individual object S contains a certain part; for example, "The house has or contains an attic." Assertions of this kind refer back to experiences in which an object is perceived as being a whole made up of parts. These assertions *cannot* be converted into assertions of the form "S is p"; the part which is separable cannot lose its independence and become a property. On the other hand, a statement of the form "S is p" *can* be turned into a statement of the form "S has T"; for instance, the assertion "This object is red" can become "This object has redness," or reversely, "Redness belongs to this object." This shift involves a *substantifying* of the property designated by the word "red." *Substantivity* means standing as something which can have characteristics, and which can therefore become the subject of a predication; it is opposed to *adjectivity*, which means *being in* or *on* something else. Substantivity and adjectivity are not merely a matter of grammatical forms; the difference in the two depends on a difference in the manner of grasping something, either as *for itself*, or as *on* or *in something*. Any characteristic of a thing, although initially presented as in or on a substrate, can be substantified. This freedom in substantifying rests on the fact that already in the receptive experience of the world everything that presents itself, whether substrate or characteristic, can be made the theme of inquiry; it has characteristics which can be ascertained, including relations of similarity and difference to other substrates or characteristics.

Again, there are assertions based on our grasping of relations in experience, for instance the assertion "A is similar to B." Once more we have a subject and a predicate, but the predicate is more complicated than in the previous cases. The word "similar" is adjectival, but its adjectivity is different from that of the word "red"; it is grasped only through the transition in awareness from A to B, from the *subject* to the *object* of the relation. Once again, what is adjectival can be substantified, and we can come to speak of the "similarity of A to B."

Now this freedom in substantifying extends further, and at this point we can take a very large step forward. Having uttered assertions, I can now substantify that which they mean, the synthesis of subject and predicate which is intended in the act of asserting. I can make statements of the form, "The fact that S is p, is q," where q can be an adjective like "just" or "pleasant." Here the subject of the sentence is itself a sentence expressing a state of affairs. As subject of the new sentence, the assertion "S is p" is no longer traversed in a two-membered, upbeat-downbeat rhythm; it is caught, so to speak, in one beam of the attention, is treated as a substrate of which I can ascertain characteristics. We here encounter a new kind of object of awareness, the unity of meaning in a completed judgment. Such objects I shall call *objects of reason*, because they presuppose the activity of reason or *logos*, the faculty of making judgments.

These new objects, constituted in the activity of reason, differ radically from the objects presented in our experience of the perceptual world. The perceptual object is indeed presented in a temporal process; further examination always enriches its meaning, adds to its ascertained characteristics. But the object is always there; the examination of the object can be broken off at any point, and yet the object is always presented as being one and the same and *there*. The activity of the "I" or self produces *presentations* of the object, but not the object itself. In the case of an object of reason, on the other hand, the synthesis of subject and predicate is required for the object to be given at all; the activity of the "I" cannot be broken off at an arbitrary point, but must be carried through to completion, in order for the object to be present.

The difference may be stated differently. The perceptual object, the individual object of the visible world, is presented in the course of my inner time, the succession of awareness, but it always stands before me as existing in an objective time, a time which is valid for the whole world of individual objects. It is an individual thing, distinguished from every other individual thing of the visible world in virtue of being localized in public space and time. An object of reason, the unity of meaning in an assertion, does not belong to the visible world in this way; we do not find meanings in the world in the same way in which we find things. The meant states of affairs are indeed constituted and grasped in my inner time. But what is grasped when I grasp the content of an assertion is not given as itself belonging to any particular stretch of the objective time of the world. I am not concerned here with the truth or falsity of the assertion, but only with the mode of given-ness of its content. That Caesar crossed the Rubicon may be true or false; but the kind of object I grasp when I grasp the content of this assertion, namely a meaning, presents itself as transtemporal, something which is identically the same every time I grasp it, that is, every time I think of it, but which is not itself individualized in the space and time of the visible world.

What I am saying here is, I believe, quite elementary, and is tacitly presupposed in every assertion I make. For in making an assertion I intend that the auditor grasp my meaning, and I am disappointed when what he says and does implies that he has failed to understand. Any particular uttering of the assertion is an event in the objective time of the world; but I act as if what is asserted in many repetitions of the assertion is self-identical,

always the same, and capable as such of being communicated.

Now there is one more kind of object whose mode of given-ness has to be discussed; this is the universal, the idea, or in the Greek, *eidos*. The Greek word *eidos* comes from the verb "to see," and meant originally the "look" of a thing. The look of a thing, what we see on first impression, is the general type to which the thing belongs. In the sense of familiar type, the universal has been with us all along.

Up to now I have been talking about experience of individual objects of the visible world, and about assertions immediately based on such experience. All such assertions involve an *implicit* relation to generalities or universals; this is shown by the fact that in making an assertion we have to use *common* nouns and adjectives and verbs, which in virtue of their meaning are capable of referring to many individuals. Words of this kind, capable of referring to many instances, seem to be fundamental to any language. Even proper names often derive from common nouns, Smith, Brown, Klein, and so on. The implicit relation to universals rests on our typical familiarity with the world, the fact that every object presents itself as belonging to a more or less definite type.

Is there any way in which ideas or universals can be *explicitly* grasped, as evidently *given* objects of consciousness? This is a difficult question. Let me point out first that every inquiry aiming at knowledge seems to *presuppose* that the universal can be clearly and distinctly grasped, insofar as it assumes that questions of the form, What is so-and-so, for instance, What is what we call a tree, or a *meson,* or courage, can be inquired into, and with effort and good luck, be answered. In Greek, the question is τί ἐστιν—What is it? The *what* is the universal, capable by its nature of being applied to many.

You must permit me once more to proceed on the basis of the simplest example. Suppose I am confronted with two objects, S and S', each of which has the property p, say "red." Of course S has *its* redness, and S' has *its* redness; there is a separateness of the properties as well as of the substrata. But there is also a unity here, an identity, which I can grasp in shifting the attention from S to S' and back again. There is a oneness in the manyness. The comparison of objects, the focusing upon that with respect to which they are similar, can go on to further cases, and need not be limited to actually presented cases, but may include the consideration of *imagined, possible* cases. Thus through the medium of the imagination I arrive at the notion of an infinity, an endlessness of possible individuations of the same *eidos*. It may be difficult to define the limits of the possible variation of instances, but in some cases I do seem to be able to do this, and to see that the universal involves definite limits, a definite structure, definite relations to other universals. For instance, I can imagine the colors of the objects to be different; there is a range of possible colors, but I seem to grasp that whatever color is, it will always be extended; an unextended color is unimaginable. Similarly, it appears clear to me that a tone or any sound must in every instance have an intensity, as well as the quality we call timbre or tone-quality.

I introduce these cases of intellectual perception, not because of any importance they might or might not have in themselves, but because of what they show. It is not enough, and not quite correct, to say that they *derive* from experience, that they are inductions or abstractions from experience. If I observe 100 swans, and find them all to be white, I may indeed guess that all swans are white; but the conclusion is not *necessary*, and is in fact false, since there are black swans in Central Africa. It is not the same with the connection between color and extension; color involves extension *essentially*, and I see this not just by observing particular instances of color, but by a variation of instances in the imagination, which allows me to "see" what must be involved in any case of color. And the idea or *eidos*, which thus appears as an identity running through the imaginable instances, presents itself, like the objects of reason previously described, as something trans-temporal, something not in the objective world with its objective time, not even immanent in the acts of consciousness, but as an identity which can be repeatedly *intended* by consciousness.

Permit me to summarize what I have been saying. I have been aiming, not to make hypotheses, but to describe and to explicate; what I have been attempting to describe and explicate is that which is involved or presupposed in the making of assertions, judgments, predications. The description has proceeded by stages; at each stage I seek to delineate precisely what the I or self grasps, as being somehow presented to it.

The making of predications presupposes, in the first place, my pre-predicative, pre-reflective experience of the world. My pre-predicative experience of the world can be separated, in analysis, from speech; our speaking, on the contrary, appears when analyzed always to point back to the pre-predicative experience of the world. Pre-predicative experience is first and foremost experience of perceivable objects. The objects present themselves as *in* the world, along with other objects, in an objective time which is valid for all such objects. They present themselves as belonging to more or less familiar types. And they present themselves in and through their properties, parts, and relations. There is always a sense of "and so on" attaching to my experience of a perceivable object, in that I can always make further determinations, both of the internal characteristics of the object and of its relations to other objects. But it remains throughout an identity, a locus of possible experience, a substratum of possible determinations.

Predication, on the simplest level, involves an active repetition of the passage in pre-predicative experience from substratum to characteristic. The flow of perceptions in our pre-predicative experience goes on harmoniously almost of itself. Predication, on the other hand, presupposes an active will to fix, once and for all, that which is given in experience, to make it my possession.

The predication is embodied in a temporal event, in a succession of sounds, the spoken sentence; but it is not itself this temporal event. The sound emerges from silence and falls back into silence; it passes like an arrow, leaving no trace in the air. But that which the sound expresses, the predication, is a unity or identity of meaning which can be repeatedly intended and repeatedly expressed; speaking quite strictly, it is not in the objective time of the world, but is grasped as trans-temporal. It is constituted in the activity of the I or self, but it is nonetheless an objectivity; it can be substantified, and itself made the subject of predication.

Finally, I have described one further and essential condition of predicative speech, namely the universal. Every assertion I make involves categorematic terms, universals, which in their nature are capable of referring to many instances. The use of the universal in speech is based, to begin with, on the typical character of my experience of the world, the fact that objects and characteristics present themselves as belonging to more or less familiar types. The universal first enters the assertion so to speak tacitly, without its range of meaning being explicitly grasped. But the will to knowledge can be satisfied only if the universal can itself be made the subject of predication. The empirical sciences approach such universal predications by means of statistical inference; their results are always open-ended, subject to revision. But it also appears that there is such a thing as intellectual perception, eidetic insight, by which one can grasp the range of a universal, define it, and make necessary predications about it, on the basis of a variation of instances in the imagination. I may note that, on a rough count, nearly half the assertions I have made this evening are such universal assertions.

My effort at description has to end here, although the stopping-point is arbitrary; there is a vast range of possible explications of this kind, which would have the aim of delineating each objectivity or kind of objectivity presented to awareness just *as* it presents itself. I regard such description as important, because I believe the correct method of philosophy is that of attending to and grasping states of affairs just as they are given or presented, and explicating them with respect to such of their connections and relations as are likewise presented and grasped. Only by a repetition of this process can philosphically primitive ideas and propositions receive adequate confirmation. Principles should not be just postulated or constructed, accepted merely on faith, whether animal or spiritual, or justified by the emotional comfort or practical success they may bring. That is part of the meaning, I think of the Socratic return to the *logoi*.

What, finally, about the Underground, since the announced title of this lecture included that term? The German word "Underground" can mean anything which either in a direct way or analogically underlies something else. So in talking about *hypokeimena*, or subjects of predication, and of the way in which they present themselves, I can claim to have been talking about the underground of speech. But as everyone knows, there is a more subversive and indeed altogether more interesting sort of underground, the one which, Dostoevski intends in *Notes from the Underground*. This underground is the location, so to speak, of certain writers of the present and of the last hundred years who throw to us, and in fact to the whole tradition of philosophy, a certain challenge. There are really many challenges which they throw; the challenges are difficult to characterize as a whole, but they might perhaps be subsumed under the formula of the old myth of Prometheus, according to which all the gifts which make man *man*, including speech, are based upon, and therefore infected by a fraud. So Camus and Jaspers and Heidegger speak of man as a castaway, shipwrecked on an island of everyday-ness. And Heidegger above all has sought to pull the tradition of philosophy up by the roots, and to show that our awareness of the world and of ideas as constituted in inner time involves a fraud. Then wisdom can only lie in the destruction, the total dismantling, of what is fraudulent in our awareness. And perhaps the four revolver shots of Meersault, the hero of Camus' novel *The Stranger*, are more efficacious in this respect than the discipline of listening to and following the *logos*. On the other hand, it might just be that the staccato notes which issue from the Underground will shock us, and cause us to look once more with open eyes and with wonder at what is our most characteristically human endowment, speech.

Orwell's Future and the Past

Ronald Berman

Czeslaw Milosz wrote in *The Captive Mind* that Orwell was phenomenally popular behind the Iron Curtain because readers were "amazed that a writer who never lived in Russia should have so keen a perception into its life."[1] But truth is not always the appropriate standard by which to judge fiction. Orwell may have given us a convincing picture of life in the Soviet Union, and of the social character of totalitarianism, but that is not all he has done. He had more than Moscow or even London in mind when writing about the chief city of Airstrip One, a province of Oceania: it may well be that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is as much about Athens as it is about Moscow. A place in any work of fiction, like Pemberley or Laputa or Vanity Fair, is primarily an idea.

Nineteen Eighty-Four differs radically from most stories of the future. It is not about a great calamity which comes from outside the social situation. It is resolutely conventional in its description of things and its understanding of character. There can be very few other works about the future life of man so permeated by the smell of boiled cabbage. A producer has despairingly remarked of science-fiction films that they have been all platinum hair and diagonal zippers, but there is none of that here; no fascination with the terrors of change. In many ways, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seems to resist futurism.

Rather it seems to require a lot of knowledge about history. It challenges our recollection of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky. It suggests events of the twentieth century as we have experienced them. But the book is also about certain philosophical arguments. Orwell intends us to recall many of them, beginning with that between Socrates and Thrasymachus. O'Brien is the ultimate version of those Guardians "who keep watch over our commonwealth"[2] and preserve the purity of its laws. It makes a good deal of sense to read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the light of Plato's *Republic*—and of the *Politics* of Aristotle.

I think that the book also intends us to recall certain literary themes. It is a superb example of the *topos* of awakening into intellectual and spiritual life. Winston Smith shares the awakening experience—"It is not easy to become sane"—not only with the wretched prisoners of the Ministry of Love but with all those whose awakening challenges their capacity to understand it, with Lear, with Kurtz, with Gregor Samsa. I would not call it a genre, but one of the great literary forms of the West is about a man who escapes from the Shadows of the Cave, and is blinded by what he sees.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a very *literary* book, full of echoes of other books. It develops ideas which have been argued for centuries. In a sense, the sources of this book are everywhere. To go through Orwell's *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* is to be overwhelmed by the names of authors and the titles of books. His work is a library of allusions to Arnold, Baudelaire, Belloc, Carlyle, Dickens, Eliot, Flaubert, Gissing, Hardy, Lawrence, Powell, Shakespeare, Waugh, and others the full mention of whom would take a very long time. He read everything, and he quarrelled with most of it.

We know that Orwell read the classics because he complained in such detail about having to read them. When he was at St. Cyprian's (immortalized in "Such, Such Were the Joys") he was force-fed the classics like a Strasbourg goose. In order for the school to make a reputation off the brilliance of its students the scholarship boys were bullied into brilliance. In order to distinguish themselves on the examinations they had to become

Ronald Berman served as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1971-1977. He is now director of the Humanities Institute at the University of California, San Diego.

little encyclopedias of Latin and Greek, "crammed with learning as cynically as a goose is crammed for Christmas."[3] Orwell said of his involuntary mastery of the classics, "looking back, I realize that I then worked harder than I have ever done since."[4] It is a fairly strong remark from the author of *Down and Out in Paris and London.*

Orwell's favorite reading on summer mornings at school, when he was temporarily free from his own set of academic Guardians, included the novels of H. G. Wells. It seems odd to think that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* should be in part a combination of two such different kinds of reading: stolen hours with Wells and soldiering through Latin and Greek. I think we should agree that Wells stayed with Orwell till the end of his life, and, I would argue, so did the reading he did with much less enjoyment.

The dialogue form is rightly associated with Plato, but before looking at *The Republic* we ought to consider the connection between Orwell and Aristotle's *Politics*. For the latter, I believe, is the most essential book in that history of ideas which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* summarizes, and of which it is the latest statement. Aristotle's *Politics* contains nearly everything but Orwell's plot. The fifth book of the *Politics*, on the causes of revolution, describes a society penetrated by informers, spies, eavesdroppers, and secret police. It analyzes the conscious institution of poverty by the state. It discusses the rivalry between the state and other social units like the family. It refers to the public promotion of private hatreds. It talks about war as a form of domestic policy. Above all, it is about the attack on what Aristotle calls the "spirit" of the polis.

There are many tactical similarities between the two books. For example, Aristotle writes that "men are not so likely to speak their minds if they go in fear of a secret police,"[5] and we can see without difficulty how this observation can have been put into narrative form. (Although, clearly, given the totalitarian history of our own century we need not go to Aristotle for the suggestion). It is probably more important for us to be aware of more specific resemblances. Aristotle, like Orwell, is not concerned with tyranny as a sudden calamity but as a development of other forms of political life. When he writes that "the methods applied in extreme democracies are thus all to be found in tyrannies" (245) he provides us with a way of recognizing and interpreting events in *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

Both the *Politics* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are about the development of political systems. Both are about a certain kind of tyranny, which goes far beyond merely political rule. Both are about oligarchy: Emmanuel Goldstein's book (actually written by O'Brien and his collaborators) is called *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, a title which neatly connects classical and Communist terminology. The phrase "oligarchy" itself leads us inescapably to its classic definition, which is in the works of Plato and Aristotle where the conception of closed minority rule enters our political consciousness.

Aristotle describes a number of forms of oligarchy, not all of which concern us. What we are concerned with is, I suggest, the kind of oligarchy which has some connection both to tyranny and to what Aristotle disapprovingly calls "extreme democracies." The ultimate form of oligarchy comes about when a dynasty has absolute control over property, men, and politics, "and it is persons, and not the law, who are now the sovereign" (172). The reader of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* tends to slide by distinctions, but *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* recognizes the differences between stages of despotism. It is very close to Aristotle when it acknowledges that "the essence of oligarchical rule" is to be found in "the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life." That "certain world-view" means the law has been replaced by a different conception, that of power. In Aristotle, oligarchy becomes tyranny; in Orwell it becomes dictatorship.

There is a passage in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* often cited for its quality of psychological revelation. The passage, from O'Brien's *apologia* for the Party, states the satisfactions of power as the reason for exerting it:

> We are different from all the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but never had the couragee to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise. . . . We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. (116)[6]

The modern audience is rightly fascinated by the insight into aberrant motivation. Any teacher of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* finds that this passage gets students to realize some hidden truths about human desires. But the passage is useful to us in another way, because it makes a crucial distinction: "all the oligarchies of the past" have had political ends. And, they have culminated only in the forms described by Aristotle and other theorists. This oligarchy will be different in its philosophical imaginativeness. It will extend political definitions.

Orwell has a highly organized sense of the operation of such an oligarchy. His narrative is deployed around three issues:

1. The relationship of the state to certain individuals who represent potential opposition to authority.
2. The object, political and non-political, of unconstitutional power.
3. The tactics of authority.

These issues cover the common ground between Orwell and his source. We ought to see how they take shape in Aristotle, and how they are dramatized by Orwell.

I Individual and State:

Aristotle's discussion of tyranny is first of all concerned with the relationship of individual to government. He writes of the man who is virtuous or "outstanding" in a rather special way. This man is the natural object of tyranny. He need not be in active opposition to the state. It suffices that the state recognizes the fact of his excellence, that it perceives his excellence to be a potential threat. This conception is at the heart of Orwell's narrative. Winston Smith seems unheroic to us, who have been raised on a literature of more activist heroes. But it must be understood that he is more honest than the other characters—except possibly for O'Brien—and that he is capable of independent thought. And, he loves what is beautiful. In his world, these constitute remarkable differences. If his character did not constitute a danger to illicit power then the following dialogue would not have been written:

> "And you consider yourself morally superior to us, with our lies and our cruelty?"
>
> "Yes, I consider myself superior." (119)

He has been kicked and flogged and insulted before saying this, and he has rolled on the floor in his own blood. I think that qualifies as "outstanding."

All outstanding men are potential criminals. Aristotle was much interested in a certain story about such citizens (he mentions it on three separate occasions in the *Politics*). It is about the appropriate punishment for excellence. By the time the story had reached him it had become a parable of political foresight: of policy dealing with propensity. The story is about the "advice which was offered by Periander to his fellow-tyrant Thrasybulus" about the best way to deal with those potential enemies, the "outstanding citizens" of the commonwealth (237). Aristotle refers to this story a number of times, but in an abbreviated way. Here I quote the fuller account given in Herodotus:

> On one occasion he sent a herald to ask Thrasybulus what mode of government it was safest to set up in order to rule with honour. Thrasybulus led the messenger without the city, and took him into a field of corn, through which he began to walk, while he asked him again and again concerning his coming from Corinth, ever as he went breaking off and throwing away all such ears of corn as over-topped the rest. In this way he went through the whole field, and destroyed the richest and best part of the crop.[7]

The bewildered messenger returns home, and it is left to the subtle imagination of tyranny to interpret the meaning. Herodotus has reversed the asking and giving of advice, but he has clearly provided the essential strategy for tyranny: cut off the tallest heads. The *Politics* takes its departure for the study of tyranny from this story. Orwell has translated the idea of outstanding civic merit— Winston differs from the rest because of his inward honesty, his sensibility, and his intellectual stubborness—but, as both O'Brien and he acknowledge, he is indeed morally "superior."

II The Object of Power:

Perhaps the most important thing that can be said about this part of Aristotle's discussion is that it is not political, at least not as the phrase "political" is commonly understood. Aristotle's discussion (244) is existential. He knows what the "traditional" policies of tyranny are, but he is much more concerned with policies directed *"against everything likely to produce the two qualities of mutual confidence and a high spirit"* (emphasis added). The statement seems oddly inexact, especially for a methodical thinker. It seems far afield from politics. But is very close to Orwell's conception of policy in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The statement is rephrased in various ways throughout Aristotle's discussion of tyranny, surfacing finally as one of his major conclusions about the subject. One of the great ends of the authoritarian state is, he states, to break the "spirit" (246) of its citizens. The *Politics* is a book rich in detail and in historical example—it lets us know just what policies are used by Sparta or Athens or Corinth in just what circumstances. But it is also a book of consummate psychological insight. Aristotle's discussion of tyranny is much more than a catalogue of ruinous taxes, unjust laws, and inhuman penalties. He writes about the effect of tyranny in a way which must have captured Orwell's eye. He writes about the destruction of what is intuitive in human character and free in human expression. He is concerned with friendship, confidence, trust, feeling and, above all, with spirit. He refers again and again to "spirit," coming back to it each time as the ultimate object of tyrannic power. He insists on the human necessity for association, and his essay is largely an analysis of the forms it takes, forms which are the natural object of unjust power. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is about association in all its forms, from the sexual union through the choice of friends to the formation of the family, the consent of the community, and the largest voluntary association of all, the polis itself. Each of its episodes in some exemplary way concerns the breakdown of human association.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is not a story of political resistance. It is about the operation of sensibility. It does not describe the activity of a political cell—Winston's ideas of rebellion are never more than hopes or illusions. The narrative is about sexual and aesthetic consciousness. It is about a man with a sense of taste and style who perceives things artistically. Its central symbolic object is a piece of coral embedded in glass; its central act is the act of love.

May I suggest that O'Brien as well as Orwell has read the *Politics*? To O'Brien, political theory of the past is an explicit challenge. He mentions that theory constantly, and always points out how its conception of totalitarianism has been exceeded by his own contribution to that subject. He takes an unholy delight in posing as a teacher, conducting a "dialogue" with the uninitiated, discussing to what degree the future will exceed the moral limits of the past. He gives us what Aristotle did not guess at: the reason why tyranny is pleased by power. And he is, I think, fully and perhaps exquisitely aware of the truism

that is at the beginning of Aristotle's fifth Book: "Men tend to become revolutionaries from circumstances connected with their private lives" (227). He must be aware of this, for it is this idea which validates his unending search for deviations of taste, style, or feeling.

O'Brien competes with all political theory before him. When he discusses oligarchy his version surpasses the classical definition; and when he discusses tyranny his version outdoes the pallid beginnings of injustice previously recorded. He has the trait—almost the tic—of comparing the future with the past, which is to say of comparing his own megalomania to that of all tyrants before him. What all previous books say about the effect of tyranny on private life will be exceeded after the orgasm has been "abolished." The entire philosophical category of "private" life will also have been abolished.

III The Tactics of Authoritarian Power:

How does the authoritarian state respond to the natural human desire for association? By defending itself, Aristotle writes, from "everything likely to produce the two qualities of mutual confidence and a high spirit." The unjust state will prohibit public meetings and make "mutual acquaintance" difficult. This necessarily means the invasion of privacy, and Aristotle tells us how that is accomplished. In essence, men must live their private lives in public. What they say and whom they talk to must always be under scrutiny. Under tyranny, all citizens must *literally* be under the eye of government.

Citizens must not confuse themselves by assuming that there are independent and opposed public and private realms. Aristotle's locution for the destruction of privacy is, to say the least, striking and anticipatory. The forced exhibition of private association,

> is meant to give the ruler a peep-hole into the actions of his subjects, and to inure them to humility by a habit of daily slavery. (244)

By no stretch of the imagination was Aristotle thinking of television. But Orwell, who was thinking of television, may have joined an idea to its technological realization.

In general, Orwell allows O'Brien to show how previous political theory, disarmed by its own limits of imagination (and possibly by its own decency), has failed to understand both the power of the state and the human nature upon which it feeds. When we read the list of state activities provided by Aristotle we sense that it provides Orwell with a skeleton structure for his story, and provides O'Brien with a history that must be exceeded:

> A fourth line of policy is that of endeavouring to get regular information about every man's sayings and doings. This entails a secret police like the female spies employed at Syracuse, or the eavesdroppers sent by the tyrant Hiero to all social gatherings and public meetings. (Men are not so likely to speak their minds if they go in fear of a secret police; and if they do speak out, they are less likely to go undetected.) Still another line of policy is to sow mutual distrust and to foster discord between friend and friend; between people and notables; between one section of the rich and another. Finally, a policy pursued by tyrants is that of impoverishing their subjects. . . . The imposition of taxes produces a similar result. . . . The same vein of policy also makes tyrants war-mongers, with the object of keeping their subjects constantly occupied and continually in need of a leader. (244–245)

One grants that these ideas have passed into universal currency and, after two thousand years, are to be found scattered from Machiavelli to Lenin. But the vein of discourse in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is pointedly historical. O'Brien's favorite rhetorical mode is to invoke the incomplete tyrannies of the past from Egypt to the Inquisition to National Socialism whenever he wishes to establish the ultimacy of the Party. Orwell's historical references and phrases are more pointed than a casual reading may bring out. For example, Aristotle states that one of the best ways to waste civic resources intentionally is to undertake useless public projects: "one example of this policy is the building of the Egyptian pyramids: another is the lavish offerings to temples" (245). *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* agrees that it is indispensable for tyranny to destroy private wealth by public means, but it takes the idea literally. O'Brien-Goldstein considers Aristotle's example—"it would be quite simple to waste the surplus labor of the world by building temples and pyramids" (85)—but rejects it as too simple a solution. The new tyranny not only builds enormous public works which waste private wealth; it then destroys them by war in order to absorb yet more taxation.

There are other references to classical political theory, and other echoes of Aristotle's text. Aristotle had written that under tyranny it is customary "to increase the poverty of the tyrant's subjects and to curtail their leisure" (245) and O'Brien modifies that formulation: "Leisure," he writes, "must be abolished because the totalitarian state is erected "on a basis of poverty" (84). A much larger theme develops from the use of Aristotle's second major conclusion about unjust power: the aim of such power being to reduce citizens to slaves and conquer their innate "refusal to betray one another or anybody else" (246). Since that theme is in a sense Orwell's book, it becomes difficult even to organize resemblances. The phrase "betray" is everywhere in the text. But it is used in a special sense. It does not mean giving up political secrets under interrogation—it means giving up human association, betraying the "spirit" of mutual trust, loyalty, confidence, and love. This conception dovetails with Aristotle's. He is intensely concerned with the existential conditions of the unjust polis. The examples he gives and, as we shall see, the conclusions he reaches are about the emotional, spiritual, and ethical effects of tyranny upon association. The unjust polis, he writes, corrupts the feelings of its citizens, and intends *above all* "to break their spirit."(246)

Before he is tortured, Winston makes an important distinction between confession and betrayal. We should be aware that Orwell is having him follow the implication of the *Politics*: that is to say, confession is a political

act while betrayal is an act directed against human association. Julia, who is measurably less conscious than Winston, begins this particular exchange by saying that "Everybody always confesses. You can't help it. They torture you" (73). Winston's reply is as follows:

> "I don't mean confessing. Confession is not betrayal. What you say or do doesn't matter; only feelings matter. If they could make me stop loving you—that would be the real betrayal." (73-74)

The distinction is Aristotelian. It signifies not only that the unjust polis must maintain order but that it must internalize it. If it prevents "trust" and "confidence" from developing, it prevents the development of the one thing it really fears, association independent of political control.

Under torture, Winston first betrays all of humanity, with one vital exception. That is to say, he confesses. *Because confession is not betrayal*, he remains, after the first stage of torture, in some sense immune to the power of the state. The measure of his character is not only that he knows this, but admits it:

> "You have whimpered for mercy, you have betrayed everybody and everything. Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you?"
>
> Winston had stopped weeping, though the tears were still oozing out of his eyes. He looked up at O'Brien.
>
> "I have not betrayed Julia," he said.
>
> O'Brien looked down at him thoughtfully. "No," he said, "no; that is perfectly true. You have not betrayed Julia." (121)

Being a good reader of the *Politics*, O'Brien knows the distinction that Winston has unconsciously raised. He reserves further punishment for him, of the kind that will assuredly "break" his "spirit." It is of some interest that O'Brien's phrase, "you have betrayed everybody and everything" rings a change on Aristotle's implicit definition of the free and noble condition: the "refusal to betray one another or anybody else."

There is an answering passage, after Winston has been to Room 101 of the Ministry of Love:

> "I betrayed you," she said baldly.
>
> "I betrayed you," he said. (129)

Julia's explanation is worth some emphasis: "After that," she says, "you don't feel the same toward the other person any longer." The words are the words of Orwell, but the ideas are the ideas of the *Politics*. When mutual trust, confidence, or love disappear, then the "spirit" has in fact been broken. Human association, the only rival left to the power of the state, has itself been "betrayed."

Sometimes words are identical—a key phrase like "oligarchy" is an automatic reference to its source. It is as much an indicator of Plato and Aristotle as the phrase "surplus labor" is of Marx. Sometimes the words are only echoes. But the two texts continuously bear upon each other. There are some small mysteries which cross-reference may be able to clarify. For example, the beginning of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is anti-feminist. It is so in a special way, Winston being normally sexual and in fact highly appreciative of the female body. But he hates women. Or is it that he fears them?

> He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. (6)
>
> Some nosing zealot in the Ministry (a woman, probably; someone like the little sandy-haired woman or the dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department) might start wondering why he had been writing during the lunch interval . . . and then drop a hint in the appropriate quarter. (14)

Since Orwell did not write like this in his other works, the presumption is that he had something particularly in mind. I think that he reworked classical misogyny in this case, which becomes clear if we consider the source for this idea about "amateur spies." Aristotle is one of the great anti-feminists, and he credits women with totalitarian proclivities. Within slightly more than a single page in the *Politics* (244–245) he refers to "a secret police, like the female spies employed at Syracuse"; to tyrants who customarily "encourage feminine influence in the family, in the hope that wives will tell tales of their husbands"; and to the fact that "slaves and women are not likely to plot against tyrants."

I have so far talked about tactical resemblances between two books. I would like to conclude with a more strategic assessment. During the course of his torture at the Ministry of Love Winston discovers the motives of the Party. They seem to transcend ordinary political ends:

> Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then fill you with ourselves. (113)

In one sense, this statement reveals the characteristic megalomania of both O'Brien and the Party. O'Brien is a character of fiction, and one of the things about him is that he enjoys assuming the God. But the passage also has an intense connection to the *Politics*. It is about changes in emotion and conception—not really about political changes at all. It is about human association specifically; that is, about the feelings which connect people to each other. In short, the passage is about what we should now call social psychology.

When we come to Aristotle's conclusions about the aims of tyranny—conclusions which he emphatically states twice on a single page—we see that he defines the human changes imposed by tyranny also in terms of social psychology. In fact, he defines the end of tyranny as the accomplishment of change in human feelings. The following passage, which sums up Aristotle's view of the ends of tyranny, is about psychology and ethics:

> Their first end and aim is to break the spirit of their subjects. They know that a poor-spirited man will never plot against

> anybody. Their second aim is to breed mutual distrust. Tyranny is never overthrown until men begin to trust one another; and this is the reason why tyrants are always at outs with the good. They feel that good men are doubly dangerous to their authority —dangerous, first, in thinking it shame to be governed as if they were slaves; dangerous, again, in their spirit of mutual and general loyalty, and in their refusal to betray one another or anybody else. The third and last aim of tyrants is to make their subjects incapable of action. (246)

The vocabularies of the two passages are similar. They are both about human association. They are both about social feelings. Aristotle writes about "trust," "loyalty," and "spirit" while Orwell writes about "love," "friendship," and "integrity." It may be assumed that they bear on each other in a certain way, for they both argue that a political relationship is founded on existential conditions. But the passage in Orwell is clearly very extreme. It seems almost, if the use of the term can be imagined, very *romantic*. It looks at the history of political exploitation and states that nothing in the history of the world can match its own tactics and strategy.

It may be useful to compare O'Brien's sense of the ends of tyranny with modern historical examples, because criticism of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is almost hopelessly bound up with the belief that the book is about actual totalitarian regimes. My own sense of the matter is that it does not make much sense to interpret the revelations which come about during Winston's torture at the Ministry of Love *entirely* as if they reflected "reality." We know rather a lot about twentieth-century totalitarianism after reading *The Destruction of European Jewry, The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and *The Gulag Archipelago*. These books are significantly different from Orwell—that is to say, they perceive ends different from those stated by O'Brien. They do not suggest that the modern totalitarian state aims at anything more than the extinction of opposition. The KGB is not interested operationally in the feeling *per se* of dissidents: it uses torture to beat people down and drugs to make them helpless or psychotic.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt summarized the state's attitude toward political opposition: "Criminals are punished, undesirables disappear from the face of the earth; the only trace which they leave behind is the memory of those who knew and loved them, and one of the most difficult tasks of the secret police is to make sure that even such traces will disappear together with the condemned man."[8] And of course it must be so—in a nation of 250 million prisoners it does no good at all to have the worst offenders on parole. The business of the secret police is to eradicate them, not change their minds.

The secret police are not romantic nor do they have a philosophy. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* misleads us *if* it suggests that we are speaking only of historical possibilities and examples. Secret police do not read books or worry about the past, although O'Brien spends an awful lot of his time doing both. Secret police have what may be called the *opposite* of a philosophy, for they do whatever the leadership requires, even if it contradicts what they were told an hour before. In fact, as Hannah Arendt so brilliantly describes, the secret police find no trouble in doing things clearly contradictory at the same time: awarding some poor befuddled bureaucrat a medal and recommending the firing squad for him.

Need it be added that the secret police are often content with the appearance only of submission? They are a huge bureaucracy, and find perfection to be quite hopeless. What they want is compliance, not conversions. For example, in Poland right now the state is quite happy not to have demonstrations take place: the *provocateurs* do not go about arranging for people to undertake resistance in order to be entrapped.

There certainly seems to be a big difference between actual totalitarian ends and those stated by Orwell. It must be fairly plain, if we return to O'Brien's revelation, that he has no political objective. But he does have a political-theory objective. And that objective is what causes the book to have such striking powers of arousing outrage in the reader. It is concerned with what I should call the nightmare of philosophy. Like the writing of Machiavelli it holds a dagger to the body of the West.

It might first be noted that there is a difference between the book's quality and its effect. One recognizes that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an influential but not a great novel. It cannot be compared to anything by Dickens or Jane Austen or even to writers not up to their exceptional standard. Orwell's mind is first-rate and his language is always a pleasure to read, but clarity and purpose do not make great art. Why then is *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which is not a great novel, a great book?

In part because it addresses a great concern meaningfully; in part because it belongs to a series of books and meditations which have in certain ways not only captured but formed our imagination. The reader will understand when I say that this book—which is not great literature—belongs with the *Inferno*, with *Pilgrim's Progress*, and with another book sharing its characteristics, *The Prince*. In some important ways, even now in the Age of Criticism not fully understood, such books provide the archetype of experience: that is to say, we refer back to them to understand our own experience. Not all of these books are equal, but each of them has been definitive. *Frankenstein* is a much lesser work than the *Inferno*, but it has become its own kind of datum.

The reason why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* belongs with *Pilgrim's Progress* and the rest is its view of the past. Among a great many other books it has in a singular way come to grips with a problem that has engaged political philosophy since its beginnings. That problem, in one of its shapes, has been brilliantly stated by Isaiah Berlin in his famous essay on Machiavelli:

> If Machiavelli is right, if it is in principle (or in fact: the frontier seems dim) impossible to be morally good and do one's duty as this was conceived by common European, and especially Christian, ethics, and at the same time build Sparta or

> Periclean Athens or the Rome of the Republic or even of the Antonines, then a conclusion of the first importance follows: that the belief that the correct, objectively valid solution to the question of how men should live can in principle be discovered, is itself in principle not true. This was a truly *erschreckend* proposition.[9]

The principle of the good *social* life is familiar even to literary critics. We see it at work—and being undermined—in every one of Shakespeare's political plays. Berlin continues:

> One of the deepest assumptions of western political thought is the doctrine, scarcely questioned during its long ascendancy, that there exists some single principle which not only regulates the course of the sun and the stars, but prescribes their proper behavior to all animate creatures. Animals and sub-rational beings of all kinds follow it by instinct; higher beings attain to consciousness of it, and are free to abandon it, but only to their doom. This doctrine, in one version or another, has dominated European thought since Plato; it has appeared in many forms, and has generated many similes and allegories; at its centre is the vision of an impersonal Nature or Reason or cosmic purpose, or of a divine Creator whose power has endowed all things and creatures each with a specific function; these functions are elements in a single harmonious whole, and are intelligible in terms of it alone.
>
> This was often expressed by images taken from architecture: of a great edifice of which each part fits uniquely to the total structure; or from the human body . . . or from the life of society.

We know these great metaphors, in Shakespeare, in Herrick, and in Sir Thomas Browne:

> There are two books from whence I collect my divinity; besides that written one of God, another of his servant nature, that universal and public manuscript that lies expansed unto the eyes of all; those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other.[10]

But such metaphors now have only psychological validity, for since Machiavelli we have been forced to conclude that they were wrong, that there is no connection between morality and government, or between individual and "body" politic. Since Machiavelli, Berlin writes, we have for the most part believed simultaneously in Christian morality and in the political realism of Machiavelli. But the two contradict each other, for Christianity cannot govern and the state is immoral. It is a Gordian knot.

Philosophers have described the effect of Machiavelli on the West as "the wound that has never healed." Much the same might be said of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. But perhaps I ought to put the matter this way: is this book so traumatic to its audience because of its unequalled mastery of description of the art of torture? Or because, as so many suggest, it accurately describes the modern totalitarian state? Or because of some other reason, a reason more tragic still, but less visible?

Nineteen Eighty-Four accepts and even exemplifies the ideas of Machiavelli—not to say the ideas of Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler. But it goes beyond making a fiction of reality. It is about a world without justice. It tells us that guilt and innocence do not matter, that there is no difference between good and evil. It tells us that the object of power is power—not pain, not punishment, not redemption, not correction, not even pleasure. It even tells us that sanity does not matter, that reason has nothing to do with rule.

It describes a world of random incident. No matter how tightly organized the Party may be, and no matter how strategic its intentions, life in Oceania is a series of accidents. There is no relationship between necessary causes and outcomes. Nothing really matters; there is no definitive boundary between guilt or innocence. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers a great reversal to the concept of predestination: all within it is a matter of chance. Even the most perfect monad cannot hold; even Parsons whispers in his sleep.

Since its beginnings and in all of its times of trouble, the West has feared and rejected the idea of chaos. We have had much less trouble accepting the idea of the Apocalypse. Apocalypse is, after all, intelligible. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is built upon the most primitive of mysteries, of a return to a condition to us so fearful that our whole mythology is about its transcendance. The book is much more troubling than the art of the end of all things. In a sense it is the most illiberal of all books ever written, for it presupposes that all men will return, without much troubling themselves, to the chaos which is the very opposite of civilization.

Even *The Gulag Archipelago* is about justice, for it is profoundly concerned with the discrepancies between Soviet law and punishment. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not about the difference between constitutional and actual rights. It is about the nightmare of the West, a nightmare that has been sublimated and soothed by an endless sequence of meditations on the just society. The reason why this book is so literally *reflective*, why it alludes to Aristotle, Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Lenin, and Hitler, is that even the last of these had an order in mind. When *Nineteen Eighty-Four* tells us that the past is over it means that the dream of order and justice is itself finished; that it never corresponded to human actuality. And, even for moderns, it is a shock to know that the past is over. How much more of a shock must it be to know that there is no connection between the self and the polis?

Perhaps the last word ought to be left to a book that has every few pages intruded into my text and into that of Orwell: *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* tells us, among other things, of the failure of dreams:

> In more primitive ages, when a just and peaceful society was in fact not possible, it had been fairly easy to believe in it. The idea of an earthly paradise in which men should live together in a state of brotherhood, without laws and without brute labor, had haunted the human imagination for thousands of years. . . . But by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the

main currents of political thought were authoritarian. The earthly paradise had been discredited. (90)

To give up the vision of an earthly paradise is to give up more than a myth or speculation. It is one of the many vestiges of history which are to be surrendered. There is a vision which underlies even this, however. The idea of a just state, the aggregate of good men, has also "haunted" or inspired the imagination of the West "for thousands of years." Why has that been so? First, because political science itself began in Plato and Aristotle with that conception: it is by now woven into the strands of imagination. And second, because the idea of the just state has always been in critical relationship to the imperfect facts of social life. What Orwell writes about—what makes this book so painful—is the destruction of those values which make imperfect life endurable.

This book is not frightening because of its absolute mastery of the detail of torture and disgust. Nor because it puts totalitarian practice into believable fiction. It frightens us—arouses what Orwell late in his life called our "instinctive horror"[11]—because it conceives of a social order without justice, and of human nature quite capable of living that way. There is one more thing: while Orwell was writing this book and thinking about it he was reflecting constantly on the development of such a social order.[12] He was powerfully affected by the futurist novel *We* by Zamyatin and in his review of it he said, "what Zamyatin seems to be aiming at is not any particular country but the implied aims of industrial civilization."[13] That is to say, Orwell himself saw the future of tyranny as a natural outcome of the ideas and realities of the past. Perhaps that is why his own novel of the future has so much to say about the past, and why his own Grand Inquisitor takes such pride in his idea of progress.

1. From Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind* (London, 1953), p. 42. Reprinted in George Orwell: *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Jeffrey Meyers (London, 1975), p. 286.
2. *The Republic of Plato*, ed. Francis MacDonald Cornford (Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 115.
3. George Orwell, "Such, Such Were the Joys," *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York, 1968), IV, p. 336.
4. *Ibid*, p. 338.
5. *The Politics of Aristotle*, ed. Ernest Barker (Oxford, 1981) p. 245. Subsequent page references are to this edition. This standard edition was first published in 1946, just as Orwell began thinking of his novel of the future.
6. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, ed. Irving Howe (New York, 1963), p. 93. Subsequent page references are to this edition.
7. Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, trans. George Rawlinson (New York, 1942), p. 417.
8. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland, 1962), p. 433. On page 426 Arendt writes that "the task of the totalitarian police is not to discover crimes, but to be on hand when the government decides to arrest a certain category of the population."
9. Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current* (New York, 1980), pp. 66–67.
10. This passage from Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* has been reprinted in *Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry*, ed. Alexander Witherspoon and Frank Warnke (New York, 1963), p. 336.
11. Orwell, "Pleasure Spots," *Collected Essays*, IV, p. 81.
12. See for example "The Prevention of Literature," *Collected Essays*, IV, pp. 59–72; the review of *We*, pp. 72–75; and the letter to Herbert Rogers, pp. 102–103, all of which speculate on the course of contemporary society, and the relationship of present actualities—many of them technological—to the future. This volume covers the years 1945–1949, the last five years of Orwell's life.
13. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, IV, p. 75.

Is Nature A Republic?

David Stephenson

I propose first of all to talk about "energy." The word is so common and so current that it is difficult to extricate ourselves from the conviction that the conservation of energy comes close to being the unquestionable foundation of all physics and even of all nature. Recent decades have made us acutely aware of the necessary connection between energy and economy, energy and threat, energy and business. Even news reports frequently imply that energy is something that our comforts and lives depend on, and we save, spend, or waste it with greater consequence than we do money. It is hard to remember that such universal affirmation of this law is relatively recent; that three centuries ago "conservation of energy" was not a conscious part of anybody's thinking. How can one imagine ignorance of the now so readily acknowledged presumption that everyone must pay to accomplish a task; that a quantitative equivalence between effort and accomplishment exists and can be expressed by a mathematical equation? To question this "work-energy equation" nowadays would arouse universl astonishment and ridicule. It is quite *de rigueur* to presume the existence of unknown quantities just to balance that equation when it seems to fail in some experiment. Yet when Leibniz announced the first version of this law its apparently frequent failure in practice understandably discouraged many of those otherwise inclined to support his doctrines. There is a historical mystery here: how did such a profound revolution in consciousness take place between Leibniz's day and our own, resulting in the universal adoption of his essential theory, when the overwhelming evidence of daily experience seems to directly contradict it?

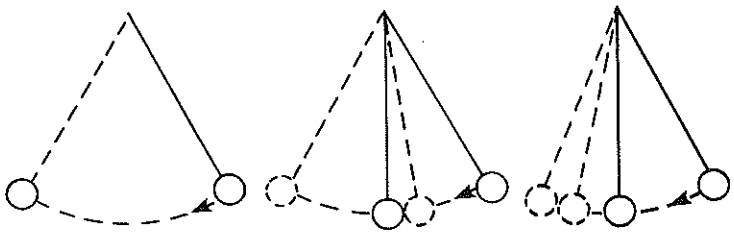
Mr. Stephenson, a tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis, delivered this lecture at the Santa Fe campus in February 1983.

For we see the law apparently broken every day. Think about it. Bodies skid to a stop, their energy of motion vanishing into oblivion; the fire warms my hands without thereby growing perceptibly colder; even the best bouncing ball fails to return quite to the hand that drops it; clocks need rewinding; I wake up hungry from a sound sleep; the table sustains a weight forever where my arm would quickly grow tired. You tell me that I must look more closely to discover the lost energy of these actions departing in another form. But that demand really amounts to assertion of a postulate, that, for example, motion lost by friction is *equivalent* to the heat thereby generated. There is no way of actually *proving* this equivalence. The question of whether or not a law of conservation applies has been decided *a priori*. Might not Aristotle's non-quantitative treatment of cause better correspond to what we see? Why should the fire lose heat to what it warms any more than a teacher give up his knowledge to a pupil in teaching him? And remember that it is everyday experience that we are considering, since we are seeking the reasons for the virtually universal adoption of a law.

Conservational thinking has always persisted in some form. Probably the oldest form derives from consideration of material things. Aristotle himself makes his four elements mutually convertible but denies the possibility of their emerging from nothing. Lucretius presents his assurance that our bodily atoms will persist after death as medicine to cure our fear of that event. But many things are not conserved: knowledge, for example, or disease, or perhaps even money. If I have a cold, it is fortunately unnecessary to find someone else to give it to in order to get rid of it. Money can be devalued or invested, help to produce surplus value or can be gambled away. Whatever knowledge you may gain from this lecture has nevertheless not left my side. On the other hand,

conservation seems to be what we expect of whatever is called "substance," so our historical problem could be restated: why and when did energy gain admission to the category of substance?

If you are in doubt concerning the help offered by such a metaphysical term, Leibniz will come to your aid with a definition: "Substance is a being capable of action."[1] This definition even comprises an embryonic statement of the conservation law we seek. For consider a pendulum. Beginning at rest, it descends with increasing velocity and then ascends and comes to rest again momentarily before repeating and repeating the cycle of motion and rest. Something, therefore, in the pendulum even at rest is capable of the action that is manifest in its subsequent motion. This substance, called "absolute" or "living force" by Leibniz and later "energy"[2] by others, also appears to be transferable from body to body in an elastic collision. In practice, however, some of this substance, energy, always vanishes during any collision, and it is quite possible to make the motion disappear entirely in what is called an "inelastic impact." Fully aware of the challenge to his theory of absolute force offered by this experiment, Leibniz insists that despite appearances none of his precious substance is really lost: it merely comes to be distributed insensibly among the infinite infinitesimal parts of the bodies themselves after such an inelastic collision. But this is an appeal to faith, not evidence.



As pointed out later in the eighteenth century, the theoretical justification for this faith immediately follows if one makes another assumption, *viz,* that all interactions between bodies depend only on the distances between their particles, regarded as points. But even Boscovich, whose universe is just such a sprinkling of massy points separated by forces, and who thought in other respects to have reconciled Newton and Leibniz, refused to follow this hypothesis to its conclusion and rejected conservation of energy in the face of those vivid violations exhibited by the inelastic impact that characterizes our visible world.

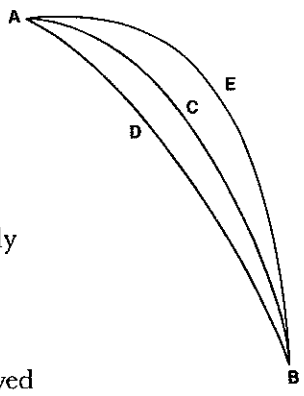
Moreover, this example of inelastic impact may have claims on us *a priori*, as it did on Newton, and on Maupertuis and others of Newton's successors during the succeeding century. For if we, like them, are true atomists—if we commit ourselves to the belief that our material world is assembled out of ultimately indivisible particles having some, though minute, extension—then these particles must be absolutely hard: they cannot flex and change shape as elasticity requires because they would then have to have distinct parts. "If," says Maupertuis, "in the majority of bodies the parts which compose them separate or bend, this happens only because these bodies are heaps of other bodies: simple bodies, primitive bodies, which are the elements of all the others must be hard, inflexible, unalterable."[3] Contact between such hard atoms, therefore, could only follow the model of inelastic impact. Leibniz, in fact, only avoids this rock because he denies the world an atomic foundation: matter is infinitely divisible.

Nevertheless, Maupertuis is not perfectly confident of his atomic prejudices:

> It appears, therefore, that one would be better grounded in maintaining that all primitive bodies are hard, than one would be in claiming that there are no hard bodies whatever in nature. However, I do not know if the manner in which we know bodies permits us either the one or the other assertion.[4]

This doubt, together with a kind of natural piety, led him to the formulation of one of the great principles of physics, but one which does not depend on a special understanding of material constitution: the Principle of Least Action. "When some change in Nature happens, the Quantity of Action necessary for this change is as small as possible." "Quantity of Action" he then defines to be the "product of the mass of the bodies by their speed and by the space they travel."[5] The universality and unity of this principle obviously support and confirm Maupertuis's dedication to the discovery of God's work in the world. For God, or Nature under his dominion, thereby displays a kind of economy or even parsimony. The Quantity of Action is not conserved, but as little as possible appears at each natural event. The relevance of final cause seems not to have vanished from physics.[6]

With appropriate zeal Maupertuis seeks to derive from this principle the known mathematical laws governing a variety of phenomena, including the refraction of light, the equilibrium of a balance or lever, and both elastic and inelastic impact. In later, more capable hands the Principle emulates the fruitfulness of Newton's Laws, in this century proving remarkably adaptable to Quantum Theory and Relativity. With great deference to Maupertuis, his younger contemporary, Euler, derived



the path of a falling body from the principle, and Lagrange and Hamilton soon afterwards based entire systems of physics upon it. Maupertuis himself misapplied it. But in attempting to address the problem of impact he really invoked without realizing it the primitive form of a totally different principle: the Principle of Least Constraint.

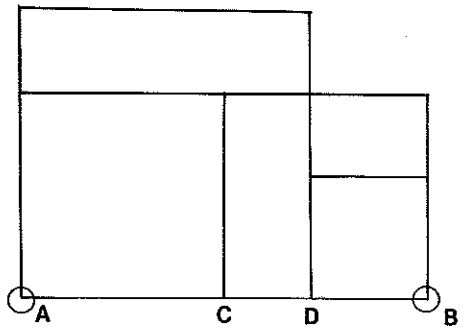
To distinguish these two principles it should help to compare them in their simplest manifestations:

1. Least Action involves the product of length, velocity, and mass. A ball thrown into the air describes a particular arc ACB. The Principle of Least Action states that the total action involved with this path is less than it would be for any other under the same conditions. That is, although the path is shorter for a flatter arc, e.g. ADB, the velocity—determined by the height above the ground[7]—will have to increase so much with respect to corresponding points on the original arc that the sum of the products of mass, velocity, and path segment for the new path—which sum makes up the total action—will exceed that for the original path ACB. Conversely a longer path AEB, while decreasing the corresponding velocities, more than makes up for this in the product

If W=AC, W′=BC; U=BC, U′=AC.

If W=AB, W′=O, U=BC, U′=AC.

Other supposititious values for U, U′: BD, AD.



From the figure

$\Sigma U^2 = Ac^2 + BC^2\ AD^2 + BD^2$

i.e., less than the supposititious ΣU^2.

Example of two equal bodies with equal velocities AC, BC, and sticking to remain motionless at C thereafter (the actual case), or moving off together with velocity CD (a supposed alternative case). In the first case velocities AC and BC would be lost upon impact, so that these would represent U and U′, the "deviations from free motion" caused by their meeting. The "constraint" would according to Carnot be represented by a quantity proportional to the squares of these losses, i.e., to the rectangle on AB. On the other hand, the supposed alternative case would produce losses represented by AD and DB, and "constraints" therefore proportional to the squares on these lines, whose sum is clearly greater than this rectangle.

by the increased path length. Actual computation will confirm the fact that the minimal path must be Galileo's parabola.

2. Least Constraint. A body, or (and this is the important case) a whole system of bodies linked together rigidly, will move in such a way that the deviation in each part from free motion is as small as possible. The previously mentioned examples of inelastic impact satisfy this principle in the following way: "free motion" in this case would signify that the bodies could be imagined as not impeding one another, i.e., as penetrating one another freely with velocities W, W′, etc. Now the real nature of the impact compelling the colliding bodies to each alter its motion by amounts U, U′, etc. the principle determines this subsequent motion on the basis of collective minimum for these deviations U.[8] One can easily demonstrate in a Euclidean manner that the results of the inelastic impact of equal balls we earlier saw are precisely prescribed by this requirement alone.

However different these two principles appear, they are yet more removed from the Newtonian—and to us probably more familiar—world of push and pull, of force and resistance. For everything is by them determined from a consideration of the whole array of what is possible, the actual motions we observe selected by Nature according to their obedience to a universal principle involving some kind of economy. The whole procedure resembles much more closely the planning and choice we exercise consciously than does Newton's. Exactly what is saved in the case of the second principle may not at present be clear, but we will return to consider it later.[9]

It was Lazare Carnot who first recognized the distinctness as well as the independent validity of the second principle.[10] Carnot is also largely responsible for the discovery of a new quantity that is conserved in all physical activity. He calls this quantity "moment-of-activity" and identifies it with some very ordinary and vulgar notions: of labor in particular and of wages; of animal or human muscle power; of power drawn from wind or water; of machines used to direct that power. His practical interests in fact may provide the clue we need to solve our original historical riddle of energy. For our earlier dilemma can be resolved into two distinct problems:

1. How can we account for the apparent loss of energy in every physical activity? 2. How can such manifestly different phenomena as heat, motion, and electric or muscle power, all ultimately claimed to be different forms of energy, be made to exhibit this essential kinship? The questions are complementary. A reply to the second will answer the first. But this can only be done by the mediation of another concept, the concept of "work." Wind, water, and fire can all drive engines whose work can be quantitatively compared to what muscle can do. The conversion of motion into heat through friction can then, at least theoretically, be restored to its original form by letting that heat drive a suitable engine. Energy thereby

becomes a substance taking various forms, but all of which can exhibit the action we call "work."

The name, Lazare Carnot, evokes very different reactions in different circles. Scientists would nowadays remember him, if at all, as an obscure eighteenth century engineer preoccupied with machines and their efficiency, and the author of "Carnot's Theorem," which predicts that the more abrupt the change the greater the amount of "living force" lost. Percussion of the parts in a machine makes it less efficient; rapid acceleration—as in an automobile—wastes fuel. His son, Sadi, is more famous, since he founded the science of thermodynamics. To the politically or historically minded, on the other hand, Lazare Carnot stirs up memories of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. Insulated from the first violent days of revolution by prison walls, because he had been incarcerated after presuming to propose marriage to his noble mistress, he soon took charge of the new republic's military forces. Although disorganized and discouraged by some military defeats in the face of repeated attempts by other European nations to destroy the young republic and restore royalty to France, the army under his leadership managed to secure French borders and thereby save the republican form of government from foreign invasion. As a member of the Directorate and the Committee on Public Safety he even survived Robespierre, without, so he later claimed, condoning its bloody purges more than necessary.[11] His association with Napoleon during the early campaigns did not inspire him to accept more than a temporary post in the First Consul's government, and he even dared to protest publically Napoleon's elevation to emperor. Retiring to a private life of scientific and engineering pursuits during the first decade of the nineteenth century, he did rejoin the army for the last Napoleonic campaigns, earning thereby a final exile in Germany, devoted primarily to writing memoirs defending his actions during the Terror. And in truth his greatest passion seems always to have been the cause of republican government.

His scientific works, though relatively few, all display a unique marriage of the practical and the abstract. Consider, for example, his concept of a "machine." What he calls a "machine in general" is any system of objects linked together so that consecutive masses can neither approach nor recede from one another: the links are rigid but the machine as a whole need not be, since its parts may be hinged even while they are linked by rigid connections. Any ordinary machine, from a simple lever to the most complicated factory engines satisfies this definition. But so does a single rigid body, such as a baseball bat or a hammer: their parts are rigidly connected. The curious behavior of a top, gyroscope, or frisbee exhibits the unexpected effects of these linkages. Most animals—including human beings—resemble machines, for their bones do keep joints at fixed distances.[12] Most surprising of all, perhaps: water and other practically incompressible fluids are machines, as long as they remain in one continuous or connected mass. For being incompressible, the fluid's consecutive parts stay the same distance apart; they can slide or rotate around one another but not approach one another (imagine smooth sand in an hour glass). It is in fact characteristic of Carnot's thinking that the agents which operate machines are themselves in part machines, especially since he ultimately can include elastic connections (like muscles), as well as rigid ones, within the same theory.

Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and virtually all their successors agree on one subject: uniform rectilinear motion is as natural as rest, so that any body will continue whatever motion it has in a straight line *if free to do so.* What happens, then, when moving bodies are linked together to form a machine? Obviously their masses mutually impede or assist one another. A lot of pushing and shoving goes on, the resultant motion being a compromise, since each constituent body must depart in some measure from its free motion. And this compromise continues to be worked out afresh each moment. The Law of Least Constraint is an expression of this compromise. By its means we can begin to understand why a spinning top does not fall over, the inertial motion of one part counteracting the falling tendency of another. We can also see how Galileo's experiments on inclined planes, which he presumed to illuminate the motion of falling bodies, could be corrected: the mutual constraint of the parts of a rolling ball producing quite a different effect from one that falls without rotating.[13]

But it need not rest with the imagination alone to demonstrate the effects of mutual constraint by the parts of such "machines-in-general." We can reduce these effects to experience: the experience of inelastic impact. If one considers this experience, one can easily see that before impact the bodies move *freely* (at least with respect to one another); after impact their motion is *constrained*; they are linked together as by rigid connections. Carnot's general conclusions about machines, therefore, can be tested by experiment. Furthermore, the exact reverse of inelastic impact is *explosion,* and one can view elastic collision as the combination of these two phenomena: inelastic impact followed by explosion. Thus elastic impact or connection may be regarded as a special case of inelastic impact.

But whereas the Principle of Least Constraint seems peculiarly well adapted to our understanding of machines, the equation of work and energy, or "moment-of-activity" and "living force," does not enlighten us so obviously in this respect. After all, these machines all seem necessarily to change the form of energy in ways not entirely within our control, and any such change in form can not be understood as a purely mechanical transformation. With this problem I arrive at the heart of my thesis, one which I state with the more caution because Carnot himself is not explicit about it, as far as I know. It can be derived from his work by inference, but by inference only. I infer it primarily from the fact that the

abrupt changes exemplified by inelastic collision are primary for him, although he is not a confirmed atomist, and so does not need to make this hypothesis.[14]

What is crucial to Carnot's point of view is his refusal to get lost in the details of a problem. He looks at phenomena grossly rather than closely, and this "gross vision" is what I believe allows him to ignore our ignorance of the inner mechanics of bodies and machines. If "a body meet a body," the more intimate consequences of this meeting seem to depend very much on private matters beyond our ken. That is, for I am of course thinking of mechanics, whether the bodies have a continuous or atomic internal structure, whether they or their parts are hard or soft, elastic or inelastic, it remains true that collision alters their motions. It is possible for Carnot to say something significant by *consciously ignoring* the doubtful processes of impact, and confining his attention to their relatively simple relationships before and after impact. Motion is probably conveyed from one body to all the parts of another through an incredibly complex sequence of inner vibrations and interactions; yet when this inward disquiet has subsided the bodies do have some motion as wholes, and this latter motion is the focus of his apparent interest. One could perhaps see him as anticipating the modern quantum physicist's tendency to imagine particles entering and leaving a "sphere of ignorance," within which they affect one another in some mechanically indeterminate way. The assumption of such a "sphere of ignorance" then permits one to be relatively knowledgeable about what happens outside that sphere, and the relationships between objects before and after entering it. Inelastic impact from this point of view amounts merely to a succession of events in which bodies at first moving independently of one another are somehow—we need not say how—constrained to move off together.

What does this "gross vision" mean for energy? The following dialog imagined between Carnot and Leibniz should answer this question:

> *Carnot*—"I observe rigid bodies and connections all around me, and many degrees of absurpt and inelastic impact but nothing so perfectly elastic as to entirely conserve your 'living force.'"
> *Leibniz*—"But these bodies can not be perfectly inflexible, for my reason demands that changes take place gradually, according to Nature's great Law of Continuity. The transfer of motion from one body to another takes time, *viz.*, the time during which those bodies remain in contact while changing shape."
> *Carnot*—"In that case, as I have shown mathematically, no 'living force' would ever be lost!"
> *Leibniz* (with evident satisfaction)—"Exactly!"
> *Carnot*—"Nevertheless one ought to explain the *appearance* of such a loss. It is after all manifest that 'living force' does disappear from the scene of action in most, perhaps even in all actions where bodies do not move freely but constrain one another."
> *Leibniz*—"I am content to find that you have confirmed my expectations for the eternal survival of 'absolute force,' and that the Principle of Continuity required by reason has in fact entailed this survival. Look closely enough at an apparent discontinuity in Nature and you will discover continuity."
> *Carnot*—"Why should I not trust my observation that changes do often happen abruptly, and that in fact the more abrupt the more 'living force' lost?"
> *Leibniz*—"Your senses are not fine enough. They need to be corrected by reason."
> *Carnot*—"But you are looking *too* closely! The trees are obscuring the forest. Even if as you say motion and 'living force' does survive in the microscopic motions of a body's parts, it remains irretrievable for me. The gross picture remains the significant one. Perhaps it is true that 'living force' is never *lost*, but it is always *wasted*, sometimes more and sometimes less. That is, it is lost for all practical purposes."

At this point we might add two other characters to our imagined dialog. Robert Mayer or Joule, or even Count Rumford if present would no longer be able to restrain his impatience—"But you are talking about heat! Could I not recover the 'living force,' which you think is permanently wasted, by applying the heat it generates to run an engine?"

It is not Lazare Carnot, but his son Sadi who answers this question. The answer is "No. There is no hope of recovering *all* that 'living force'." Unfortunately unavoidably abrupt changes in the temperature have the same effect on a heat engine that the abrupt changes characteristic of inelastic impact have on a purely mechanical one: Loss, not of energy, but of *usable* energy. This is an expression of the famous Second Law of Thermodynamics, of which therefore the elder Carnot's theorem proves to be an adumbration.

This kind of a dialog somehow reminds me of Plato's "Phaedo." All of Socrates's assurances of immortality can not entirely dispel the grief of his friends in the face of his impending death. Nor should it. It is at least as true that he will leave this world as that he will survive somewhere else. So with energy, whose loss and preservation inevitably and paradoxically take place simultaneously.[15]

Returning to our original political question, we can now easily see that Maupertuis's principle implies a naturla monarchy; Carnot's republic. The success of the Principle of Least Action compares most easily with the government of a single intelligence, which chooses the course and concourse of bodies from among all possibilities according to the end desired and a single prevailing principle of economy. The Principle of Least Constraint, on the other hand, is a kind of law of freedom. Every body or particle deviates as little as possible from its free flight, and it does so only in order to accommodate the greatest possible compatible general freedom for all the others. Nature thus resembles the most perfectly democratic republic.[16] A presiding intelligence

may have been necessary to organize such a scheme, but not to take part in its normal daily progress by specific decisions.

We might further extract from this latter principle the suggestion that, because of the continual jostle and readjustment of small motions, the most fruitful view of Nature would be to concentrate on the overall net effect, i.e., to adopt what I have called Carnot's "gross vision." The concept of "work" or "moment-of-activity" then goes one step further by disregarding all difference in the forms of energy in the interest of a reliable quantitative judgment. But as we have seen, this same vision that confirms the conservation of energy denies us the means to fully exploit it. The full fruitfulness of energy emphasized by its equivalence in "work" is ultimately snatched from us.

Whether Carnot's political experience guided his scientific research or his science his politics is hard to decide, but one cannot escape the suggestion of mutual influence. Carnot might even have considered the resemblance between revolution and abrupt change, but, unable to prevent the inevitable losses in either case, sought to minimize them.[17] If you think it was *sang froid* rather than cold blood that enabled him to maintain his position in the ruling Committee during the Terror, then you probably base your admiration on our present knowledge of the final outcome of his and others' connivance: that is the French Republic itself. As to the details of his actions during this tumultuous period: don't look too closely!

Carnot's Principle of Least Constraint bespeaks a kind of natural republic; I do not know what political analogues there might be for work and energy, or for the joining of these concepts in which he played a major part. The quantification of endeavor implied by them, however, does emphasize by contrast all the human ventures that elude quantification. The importance of the former magnifies the latter: against "work" we must balance "play." A contemporary of Carnot, Friedrich Schiller, expressed succinctly the importance of this: "Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and *he is only wholly Man when he is playing.*[18] But that is a subject worthy of another whole lecture.

1. Leibniz, "Principles of Nature and of Grace, Founded on Reason."
2. The man responsible for introducing "energy" as a technical term with roughly the modern meaning (but with scope limited to simple mechanics) into English was Thomas Young (cf. his lecture "On Collision": number 8 from "A Course of Lectures on Natural Philosophy and the Mechanical Arts," vol. I, esp. p. 78; cf. also vol. II, p. 52, §347). Though obviously deriving from Aristotle's, ἐνεργεια the word appeared more in literature than in scientific writing before the nineteenth century, and, with the exception of Jean Bernoulli's occasionally prophetic adoption of the French "energie," seems to have born the more figurative than mathematically decipherable sense of "eagerness" and "assiduity." In the works of David Hume this literary term does approach the scientific one.
3. Maupertuis, "Les lois du movement et du repos déduites d'un principe métaphysique," reproduced in vol. V of the collection of Euler's works, "Leonhard Euleri Opera Omnia" (Lausanne 1957), p. 294.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p.298.
6. This conclusion, however, may be qualified by the fact that, as discovered by Hamilton, under certain circumstances there is a *maximum* of action, and in general only an *extreme*, or, as he calls it, "stationary" value of action is required.
7. Knowledge of energy relations may be seen to be implicit in this statement, even though all that seems necessary is something which determines velocity as a function of height alone.
8. Actually it is the same ΣMU^2 that is minimized for all masses M, M′, etc., and deviations, U, U′, etc., the square serving to make all quantities positive. Carnot's manipulation of these fictitious quatities, U and U′, etc., derives directly from the mechanics of d'Alembert, who used them largely to avoid what he saw as the too metaphysical concept of "force." Carnot's own impatience with metaphysics may also have its source here.
9. It is, however, a true minimum principle, unlike the first one.
10. The name "Principle of Least Constraint," or "Prinzip der kleinsten Zwange," comes from the mathematician Gauss (cf. his paper, "Über ein neues allgemeines Grundgetsetz der Mechanik," pp. 25-28 in "Werke," Bd. 5 (Göttingen 1877). Whether or not Gauss knew of Carnot's work might be worth investigating. The latter, however, explicitly recognized the beauty of this principle even without such an appropriate name. After rigorously deriving the principle from Newton's laws, Gauss remarked on the curious coincidence of its having the same mathematical form as the important statistical law of least squares, of which he was the author: was the same natural law appearing in two different guises?
11. He did, for example, mercilessly extirpate such potential anarchists as Babeuf.
12. Carnot, however, carefully avoided the logical fallacies of μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος and infinite regress involved in any assumption that the will or desires were essentially mechanical. Thus he says in his "Principes" (§73): "Je répéterai d'abord, qu'il ne s'agit point ici des causes premières qui font naître le mouvement dans les corps, mais seulement du mouvement déjà produit et inherent a chacun d'eux."
13. The descent of a yoyo is the true limiting case of a body rolling down in increasingly vertical plane.
14. I do not know of any statement by Carnot expressly concerning atoms. However, the following assertion in his "Essai" (par. XLVII) about fluids could hardly have been made by anyone committed to a merely finite division of material in the world: "On peux regarder un fluide comme l'assemlage d'une infinité de corpuscules solides, détachés les uns des autres . . ." His definition of "fluid" in the "Principes" (§12) is a little more cautious: "Les fluides sont ceux qui se trouvent divisés en parties si fines, qu'elles échappent à tous les sens aidés des meilleures instrumens. Tels sont l'eau, l'air. Un fluide parfait seroit la limite vers laquelle tendent tous ces fluides à mésure que la tenuité des particules est plus complèt. On ignore s'il existe un pareil fluide."
15. But lest I carry this analogy too far, I refuse to assert that just as the engineer may see his task as preventing the loss of "living force" as long as possible, so should Socrates seek to stay alive at all costs.
16. Not necessarily a purely egalitarian republic: individual mass is a factor in the calculation of constraint.
17. Consider, for example, Napoleon's opinion that Carnot was "easily deceived" simply because, as construed by Louis Madelin in his "The French Revolution," he desired to bring order out of chaos. (Heinemann English ed., p. 490)
18. Fifteenth letter of Friedrich Schiller's "On the Aesthetic Education of Man." (Ungar English ed., p. 80)

Between Plato and Descartes— The Mediaevel Transformation in Ontological Status of the Ideas

James Mensch

I

Even the most casual reader of philosophy senses the abyss that separates Descartes from Plato. In Descartes a concern for certainty overshadows and, in fact, transforms the original Platonic conception of philosophy. Such a conception, as exemplified by the figure of Socrates, involves fundamentally a love of wisdom. Wisdom—σοφία— is not the same as certainty. That which I can be certain of does not necessarily make me wise (see *Phaedo*, 98 b ff.)

We can mark out the difference between Plato and Descartes in terms of two constrasting pairs of terms: trust and opinion for Plato, doubt and certainty for Descartes. Plato describes our attitude to the visible realm as one of trust—πίστις (see *Republic*, 511 e). Descartes begins his *Meditations* by doubting his perceptions. For Plato, the examination of opinion is a necessary first step in the philosophical ascent to the highest things. He depicts Socrates as enquiring into the opinions of the most various sorts of men. There is in Socrates a certain trust in the existence of "true" or "right" opinions. At times, such opinions can become "hypotheses"; they can become stepping stones leading to "what is free from hypothesis" (*Republic*, 511 b). For Descartes, precisely the opposite attitude is assumed. Because of his lack of such trust, he begins his *Meditations* by withdrawing from the company of men and systematically doubting every opinion he has hitherto accepted on trust. His position is summed up by the statement: ". . . reason already persuades me that I ought no less carefully to withhold my assent from matters which are not entirely certain and indubitable than from those which appear to me manifestly to be false . . ." ("Meditation I," *Philosophical works of Descartes*, trans. E. Haldane and G. Ross, New York, 1955, p. 145).

This lack of assent, of qualified trust, reveals the transformation that philosophy undergoes in Descartes' hands. It is a transformation of philosophy from a love of wisdom to a love of certainty. Certainty, even if it concerns what is apparently trivial, becomes the philosopher's goal. Here, we may observe that the certainty Descartes pursues has an absolute, almost mathematical character. His assent will only be given to matters "entirely certain and indubitable." This is a sign that certainty has, indeed, become the object of Descartes' philosophical love. What a philosopher loves and, hence, pursues must, in Descartes' eyes, be something absolute; nothing less than absolute certainty will satisfy Descartes.

How did this transformation occur? Our thesis is that it is a result of a transformation in the minds of philosophers of what it means for an idea or εἶδος to be. More precisely put, it is the result of a transformation, occurring in the Middle Ages, in the philosophical notion of the *ontological status* of the idea. Because of this transformation, doubt replaces trust in our perceptions. In the consequent shifting world of doubt, certainty becomes the necessary object of both the beginnings and final end of our philosophical enquiries.

II

Before we present the historical evidence for our thesis, we must be clear on what is meant by our term, *ontological status*. The term signifies "status of being." An entity can be said to have the status of a merely *possible* being. Alternately, it can be said to have

James Mensch is author of a recently published book on *The Question of Being in Husserl's Logical Investigations*. He is an alumnus of St. John's College, Annapolis.

the status of an *actual* existent. Here, we must note that the question of the content of a being—the question of its essence or "whatness"—is a question distinct from that of its ontological status. *Whether* something is, i.e., whether it is actual or merely a possible existent—is not answered by giving a concept delineating *what* the entity is. As Thomas Aquinas puts this: "I can know what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it exists in reality" (*De Ente et Essentia*, ch. 4, ed. Roland-Gosselin, Kain, Belgium, 1926, p. 34). Kant expresses the same point by writing, " 'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing" (*Kitrik d. r. V.*, B 636). If it were a real predicate, i.e., part of the concept of a thing, then from knowing the *what*, I could know the *whether*—i.e., whether the concept refers to an actual or a merely possible existent. That this is not the case is shown by the fact that there is not the least difference in content between the thought of a possible existent and the conception that arises from its actual presence. As Kant observes, the thought of a hundred possible thalers contains the same amount of coins as a hundred actual thalers (see *Kritik d. r. V.*, B 637). It is because of this that loans can be repaid, or, more generally, that what we think of as merely possible can be encountered and recognized in reality. If being did make a conceptual difference, if it was something "added to the concept of a thing," then when I was actually repaid, I would reply, "This is *not* what I had in mind when I thought of the possibility of repayment."

The distinction we have given has a technical name. It is called "the distinction between being and essence." "Essence," as Aquinas says, "is what the definition of a thing signifies" (*De Ente et Essentia*, ch. 2, ed. cit., p. 7). It is *the content of an idea*, the idea, e.g., of a man or a phoenix as delineated by its definition. Being, as distinct from essence, refers to ontological status. Admitting this distinction between being and essence, we must also admit that what is defined conceptually is not specified according to its mode of being. The question of its ontological status, the question concerning the *actual or merely possible* being of what is defined, is not answered through its definition.

This point applies directly to our thesis about the ideas. It does so because the ideas, considered simply in themselves, are the same as essences. An essence, as we said, is the content of an idea. An idea, however, is just its own content and nothing more. It is, we can say, a *pure* conceptual unit. It is such by virtue of the fact that it is, in itself, simply the conceptual content which a definition delineates. Given the fact that *idea* and *essence* denote the same thing, what we said about the essence applies to the idea. The latter, too, is necessarily silent on the question of being. Otherwise put: no examination of an idea as it is in itself—i.e., as a pure conceptual unit—can answer the question of actual versus possible being. This silence on the question of being, based as it is on the very nature of the idea, is absolutely general. It, thus, applies to the question of the idea's own ontological status. If we attempt to answer it by considering the conceptual *content that is the idea*, we are always free to answer it in two possible ways. We are free to give the idea the ontological status of a possibility *or* an actuality.

III

The history of philosophy gives ample evidence of this freedom. For the moderns, the idea has the ontological status of a possibility. To illustrate this, we shall take three prominent figures: Kant, Whitehead and Husserl. According to Kant, every conception that the understanding itself grasps is grasped under the aspect of possibility (see "Kritik d. Urtheilskraft," *Kants Werke*, Berlin, 1968, v, 402). For very different reasons, Whitehead concurs. Ideas or essences are "eternal objects." But, as he says, ". . . the metaphysical status of an eternal object is that of a possibility for an actuality . . . actualization is a selection amongst possibilities" (*Science and the Modern World*, New York, 1974, p. 144). Husserl, who would not at all be found in Whitehead's camp, agrees on this one point: possibility and essentiality are the same. The reason he gives for this is that the being of an idea is the being of an ideal or pure possibility (see *Logische Untersuchungen*, 5th ed., Tuebingen, 1968, I, 129, 240, II/1, 115, II/2, 103). Such examples could be multiplied. In modern times, the idea is universally given the status of a possibility: an empirically grounded possibility for the empiricists, an ideal or "pure" possibility for the idealists. In neither case are ideas considered to be actualities.

For Plato, however, this was just what the ideas or εἴδη were when he introduced them into philosophical discourse. He names them οὐσία which is taken from the participle of the verb *to be*, εἶναι. A corresponding root is found in the word *essence*, in Latin, *essentia*. The root *esse* means in Latin *to be*. To call something οὐσία or *essentia* was to say that it actually is. It has what is signified by the verb *to be*. The same point can be made by looking at the divided line (see *Republic*, 509 d-511 e). In a proportion involving the ratio between reality and image, the ideas are at the top. They are supremely real. They possess οὐσία in the highest degree.

One of the ways to see why this is so is to look at Parmenides' statement: Τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι. We can translate this as "the same thing exists for thinking and being," and take this to mean: "the same thing can be thought as can be."[1] So understood, we have a statement of logical equivalence: thinkability implies being and being implies thinkability. Now, whether or not this understanding agrees with Parmenides' original intention, it does yield a notion that for Plato is crucial for the status of the ideas. This is that thinkability and being pertain to the same thing. More precisely expressed, that which makes it possible for a thing to be *also* makes it possible for it to be thinkable. The com-

mon ground of these possibilities is self-identity or self-sameness. This self-identity will turn out to be a mysterious quality. For the moment, however, we may define it as the quality of something remaining the same with itself.

That such a quality is at the root of being is affirmed by Plato when he writes that "the very being of to be"—the αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία τοῦ εἶναι—is to be "always in the same manner in relation to the same things." As Plato explains, this is to be "unchanging" and, thus, to remain the same with oneself. The ideas, "beauty itself, equality itself, and every itself" are called "being"—τὸ ὄν— and this, because they "do not admit of any change whatsoever" (*Phaedo*, 78 d). Plato's position follows from Parmenides' statement and an analysis of what change means. Its fundamental intuition is that change is always change of something. This something is an underlying self-identity. The consequence is that real loss of self-identity is not change. It is rather annihilation pure and simple of the individual. Now, the presence of self-identity not only makes possible the persistent being in time of the individual, it also makes possible the predication of an idea of this individual. If change negated all self-identity, then nothing in our changing world could have any intelligible name or sense. Let us take an example: a person proceeding from a newborn baby to extreme old age. It is the presence of some self-identical element in this process that allows us to predicate the idea "human" of this individual. When the person dies, this is no longer possible. What answers to the concept "human" is no longer there. The point is that self-identity is required both for being and being thought. What is not self-identical cannot be thought and cannot be.

A number of consequences follow from this reasoning. The first is that the ability to recognize being and the ability to predicate an idea of a thing always occur together. They must, if they are both based on the apprehension of an underlying self-identity. Given that predicating an idea of a thing is the same as the recognition of the thing as intelligible, "being" and "intelligibility" must be understood as co-extensive terms. One cannot ascribe the one without ascribing the other; whatever has a share in being must also have a share in intelligibility. Now, participation—μετέχειν—means literally "having a share in." It, thus, follows that participation must be understood as participation in *both* being and intelligibility. We can put this in terms of the Platonic doctrine that a thing is intelligible by virtue of its participating in its idea. The idea itself is the conceptual expression of the self-identity that Plato calls the οὐσία of *to be*. Thus, one can also say that a thing has being by virtue of its participating in its idea—i.e., participating in the self-identity that the idea expresses in terms of an unchanging concept. From this it follows that participation demands a single notion of being, one common to both the thing and its idea. A thing could not possess its being by virtue of its participation in its idea if both did not exist by virtue of the same οὐσία of *to be*. This is self-identity or self-sameness. This self-identity is, we observe, what allows us to take the divided line and see it as a hierarchy of beings with the ideas at the top. Levels of being could not be ordered and ranked if there were not a single standard of being by which to measure them. This, for Plato, is the self-sameness which images, things, mathematical objects and ideas respectively possess to a more and more perfect degree.

IV

How does the transformation between Plato and the moderns occur? How do the ideas, from being understood as pure actualities—i.e., entities capable of being called τό ὄν—become for the moderns expressions of possibility? From a philosophical standpoint, the answer to this question has already been indicated. Our paper's position is that self-identity is not a sure criterion of being. In particular, it does not point to the actual as opposed to the merely possible. The reason for this is that, like any other conceptual content, self-identity is part of the essential determination of a thing. As forming part of a thing's essence, it is silent on the question of the status of the being of a thing. Thus, to return to Kant's example, we can say that a possible entity—a hundred possible thalers—possess as much self-identity as an actual identity. Granting this, we must admit that self-identity does not distinguish between the actual and the possible. An argument for the actuality of the ideas, which is based, like Plato's, on their self-identity, is thus bound to fail. Here, indeed, we can find the underlying reason for the ambiguity which, as we shall see, characterizes the use of the term "self identity." The concept *per se* is not ambiguous, its meaning being simply sameness with self. It becomes ambiguous when we attempt to make it into a criterion of being, something which no concept is fitted to do.

For Plato, the attempt to make self-identity a standard of being arises in connection with his doctrine of participation. As we have seen, entities have being to the point that they participate—or have a share—in self-identity. How are we to understand the self-identity which is to be shared in? We cannot understand it as simple identity with self. That which shares with another its identity with self would either absorb the other into its own identity or else lose itself in the identity of the other. Thus, if the ideas and things are related by virtue of their sharing in self-identity, either the idea would absorb the thing or vice versa. A similar difficulty arises when we take self-identity as the quality of *being one*. Is the oneness to be referred to the oneness of a thing or to the oneness of the idea?

The *Parmenides* shows Plato's awareness of the difficulty we are pointing to. He has Parmenides ask Socrates whether ". . . the whole idea is one and yet, being one, is in each of the many" (*Parm.*, 131 a, Jowett trans.). Socrates agrees that this is his meaning and further agrees

that things must participate either in the whole of an idea or in a part of it. Both, however, seem to be impossible. Participation by parts would make the ideas divisible by parts. It would also make us say that we can predicate "part" of an idea of a thing. Such notions are strictly speaking unintelligible. Ideas, which are not material things, are not materially divisible. But neither are they conceptually divisible. A *simple* idea cannot be conceptually divided. As it has no parts, part of it cannot be predicated of a thing. A *complex* idea, so divided, would become a different idea. Here, the notion of the idea as maintaining its self-identity by virtue of its unity precludes all division. If, however, we say that the *whole* of the idea is participated in, we still cannot maintain the necessary oneness of the idea. If individuals participate in the whole of the idea, then, according to Parmenides, "one and the same thing will exist as a whole at the same time in many different individuals and therefore will be in a state of separation from itself" (*Ibid.*, 131 b). Self-separation seems the opposite of self-identity when we understand this latter as the quality of being one. To be as a whole in many is to be many rather than being one.

As is obvious, at the basis of Parmenides' dialectic is the ambiguity of the meaning of being one. There is being one in the sense that an idea or concept is one; there is also being one in the sense that an individual thing is one. If, with Plato, we understand participation in terms of a single notion of being, one common to both the thing and the idea, then we are faced with the problem of trying to put together these two different ways of being one. This, of course, is the famous problem of the universals. It is: How can the idea or species be present in the individuals, or how can the single individuals share in the unity of the species? The endless debate on the question is actually about the notion of being. Both sides agree that the very being of *to be* is being one, but disagree on what this last means. If to be means to be one thing, then the ideas, which only have conceptual unity, are not. They are nothing but "common names" produced by habit, circles of association, historical processes—the list is endless. An illegitimate child who is not owned up puts everybody under the suspicion of parentage. If we reverse this and say that to be means to be a conceptual unity, then the same fate befalls individual things. *What* a thing is, its form or common nature, is what is. In itself, in its own individual unity, the thing is not. Both solutions are obviously one-sided. For just as our senses convince us that there are individual things, so without conceptual unities we would have no specifically human mental life.

The debate points out a problem, but it does not *per se* give a solution. When, in the Middle Ages, a solution does arise, it occurs by virtue of a transformation of the ontological status of the idea. The context of this solution is set by Aristotle. More specifically, it is set by his denial that ideas or essences exist in themselves as opposed to being either in the mind or in objects (see *Metaphysics*, 991 b, 1–3, 1039 a, 24 ff.). For his medieval followers, this denial of the self-subsistent idea or essence does not solve the problem of the universals. The denial leaves intact the two notions of being on which the problem revolves. The facts of predication show this. What is predicated is the idea in the mind. Viewed in terms of the activity of predication, the idea has the characteristic of universality. As engaged in the individual object, however, the idea has the characteristic of singularity. Thus, we do not predicate the "humanity" of Socrates or Plato. The "humanity" of Socrates is part of his individuality. It is an informing form that makes him into a definite individual—i.e., into what Aristotle calls a "primary substance." We do, however, predicate the idea of humanity, which is present in our mind, of both Socrates and Plato. It has the characteristic of universality; that is, the character of one thing being applicable to many. How is this possible? How do we recognize that the humanity of a sensibly perceived singular is the same as the intellect's universal idea of humanity?

This is the question Avicenna, and eleventh century Persian philosopher, asked himself. His answer is that such recognition is possible only by abstracting the idea or essence from both forms of being one. The unity of a universal and the unity of an individual must both be seen as accidental to the essence considered in itself. Without such an understanding, predication is impossible. Let us quote Avicenna on the essence "animal":

> 'Animal' is the same thing whether it be sensible or a concept in the mind. In itself, it is neither universal nor singular. If it were in itself universal so that animality were universal from the bare fact of being animality, the consequence would be that no animal would be a singular, but every animal would be a universal. If, however, animal *qua* animal were singular, it would be impossible for there to be more than one singular, namely the very singular to which animality belongs, and it would be impossible for any other singular to be an animal (*Logica*, Venice, 1508, III, fol. 12 r, col. 1).

Avicenna is here arguing that we cannot explain predication by identifying the essence either with the universality of the concept or the singularity of the thing. Predication requires both the thing and the concept, and they must be brought together through an essence that is recognizably present in each. If this is the case, then Avicenna's conclusion apparently follows. It is that we conceive something "accidental" to animality when beyond its bare content we think of it as singular or universal (see *Ibid.*, see also Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, Venice, 1508, V, fol. 86 v, cols. 1–2).

Avicenna's position is in some sense a return to Plato; but it is a return that transforms Plato's original conception. Plato has Parmenides ask: "In the first place, I think,

Socrates, that you, or anyone else who maintains the existence of absolute essences, will admit that they cannot exist in us?" To which Socrates replies: "No, for then they would not be absolute" (*Parmenides*, 133 c, trans. Jowett). Now, it seems to be part of the logic of the notions that make up Plato's thought they they are incapable of being absorbed in incompatible philosophical systems. They have, in other words, a certain resistance to their being misunderstood. This resistance is evident here. Attempting to follow Aristotle, Avicenna begins with the position that essences are either in the mind or in things. But then he examines predication, and the logic of the notion of an essence compels him to say that essences cannot be identified either with being in the mind or being in things. In themselves, absolutely considered, they are, as Avicenna shows in the passage quoted above, in neither. Yet the very way in which Avicenna affirms this exhibits the transformation he has wrought on Plato's essence. It is a transformation of the criterion of being which underlies Plato's notion of participation.

The problem with this criterion in Avicenna's eyes is its equation of being and being one. How can we understand oneness with respect to the ideas? How can an idea or essence be—that is, be one—in many individuals, each of which is also called one? Avicenna's answer is to split the category of being by asserting that *to be* does not necessarily mean *to be one*. Let us restate this. If asked how the idea can be one and yet, being one, *be* in each of the many individuals, Avicenna would reply that it is precisely because unity is *accidental* to the being of an idea that its being in the many does not prejudice the idea's own inherent being. To make the idea one is to make it present either in the mind or in things. It is to make it *either* an idea in the mind which is predicable of many *or* an individual which is a subject of predication but not itself predicable of another. Both forms of being one are accidental to it as it is in itself. In itself, it represents a form of being which is other than predicable notion or physical object. Itself neither, it has the possibility of being either. In other words, from the point of view of mental notion or physical thing, it is just this possibility of being either and nothing more. Its ontological status is simply that of a possibility.

The transformation that Avicenna has worked on Plato's original position can be indicated by noting the following. For Plato, participation is based on a single notion of being. As a consequence, participation in an idea is also participation in being. For Avicenna, this is not the case. The essence, insofar as it lacks unity, has not the same being which an individual entity has. Thus, participation in an essence does not mean participation in actuality. How could it if the essence, instead of being supremely actual, represents only a possibility? In fact, for Avicenna, the function of sharing being is taken over by God, the only necessary being. Things cannot become actual by participating in their essence, since essence has, for Avicenna, no inherent status of actuality.

We need a further step to come to the modern notion of an essence or idea. Once again it can be looked upon—at least in a superficial way—as an attempt to return to Plato. This return attempts to restore to the essence some notion of unity.

While Avicenna's influence was spreading through the Arab world, the Latin West was independently developing a doctrine of the transcendent properties of being. These are the properties of being irrespective of where it is found. There are a number of these properties, but we need only mention one: unity. The doctrine taught that being and unity are co-extensive properties. Where being is present, unity is present. To the point that being is lacking, there is a corresponding lack of unity.[2] When Avicenna entered the West with his assertion that an essence had being but not unity, only two alternatives seemed possible to those who thought being and unity were co-extensive. They could accept Avicenna's denial of the unity of an essence, but reject his teaching on the proper being of an essence. Alternately, they could accept his assertion that an essence has a proper being, and reject his doctrine that unity does not apply to essence as such.[3] The first course was followed by Aquinas who writes that essence, considered in itself, abstracts from "any being whatsoever" (*De Ente et Essentia*, cap. 3, ed. cit., p. 26). In other words, lacking unity, it must, in itself, lack being. This is part of what Aquinas means when he writes that essence and being are "really distinct." The famous defense of this distinction is the treatise, *On Being and Essence.*

The second course was taken by Scotus. Scotus agrees with Avicenna that essences have a proper being. He thus argues against Aquinas's attempt to conceive of essence apart from being (see *Opus Oxoniense*, lib. IV, d. 11, q. 3, n. 46, Vivès ed., Paris, 1891–5). He also asserts that essences do have a unity—not the unity of a mental idea or a physical thing—but something slightly less than this called *minor unity.*[4] This unity corresponds to Avicenna's being of an essence. Such unity is demanded by the fact that the essence in the individual perceived through sensation and the essence in the mind's universal notion is, in fact, one and the same essence.

How does Scotus know that it is the same essence? The answer can be drawn from the elements of Scotus's position. The first of these is that essence in itself does not express reality, this last being understood as a mental idea or extramental thing. It expresses only the possibility of a reality. Its ontological status—i.e., the status of its being—is that of a possibility (See *Op. Ox.*, ed. cit., lib. I, d. 2, q. 1, n. 56). The second is that the examination of this possibility is the examination of the essences's "minor unity." This means, for Scotus, the terms which make up the definition of an essence must not be contradictory. They must be compatible, that is, be capable of forming a unity. The insight here is that without this capability, the essence defined by these terms cannot be instantiated as a unity either in the mind or in

things. It cannot be so instantiated in the mind, for as Scotus observes, contradictories cannot be thought of as single notions (see *Op. Ox.*, lib. I, d 2, q. 1 in *Duns Scotus, Philosophical Writings*, ed. A. Wolter, London, 1963, p. 73). This applies to analytical contradictions such as "p and not-p." It also applies to synthetic contradictions such as the concept of a red tone. In such a case, the notions are so "distant" from each other that neither determines the other. If we leave the notion of figure out of account, color and tonality can only be thought of as separate, unrelated notions. The same criteria of compatibility apply to instantiation in things. To say "this one" in the sensible world implies that there is a subject of predication there. It presupposes that the predicates we express are *unifiable* in this subject. Otherwise, there would not be one but two subjects of predication there.

A further element in Scotus's position is that we never leave the field of being when we talk about an essence. There is a being of an essence; in fact, there is an existence of an essence. Essences themselves are only possibles; but as Lychetus, Scotus's authorized commentator, remarks: "It is simply contradictory for any essence to have its being of a possible and not to have its existence of a being of a possible" (*Op. Ox.*, ed. Vivès, lib. II, d. 3, q. 1, n. 7). In other words, since essences have being, they also have existence. For Scotus, this means that degrees of existence follow upon degrees of essence (see *Op. Ox.*, ed. Vivès, lib. II, d. 3, q. 3, n. 1). We can illustrate this by an example: the person of Socrates. We start out with the most general essence we can think of, that of thinghood or substance. We now begin to specify this essence, adding successively the predicates, living, animal, two-legged, rational, capable of laughter, in Athens, engaged in dialectic, snub-nosed, etc. The essence, as it is further specified, gradually narrows and makes more definite its unity. The possibility corresponding to its unity becomes more defined. The possibility of a rational animal living in Athens is not the possibility of thinghood in general. Now, the ultimate determination is, of course, one of singularity, in this case, the *numerical singularity* of an individual thing. When we reach it, then according to Scotus, we have an existence corresponding to this grade of determination. We have the actual existence of an individual man. This view can be summed up by saying that all individual existents are completely full essences. They are specified down to the here and now of their being. Let us make a comparison. If we say that such essential determinations must take account of every element of a person's life and, in this, also his relations to all other actual existents, we shall be able to see the monads of Leibniz peeping over Scotus's shoulder. Such monads also owe their actual existence to the fullness of their essence (see *Discourse on Metaphysics*, XIII).

Here, it would be helpful to mention Scotus's proof for existence of God. It involves a redefinition of Anselm's formula for God. In Scotus's version, it runs: "God is that without contradition than which a greater cannot be conceived without contradition" (*Duns Scotus, Phil. Wr.*, ed. cit., p. 73). The addition of the words, "without contradition," points to the fact that Scotus's attention is on the essence of God. Since essences are possibles, to demonstrate an essence is to demonstrate a possibility. But, as we said, the basis of essential possibility is minor unity. This is the same as the absence of self-contradition. Thus, according to Scotus, what one has to first demonstrate is that the essence of God *"non contradicit entitati"*—i.e., "does not contradict entityness." This phrase is typical for Scotus. Less literally translated, it means "does not contradict that which every entity must be in order to be." This, for Scotus, is being compatible with self. Every entity must have compatible attributes if it is to be. Thus, the major part of Scotus's argumentation is directed towards showing that God, as Christians conceive him—as causally active, as intelligent, as willing, as infinite and perfect, but especially as the first or highest—is, in fact, a compatible essence. This means, for example, demonstrating that the notion of causality is compatible with that of a first cause. It means demonstrating that the notion of perfection is compatible with the notion of a highest or first degree of perfection (see *Duns Scotus, Phil. Wr.*, ed. cit., pp. 39–45, 48–9).

All of these demonstrations, if we grant them, prove that God is possible as an essence. But what about the proof that he is an actual existent, that he is a numerical singular? To demonstrate this, we have to establish that he is unique. This is because the grade of actual existence corresponds to that of an essence specified down to the uniqueness and singularity of an actual individual. To manage this step of the proof, Scotus points out that the notion of a first in the order of causality—as well as in the orders of perfection, will, intelligence, and so forth—can only involve the same unique singular. The notion of two firsts, as he argues, is simply contradictory. It is, for example, contradictory to conceive of more than one being which, at first, is defined as the necessary and sufficient cause of the world's existence. If there were more than one, neither cause, by itself, would be a sufficient cause. The result of such arguments is the assertion that if God is possible, he must necessarily be an actual existent. This follows because God's notion specifies in the order of possibility a unique singular. His essence includes his actual existence, for it is an essence which is only possible as that of unique existent.

There are a number of ways Scotus makes this point. For example, he notes that a first cause is essentially possible only as an actual existent. It is, he argues contradictory to the notion of a *first* cause of existence, to receive its actual existence from some other cause. Thus, if it is, indeed, *possible* for a first cause to exist, it must actually exist of itself. The *possibility* of its existence, however, has already been demonstrated by Scotus's arguments showing that the essence of a unique first cause is a compatible essence. As a consequence, we must say that a first cause does, indeed, actually exist of itself. It

is an actually existent entity (see *Duns Scotus, Phil. Wr.*, ed. cit., p. 46). A similar argument is made about God as the measure of perfection.

Whatever else we might think about this proof, we should keep an essential point in mind. It only works for God. In other words, since nothing else is first, nothing else can be proved to be unique and, therefore, actual by this method. We can express this by saying that God is a deductive singular. From this notion as a *first*, we deduce he can only *be* as an actual singular. All other beings, like our example of Socrates, are singular inductively. They are singular by the inductive addition of conceptual formal note to conceptual formal note, each further conceptual determination working to further specify the essence in question.

What happens when we say that such "notes" or specific differences are infinite in number, that they comprehend the specification of the relations of our finite being to every other finite being? If we believe this, then Leibniz's God is capable of seeing in our essence the necessity of our actual existence. But we, with our limited understandings, are not. In other words, *for us*, every actual existent other than God is, in terms of its conceptual essence, essentially unprovable. The conclusion follows from our adoption of Scotus's metaphysics. The result of this metaphysics is ultimately to collapse being and essence together. In Scotus's words, "It is simply false that being is other than essence" (*Op. Ox.*, ed. Vivès, lib. IV, d. 11, q. 3, n. 46). Granting this, the proof of a being is also the proof of an essence. Thus, if we say that a finite being has an infinite number of specifying differences in its essence, then a proof of its actual being, as based on the examination of its essence, is a proof necessarily involving this infinity. It requires the demonstration of the compatibility of an infinite number of formal notes. Such a demonstration is impossible for a finite mind. What we are saying, then, is that in terms of our limited, human conceptions of individual beings, we never cross the boundary between possibility and actuality. This is because we can never inductively specify an entity down to this one thing, to an actually existing unique singular. We mention this to point out the transformation which Scotus has worked on the original Parmenidean equation between conceivability and actual being, νοεῖν and εἶναι. The equation no longer involves, as it did for Plato, the identification of a *limited* number of underlying, self-identical elements.

V

Let us now return to Descartes. In his *Meditations*, Decartes doubts the world and then finds it necessary first to prove God in order to assure himself of the existence, say, of his inkpot. Why begin with God rather than the inkpot? The procedure is in some sense intelligible if we take into account the philosophical world into which Descartes was born. As a number of historians have pointed out, the decisive influence in this world was ultimately that of Scotus.[5] The influence of Scotus can be seen by comparing Descartes' proof for the existence of God with Scotus's original. The former is actually a truncated version of the latter. The reason why Descartes must begin with God's existence is, thus, at least historically clear. In the order of demonstration, God's existence comes first, since it is, in fact, the only existence which we can in this tradition demonstrate.

What about Cartesian doubt? There are, as we maintained at the beginning, two sides to this doubt: doubt of perception and doubt of opinion. Both, we claim, can be traced to the transformation in the ontological status of the idea.

Let us consider, first, the value Descartes places on opinion. As indicated above, the transformation implies that every essential predication we can make about the world only grasps its objects under the aspect of possibility. In other words, the subject of our discourse, insofar as our discourse is concerned, is only a possibility. It is an essence which we can only incompletely specify. For all our talk, in terms of our statements' *essential* content, the object we are talking about may or may not actually be. The implication is that our statements, considered in themselves, express what may be called *mere* opinion. By this, we mean that they have no inherent claim to be "true" or "right." Because of this, their examination is not, as Plato thought, a necessary first step for philosophical enquiry. Since they are, in their essential content, inherently capable of expressing an actual reality, they must, as Descartes believes, be, one and all, doubted.

What about a direct perception of the object? Plato, as we said, associates the realm of the directly perceivable with the attitude of trust. Trust, as opposed to certitude, is all that we can have if we remain on the level of direct (or sensuous) perception. On this level, we cannot confirm a perception except through a further perception, and so we have ultimately to trust our perceptions. Between this trust and the Cartesian doubt of perception, there also lies the change in the status of the idea. The idea, for Plato, is etymologically and philosophically tied to perception. The Platonic term for the idea, εἶδος, is taken from εἴδω, which means "to perceive." The philosophical link between the two appears when we take the ideas we garner from our perceptions of the world as the highest expressions of actuality. If we take the ideas as supremely actual, we are inclined to trust rather than to doubt our perceptions; for then we say that our ideas *are* and that their images, the directly perceivable things, also *are*. The relation here is that of actuality to image as given by the divided line. For Plato, given that the ideas are, the directly perceivable things—which, as images, are dependent on the ideas—must also be.

This philosophical position is, of course, completely undermined once we say that the ideas have the ontological status of possibilities, i.e., that they express the

fact that what sensibly instantiates them may or may not be. At this point, they cannot provide a philosophical basis for a belief in the existence of sensible things. Trust, therefore, turns to doubt, and like Descartes we must turn to the benevolence of God to assure us of the world we once took for granted. A sign of the new character of this doubt is the fact that this benevolence itself becomes an object of proof rather than a matter of direct perception. In the absence of any proof to the contrary, it is, for Descartes, possible that God may be an evil, deceiving genius. Here we may remark that the direct experience of God's benevolence is grace. That grace could be considered a matter of demonstration is the surest sign that the modern age has been entered.[6]

Was this transition to modernity necessary? Was it necessary for us, with Descartes, to enter an age in which we attempt to demonstrate matters which we formerly took on trust or faith? Given that the whole of the history we have recounted turns on the failure to distinguish being and essence, we cannot say this. What we can say is that the question of being, of that which, as Parmenides says, "is and cannot not-be," still remains open.

Footnotes

1. Both translations are given in *The Presocratic Philosophers*, trans. and ed., G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, Cambridge, England, 1966, p. 269. The first takes the infinitives νοεῖν and εἶναι as infinitives of purpose.
2. This is the doctrine of the *Book concerning Unity* by the 12 c. philosopher and translator, Gundissalinus. See *Die dem Boethius fälschlich zugeschriebene Abhandlung des Dominicus Gudissalinus De unitate*, ed. P. Correns, Münster i. W., 1891, p. 3.
3. See Joseph Owens, "Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics," *Mediaeval Studies*, XIX (1957), 4.
4. See Owens, pp. 8-9.
5. As Gilson points out, Scotus influenced Descartes, not directly, but through Suarez's work, the *Metaphysicae Disputationes*. See Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed., Toronto, 1952, pp. 106, 109.
6. By way of contrast, we may observe that for Aquinas grace is emphatically *not* a matter of demonstration. See the *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 112, a.5.

Looking Together in Athens: The Dionysian Tragedy and Festival

Mera J. Flaumenhaft

Looking at *The Bacchae*, we do not see all that Euripides once meant to show, for the text is incomplete. How is it that, just as we come to the most terrible parts, after Agave has exhibited the dismembered corpse of her son and invited the Chorus to eat of the feast, how is it that just here so much of the text is lost to us? Scholars speculate about torn manuscripts and they scour ancient citations, hoping to recover missing lines. Editors labor to piece together sections from a twelfth century play called *Christus Patiens*, parts of which are cribbed from *The Bacchae*. But we who read the play, or watch it in the theatre, realize, as we approach the end, that we can hardly bear to look, hardly bear to hear. What *The Bacchae* shows is obscene; what it says is unspeakable. Nevertheless, we feel compelled to see what it shows, to say what it means.

This essay is a suggestion about a kind of poetic justice. Might the mangled corpse have resulted in a mangled text because, once the situation in which it was originally confronted was gone, there was no way to face such things? Dionysus may be unapproachable outside the Athenian theatre of Dionysus, and perhaps such spectacles *should not* be watched except in circumstances like those for which they were intended. The restored text has been brought to life in the theatre. Modern technology broadcasts the Greek drama to our living rooms and flies us to Athens in attempts to reproduce the original context. But viewed alone at home, or watched in the company of strangers, the play must have an effect thoroughly different from the one it had in an Athenian festival two thousand years ago.

The Bacchae, like other Greek tragedies, is about, among other things, looking together. While raising questions about Dionysus and the ordered, everyday life he disrupts, the play suggests further questions about the place of looking in civilized human life. How do human beings look at the world around them, at each other, and at themselves? Are there things that should never be looked upon, or should be viewed only in certain circumstances? Do rulers and ruled look differently when public policy is determined in different regimes? Is the looking of spectators in a theatre related by nature to Dionysus; and is a festival like the one which once surrounded the play essential to the proper effect of such looking? Let us look together, first at Euripides' depiction of Dionysus in Thebes, and then at the festival which celebrated Dionysus in Athens.

PART ONE:
The Dionysian Tragedy at Thebes

Bacchus abolishes boundaries. This god shows up oblivious to the lines and limits which define ordinary human life. "Having changed his form" *(morphēn d'ameipsas)* (4) from divine to human, he is simultaneously god and beast, male and female, terrible and gentle. The geographical sweep of the Prologue depicts his disregard for natural and conventional distinctions alike. Transcending mountains, rivers, and great seas, he has moved over a hugh diverse continent and made it one. Different races, languages, and even walled fortresses present no barriers. The coming resembles an itinerary for an army advancing from the east, but Dionysus' advent is an easy flow. The liquid sounds *(lipōn*

A tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis, Mera Flaumenhaft has published articles about Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Homer. An earlier version of this essay was delivered as a formal lecture in Annapolis on September 23, 1983.

de Lydōn) (13) indicate the ease with which he has come. Embraced by the already "mingled" *(migasin)* (18) Greeks and barbarians in Asia Minor, he returns to the "streams of Dirce and the waters of Ismenus." His sudden appearances are not through doors or gates or passageways. Liquid himself, he slips in.

For those touched by Dionysus, life ceases to be measured, articulated experience in place and time. The women who follow him are merely "Asians." "Having passed from" (*ameipsasa*) (66) their origins, they forget their former distinct lives in their single-minded devotion to Bromius. They exhort others to follow them, to be "displaced" (*ektopos*) (69). The stung Theban women resisted at first but, now, they too are "all mingled together" (*anamemeigmenai*) (37). They have left enclosed houses in a walled city to dwell on 'unroofed" rocks on the open mountains. There the distinctions between human beings and the world around them are muted. The Bacchantes are not separated from the earth by walls, floors, and shoes. They've exchanged their shuttle sticks for thyrsus sticks, and now weave with ivy vines and living snakes. They are compared to birds, colts, and fawns; instead of woven cloth they wear animal skins. Their fire is not an instrument of art or domination. It is not used for cooking, for forging tools, or for warmth against the snows of Cithaeron. Nor does it harm them. Rather, it flows from their rods, like lightning, a visible charge from the god who electrifies them. They throw themselves to the earth and sweet liquids spring up—not in rivers, springs, or wells, but wherever the earth is touched. The god's bounty is so great that even storage containers are unnecessary. When Bacchantes dance, the whole mountain "bacchizes with" (*sunebacheu'*) (726) them. But this mountain is not properly their "place." They speak of Crete, and yearn for Cypris, Paphos, and Pieria, as well. Furthermore, their holy places are peculiar in that their sense of the holy precludes place as it is ordinarily experienced by human beings. As a proseletyzing cult, Bacchism aims at universality. The god could be anywhere, anywhere one is not confined by the constrictions and constructions of civilized life. He'll move on when he's done with Thebes. To worship Bacchus is to be in touch—with earth, air, fire, water—but not with any particular place. He promises a literal u-topia: no house, no city, no defined home on earth. The Theban counterparts of these uprooted women tear up trees by the roots.

The women who worship Bacchus "out of place" also live outside articulated human time. Neither natural nor conventional time punctuates their lives; they do not plan or wait. Unconcerned with time of year, they tend no crops or animals, and store no food or wine for the future. Their plants are ivy, bryony, and fir, ever-greens whose looks do not reflect seasonal cycles, but whose lavish growth is a continual show of powerful life within. The ivy and vines grow freely, ungoverned by a set form which they must reach to be themselves. The Bacchantes live apart from men, mingling without regard to age, and their lives are unmarked by ceremonies of birth, growth, or death. The fertility god of seasons makes his followers barren. They leave their own infants and nurse young animals. New devotees must be made in the streets of the cities which generate them. The Bacchantes chant the remembered story of Bacchus, but they have no story of their own. They do not look back together upon their own pasts or forward to their own futures. Once again, being in touch makes them deeply out of touch as well. Immersed in the present, they are at one moment fast asleep on the ground and then fully awake and upright, or, at one moment bloody from battle and immediately after, clean and refreshed, with no memory even of recent experience. The ritual *orgia*—"works in service"—of this god require little time-consuming preparation. There are no embroidered robes, no burnt offerings, no altar or hearth, no statues, no organized feasts. In short, where there is no ordinary sense of time, there can be no articulated festival time; where there are no days, there are no holidays.

The Bacchic celebrants merge not only with the earth and other living things around them, but with the god himself. To revere Bacchus is to "bacchize" *(bakcheuō)* or to "bacchize oneself" *(katabakchioomai)*. The verb does not take an accusative outside the subject. Instead of offering libations and food to a distant divinity, the followers of Dionysus drink him and eat him raw, ignoring even bodily boundaries to become one with him. Losing oneself in Dionysis is a reassertion of one's ties to the earth, but, at the same time, it is an attempt to assimilate oneself to the condition of the god. Dionysus needs no priest to mediate between himself and his followers, no prophet to explain him: "the leader—*exarchos*—is Bromius" (140) himself. Anyone at anytime can be in touch with the god.

Those who merge with the natural world and with Dionysus do so while merging with others. It's not surprising that the most willing followers of Dionysus are women, who are, perhaps, by nature most attached to and in touch with other human beings. To "bacchize" is to "thiasize the soul" (*thiaseuetai psychan*) (75). Like most Greek choruses, the women of the thiasos, the Bacchic band, speak in the singular: "I rush" *(thoazō)* (66) and "I shall hymn" *(hymnēsō)* (72). But here the dramatic convention acquires special meaning as they are made one by their dress, slogans, and the dance. Individual heartbeats merge in the drumbeat, and ecstatic music moves them "outside themselves," not to isolation, but to thorough communion. Even Cadmus and Tiresias feel it; they say they've forgotten they are old men. Feeling the same things, they slip into the dual (194) and share a line of iambic trimeter (189). They "clasp hands and together make a pair" (*xunapte kai xunorizou chera*) (198); in Greek, they "join the horizon." "Counting out no one" *(diarithmōn d'ouden)* (209), the god "has made no distinctions" *(ou gar diērēch')* (206). As we soon see, the priest of Apollo and the founding father of Thebes never fully lose themselves in Dionysus. But the maenads on the mountain are thoroughly merged. In a vase painting

Dionysus faces two women, but it is difficult to tell which of the four bare feet and arms belong to which. The thiasos distinguishes itself from hostile outsiders; left alone, it is a unit. The Messenger mentions three groups and the individuals around whom they gather, but the women don't attend much to the division. Within the thiasos there is no opposition or competition, in deed or in speech. Once again, articulation is foreign to Dionysus. In contrast, the cattlebreeders and shepherds distinguish themselves from each other, as well as from an easy-talking city-slicker, and from the mute domestic animals whom they again distinguish as young and mature heifers (737,739). Like most messengers in the tragedies, the Messenger from Cithaeron has looked with others. He speaks in the first person *plural*, reporting that the herders argued about what they saw: they "matched common reports with each other in strife" (715). But the Theban maenads, like the Asian chorus, cried out "in one voice," literally, "with one mouth" *(athroō stomati)* (725). Later as they attacked Pentheus, "all gave voice at once" *(ēn de pas' homou boē)* (1131). The homogeneous democracy of the Bacchantes merges into an impetuous "throng." *Ochlos* (117, 1058, 1130) is a word often used in political contexts to describe a fickle mob, female or male, as opposed to the *dēmos*, male citizens who assemble to discuss their own and the city's common business. Though the women sing antiphonal chants of some sort, there are no "winged" words among the Bacchantes. In Homer the word *ameibō* is used for exchange between persons, exchange of speech or private possessions—like the self-conscious talk and trade between Diomedes and Glaucus in *Iliad* VI. In *The Bacchae* it refers mostly to change of position or appearance. It signals not organized giving and receiving among separate individuals, but the fluidity of anything touched by Dionysus.

The communion of the thiasos precludes private as well as public relations. Ordinarily, human love begins in distinguishing the loved one from others. Later, lovers or friends rightly feel that they have become "one." Nevertheless, in love and friendship, the others like oneself also remain somehow other. The Bacchantes mention love—Eros or Aphrodite—only as symbols of peace and release. Since they make no distinctions within the communion, they do not recognize either permissible or desirable behavior in its separate members. Their gentle closeness is thus deficient love, just as their angry violence can only be primitive justice. Unlike friends, they look neither at nor with each other, and feel no profound admiration, pity, or fear for other human beings; they are too much in touch.

Finally, placeness, timeless, merging Bacchism is opposed to the human self-consciousness which develops from standing up and looking at the world, for Dionysus makes it very difficult to look. The maenads are characterized by constant motion, interrupted by falls to the earth. Euripides repeatedly calls our attention to the way in which the god confounds "up and down" *(anō te kai katō)*,[1] turning the world topsy-turvy, and transforming the relation of vision to the other senses. In the Parodos the women sing of their feet, hands, mouths, and hair. Those who feel themselves to have come alive through Dionysus evoke the *contact* senses: the feel of air, smell of smoke, taste of liquids, and sound of drums. In a later ode they sing of the "pale-bare foot" dancing in the "green pleasures of a meadow" (863-67). The synaesthetic mingling of visual and tactile expresses wonderfully the powerful beauty of their undifferentiating awe. Similarly, when they sing of colors in the Parodos, the effect is kaleidoscopic. For them, color permeates, is diffuse; it does not define the contours or limits of things. They prefer night and shadows to light and clear lines. A vase painting depicts a dancing maenad with head thrown back and eyes open, but glazed over. Others shut their eyes. The dancer's freely moving body extends and crosses the defined vertical space he usually occupies.[2] Ordinarily, eyes see only when they are lifted on an upright body, away from the earth, and when they remain still long enough to gaze steadily. Through them, an autonomous individual takes in what is outside himself. But the Bacchantes "take in" the world in order to merge with it. By changing the relative status of the senses, Dionysus makes the world look different.

The Bacchae odes have been compared to Romantic nature poetry or to landscape painting. But the Bacchic attitude is very different from that of the poet who looks at himself looking at the natural world. This looking requires separation from as well as kinship with, the ivy, snakes, fawns, and foals which twine, slither, and leap through a world with no horizon, a world in which they have not stood up. Wordsworth's poems are about mortality, time, memory, place, and his own changing perspective on nature and human life. He is a mature self-conscious beholder who often looks with or addresses his observations to another. And he speculates about his kinship with and his distance from the world upon which he looks:

> For I have learned
> to look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still sad music of humanity . . . (*Tintern Abbey*)

Immersed in the beauty of the land, the Bacchantes have never seen a landscape. The latter, as the word suggests, must be "shaped" by the seer—or painter—who frames the scene with boundaries and a horizon. When a Bacchic woman throws down the frame of her upright loom *(istos)*, she abandons all frames and the orientation which framing makes possible in human life.

One reason *The Bacchae* is so unsettling is that the Chorus, which in most Greek plays is tied to the city, here consists of unrelated foreigners; there is no community "point of view." Agave thinks she has seen and killed a lion (1175, 1238), and, with eyes rolling in her head, she calls upon her son to come look. (1257). Instead of withdrawing in pity and fear, the women, for

once, are eager to look: "I see and shall accept you as a fellow reveller" (1172). Their response to her invitation to eat expresses their revulsion, but they urge her to show her trophies to the citizens. The rest of the play is Theban business and the Chorus hardly reacts to the dissolution of the city through which they have passed, but with which they have never looked. Agave finally comes to a standstill, away from her thiasos. Only then can Cadmus make her see that this is not a happy "spectacle" *(opsin)* (1232), that, indeed, it is "not the sort of thing to be seen" *(oud'hoion t'idein)* (1244). Dionysus affects human vision not only by preventing and distorting it, but by making those he touches unable to distinguish between what should and should not be beheld.

Pentheus rejects the god. He speaks the language of opposition, not surprising in the grandson of Cadmus, who emerged from the barbarians to overcome a monstrous dragon, and reaped civilized Hellenes from these chthonic, even incestuous beginnings. Pentheus has detached himself from these beginnings. *He* makes distinctions; between old gods and new, immortals and mortals, Greeks and foreigners, free men and slaves, men and women, Thebes and countryside, day and night, dignity and folly. He orders out the articulated divisions (781-83) of his male army against the female thyrsus bearers who mingle on the mountain. Pentheus trusts in gates and walls, jails and chains. Like his grandfather, he has a strong sense of his own. He must defend "my" mother, "our" women—the Greek does not require the possessive—against alien forces. He will not be touched: "Do not put your hands on me, do not wipe off folly on me" (343-344), he cries. When the two old men who have clasped hands urge him to recognize the levelling god, Pentheus draws the line. But although he is so different from the Bacchantes, he too is characterized by his disordered vision. In both his public and private behavior, he is unable to look with other human beings.

King Pentheus is alarmed for the safety of his city. Most monarchs are vigilant about erotic alliances within their regimes, for the private friendships of those who see alike may result in invisible conspiracies against a king. There are no such friendships in Thebes and, as we have seen, the thiasos is characterized by an undiscriminating, blind form of "friendship." Though the maenads are unlikely to oppose the ruler in any political way, the presence of a communion of citizens who no longer feel their primary tie to be the city does constitute a real threat to ordered political life. But King Pentheus deals with this threat tyrannically. Without father, mother, or friends, he looks and acts alone. The maenads are too much in touch to look with others; Pentheus, like most tryants, is too out of touch. His grandfather has abdicated to him, and there is no council of advisors. He alone will spy out and act against opposition. Even the feeble chorus of elders which provides a sort of public perspective in some plays is absent here. And anyone—even a professional seer—who offers another point of view is suppressed.

Pentheus' public behavior is tyrannical in another way. Most kings rule by their manifest presence, often through public ceremonies or processions in which the ruler exhibits himself to his subjects, or in which they are reviewed by him.[3] Even without planned ceremonial occasions, the well-being of the community requires the visible presence of its different elements. Ruler and subjects might not look together as equals, but each is a viewer recognized by the other. Pentheus rejects mutual viewing just as he rejects mutual council: only he is to be on view; the city will look to him for its well-being; opposition must be hidden away in dark dungeons. He scorns even to look upon those who disagree (252).

Not surprisingly, the vision of the friendless tyrant is defective. His view of the women is based on what he's heard. "I hear *(kluō)*, he begins a long distorting description of their imagined behavior (216ff). He "knows" of Tmolus by "hearsay" (462), and mistakes a bull for the odd-looking Stranger who makes him want to *hear* more about the maenads. The eyewitness report of the Messenger from Cithaeron, in the central scene of the central episode of the play, looks both back to Pentheus' hearsay envisionings and forward to his disastrous firsthand view of the Maenads. "Having seen the sacred Bacchantes" (664), he says that Pentheus too would have *seen* (737, 740) that the thiasos was a "wonder of good order to see" (693). "Having seen these things," Pentheus "would have come with prayers" (712-13). Then he describes the attack on the villagers. In a striking image he reminds us of the way in which human eyes almost reflexively close to avoid seeing what should not be exposed to view: the garments of [bulls'] flesh were drawn apart more quickly than you could close the lids over your royal eyes" (746-47). The Messenger continued to watch this Dionysian dismemberment. The "terror" *(deinon)*, he says, was a "sight to see" *(theam'idein)* (760).

From now on, Pentheus' concern shifts from his public responsibility to his private needs. For, suppress him as he will, Pentheus too yearns for Dionysus. No longer satisfied with reports, he develops a great "desire" *(erōs)* (813) to see the maenads with his own eyes (811), to become a "watcher" *(theatēs)* (829). He says he would be sorry to see them drunk, but Dionysus remarks that, all the same, he would see these "bitter things" with pleasure (815). To look differently, Pentheus must look different. He dons the "costume" *(stolē)* (828) of a maenad but, unlike the women, he is painfully self-conscious. His posturing betrays the armour between himself and the "effeminate form" *(gynaikomorphē)* (855) he has assumed; it is both shared costume and protective disguise. He says he has been "playing the Bacchant" *(bakchiazōn)* (931). The verb differs slightly from the one used by the Chorus *(bakcheuō)*; it suggests the difference between engaging in one's own activity, and watching oneself assume the customs of others. Pentheus' carefully delineated world has begun to blur. Hallucinating, he sees two suns and

a double Thebes. The Stranger, who at first seemed "not unshapely" *(amorphos)* (453), now appears in other shapes. The transformed king is led off in a peculiar private "procession" *(pompē)* of unacknowledged retainers who later report what happened, and by the Stranger, "the leader of our viewing *(theōria)* (1047).

Unlike the maenads who fall to the earth, Pentheus rises far above it, an isolated "spy" *(kataskopos)* (916, 156, 981) and a "spectator" *(theatēs)* (829) of the absorbed women below. Once again, his looking is aberrant. Pentheus is a voyeur. In the private realm he wishes not to do, but to view, everything. The sexual voyeur watches actions which, by nature, should not concern anyone but the actors. By ignoring the line between private and public, he obliterates both realms. Other voyeurs who stare unblinkingly at the corpses of the dead, or the grief of the living, also see what in civilized life must be obscene, off-stage. The voyeur may seek out spectacles of bestiality, incest, necrophilia, cannibalism, and other violations of the natural lines of human life. Pentheus surely is titillated by the suggestion of such things among the maenads. In collapsing the distinctions between private and public, seen and obscene, human and animal, the voyeur may appear to embrace Dionysus. But the embrace is false. Although the Bacchantes, like animals, do not properly look with others, they do look—in their fashion—in the presence of others. As we have seen, the voyeur lacks their unselfconscious innocence. His furtiveness reveals a deliberately violated sense of shame which they do not have; he knows he should not be looking. We call him "bestial," suggesting not nature, but degeneration.

The voyeur's vicarious embrace of Dionysus is false also because, though somehow moved by what he sees, he is an isolate, outside communal, as well as private, combinations. Pentheus wants to see "the things he should not see" (912), but *his* looking must be seen by no one; he must not be touched. Even as he ignores boundaries, he erects a frame around others like himself, reducing their actions and passions to material for his viewing. Pentheus' private spying, like his public violence, is tyrannical.[4] Earlier, he speaks only of the maenads' physical behavior; now too, he can see only what their *bodies* are doing. He cannot share their spiritual joys or sorrows or "thiasize the soul" with others; at the end he feels only the "pain," or "grief" (*penthos*), of Pentheus. In a terrifying reversal, this solitary and too-distant onlooker is drawn swiftly into the scene. Seen by those who do not ordinarily look up, he is pulled down to the earth he denies in himself. Earlier he anticipates being held by his mother; now he reaches out to touch her cheek and is ripped apart, his ribs "laid bare" *(gymnounto)* (1134) like those of the animals the Messenger describes. The corpse, dismembered and unburied, will be displayed for all to see. The young man who would maintain distinctions is almost eaten, reabsorbed, by his own mother, in a terrifying violation of human time and relations. His city is shattered; its founder will be transformed into a snake and will lead a mingled barbarian horde against the Hellenes he once civilized. Exiled by Dionysus, he will return to "ravage the oracle of Loxias," that is, of Apollo (1336).

Apollo's priest had warned Pentheus to join him in recognizing the new god. But like the god he already serves, Tiresias remains somehow aloof, always looking from afar. His rationalized arguments on behalf of Dionysus seem alien to the spirit of the god of unmediated mergings. He is a Theban, yet he has the distance to look into Theban affairs and see more than those whose primary allegiance is to the city. Like the Bacchantes, he is in touch with a god; but he is somehow out of touch with other human beings; unmarried and childless, he has been male and female; he has looked upon copulating snakes, and once he beheld the goddess Athena naked, as she bathed. Unlike the followers of Dionysus, he transcends the city in isolation. His blindness, though related to his insight and foresight, precludes his looking together with others. He alone is not punished, but it is clear that, Apollonian vision, as well as the looking of shameless Bacchantes, and voyeur-king, is inadequate when Dionysus shows himself in Thebes.[5]

PART TWO:
Tragedy and the City Dionysia at Athens

Imagine now another city, one which tries to provide an entire community with something like the experience of those who lose themselves in Dionysus. We are all familiar with revels which sanction temporary release from daily life: medieval Festivals of Misrule, Twelfth Night, Jewish Purim, Catholic Mardi Gras, and camp topsy-turvy days. These are characterized by reversals or blurring of political and sexual hierarchies and distinctions, by unusual masks and costumes or no clothing at all, by dramatic role-playing, by wild dancing, or by the conspicuous consumption of intoxicating beverages. The most important of the Athenian festivals was called the City Dionysia. The name differentiates it from rural festivals by attaching it to the physical city, *astu*; the location is crucial. This festival was far more than temporary entertainment; it was an important part of the positive training of the Athenian people.[6] Let us delay considering the dramatic highpoint of the festival and speculate about how the arrangements which led up to it address the unsettling questions *The Bacchae* raises about Dionysus, looking, and the city. We shall also consider some modern counterparts.

Like other civic events, this annual festival is characterized by its attention to shared time and place. In late March summer agriculture and war do not demand the full attention of the citizens. The seas are navigable again, and allies send ambassadors to bear tribute and also to look at the first city. In the spring,

the citizens are constantly aware of the distinctions between themselves and outsiders, as well as between themselves and resident aliens and slaves within the city. As we shall see, the community which assembles to celebrate the god who obliterates boundaries is conspicuously divided into distinct groups throughout the festival.

As in most civic business in Athens, responsibility and preparations are shared. Though inefficient, this arrangement insures continual participation in public life. Like other projects whose parts are contributed piecemeal by private citizens who order and pay for them, the festival involves large numbers of people. Several months before, the Archon Eponymous and his aids, none of whom is required to have any special training in drama, choose the poets who will enter the competitions. Actors are assigned and a preliminary selection of judges is made from among the tribes. The ten names of these ordinary citizens—not drama critics—are put into sealed urns in the Acropolis; tampering with them is a capital crime.

Also chosen long before the festival are the *chorēgoi*, private citizens who provide the money to outfit and train dithyrambic and dramatic choruses and flute players. This duty is called a *leitourgia*, a work on behalf of the *leitos*, or folk. Unlike the Bacchic *orgia*, the *leitourgia* is the civic duty of an individual, freely assumed, or assigned, by tribe or city. Other "liturgies" equip a warship or finance a delegation to a pan-hellenic festival. This great public giving allows an individual to exhibit his wealth, but to do so in partnership with the city, which pays the actors and endows poets' prizes. A liberal choregos spends gladly; though compulsory, the *leitourgia* is not a tax. His giving, like all noble action in a small homogeneous community, is meant to be seen. During the festival, the choregos exhibits not only his chorus, but himself, dressed in splendid robes, as a noble object for the contemplation of his fellow citizens. This office seems to speak to Rousseau's warning in *The Social Contract,* against the substitution of money for public service. In fulfilling his civic responsibilities, the choregos offers, in Rousseau's terms, *both* his "pocketbook and his person";[7] he expends *himself.* Compare him with modern "philanthropists,"—an interesting word—who, in their own way, often privately, and even anonymously, endow museums, parks, and theatres of their own choosing. At another extreme, a manual for producers of community dramas warns against a single patron because even financial dependence on one person reduces the community, group, effort.[8] The modern representative republic often seems either to put *all* the responsibility into private hands, or to fear private initiative. The ancient participatory democracy requires the wealthy citizen to spend his wealth honorably, and then displays him and his work as examples of civic liberality—even magnificence—befitting a free man among equals.[9]

The Proagon, before the poets' contest (*agōn*), takes place one or two days before the festival. Here the public is officially given the details of the program. In the Odeum, a hall near the theatre, each poet stands with his choregos, actors, flute players, and chorus, to announce the titles, and perhaps plot summaries, of the plays. The civic meaning of the Proagon is clearer when compared with our practices. It is not a review by an outsider who discusses and perhaps recommends the play. Nor is it a coming attraction in which potential spectators are enticed by samples; there will be only one performance. Rather, it is an occasion for the many citizens who will be acting to display themselves in their own persons, as fellow citizens, to those who will be watching. In the Proagon, no one wears masks or theatrical costumes.

The last event before the festival period is the torchlit night procession commemorating the coming of Dionysus to Athens. The god's image, removed earlier from the temple in the theatre precinct, is carried back from the northwest Eleutherae road to the theatre. The procession is the first properly "Dionysian" event but it differs strikingly from the various manifestations of the god in *The Bacchae.* Here again we see how the City Dionysia links *orgia* with *leitourgia.* Instead of lightning appearances and the removal of the population to the mountain, here a manmade statue of the god is deliberately carried within city walls, through gates and streets, and placed in a building made for institutional worship. It is escorted by armed *epheboi*, young men in training to *defend* the city, but who are not yet full members. Like the festival period, they are on the border between civic and non-civic time. In *The Republic*, Socrates would forbid them to watch plays and would restrict their "spectacles" to the noble warfare of their elders.[10] In his *Letter to D'Alembert,* Rousseau suggests that they attend community dances instead of the theatre.[11] Athens requires the young men to be present at the theatre festival, but carefully regulates their role.

The next day begins the period during which all ordinary business is suspended. There is no assembly during the festival, and no legal action may be taken. Jailed prisoners are released on bail. The first official event, a turbulent procession, the *pompē,* is not an occasion for careful looking and distinguishing. Pressed together, or even from the sidelines or a reviewing stand, one forms not a view of the whole, but a fragmented, kaleidoscopic impression. Though it is difficult to gaze steadily, one is intensely aware of moving bodies, of arms, bellies, noses, backsides, and ritual phalluses.[12] Citizens and foreigners, old and young, men and women move to the same throbbing rhythm. Many wear masks, and perhaps costumes, which blend their identities with those of the opposite sex or the god they celebrate. The arrangements do, however, maintain some shape, some direction. Now the physical forms of the city, which may have blurred in the flickering torchlight the night before, are visible. The procession winds through the streets, halting in the agora, perhaps for choral dances at the altars of other gods. The epheboi sacrifice a bull and present the choicest parts to prominent city officials. Unlike the mingled Bacchantes of all ages, only unmarried girls take part in the

pompē. A maiden of noble birth leads, carrying a golden basket of offerings. Others bear wine, now mixed with water, and food, now cooked with fire, to be consumed on the way. The abundance of Dionysus in Athens is enclosed in pots, baskets, wineskins, and other manmade containers. The rich ride in chariots. Prepared costumes identify other groups: citizens in white, metics in red, and choregoi in their finery. However immersed in the crowd they are, the celebrants enter the theatre of Dionysus together, in public procession, as citizens of Athens. They are one, but the one is an articulated community, not a thiasos.

The *theatron*—watching place—where the entire city will spend the next few days, from dawn to dusk, is a round space like both a natural dell, and a conventional agora or an enclosure within a city wall. Most sit closely, knee to knee, with nothing between them. Jean-Louis Barrault remarks on the warmth and unity of "houses" where there is only one armrest between seats:

> The spectator is part of the others . . . the audience is a sort of synthesis of the whole community of the world, of the promiscuity of all the others pressing one against the other; a sort of human stirring shoulder to shoulder . . . which releases . . . a monstrous god, a sole personality. . . . The audience is a kind of enormous baby . . . all the adults lose their personality.[13]

This might recall the Bacchantes. But it does not describe with sufficient subtlety the Athenian theatre, or the way in which "the monstrous god" comes there. The congregation includes the free male citizens, the Assembly, who often gather in a similar amphitheatre on a nearby hill; the festival gathering is not the first time they form a community. They are uniformly encouraged to attend—Pericles arranged for the city to provide tickets for all—but they are not mingled indiscriminately. And, while they are joined on this occasion by many resident aliens and foreign visitors, the aim is not a "synthesis of the . . . world." Rather, grown men, epheboi, maybe women and children, metics, and visitors, sit in separate sections, identifiable in their colored robes. Citizens may sit by tribe. It is the city of Athens that is foremost, and not the unarticulated "world." It has been conjectured that the wooden bleachers, which were later replaced with stone ones, were made from the timbers of Persian ships that these men, or their fathers, defeated at Salamis a few years before.[14] Whatever the facts, it is important to remember the occasions on which they gathered together in the past.

Finally, there is another kind of seating—"front row" stone thrones for polis officials, generals, and choregoi. Unlike Bacchantes who sit close together and look at nothing, or Pentheus, who sits alone and spies on everything, these "distinguished" citizens sit together and apart, viewing and on view. Most prominent, at the center, sits the priest of Dionysus, city official and intermediary between the god and his celebrants. Gone is the exarchos who whips up the moblike thiasos to ecstatic identification with Dionysus. A statue of the god who always looked alone in Thebes, now joins Athens as a fellow spectator at his own festival.

Dionysus is present in his altar as well. The flame which burns in the orchestra throughout the festival is neither the useful fire with which men master nature, nor the narthex fire which streams spontaneously from the wands of dancing Bacchantes. The altar fire is for *looking at*,[15] not by solitary individuals or private households, but by the whole city together.

The visual focus of the theatre is the round dancing place *(orchēstra)* of the chorus and the platform *(skēnē)* where the actors perform. This platform usually represents the outside of a palace. There is no drop curtain to separate audience from acting place. Unlike modern theatregoers whom an implied "fourth wall" puts in the position of voyeurs looking into a private place, Athenian spectators, like the dramatic characters, observe what is normally on view to the public.

But while attention is focused on the stage, it is not exclusively so. The performance takes place in the daytime, so the acting area is not a lit place in a dark space. Daylight preserves distinction which break down in the dark. Changing as the day passes, it keeps those who concentrate on artificial stage time in touch with natural time. Since the theatre is so large, the figures on stage are small, distant, and undetailed. The well-lit audience which sits almost circularly around them, is thus as much to be seen as the performers on stage. A citizen in the theatre of Dionysus is far more aware of himself and his fellow spectators than are modern theatre or movie goers, strangers who are absorbed by the illuminated action at one end of a dark rectangular room. Television, which enables viewers to watch in common, but in private, *all* the time, with no preparation or cooperation before the viewing, seems the complete antithesis of the civic viewing we are considering. The modern extended republic does its governing through representatives, now also mostly seen at a distance, on television. It is not surprising that those who stay home to view Thanksgiving parades organized by private businesses will view anything else that is shown. Electronic inventions have the potential to turn millions of viewers into voyeurs, who see without being seen, and keep in touch only by looking from afar. This technology may produce extreme unity and homogeneity, but at the same time, extreme isolation. Such isolation was less possible in the Athenian arrangements for overseeing public policy and viewing dramatic performances in full view of one's fellow citizens.

Two more views are shared by the spectators in the theatre. One is of the mountains surrounding the city. Scenic shots in film versions of Greek tragedies are beautiful, but tend to remind most of us that we are foreigners. The landscape beheld by the Athenians is their own. The second view is of what they have built upon the land. Though they are outdoors, in touch with the weather and the natural contour of the hill they sit on,

they can still, as Pericles tells another congregation of Athenians and strangers, feast their eyes on Athens. The unsettling wonders they will behold in the plays are framed by the solid citizens and solid foundations of the city which makes the festival.

Before turning to performances, let us glance briefly at some of our contemporary American festivals. In the context of our present discussion, they have a decidedly uncivic look. Popular *theatre* festivals sell tickets long distance, mostly to non-residents, and import famous actors who perform for audiences that have never before assembled and never will again. They gather at various Stratfords, for example, to "see shows." Our diverse and tolerant republic is rich in the variety of local ethnic festivals which are celebrated traditionally, often with the help of quite different friends and neighbors. But, in America, these festivities cannot be *civic* festivities, and it is evident that in a prosperous, mobile, and cosmopolitan society such traditions tend to atrophy. National holidays like Thanksgiving, Independence Day, and presidents' birthdays do not seem to have the same intensity as local or ethnic celebrations. Another variety of contemporary festival self-consciously aims to bring together a diverse urban community. A recent Chicagofest was run by a non-local business called "Festivals Incorporated." It offered food, crafts, entertainment, and publicity for the incumbent mayor, but deteriorated into racial wrangling. In Annapolis, a national beer company underwrites an annual city festival heavily attended by outsiders. It is advertised in the Washington Post among other area "Festivals, Festivals, and more Festivals," from which a private family might choose a spring outing. Most of the pleasant fairs and festivals in hundreds of American towns have a commercial basis; their most visible activity, amidst preparations, decorations, and entertainment, is exchange of merchandise; the crafts displayed for looking are for sale, as is the food.

Our hunger for something more than commercial fairs has taken an interesting form in the past few years—food, crafts and entertainment in a setting of medieval and Renaissance exotica. For example, at Columbia, Maryland, a "planned community" with a heterogeneous population which works in other cities, a corporation started in Minnesota hosts a "Renaissance Festival" to celebrate another place at another time. The Washington Post ad announces that, "the sixteenth century is back by popular demand." Of course, the sixteenth century fair was also primarily a commercial enterprise. Our celebration of such things must be very different from Little Italy's saints' feasts, and even more so from Athens' Dionysia. Examples abound to demonstrate the differences between the festivals of cosmopolitan modernity and those of the ancient polis. Let us now return to the theatre in Athens.

In the first watched performances, choruses from each tribe sing dithyrambic hymns, often about Dionysus. But unlike the identically masked, rootless Asian women in *The Bacchae*, these singers are native-born men and boys, present and future citizens. They are released from their required military training to be trained for the festival. Their trainer, though not a poet, must also be native to the city. As worshippers of the god, they sing and dance, bound into a circle, crowned with flowers and ivy, but they are *unmasked*. Far from losing their identities, they remain distinguishable from each other and identifiable by their fellow citizens. Nor are the spectators moved outside themselves by these hymns, since the singers are not fictional personages with whom they identify.[16]

The next day begins with a political display in which the city exhibits itself for its own citizens and for outsiders. After the priest of Dionysus purifies the theatre by sacrificing a pig and pouring libations, there are processions which, unlike the earlier parades, are entirely for watching. Young Athenians march before the vast assembly, carrying jars of silver talents, the year's tribute from allied cities. Citizens and strangers are honored for their services to Athens. The orphaned, but now grown, sons of men who died in battle parade in full armour. They have been educated by the city, which now displays them, as they make the transition from wardship and seat themselves, as fellow spectators, among the citizens.

Now at last is the gathered city prepared to look upon what is alien, alien not only because the dramas depict semi-divine heroes, and kings, and assertive women of other cities at other times, but because, in them, civilized people must confront anew what they have made alien to themselves: their own buried monstrousness. The great chorus in *Antigone* articulates a paradox about man: the very thing that makes this *anthrōpos* wonderful makes him terrible. To be *deinos* is to be tragic. Human beings are articulating beings who rise up and distinguish themselves from the world and from other beings in the world. Only man is conscious of place, time, and mortality, and only man distinguishes between what he will do and look upon from what is forbidden. But tragedy reminds us that man is also the only being who essentially strives to ignore or overcome such limits. Like voyeurs' peep-shows and everyone's dreams,[17] the tragedies reveal rape, parricide, incest, cannibalism, defiled corpses; their subject is human *hubris*, the violation of limits and the failure to articulate. In the theatre spectators must face what is mixed and mingled, mangled and impure.

To understand the theatre of Dionysus in Athens one might have to understand why Oedipus ends his life in Athens. Repeatedly, the plays show us a tragic protagonist from Thebes—or some place like it—who brings his terrible and wonderful experiences to the most civilized city in Hellas. Athens is not simply providing a refuge for them. These extraordinary sufferers are somehow gifts to insure the fertile, vital humanity of the city that takes them in. Consider Thebes, the paradigm tragic city. Cadmus comes from the east, brings the alphabet, slays a dragon, and turns a violent,

chthonic, incestuous settlement into a walled and orderly city. Then Dionysus is engendered there and, when he returns, the women run for the mountain. The young king is killed and the city is shattered. After a few generations, another watchful king exposes a baby on the mountain to avoid predicted disasters. The baby, who grows into a fully developed version of Pentheus, returns to subdue the raw-eating sphinx-monster that has attached itself to this city. Answering all questions and requests himself, standing above the earth and the city, taunting the gods, this autonomous paradigm of all human beings kills his father, sleeps with his mother, and generates his own siblings. Years later the blind, dependent untouchable comes to Athens, to a sacred grove containing the threshold to the underworld. Adopted by the city whose ways he must now *feel* out, and recognizing the power of love, he now gives not his power to dominate or control, but himself. Theseus recognizes that to accept him is to worship simultaneously (*hama*) the earth and the sky. It is not clear whether Oedipus vanishes up or down, but at last he leaves something which will pass down properly through generations of Athenians. Thebes, the city of violent beginnings, of vines and wines, of dragons, snakes, and sphinxes, of maimed walkers on earth, and of the wild mountain, has come home to Athens, the city of peaceful beginnings, of the rooted olive tree, of skilled horsemen, and the tamed sea. *Athens* is deepened by this presence.[18]

The plays, then, are emissaries between the community and what it must usually exclude. Like Oedipus, the tragic drama is a necessary pollutant, "terrible to see, terrible to hear" (*deinos men horan, deinos de kluein*) (*Oed. Col.* 140–41). Like Oedipus, it is also a blessing to civilized human beings, to reconcile them with their primitive, yet ever present, origins—with the buried dragon's teeth. But these *deina,* terrible things, are now "most terrible to men, yet most gentle" *(deinotatos anthrōpoisi d'ēpiōtatos)* (861). Dionysus on the mountain makes one forget the bitter things; in the theatre, he recalls them, so that remembering and looking are sweeter than forgetting and turning away.

Athens understood that to be fully human, *deinos anthrōpos* must recognize both static, pure Apollo, and dancing, drunken Dionysus—and to come to "see" in the ways of both gods. Officially sanctioned Dionysian festivals, and the arrangement by which the Delphic shrine was given over to Dionysus for several months of each year, both bear witness to this understanding. But like Tiresias' arguments, other festivals—and even the sharing at Delphi—fail to recognize Dionysus fully. The difficulty is that they are all from the point of view of Apollo. One measures off part of the year, contains it within strict boundaries, and permits a weak version of once powerful devotions. *Mēden agan*—"nothing in excess"—we hear Apollo say; *metron ariston*—"measure is best"—even as the revellers toss their heads and drink their wine. The wisdom which says one must know oneself, and that both Apollo and Dionysus are that self, is an Apollonian wisdom. One temporarily forgets oneself, under orders from the god of clarity, articulation, and the distant view. The difficulty lies in the *serial* character of these arrangements, the *alternation* of distance and participation, vision and touch. Pentheus' acting and looking are not Euripides' images of the theatrical experience. For true actors and spectators experience *simultaneously* both Dionysus and Apollo, just as Theseus worshiped earth and sky *hama*, "at the same time."

The actor undoubtedly "identifies" with the alien character he impersonates. But, behind his mask, he retains his self-conscious awareness of who he is. In the Proagon he showed his own face; in the drama he shows the mask of Pentheus or Dionysus. The mask may call into question our fixed identities, may suggest Dionysian flux. But, we do not see one person transforming his very face into that of another.

The Chorus is also simultaneously foreign and familiar. In *The Bacchae* fifteen male citizens impersonate the Asian women. They sing of wild, timeless, placeless running, while executing dances which require the utmost attention to time, place, and direction. Though they speak as one and wear the same mask, they move in rectangular formations, always aware of rank. They sing of open spaces in the shadows and contact with the earth, but dance in an enclosed space, in broad daylight, on a hardened orchestra floor. They sing of experiences which obviate speech in complex diction and matched stanzas. They have committed to memory hymns to amnesia.

The spectators, who behold the action on the stage, are also *simultaneously* themselves and others. Only as separate, autonomous souls can they feel pity and fear for others like themselves, but clearly other. As democratic equals, citizens-friends, they look both at and with each other. And like friends who act for and see themselves in each other, they see themselves in those they watch on stage. Unlike the cave spectators in the *Republic*, they are not in the dark; they can turn their heads. They are aware, even as they feel the real joys and terrors of Dionysus, that they watch a framed imitation, a whole with carefully articulated parts. Looking *together*, they can face what, if experienced firsthand or seen privately, might destroy their humanity. The "spectacle" *(opsis)*, contest, and actors, which Aristotle and some of his interpreters dismiss as unnecessary, allow for facing such things with others. Essential to the moral and civic ends of tragedy, they are the proper work of legislators, teachers, and citizens, as well as of the costume maker.[19]

Let us pause again to consider some recent American theatre "experiments," of interest to us because they so often invoked Dionysus, while differing radically from the theatre which celebrated him in Athens. The "new" theatre of the 60's took its cues from Cezanne and Cubists; it sought kaleidoscopic, collage effects unbound by frame or linear, articulated forms. Often looking to eastern models, it was self-consciously "total," multi-media, not just visual. The followers of

Artaud and his "theatre of cruelty" agreed that Sophocles is too "fixed," that the theatre must move away from looking, language, and "masterpieces."[20] Athens brought Dionysus from the mountains through the streets, into the theatre. Some "new" groups took their performances "to the streets"—to Times Square and Grand Central Station—in order to dissolve barriers between imitation and "life." Others abandoned the "fourth wall" convention and the distinction between watcher and watched, encouraging audiences to mingle with "actors" and to take part in the "action." Distinctions between what is publicly or privately viewable lost their meaning in such spectacles; nakédness was a trademark of the "new" theatre. The explicit goal was to create a democratic communion among all participants, most of whom had never come together before. Paradoxically, this communion was to coexist with different reactions from different spectators. Everyone could do and feel his own thing, but together. Theoretically, any reaction was as good as any other in this "democratization of Dionysus,"[21] but the celebrants themselves have described violent conflicts. The deliberate avoidance of hierarchy and "rigidity" was the goal of such groups as the Living Theatre, The Orgy-Mystery Theatre, The Any Place Theatre, The Ontological-Hysterical Theatre, and the James Joyce Liquid Memorial Theatre. The name of Dionysus was often heard, even before The Performance Group produced its famous *Dionysus in 69*, in which actors, spectators, speeches, and sets maintained their "fluid" character from "performance" to "performance." The published text, in which the triumph of Dionysus is unequivocal, is based on Arrowsmith's translation of *The Bacchae*. It includes the ruminations of the director and members of "the Group," and closeup photographs of their writhing, blood-stained, naked bodies. It is, appropriately, not paginated.[22]

The so-called "people's" theatre thrived in the 60's during the most intense opposition to American "participation in the war in Vietnam." But the "participatory" anti-war "happening" rarely explored broad questions of policy and conscience. It was often meant to substitute for, not speculate on, political action. The Athenians participated in the decision to fight the Persians, and those who sat together in the assembly fought together at Salamis. When they produced *The Persians*, however—and later plays as well—they remained spectators, and their judges *were* looking for universal "masterpieces." What is the relation between ordinary action in Athens and festival and theatrical action during the Dionysia?

In their workaday world the Athenians look together at the same things, from differing perspectives, in order to reconcile private interests in domestic policy. From a single shared perspective they must also look together to formulate foreign policy for the whole city. This too is self-interest. Hindsight, present-sight, and foresight are for the sake of action. In their leisure time, in the theatre, they feel and judge, but not from self-interest. These plays are also civic actions, but they are not for the sake of further political action. Like assembly, lawcourts, and war, the festival unifies the citizens. The plays at the heart of the festival also make them one, not from competing, but from looking, together. Just as festival competition is somehow higher than the competitive excellence of Athens at work, so also is play watching superior to play production, because, in addition to prizes, glory, and a beautiful product, it has *looking* as its end. Pythagoras said that some people attend games in order to sell for gain, others to compete for fame, but that the best come to see.[23] In the shared time of the festival, and especially of the play, human beings cease trying to control the world and others in it. They do not merely merge or dissolve, but, for a time, they pause from working, building, and fighting, to recall their relations to the earth, to other living things, to each other, and to the gods. During the festival of Dionysus, looking for the sake of looking is joined with dancing for the sake of the dance; looking here means staying in touch. The thoughts which accompany such looking are likely to transcend particular interests, and also distinctions between people who belong to the city and others outside it. Thus, to this assembly, Athens invites its resident aliens and foreigners to behold both Athens and what Athens beholds. Many, no doubt, are mere sight seers. But for some citizens and some strangers, this dancing, looking, and feeling together may approach a communion which far transcends that of the city and that of the Dionysian communicants. Does this kind of looking require others—or very many others? Do philosophic friends require civic festival times to direct their attention to the things which transcend time? The few who emerge from the cave in *The Republic* appear to be solitary spectators. Perhaps they might read tragedies in private. But for most at least, the Athenian *theatron* is somewhere between the *thiasos* and *theōria,* and it aims at making them fuller human beings than they would be without it.

Having made such high claims for the tragic high-point of the City Dionysia, I hesitate to bring us back to earth. But we must return, if we are to be true to the spirit of the festival. Back to the *city* would be more accurate, since, as we have seen, the earth and the city, though in touch, are not to be confused. The exact order of the festival events is disputed, but nearly all the schedules proposed agree that satyr plays and comedies follow tragedies. Either at the end of each day, or at the end of the festival, the spectators turn to different sorts of Dionysiac representations. It is impossible to explore them fully here, but we can at least note that both differ from tragedies in that they depict unbounded appetites, distortions, and monstrosities as humorous supplements to regulated everyday life. They, like processions and carnival merrymaking, can coexist with that life, without threatening to shatter it. The comedy after the tragedy helps to *return* the partially transported spectators to full citizenship, even as it mocks them. Contemporary subjects, Athenian settings, topical and personal allusions, and unmasked addresses to the audience

as citizens, repeatedly break the dramatic illusion. The awarding of prizes, crowning of victors, and processions out of the theatre, return them to ordinary time and place. The Assembly is the core of their non-festival life and the appropriate setting for the formal transition back into that life.

The first business transacted by the Assembly on the day after the Great Dionysia is festival business. Now only the citizens gather in the theatre to consider religious matters and complaints about the processions, contests, officials and participants in the festival.[24] Such self-conscious e-merging from festival to everyday time is strikingly missing from the mergings which are central to the Dionysian experiences we have examined in *The Bacchae*. And it rarely occurs after conventional theatre and television shows—contained gaps in ordinary time—or after anti-establishment performances which deliberately blur the margins of the action. The conclusion of Mardi Gras in New Orleans provides a last example. A reporter writes that at midnight a bullhorn abruptly announces that the holiday is over: " 'You must clear the streets for the street cleaners' . . . by morning the natives say, 'You'll never know it happened.' "[25] Mardi Gras takes over the city for a day; but like most of the festivals discussed above, it is not primarily a civic event. Exclusive "crewes" organize parades, crownings, and balls, and there is much general merrymaking, but the city does not gather as one.[26] Rather, it provides police protection and garbage disposal. The ends of the Great Dionysia and of the Mardi Gras are a telling contrast of ancient and modern notions of the ends of government.

In *The Bacchae* the god says he will manifest himself "so that the city of Cadmus may see (*horai*)" (61). But Cadmus and his people somehow cannot "see" Dionysus and survive. The city of Athens arranges to look together upon Dionysus and those who have beheld him, and at the same time to look upon those with whom they are beholding Dionysus. In this remarkable arrangement it is possible, at least, that citizens may truly drink and dance, yet look and learn, and yet again, return to their looms and to their assembly on the day after.

We who live in a world where women no longer labor at looms, and free men may never set foot in assemblies, cannot return to the Athenian polis. Nor would most of us want to, knowing that the coherent public life we have been examining was accompanied by rigid sexual distinctions, by extreme censorship, by slavery, poverty, and almost continual warfare. As we buy our machine-made clothing and elect our representatives, as we feast together after watching the parade in the comfortable privacy of our homes, as we choose our plays and movies, and even our festivals, we thank whatever god we will for our physical, political, religious, and intellectual freedom. But we too have paid a price, a price having something to do with Dionysus and with civic community. Perhaps we can avoid becoming intellectual voyeurs who restore the texts of unspeakable things, stage what should not be seen, and examine with unblinking curiosity the cares of a distant time and place, by keeping always one eye upon ourselves, and by asking what *our* souls and cities can learn from the ones at which we have been looking.

Notes:

1. *Bacchae*: 80, 96, 349, 552, 602, 741, 753.
2. See Erwin Straus, "Forms of Spatiality" in *Phenomenological Psychology*. (New York, 1966). I have learned much from the essays in this book.
3. One might think of the progresses of the first Queen Elizabeth, or the coronation of her namesake. See Edward Shils and Michael Young, "The Meaning of the Coronation," *Sociological Review*, 1, No. 2,1953.
4. We might also remember Gyges whose injustice and tyranny are related to his voyeurism. In the *Republic* (II) Gyges—or his ancestor—looks on an oversized naked corpse in a hollow horse. The ring he steals from the body enables him to be present among people who cannot see him, and to do unjust acts with impunity. He soon commits adultery with the king's wife and takes over the rule. In Herodotus (I.8-13) the ruler of Lydia insists that Gyges look upon his naked wife. After this viewing, Gyges kills the husband and becomes ruler. Leontius is another solitary viewer of dead bodies in *The Republic* (VI). Although his anger and desire are at odds, it is not clear that intellect and desire are. Injustice and voyeurism are also related in the Biblical story of the lustful elders who watch Susanna as she bathes. Their looking, as much a violation as their rape would have been, is related to their being corrupt judges, violators of community. Turning their eyes from heaven, they bear false witness, and are finally exposed because they could not properly look together with others.
5. I have found the following books most useful in thinking about *The Bacchae*: G.S. Kirk's translation (Cambridge, 1979); E.R. Dodds' Text, Introduction and Commentary (Oxford, 1960); R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge, 1948); Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (Bloomington, 1965).

   Charles Segal's comprehensive study, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' "Bacchae"* (Princeton, 1982) appeared as I was finishing the present essay. I have elminated some, but probably not all, of the overlapping material. Segal's book is indispensible reading for anyone interested in *The Bacchae* and Greek tragedy. I too have learned much from many of the authors he cites: Rene Girard, Arnold van Genneps, and others.
6. I have found the following books most useful in thinking about the festival and about Athens: Alfred Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth* (Oxford, 1961); H.W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Cornell, 1977). A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (Oxford, 1927) and *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1953). H.C. Baldry, *The Greek Tragic Theatre* (Norton, 1971) is an easily available paperback introduction.
7. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, III, xv.
8. George McCalmon and Christian Moe, *Creating Historical Drama: A Guide for the Community and the Interested Individual* (Carbondale, Ill., 1965), p. 48.
9. Aristotle, *Ethics*, IV.
10. Plato, *Republic*, VI.
11. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, IX.
12. Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968) contains the best discussions I know of such periods of festival abandon.
13. Jean-Louis Barrault, "Best and worst of professions," in *The Uses of Drama*, ed. John Hodgson (London, 1972), p. 24.
14. E. O'Neill, Jr., "Note on Phrynichus' *Phoenissae* and Aeschylus' *Persae*," *Classical Philology* 37 (1942), 425-27.

15. One is reminded of the Jewish injunction about Hanukkah candles: they are to have no utilitarian purpose, but to be only for looking. There is conjecture that Hanukkah customs developed deliberately in response to rural Dionysiac rituals: Jews no longer need hide in the mountains like beasts, wild running is replaced by standing around an altar; inarticulate shouts by psalms of praise, and flowing torches by crafted candelabras. See Theodore H. Gaster, *Festivals of the Jewish Year* (New York, 1966), p. 252.
16. A thoughtful discussion of the civic status of the dithyramb can be found in William Mullen's *Choreia: Pindar and Dance* (Princeton, 1982). Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* consistently underemphasizes the institutional and civic context of both dithyramb and tragedy.
17. What does the *dreamer* behold? Often timeless, placeless, topsy-turvy, his dream is peopled with fluid personae who merge with each other and their surroundings. It may resemble the shifting life of the Bacchantes, who wake or sleep in an instant. Having no memories or restrictions when awake, perhaps they sleep without dreaming. The dreamer may experience what is unthinkable in waking life. Not only Jocasta has observed that, "in dreams many a man has lain with his own mother." Like a play, a dream is often *watched*; Homer's people "see" their dreams. The dreamer may be a spectator of his own actions; he may be the protagonist of the drama, or "play" all the characters. In such dreams, the line between watcher and actor is blurred or even disappears. Because a dream has no continuity of time or place with waking life, and no frame or context in which it is "seen," the dreamer is usually thoroughly absorbed by it. But at the same time, a mysterious "second sight" says it is *only* a dream." Dreamers who lose all awareness that they dream a contained "imitation" really choke, or scream, or wake, when the dream becomes too "real," too traumatic. They might remind us of theatre spectators who miscarry when they see the Furies, who shoot the villain, or who run from the theatre in fear. There is another sort of frame around the dream vision. Not prescribable, reportable, or censurable, the sweet dreams and hideous nightmares of civilized human beings are their own business. We cannot dream together, and so dreams can have only the most indirect, unpredictable influence upon the waking life of citizens and city. Those legends in which men about to violate their motherlands dream of violating their mothers suggest that our dreams are not the realm in which to nurture viable community life. [For examples, see "Caesar" in Plutarch and Hippias in Herodotus (VI. 107)] The waking tyrant *does* what other men would only *dream* of doing. The dreams of good men may be better than those of ordinary ones, but no one can learn to be good while asleep. Dreams, like voyeurism, offer a less disruptive form of Bacchism, but they are still private, in Greek, "idiotic," experiences.
18. I believe that a similar story is to be found in *Suppliants, Persians, Oresteia, Philoctetes,* and *Medea.*
19. Aristotle, *Poetics,* VI.
20. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double* (New York, 1958).
21. Daniel Bell, "Sensibility in the 60's," *Commentary,* June, 1971, 73.
22. The Performance Group, *Dionysus in 69.* Ed. Richard Schechner (New York, 1970).
23. Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pythagoras.* The present discussion raises questions about the looking we do at "sports events." Consider the funeral games in *Iliad* XXIII, their more civic counterpart in *Aeneid* V, the Panathenaea games in Athens, and the ancient Olympic games.
24. The single most important source of information about the festival assembly is Demosthenes' speech *Against Meidias.* In 349 B.C. Demosthenes served as choregos for his tribe's dithyrambs. Harrassed by Meidias before the festival, and publicly assaulted by him in the theatre, Demosthenes won a preliminary motion against him in the theatre assembly. The surviving speech was never delivered—an out-of-court settlement was reached—but it conveys vividly attitudes about the festival and its civic role.
25. *Washington Post,* February 25, 1982, B 1.
26. In 1968 a group of newcomers to New Orleans, concerned about the aristocratic exclusivity of Mardi Gras, added an event in which everyone might participate. The new "Crewe," *Bacchus,* founded a night parade for the Sunday before the holiday. Sunday was chosen, in part, because it was also prime television time. Floats were designed by a professional, and the event received nationwide coverage. The first king of *Bacchus* was not a local citizen leader, but an imported Hollywood star, the Jewish Danny Kaye! See Myron Tassin, *Bacchus* (New Orleans, 1975). For the more traditional celebrations, see Duforn Huber, *If Ever I Cease to Love* (New Orleans, 1970).

Left and Right

Jacob Klein

The typescript bearing the above title was found stuck in the German proofs of Mr. Klein's book *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra.* It is published by permission of Mrs. Klein. She thinks that she recalls hearing of Adolf Mueller as a young friend who sought out Mr. Klein for conversation in the "Romanische Café," a meeting place for intellectuals on the Kurfuerstendamm in Berlin. This rather early essay, probably not intended for publication, is somewhat uncharacteristic from the perspective of later writings, both in its matter which is the establishment of a political typology, and its style, which employs the abstract language of impersonal entities. Translated by Eva Brann and Beate Ruhm von Oppen.

For Ad. Mueller
November 1934

The following observations disregard all concrete political situations, groupings and programs whatsoever. They start with the assumption that there exist two, constantly antagonistic, human attitudes, perhaps at all times, but in any case in the Western cultural sphere within the temporal limits of its development, most especially since the Renaissance. These may be termed the "left" and the "right."

I.

In all "left" endeavors two basic motives are always to be distinguished which do, however, perhaps go back to one root. The first is the insight into the "misera conditio humana," the misery of human existence—"misery" understood in *every* sense. The consciousness of this misery has always been present, as far back as we can see. That it is better not to be born, is a saying of Sophocles. The lamentations of Job can never be stilled. Christian consciousness has made these lamentations the basis of a universal exegesis of human existence. The sinful creatureliness of all creation *is* the Christian interpretation of this constantly experienced fact. "The misery of the creature" which everyone must feel who can feel at all, the vanity of every wilful attempt to ignore it, the sense of *compassion* with all alien misery as with one's own, the contempt for pride, for glory, for power in which "compassion" and with it the deepest sources of human life are, as it were, "forgotten"—these are all basic elements of every "left" position. In modern times they are always conditioned by Christian consciousness, even if it is no longer at all understood as such.

To this first motive is joined a second: the feeling for "naturalness" on the one hand and for the "artificial," for "imagination," for the "unnatural" on the other. Human life always moves within certain conventions, mores, valuations. All these are something "artificial" as contrasted to the factual course of life with its desires, instincts, its happiness and unhappiness. "Bare" life appears here as the overwhelming phenomenon; all limits and norms which human beings erect appear not only as useless, but as fundamentally reprehensible. This view was already vital to the school of the Greek sophists, who were first to develop the great opposition of *physis* and *nomos,* of nature and convention. It is characteristic of

this view that "natural" life admits of no valuation, that it is simply not possible to maintain an affirmative or rejecting attitude in the face of the fundamental fact of natural existence. This view is also the root of all modern science, which, according to its own self-interpretation is and must be "value-free." But since this view must necessarily place itself in opposition to whatever the prevailing "moral" estimations happen to be, it immediately acquires a polemical sense. It must attack all the prevailing norms and values; it must attack whatever is "artificial" and "according to convention": Thus it must itself affirm and deny; it must itself value the "natural" *positively,* condemn the "unnatural." But thus this view is confronted with a question insoluble in its own terms, namely how valuation is itself at all possible. The ordinary answer to this question (which may, however, appear in many guises) is the denial of the originality of valuation in general and the reduction of every valuation to certain "natural" givens or situations. The scientific expression of this attitude is positivism.

For the left consciousness of the present, that is, of the last three centuries, the fusion of these two motives is characteristic. If we abstract from all the superficial appearances of this left consciousness and imagine the "ideal" case of a left human being (such as does indeed occur in real life), we may describe him as follows: He is dominated by the urge to be absolutely truthful, not to fool himself or others, to attach no importance to the external, to pay the highest respect to all feelings which are "genuine," that is, those which come from the depths of natural and creaturely life, to sacrifice himself for these.—But this kind of person fulfills his highest possibilities only in confrontation with the "other" world. His indignation against contrary conduct, against the subjection of all that is kind, genuine and truly felt can intensify so as to become—rebellion, and unconditional rebellion at that. This rebellion aims at the restoration of that condition in which alone life appears worth living—from the perspective of the "natural." If this rebellion turns to violence, this violence is understood as the self-sacrifice of one's own nature. The few genuine anarchists who have existed in the world represent this type at its purest.

II.

With respect to the attitudes of the "right" two basic motives, which however do not by any means need to go together, can be likewise distinguished. The first motive has at least this in common with the corresponding left, that it acknowledges the "misera conditio humana." But here it is no longer a matter of "sympathy" or "compassion" with the human race. Starting from "misery" as an unchangeable and incontrovertible *fact,* "right" consciousness seeks to give the human being an inner support. This support is based on the necessity of "control" [Zucht] and "discipline," and this necessity is in turn based on divine law. All conservatism which does not rely internally on divine law is self-delusion (cf. the phenomenon of the Wilhelminian conservatives). The basic principles which are the standard for this discipline are in each case already contained in the factually given living *tradition.* But the continuation of the tradition must never undermine the forces which are at work within it: Thus preservation of the tradition does not mean mere resistance to the powers which are hostile to the tradition (the phenomenon of reaction); rather such preservation must always go back to these original forces, must always honor the commandments which are the final justification of the will to preservation, must in this sense be absolutely *righteous* [gerecht]. Whether such a "right" attitude is possible or not does not depend on the "self"-will of the human beings whose attitude it is. Such an attitude can therefore never become the demand of a party program. A "conservative party" is merely a phenomenon of reaction; there are only conservative forces, never conservative "programs." A so-called "party of the right" therefore succumbs to the "left" under all circumstances.

The second motive for the formation of a "right" attitude is the striving for *power.* This motive too has an assumption in common with the "left": here, too, the "natural" is acknowledged as the last court of appeal. However, the right makes a selection within the "natural" which is not only opposed by "left" consciousness, but which appears to it as simply unintelligible. So little does the "left" take *this* attitude of the "right" seriously that it must necessarily succumb to the right when things become serious. There is a whole series of classical witnesses to this attitude. The first is Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias.* Everything that Machiavelli or Nietzsche later had to say on this theme is expressed by Callicles with unsurpassable clarity. For this attitude the proper fulfillment of the human being lies in the *"grandeur"* of human life. This grandeur is, for the most part, connected with "glory," but glory is, as it were, only the external aspect of inner grandeur. This grandeur may also mean the actual "mastering" [Beherrschen] of human beings—although this mastering may not always assume the form of external rule [Herrschaft]. What is aimed at here, in the face of all "misery," is the human possibility of insisting on *wanting-to-have-more* [a reference to the verb *pleonektein* often used in the *Gorgias*] despite all obstacles, despite every weakness, despite all *will to life.* It is a fundamental error of all left theories to wish to derive this wanting-to-have-more from more "original" instincts, such as the nutritive instinct, the sexual instinct and the striving for "gratification" of all kinds. Indeed, one might say that the consciousness of the left is simply determined by the fact that it not only condemns power and the striving for power but does not take them seriously. For left consciousness, "those in power" are from the outset caricatures, as are also all the attributes of power. For the attitude which is the "right" in this sense it is a question of realizing "grandeur," not only at the expense of all sorts

of weakness, but also at the expense of any private or public disadvantaging of any number of human beings, no matter how great.

Up to the seventeenth century this possibility was always present as a real possibility. It was taken into account. . . . The tyrant was not only a reprehensible individual but also a danger to be constantly expected. The present situation is determined by the fact that tyrants in this sense are simply no longer possible. Today rule [Herrschaft] is never exercised for its own sake: It must "justify" itself; it must be based on the interests of a class, a nation, a race. This rule no longer understands itself as "autocratic" [selbstherrlich] but bases itself on demands which arise out of specific "conditions." It is demagogic not only for tactical reasons, but demagogy is for it an inner necessity. Therefore it must perish.

The "left" and "right" types which have been described are surely seldom met with in this purity. The present day situation is in general marked by the fact that the "typical" forms of human existence become "mixed" with one another in an imperspicuous way. This has already been mentioned in discussing the second type of "right" consciousness. But it holds no less for all the "political" endeavors, narrowly understood, of the present. Here Marxism has sketched out a general scheme for determining the "true" tendencies of the historical development amidst the tangle of "convictions," "world views" or—in Marxist terms—"ideologies." Starting from the undeniably great preponderance of economic interests in our world, it distinguishes two powers of political-economic life: the one originates in "property" which wants to hold on to itself under all circumstances, the second comes from the more or less distinct consciousness of the "propertyless"—the overwhelming majority of all the people of the globe—who "have nothing to lose but their chains." The idea which was decisive for the development of this view is the idea of justice [Gerechtigkeit]. The conceptual means by which this view is articulated all come out of the arsenal of "left" consciousness. However neither of these is necessarily attuned to the other.

According to its own consciousness Marxism is based on positivistic science, although the impulse decisive to its formation had at first nothing to do with the latter. Brought up in the atmosphere of Hegelian thought, Marx saw through the enormous tension which exists between this "thought" and the factual "being" of the enormous majority of human beings. He therefore undertook—though, characteristically, using the means of the Hegelian system—to turn this thinking "upside down," and in order to be able to justify his procedure he began by understanding the Hegelian system in its already inverted form. The Hegelian system was a doctrine of the "spirit." In its concept this spirit was determined as being devoid of any *immediate* reference to the world; just so the spirit had once been conceived by Descartes. In the face of this spirit all "nature" collapsed into something unessential and indifferent. The innocent blooming of plants and the eternal paths of the heavenly bodies appear as something infinitely inferior, compared even to the confusions of human consciousness, compared even to evil. For what is here enmeshed in confusion is still "spirit." The opposite pole of spirit in the Hegelian system is "contingent", "matter." It is indeed determined by nothing but the fact that it is the opposite of spirit and to that extent "inactual." The inversion of the Hegelian system was accomplished by Marx in the sense that he took as his foundation not "spirit" but "matter." Now Marx understood this matter not at all as the last basic element of all "nature" (thus far he remained completely Hegelian), but rather as the defining concept [Inbegriff] of human life on earth. This Marxian concept of matter is thus completely *"anthropological,"* exactly as is true for Feuerbach.* The whole Hegelian "left" is in this sense anthropologically oriented: It sees the "material" or "real" human being with all his desires, instincts and entanglements *in a battle with nature* and all her forces which oppose his will to life (wherein the left is, to be sure, in agreement with the innermost tendencies of positivistic science). But now a gradual transformation of this basic view took place. Joined in battle with the ruling norms of the state, the law, religion, the Hegelian left found its obvious ally in positivistic science, and the anthropological materialism, whose nucleus had been for Marx the critique of economic conditions, slipped by reinterpretation into a scientific materialism. (Correspondingly, "dialectic" was more and more given up in favor of "causal inquiry": Kautsky's mode was typical.* Lately a school has arisen in Russia which attempts to distinguish economic materialism much more strongly from natural science.—Its chief representative, in no way sufficient, is Deborin* who has already been excluded from the Party.—In this connection the recently published writings of the young Marx are very important.) That was the basis on which the "scientific character" of socialism was understood. Indignation against "injustice" was reduced to completely value-free matters of fact. Such indignation was interpreted as [merely] the mode in which the "necessary" development toward socialism makes its break-through. Every possible assertion concerning the ultimate goals of human life was referred to a "time to come," because impossible under present circumstances. The realistic goal of world revolution which must result from the antagonisms within the system of production is, for the time being, the only con-

*[Ludwig Feuerbach, 1804-1872, studied under Hegel, attacked Christianity in favor of a "humanistic theology." Karl Kautsky, 1854-1938, friend of Marx, a founder of the German Social Democratic Party, leading defender of Marxist orthodoxy, first against pragmatic reformism and then against the radical Leninist left. Abram Deborin, 1881-1963, leading Soviet theoretician, lost his posts under Stalin for "Menshevizing idealism," the separation of philosophy from practice.]

crete and actualizable goal. Only after its actualization, in the "realm of freedom," does genuine human history begin.

In this transfer of the ultimate perspective into "time to come" appears the tension between the "left" theory of Marxism and its practices, which cannot so simply be labelled "left." Everything depends on how the idea of justice is going to be understood in the coming development of Marxism. The idea of justice stands beyond the opposition of left and right. [It is] its relationship to the idea of power which decides whether it is to be assigned to the left or the right camp. If one abstracts from all their other motives, the present "fascist" endeavors of all kinds are fighting about this relationship. Every possible reflection about this relationship, whether it come from the left or from the right, must seek to take its bearings from the place where it once received a fundamental treatment which has never since been surpassed—Plato.

On the "Frame" of Plato's *Timaeus*

Jacob Klein

The following fragment of a letter by Jacob Klein was evidently addressed to Leo Strauss. It was written toward the end of his first year at St. John's College. It was probably a draft, and there is no evidence that it was ever sent. It is published with Mrs. Klein's permission.[1]

August 14, 1939

Dear Friend,

This time I would like to pass on to you some of the results of my Timaean brain-rackings, not only for your enjoyment, but also to gain a certain clarity for myself. As things stand, you are probably the only human being who will believe me. I believe that I have understood something about the "frame" of the Timaeus, and that would naturally mean more than the mere "frame."—The first question in a reading is this: what is the point of having the Atlantis the story *before* Timaeus' speech? As is well known, some super-subtle people have wanted to transfer it to the beginning of the *Critias*. What is striking about the Atlantis story is the emphasis on the "ancient," the primeval. The speaker is Critias. According to the [dramatic] date, this Critias cannot, indeed, be the "tyrant";[2] he is differently characterized; he is too old, and even taking into account all the indifference to "chronology" within the texts of the dialogues, the tyrant just doesn't fit into the affair. But naturally, one can't leave it at that. Supposing it were *not* the tyrant Critias, why [not] another Critias who (a) is the grandfather of the tyrant and (b) has himself in turn a grandfather called Critias? And then the first question: if he develops the "program" [27 A-B] according to which Socrates is to be regaled with his "guest gifts," then he should properly be assigned the *second* speech, but in fact he anticipates the most important thing in his account as the *first* speaker. And the *Critias* itself remains a fragment. . . . Naturally it is possible that it is a natural, unintentional fragment; why not? But still, it isn't quite convincing, the less so since the *Timaeus* and the *Critias* are certainly *not* Plato's very last works. Besides, the *Hermocrates* is missing, which seemed to have been firmly promised in the *Critias* [108 A-D] and which is, so to speak, a necessary consequence of the "program" that Critias develops in the *Timaeus*. Though it isn't quite apparent from this "program" [*Tim.* 27 A-B] what Hermocrates is to talk about.

On the previous day Critias, Timaeus, and Hermocrates had been the guests of Socrates. Today Socrates is their guest. Yesterday yet a "fourth" was there: today he is "sick."—Critias is, then, the grandfather of the "well-

known" Critias (and has himself a further Critias as grandfather). Timaeus is unknown—I mean "historically"—but in any case he is from lower Italy. Hermocrates is very well known to the Athenians (and therefore to us): he whipped them in Sicily—a capable general. Why this combination?

The answer is: the three represent—Cronos, Zeus, and Ares. "Yesterday," when Socrates spoke about the Polity,[3] three "gods" were Socrates' guests; "today" Socrates is the "gods'" guest and is "divinely" entertained. Cronos is the eldest, as is well known; thus he has to *precede*—precisely in time. He is the father of Zeus and Ares; as "Critias" he is the *host* of the strangers Timaeus and Hermocrates. He is somber and loves the night. Therefore "Critias" ponders the old story in the night [26 B]. He belongs to the old, old time—like the story which he tells and at the end of which Athens and Atlantis disappear into the deep, as he himself did, according to the myth. But according to a —demonstrably—"orphic" interpretation, Cronos is ever and again rejuvenated—there is ever and again another "Critias." And the tyrant Critias *too* bears the features of Cronos; the Critias of the *Timaeus* is all possible Critiases in one. It is entirely appropriate for him, as it is for the tyrant Critias, to speak about "matters of state": the Critias of the *Timaeus and* of the *Critias* tells of a "good old time," of a period of life which is *proverbially* designated as "the life under Cronos." Nor should one forget that for the Greeks, Cronos is associated with Chronos, although the etymology is actually incorrect. Timaeus' role as Zeus is a consequence of his role in the dialogue itself: he is the "Father" of the All, "of gods and of humans," if only "in speech." [27 A]—he depicts the construction and the "genesis" of the visible cosmos. Hermocrates is nothing but a warrior. That he is suited for the relevant conversations here is the opinion of "many." The joke is that he never even gets his turn "to speak." These are three "gods" with whom Socrates is together, three "rulers," who "yesterday" allowed themselves to be instructed about true rulership and who "today" instruct him about very questionable things. And comically enough, Cronos-Critias says in the *Critias* [107 A-B]: "For, Timaeus, it is easier to seem to speak adequately when saying something *about gods to human beings* than *about mortals to us*." "We," this means, are the immortals. (Cf. also *Timaeus* 27 C-D: the ambiguous word "*hepomenōs*"[4]) Besides, mockery of the "gods" runs through the whole dialogue.

However, Cronos, Zeus, and Ares are not only the old "gods," but much "truer" gods, namely the corresponding *planets*. In fact, according to the "astronomy" of the *Timaeus*, Saturn, Zeus, and Mars themselves *together with the moon* form one group of the planets, while the Sun, Venus, and Mercury represent another (revolving with the same velocity). But Selene is first of all "feminine" and secondly not the name of a divinity at all. Hence "the fourth" is "sick"—and with this the dialogue immediately begins.[5]

So that is the "frame" of the *Timaeus*. I would like in addition to refer to the alliteration of *Cr*onos-*Cr*itias which is unlikely to be coincidental and to the connection of *Tim*aeus and *timē* [honor].

What do you think of this? How does it fit in with your "esotericism"?

1. Translated and annotated by Laurence Berns, Gisela Berns, Eva Brann, and Robert Williamson.
2. For the identification of Critias see A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's* Timaeus (Oxford 1928), pp. 23–25 and Warman Welliver, *Character, Plot and Thought in Plato's* Timaeus-Critias (Leiden 1977), pp. 50–57.
3. *Politeia* is the Greek title of Plato's *Republic*.
4. *hepomenōs* can mean either "consequently" or "accordingly." In the passage cited Timaeus prays to the gods and goddesses that what is said may be agreeable to them "and consequently [accordingly] to us." The first meaning conveys merely that "we" derive our pleasure from the gods' pleasure but the second implies that "we" *are* the gods.
5. In several conversations of later years, Jacob Klein suggested an alternative interpretation: the missing "fourth" may represent Uranos, the father of Cronos and, according to some legends, the oldest of the male gods, who was emasculated by his son. The Greek word *ouranos* also means the all-embracing heavens. On this interpretation, the absence of the "fourth" would suggest that the promised sequence of speeches by Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates lacks from the outset something needed for a complete account of the "All."

Den 14. August 1939.

Lieber Freund,

desmal moechte ich Dir einige Ergebnisse meines Timaios-Kopfzerbrechens mitteilen, nicht nur, um Dich zu erfreuen, sondern auch, um mir selbst eine gewisse Klarheit zu verschaffen. Wie die Dinge liegen, bist Du wahrscheinlich der einzige Mensch, der mir glauben wird. Ich glaube etwas ueber den "Rahmen" des Timaios verstanden zu haben, und das wuerde natuerlich mehr als der blosse "Rahmen" bedeuten.—Die erste Frage bei der Lektuere ist die: was soll die Atlantis-Geschichte *vor* der Timaios-Rede? Einige ganz schlaue Leute haben sie bekanntlich an den Anfang des "Kritias" versetzen wollen. Was an der Atlantis-Geschichte auffaellt, ist die Betonung des "Alten," des Ur-Alten. Der Sprecher ist Kritias. Der Zeit nach kann dieser Kritias in der Tat nicht der "Tyrann" sein, er ist anders charakterisiert, ist zu alt und, bei aller Gleichgueltigkeit gegen "Chronologie" innerhalb der Dialog-Texte, der "Tyrann" passt ueberhaupt nicht in die Sache hinein. Aber damit kann man sich natuerlich nicht beruhigen. Angenommen, es sei *nicht* der Tyrann Kritias, warum dann [nicht] ein anderer Kritias, der (a) Grossvater des Tyrannen ist, und (b) selbst wiederum einen Grossvater Kritias hat? Und dann die erste Frage: wenn er das "Programm" entwickelt, gemaess welchem Sokrates seine "Gastgeschenke" vorgesetzt bekommen soll, so kommt ihm die *zweite* Rede zu, er nimmt aber faktisch das Wichtigste als *Erster* in seiner Erzaehlung vorweg. Und der "Kritias" selbst bleibt Fragment. . . . Natuerlich ist es moeglich, dass es ein "natuerliches", nicht beabsichtigtes Fragment ist. Warum nicht? Aber immerhin, es leuchtet einem nicht recht ein, zumal der Timaios und der Kritias bestimmt *nicht* die allerletzten Werke Plato's sind. Ausserdem fehlt der "Hermokrates," der im "Kritias" fest versprochen zu sein scheint (108 A-D) und ja auch aus dem von Kritias im "Timaios" entwickelten "Programm" sich sozusagen mit Notwendigkeit ergibt. Allerdings ist aus dem "Programm" (Tim. 27 A-B) nicht recht zu ersehen, worueber Hermokrates sprechen soll. Am Tage vorher waren Kritias, Timaios und Hermokrates Gaeste des Sokrates. Heute ist Sokrates bei ihnen zu Gast. Gestern war noch ein "Vierter" da, heute ist er "krank."—Kritias ist also der Grossvater des "bekannten" Kritias (und hat selbst einen weiteren Kritias zum Grossvater). Timaios ist unbekannt, ich meine "historisch," stammt aber jedenfalls aus Unteritalien. Hermokrates ist den Athenern (und darum uns) sehr gut bekannt: er hat sie in Sizilien verdroschen—ein tuechtiger Feldherr. Warum diese Kombination?

Die Antwort ist: die drei vertreten—Kronos, Zeus und Ares. "Gestern," als Sokrates ueber die Politeia sprach, waren die drei "Goetter" bei Sokrates zu Gast, "heute" ist Sokrates bei den "Goettern" zu Gast und wird "goettlich" bewirtet. Kronos ist der Aelteste bekanntlich, er muss also—gerade in der Zeit—*voran*gehen. Er ist der Vater von Jupiter und Ares, als "Kritias" der *Wirt* der "Fremden" Timaios und Hermokrates. Er ist duester und liebt die Nacht. Daher ueberlegt sich "Kritias" die alte Geschichte in der Nacht (26 B). Er gehoert in die alte, alte Zeit—wie die Geschichte, die er erzaehlt und an deren Ende Athen und Atlantis in die Tiefe verschwinden—wie er selbst der Sage nach. Aber, laut—nachweislicher—"orphischer" Interpretation, Kronos wird immer wieder "verjuengt"—es gibt immer wieder "Kritias." Und *auch* der "Tyrann" Kritias traegt Kronos-Zuege; der Kritias des "Timaios" ist alle moeglichen "Kritiasse" in einem. Es kommt ihm durchaus zu—wie dem Tyrannen Kritias—ueber "staatliche" Dinge zu sprechen. Der Kritias des "Timaios" *und* des "Kritias" berichtet ueber eine "gute, alte Zeit," ueber eine Lebens-Periode, die *sprichwoertlich* als ὁ ἐπὶ Κρόνου βίος bezeichnet wird. Und nicht zu vergessen ist, dass fuer die Griechen—obgleich die Etymologie gar nicht stimmt—Kronos mit Chronos zusammenhaengt.—Timaios' Zeus-Rolle ergibt sich aus seiner Rolle im Dialog selbst: er ist der "Vater" des Alls "Der Goetter und der Menschen"—wenn auch nur τῷ λόγῳ (27 A)—, er schildert den Bau und die "Entstehung" des sichtbaren Kosmos.—Hermokrates ist nichts als Krieger. Dass er sich fuer die hier in Frage kommenden Gespraeche eignet, ist die Meinung "Vieler" (20 B). Der Witz ist der, dass er garnicht "zu Wort" kommt—Es sind drei "Goetter," mit denen Sokrates zusammen ist, drei "Herrscher," die sich von Sokrates ueber wahre Herrschaft "gestern" belehren lassen und ihn "heute" ueber sehr fragwuerdige Dinge belehren. Und ulkig genug sagt Kronos-Kritias im "Kritias" (107 A/B): περὶ θεῶν γάρ, ὦ Τίμαιε, λέγοντά τι πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δοκεῖν ἱκανῶς λέγειν ῥᾷον ἢ περὶ θνητῶν πρὸς ἡμας.

"Wir" sind naemlich die "Unsterblichen" (vgl. auch Tim. 27 C/D: das zweideutige Wort ἑπομένως). Im uebrigen zieht sich durch den ganzen Dialog die Verspottung der "Goetter" durch.

Nun sind aber Kronos, Zeus und Ares nicht nur die alten "Goetter," sondern viel "wahrere" Goetter, naemlich die entsprechenden Planeten. Und zwar bilden Saturn, Jupiter und Mars gemaess der "Astronomie" des "Timaios" selbst zusammen mit dem Mond eine Gruppe der Planeten, waehrend Sonne, Venus und Merkur eine andere (mit derselben Geschwindigkeit kreisende) Gruppe darstellen. Aber Selene ist erstens einmal "weiblich" und zweitens gar kein "Goetter"-Name. Daher ist "der Vierte" "krank"—womit der Dialog unmittelbar beginnt.

Das ist also der "Rahmen" des Timaios. Ich moechte auch noch auf die wahrscheinlich nicht zufaellige Alliteration *Kr* onos—*Kr* itias hinweisen und auf den Zusammenhang von *Tim*aios und *timē*.

Was haeltst Du davon? Wie passt das mit Deiner "Esoterik" zusammen?

Occasional Discourses
Spring 1984

The Roots of Modernity*

Eva Brann

The part of the title of this talk which I asked to have announced is "The Roots of Modernity." But there is a second part which I wanted to tell you myself. The full title is: "The Roots of Modernity in Perversions of Christianity."

The reason I wanted to tell you myself is that it is a risky title, which might be easily misunderstood, especially since "perversion" is strong language. So let me begin by explaining to you what I intend and why I chose to talk to you about such a subject.

I think you will recognize my first observation right off; you might even think it hardly worth saying. It is that we live in "the modern age." We never stop trying to live up to that universally acknowledged fact: we are continually modernizing our kitchens, our businesses and our religions.

Now what is actually meant by "modern times?" The term cannot just mean "contemporary" because all times are con-temporary with themselves. *Modern* is a Latin word which means "just now." Modern times are the times which are in a special way "just now." Modernity is just-nowness, up-to-date-ness. Perhaps that doesn't seem like a very powerful distinguishing characteristic, because, again, what times are not just now for themselves? How is our modern age distinguished from ancient times, or from that in-between era we call the "middle" ages, all in comparison with our present times?

Well, the first answer is very simple. We live differently *in* our time from the way those who came before us lived in theirs. For instance, when we speak of something or even someone as being "up to date" we are implying that what time it is, is significant, that time marches, or races, on *by itself,* and we have the task of keeping up with it. Our time is not a comfortable natural niche within the cycle of centuries, but a fast sliding rug being pulled out from under us.

Furthermore, we have a sense of the extraordinariness of our times; we think they are critical and crucial, that something enormous is about to be decided, or revealed. You might say that we don't just have a sense of doom or delivery, but that things are, in fact, that way. And yet such a feeling of crisis has marked decades of every century for the last half-millenium. Modernity itself is, apparently, a way of charging the Now with special significance.

To ask about the roots of modernity is to ask what made this state, this chronically hectic state, we are in come about. By the *roots* of modernity I mean the true beginnings, the origin of our way of being in time.

At this point you might think that I am talking of history and that I am planning to lecture to you on the various historical movements which led up to our day. But not so. Such "movements"—be they the Protestant Reformation or the Industrial Revolution—are themselves only the names given to the sum of events which are in need of explanation. Let me give an example. Suppose I were to explain the resolve or habit some of you live with of turning directly to Scripture for your knowledge concerning faith, by saying that you are "products" of the Protestant Reformation. This historical explanation would sound as if I were saying something significant, but in fact it would say nothing about the inner reasons why a part of Christianity decided to return directly to the Bible. And inner reasons, namely ideas, are in the end the only satisfying explanation of the actions of human beings.

Next, in explaining my title, I have to tell you what I mean here by Christianity. I do not refer to the faith itself. Nor do I mean specific dogma, that is to say, dogmatics. What I do mean are certain spiritual and intellectual modes, certain ways of approaching thought and life and the world, which are perhaps more noticeable even to a non-Christian than to someone who lives within Christianity. I hope the examples I mean to give you will clarify what I am saying.

And finally I want to define as carefully as possible what I mean by a "perversion."

I do not mean something blatantly heretical or terrifically evil, which we moderns should cast out. For one thing I am not myself a Christian, and it is not my business to demand the purification of other people's

* This talk was written in 1979 for delivery at Whitworth College, a Presbyterian school in Spokane, Washington. I was somewhat reluctant to submit it for publication, being mindful of Curtis Wilson's severe but just criticism of an apparently similar effort in the last issue of the St. John's Review ("A Comment on Alexandre Kojève's 'The Christian Origins of Modern Science' "). However, I was persuaded that the differences were sufficient to take the chance. E.B.

faith. For another, I mean to show that all of us, simply by reason of living as moderns, have been deeply penetrated by these perversions and that we could hardly carry on without them. They are an unavoidable part of our lives. When I say "unavoidable" I do not mean that there is no possibility and no point in resisting them. In my opinion there are no inevitable movements but only human beings willing, and on occasion unwilling, to go along. These perversions are unavoidable only in the sense that once certain very potent trains of ideas had been set into the world, they were bound to be carried beyond themselves, to be driven to their inherent but unintended conclusion.

Perhaps, then, I should speak less dramatically and say that it is the secularization of certain Christian notions that is at the root of modernity. Nevertheless, I do want to hold on to the stronger word to describe this development, and for the following reasons.

You all know what the sin of Satan is said to have been. It was resistance to God and rebellion against his creator, and its cause was pride, the sin of sins. Satanic pride, any pride, is, theologically speaking, a perverse will, literally a will that turns things awry. In particular it overturns the relation of the creature to his creator. Satan rebels because he cannot bear to be derivative and subordinate, and least of all to be more remote from the center of knowledge than Christ. He communicates that terrible impatience to Eve in the Garden when he tempts her with the fruit of knowledge and promises "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,"—in Latin, this is the *scientia boni et mali.*

Now, as it happens, the men of the generation around 1600 Anno Domini—the generation which was most pointedly responsible for modernity and in whose writings it roots are to be most explicitly seen—these men were also unspeakably proud. I am thinking of names probably familiar to you: of Galileo Galilei, of René Descartes and of Francis Bacon, an Italian, a Frenchman and an Englishman. You need only glance at the engraving published as the frontispiece of the most accessible translation of Descartes' works to see how haughty he looks.

Nonetheless anyone who reads their books must be struck with the sober and restrained character of their writing. They keep claiming that they are not revealing great mysteries or setting out momentous discoveries. They present themselves as merely having found a careful, universally accessible method, which, once they have set it out, can be used by all mankind. All that is needed is the willingness to throw off old prejudices and preoccupations, all that Bacon calls our "idols;" we are to throw off the nonsense of the ages and to apply sober human reason to clearly-defined problems. In other words, these initiators of modernity are preaching rebellion against the traditional wisdom, but in measured, careful, sometimes even dull words, so dry that students often get rather bored with reading them. That is, they get bored partly with the measured dryness with which this tremendous rebellion is announced, partly because the Baconian-Cartesian revolution is so much in our bones, has been so precisely the overwhelming success its authors expected it to be that we, its heirs, hardly recognize the revolutionary character of its original declarations of independence.

But the overweening pride of these first moderns was not essentially in the fact that they were aware of opening a new age. That was too obvious to them and they were of too superior a character to glory much in it. Their pride was the pride of rebellion, though not, perhaps, against God. Interpretations differ about their relations to faith, and I think they worshipped God in their way, or at least had a high opinion of him as the creator of a rationally accessible world, and they co-opted him as the guarantor of human rationality. Their rebellion is rather against all intermediaries between themselves and God and his nature. They want to be next to him and like him. So they fall to being not creatures but creators.

Let me give you a few bits of evidence for this contention. First, they all had a cautiously sympathetic respect for Satan.

For example, as you may know, both Galileo and Descartes had trouble with the publication of their works. Galileo had such trouble because he supported Copernicus in his view that the earth is not fixed at the center of the universe, but travels around, a wanderer (which is what the word planet literally means) in the world, so that we human beings become cosmic travelers, able to see the heavens from various perspectives. Now, the authorities of the Catholic Church at that time, considered the fixed central place of the earth as crucial to the character of the place God had chosen to become incarnate. But they were not so crude as to quarrel with an alternative astronomical hypothesis, if it happened to be mathematically satisfying. What they forbade Galileo to assert in public was that this was the true *reality* and not just a possible theory. In this they were in the best tradition of ancient science. The astronomers had always known that there were alternative mathematical hypotheses for explaining the heavenly motions, depending on one's point of view. The Ptolemaic, geocentric system was simply the one more in accord with the evidence of our unaided sense—everyone can see the sun running through the sky—and the system then and now most useful for navigation. What the Church required of Galileo was that he should keep science *hypothetical* instead of claiming that it revealed the reality of the heavens; this earth's motion could be asserted hypothetically but not as a fact. We all know that he pretended to yield, but is said to have muttered: "And yet it moves." By that stubborness he showed himself the archetypal scientist. I mean, he made it possible for that word *scientia* which means simply knowledge, as in the *scientia boni et mali*, to come to be confined to such knowledge of reality as

Galileo had, which is what we call *science* today. Among such realities is the fact that the heavens are full of real matter which is indistinguishable from and moves just as do the stones on earth.

Now Galileo and also Descartes, who had similar troubles with the theological faculty of the University of Paris, the Sorbonne, did find a publisher in Holland. And this Dutch publisher had a most revealing emblem which includes a very serpent-like vine twining around a tree, an apple tree, I imagine, whose fruit is the new *scientia, modern* science. Of course, the serpent is Satan's shape as he tempts human beings to knowledge beyond that proper to a creature! "Ye shall be *as gods* , knowing good and evil."

A few more examples. When Bacon first sets out those procedures which are now smoothly familiar under the name of the scientific method, he constructed a type of experiment he slyly calls light-bringing or "luciferic" experiments. You all know that the angelic name of Satan before his revolution in heaven and his fall was Lucifer, or the Light-bearer. Again, some of you have probably read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and perhaps you can compare Milton's Satan with Dante's. Dante's Satan is a horrible, inhuman figure encased in ice in the lowest hell in Inferno. Milton's modern Satan has much grandeur. He is in fact represented as an overwhelmingly proud, antique, even Homeric, hero. Or one last example: Dr. Faustus, an evidently not altogether fictional scholar who stands on the brink of modernity, has a real intimacy with the devil. And in those old tales from which the famous later treatments are taken Faust sells his soul to him not only for the pleasures and the dominion of the world, but also for the secrets of modern astronomy and algebra.

Here let me repeat my caution: I am not saying that these founders of modernity played silly and wicked blasphemous games, but only that they still had the theological learning and the grandeur of imagination to know what their enterprize resembled.

Now let me give you three enlightening complementary facts. Bacon wrote a book, a kind of scientific utopia called the *New Atlantis*, a place which is an imaginary island lying off the shore of America. The book is, in fact, the first description of a scientific research complex. Bacon calls the group of people in charge of it "the College of the Six Days' Work." Furthermore, Galileo's work called the *Two New Sciences*, in which he sets out the beginning of modern physics, is a dialogue taking place on a succession of days, possibly six. And finally Descartes's *Meditations*, intended to prepare the world for modern science, takes place in six sessions. There is no question in my mind but that these men were thinking of themselves as re-doing God's work of the creation, as creating a new world or re-creating the old one in an accessibly intelligible, illuminated form, and as revealing what they had done in a new kind of scripture. They were light-bringers, making us, their heirs, like gods, knowing a source for re-making the world, for better or worse, as new creators. Here, finally, is the point I have been leading up to; you may find it a little outrageous, but see whether you can deny it: We, almost all of us, have so totally absorbed such an attitude that we hardly notice what we are saying anymore. Let me ask you when you have last said that you wanted to "do something creative" with your life, or have been told to "think creatively" or called someone you admired "so creative." In fact we are in the habit of referring to all our more exciting activities as "creative." But creativity is a precise theological idea whose meaning we are partly forgetting, partly perverting to our modern use. Creativity means the ability to bring something into being out of nothing, in Latin, "ex nihilo," from the very beginning, as God is implied in *Genesis* to have separated the heavens and the earth out of a chaos of his own creating.

Clearly we are quite incapable of such production. For example, take a potter to whose work we may refer as "very creative." But a potter has clay out of which the pottery is fashioned and a wheel on which it is thrown. The ancient Greeks referred to all such work as "making," for which the Greek word is *poesis*, and they used that word particularly for that kind of making which is done in words and which we still call poetry. Creative poetry is therefore, strictly speaking, a contradiction in terms, and yet that adjective has a revealing significance. For a maker works on given material according to a tradition and from a pattern. But a creator is free of all those restrictive circumstances and bound above all by the inner demands of self-expression. It makes for that kind of production we peculiarly think of as "Art," with all its courage, cleverness, sophistication and emphasis on the artist's individuality. The story of modern art is the story of the triumph of rebellious creativity, of creativity divorced from its proper, superhuman agent.

But artistic creativity is only a later outcome of the original perversion of the notion, and indeed, a reaction to it. The first, and still predominant application of the notion of human creativity is the re-enactment of the six-days' work I have already referred to. That is to say, it is the science of nature and its application, called technology, which appears to put humanity in control of the creation.

Now modern science, it seems to me, has two separate roots. One is Greek. The Greeks began the development of those mathematical tools which characterize modern science. They also distinguished and named the science of physics. Physics is a Greek word derived from *physis*, which means growth and movement and is usually translated as "nature." But the natural science of the Greeks was, I think, in its very essence, incapable of mechanical application. It was pure theory.—Theory is another Greek word which means "beholding," "contemplation." The Greek physicists looked on natural be-

ings but they did not control nature. You will not be surprised when I say that I think this attitude has everything to do with the fact that the greatest of them, Aristotle, regarded the world not as having a beginning and an end but as unmade and indestructible.

Something very different had to arise to induce the frame of mind which made a technological science possible. It was not merely the notion of creation, for you remember that when God asks Job in the Old Testament: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?", Job has no answer.—He is overcome by his own impotence in the face of God's power over nature. But these moderns I have been speaking of, they do have an answer. For example, when God goes on to ask; "Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?" Of course, the modern answer is: Yes, we were there; yes, we can. What has intervened?

What has intervened is, I think, the notion that God can appear in human form and work miracles, that transubstantiations, that is, substantial transformations of nature can take place: in sum, that the creation can be controlled from within. Modern science takes, I believe, some of its impulse and much of its pathos from a secularized version of these notions.

There are dozens of other aspects of modernity which have a similar origin in a secularized version of Christian notions. Because I cannot set them out carefully now, let me just pour them out before you and then choose that one which particularly bears on the just-nowness, the peculiar "modernity" of our time for a brief final word.

Here is a mere list of such aspects. It will probably be a little unintelligible; it is certainly incomplete; but it might be suggestive. Modernity, then, has adopted from Christianity:

- The search for certainty in philosophic matters,
- The notion of a total adherence to an idea (cf. the bookburning of Acts 19: 19, 20, Hume, *Enquiry*, last para.),
- A burning interest in facts of existence and in their ordinary or extraordinary standing,
- The concentration on the self and its expression,
- The emphasis on the will and its power,
- The fascination with freedom,
- The conversion of the antique noble virtues to virtues of benevolence (such as Jefferson explicitly urged),
- The passion for equality,
- The notion of salvation through work (cf. Weber, *The Protestant Spirit*),
- The overwhelming importance of the written word,
- The idea of historical change.

Let me, by way of finishing off, dwell a little on the last aspect. I cannot imagine that there is anyone here who does not have one of two possible attitudes toward the past. You may think either that the past is too much dead and gone to bother with in this modern, fast-changing world. Or you may think that you need to study the past to get some perspective on the present day and its uniqueness. But that means that whether or not you are interested in the academic discipline called history, you believe in History as a movement of time in which essential and irreversible changes come about, and many of you may also think that this movement is *toward* something, either doom or fulfillment, that is either progress or decline.

The ancient pagans, to be sure, also knew that every present passes away, that kings die, empires crumble and ancestors moulder in their tombs. They too kept chronicles of times past, to keep alive the memory of heroes or to prove how ancient was their own descent, and they certainly thought that the world might have its epochs and its cycles. But, to my knowledge, they never, never, thought of history as having an intelligible, purposeful movement; they never thought that time contained moments of revelation, or bore a spirit, or had in it a beginning and an inevitable end. Hence they had none of our preoccupation with the future as a shape coming toward us. What we keep calling "tomorrow's world" was for them simply the "not yet," the nothing.

Now I think that this way of thinking of time was prepared for us by the Christian notion of the irruption into time of divinity, that is, by the Incarnation, and by the promise of a Second Coming and a Day of Judgment and a New Kingdom. The secularization these ideas have undergone has removed their precise theological significance, and what we have retained is only a sense of doom or of progress, according to our temperaments; and a sense of the whirling advance of time. But that sense of living in a Now which is both unique and vanishing—that is exactly what is meant by modernity.

Let me conclude by repeating what I said in the beginning. This is emphatically not a sermon but a lecture, and so I am in no way urging some sort of purification of modernity. On the contrary, I hope to have shown that modernity *consists* of such perversions of notions drawn from Christianity, and that to be a modern means to be deeply enmeshed in them.

But there *is* a conclusion to be drawn. It is that there is no way to understand ourselves and our world without some deep study of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Let me tell you a brief anecdote. Some of my colleagues-for-the-year at Whitman College were arguing over the current curriculum reform the college is undertaking and the difficulties of finding a subject matter that all could agree on as indispensable. One member of the group finally asked: What would you all say if you were asked what was the *single* most necessary study? Then a man who has, I am sure, only the loosest religious affiliations answered unhesitatingly: Theology. And no one was willing to deny his explanation that students need a framework in which to think about the nature and ends of their *life*. My point today has been that they need the same study to understand the nature and ends of their *time*.

Book Review

The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response.
Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983
viii+103 pp., $1.50 (paper)

Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age
Michael Novak
Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983
144 pp., $3.95 (paper)

Catholics and Nuclear War: A Commentary on "The Challenge of Peace," the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace
Philip J. Murnion, ed.
New York: Crossroad, 1983
xxii+346 pp., $10.95 (paper)

The Bishops and the Bomb: Waging Peace in a Nuclear Age
Jim Castelli
Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1983
283 pp., $7.95 (paper)

Every group today seems to have a left and a right—legislatures, school boards, advisory commissions, even committees of Roman Catholic bishops. The Committee on War and Peace of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was evidently planned that way. Archbishop John Roach, the NCCB president who appointed the committee's chairman, has said, "I wanted articulate people at the extremes." For the left wing, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Joseph Bernardin of Chicago selected Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, a well known pacifist and president of Pax Christi U.S.A.; for the right wing, Auxiliary Bishop John O'Connor of the Military Ordinariate. The other members, Bishop Daniel Reilly of Norwich, Conn., and Auxiliary Bishop George Fulcher of Columbus, Ohio, were expected to be swing votes. Bernardin's skills at guiding this group to a consensus without visibly taking sides were unquestioned.

The bishop's committee worked from 1981 to 1983, producing four drafts of a book-length pastoral letter on nuclear weapons and U.S. defense policy entitled *The Challenge of Peace*. The drafts themselves, which culminated in the official version adopted by the NCCB in May 1983, reflect major shifts of opinion among the committee members, the bishops at large, and consultants to the committee both invited and uninvited. The drafting process also found the committee members accommodating themselves not only to the Catholic just-war tradition but also to new expressions of pacifism among their fellow bishops and to the strongly expressed views of the Reagan administration and the Vatican. The story of this consultative process, unprecedented for an American bishops' conference, has been competently told by religion reporter Jim Castelli in *The Bishops and the Bomb*. In tantalizing detail, Castelli describes the special influence wielded by two advisers to the committee: the Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, director of the bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace, and Bruce Martin Russett, a Yale political science professor appointed as the committee's principal consultant. Hehir and to a lesser extent Russett were responsible for much of the precise language and subtle reasoning of the letter.

How the bishops' committee pulled and hauled between the hawk and the dove positions of O'Connor and Gumbleton reveals some interesting aspects of the leftward drift of episcopal political views, but the real significance of *The Challenge of Peace* resides in the final text itself—what it says, what it implies, how well it argues its case, how it can be interpreted, how it will be used. The letter is significant both for the American Catholic community and for the security of the nation.

The bishops' rhetoric rings clear and strong: "as a people, we must refuse to legitimate the idea of nuclear war . . . our 'no' to nuclear war must, in the end, be definitive and decisive" (*Challenge*, pars. 131, 138.) [These paragraph numbers are used in all published texts of the letter; the text is available in a low-priced edition from the U.S. Catholic Conference and as an appendix to the Castelli and Murnion books.] The bishops translate their rhetoric into moral anathemas, solemnly condemning the use of nuclear weapons against population centers, retaliatory use of nuclear weapons "which would indiscriminately take many wholly innocent lives" and any "deliberate initiation of nuclear warfare, on however restricted a scale" (147–150). Although the letter avoids a blanket condemnation of any use of any nuclear weapon under any circumstances, the bishops make no attempt to specify conditions under which a nuclear weapon could be used morally.

If no moral wartime uses of nuclear weapons can be foreseen, what moral status can be attributed to a policy of nuclear deterrence? The bishops' treatment of deterrence mostly consists of expressions of concern and perplexity. Deterrence, they write, is "currently the most dangerous dimension of the nuclear arms race" (162); it is a "moral and political paradox" (167) as well as a "contemporary dilemma" (174); and "any claim

by any government that it is pursuing a morally acceptable policy of deterrence must be scrutinized with the greatest care" (195).

Had the bishops been left to think for themselves, they might well have moved to a condemnation of deterrence, as a goodly number of their confreres wanted. But in June 1982 Pope John Paul II sent a message to the Second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament containing a sentence on deterrence that would once and for all determine the American bishops' position: "In current conditions," the Pope wrote, " 'deterrence' based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable" (*Challenge*, 173). Taking this sentence as a papal directive, the bishops simply adopted it as their policy, interpreting it in American terms, elaborating it in different language, without criticizing or altering it. The effect on *The Challenge of Peace* was seriously to soften the core of the letter by substituting moral assertions on deterrence for moral analysis. The bishops' own versions of John Paul's statement on deterrence include their "strictly conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence" (186) and their "lack of unequivocal condemnation of deterrence" (192). The strict conditions specify that deterrence must be minimally sufficient and that each new deterrent strategy and weapon must be judged "in light of whether it will render steps toward 'progressive disarmament' more or less likely" (188).

The bishops' loyalty to the Pope's every sentence prevented them not only from developing their own moral analysis of deterrence but also from uncovering a serious deficiency in the papal statement itself. John Paul evidently opposes deterrence if it is "an end in itself" but approves of it "as a step on the way" to disarmament. But in the real world of massive Soviet threats and refractory U.S.–Soviet negotiations, deterrence never is an end in itself but definitely is a need in itself. By itself it is not—and cannot be—a step on the way toward disarmament. Deterrence is needed to deter the Soviet Union from using its weapons. If the Soviets decide not to negotiate, deterrence will be needed; if a new treaty is signed, deterrence will still be needed; if George Kennan's dream of a 50 percent reduction in nuclear weaponry is realized, deterrence will still be needed. To be sure, disarmament is another need, but deterrence and disarmament are different in kind. To tie them together as the Pope did—with the American bishops dutifully agreeing—confuses any argument about the morality or immorality of deterrence policies.

The moral category most in need of study with respect to deterrence is the notion of intention. To a nuclear pacifist, the intention of deterrence is analogous to the plan of a murderer and is to be damned accordingly. But since the goal of deterrence is to prevent war, not to wage war, the moral question is not that easy to answer. Michael Novak, in *Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age* (archly described by Castelli as a "counterpastoral"), has vigorously argued for moral approval of deterrence:

> It is clear that the complexities of nuclear deterrence change the meaning of *intention* and *threat* as these words are usually used in moral discourse. Those who intend to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by maintaining a system of deterrence in readiness for use do *intend* to use such weapons, but only in order *not* to use them, and do *threaten* to use them, but only in order to *deter* their use . . . Clearly, it is a more moral choice and occasions lesser evil to hold a deterrent intention than it is to allow nuclear attack. [*Moral Clarity*, pp. 59, 61]

Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age is the most cogent critique of the American bishops' judgments yet to be published, though it addresses itself mainly to the issues rather than to the text of *The Challenge of Peace.* The pastoral letter invites dialogue and criticism by claiming that one of the major purposes of Catholic teaching on war and peace is "to contribute to the public policy debate about the morality of war" (16). From Novak, in the book under review and in numerous articles, the bishops have been getting what they apparently want. In the collection of essays, *Catholics and Nuclear War*, however, too much of the criticism is mild and too many of the essaysists follow the lead of the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, who in the book's foreward writes, "I believe [the pastoral letter] is the finest document that the American Catholic hierarchy has ever produced" (*Catholics*, p. vii). The writers in this volume are mostly Catholics, about half and half clerical and lay; well-known names among them include the Rev. Hehir and Prof. Russett, the Rev. Charles E. Curran, James Finn, the Rev. David Hollenbach, George F. Kennan, David J. O'Brien, the Rev. Richard A. McCormick, Peter Steinfels, Lester C. Thurow, Gordon C. Zahn, et al.

Inevitably when theologians take up public policy, some bizzare opinions emerge. For example, Sister Sandra M. Schneiders, professor of New Testament and Spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, locates a problem in connecting sacred scripture with contemporary issues: "The problem is," she writes, "that we lack an adequate hermeneutical theory" (*Catholics*, p. 91). As to coping with nuclear weapons, Sister Schneiders believes

> it is not a theory of just war, however morally sound, but the gospel imperative to make peace even at the cost of ultimate self-sacrifice that must guide our response to the question of nuclear arms. [p. 95]

To counter the Soviet Union's weapons, Schneiders recommends for the United States not an arsenal but "Christian defiance of death" (p. 103). For another example, Georgetown theologian Richard McCormick brings his scholarly skills to bear on the question of intention in nuclear deterrence but gets helplessly tied up in "ultimate intent," "instrumental intention," "comsummatory intention," "objective intentionality" and "inbuilt intentionality" (pp. 173–177 *passim*).

Catholics and Nuclear War on the whole is much better than these examples, however. James Finn, editor of *Freedom at Issue*, asks a central question:

> Finally, we must ask whether [the bishops'] recommendations, if they become policy, would move us "toward a more stable system of national and international security" (196), as the bishops intend, or toward some less desirable and more dangerous situation. [p. 133]

Finn finds serious flaws in the bishops' analysis of deterrence, in their understanding of the facts of the "arms race" and in their joining of the traditions of just war and pacifism. His conclusion about the bishops' letter should worry all of us: "I believe their recommendations, if pressed into operation, would weaken the security of the United States and its allies" (p. 145).

Another worthwhile essay in this book comes from the M.I.T. economist Lester

Thurow. Entitled "The Arms Race and the Economic Order," Thurow's piece takes up the bishops' treatment of the interdependence of rich and poor nations:

> The section of the bishops' pastoral letter that is most directly relevant to economics and the arms race is entitled, "Interdependence: From Fact to Policy" (III.B.3). Unfortunately, the section does not start with "fact" and therefore does not lead to "policy." The essence of the section is to be found in the second half of the quotation from Vatican II: "The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm that it inflicts upon the poor is more than can be endured." The section essentially implies that poor countries are poor (at least partially) because they have been exploited by rich, militarily powerful countries. [*Catholics*, p. 207.]

Of this claim—a claim that has become the common coin of today's political-religious rhetoric—Thurow says, "The evidence for this assertion is lacking in the bishops' letter and denied by historical research" (p. 207). He follows with his own conclusion about the relationship of arms to poverty: "There is no doubt that the arms race hurts the poor, but the arms race that impacts the poor is not that between the Soviet Union and the United States but that among poor countries" (p. 208).

Serious criticism from the left comes from the long-time pacifist Gordon Zahn, who is disturbed by the bishops' reliance on the just-war theory as their moral framework but pleased with the bishops' "recognition of evangelical pacifism as a legitimate option for the Catholic" (*Catholics*, p. 130). "It is time," Zahn believes, "to dismiss once and for all the just-war formulations as irrelevant to the realities of modern war" (p. 130). Recognizing that the bishops are moving to the left, Zahn gives them his partial approval, calling the letter "a slight turn in the right direction" (p. 131).

The American Catholic bishops, to their credit, have stimulated a new phase in the forty-year-old national dialogue on nuclear weapons. Whether their mixture of religion and politics will be more beneficial to the world than such mixtures have been in past centuries remains to be seen. So far one thing about *The Challenge of Peace* is clear: the bishops, whatever they have to teach, have a lot to learn about nuclear weapons and U.S. defense policy.

Robert L. Spaeth

Robert L. Spaeth, former tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis, is dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., and the author of *No Easy Answers: Christians Debate Nuclear Arms*, recently published by Winston Press, Minneapolis.

Cumulative Index, April 1969—Winter 1984

The last cumulative index, marking eight years of publication, appeared in the July 1977 issue of *The College.* This spring, after fifteen years as first *The College* (Apr 69–Jul 79); then *The College/The St. John's Review* (Jan and Jul 80); and now *The St. John's Review* (since the Winter 81 issue), it seems appropriate to bring the index up to date.

The following list, arranged alphabetically by author, includes all material published from April 1969 through Winter 1984. Photocopies of specific articles are available at $.20 a page, minimum order $2.00; requests should be addressed to the managing editor in Annapolis.

The St. John's Review
St. John's College
Annapolis, Maryland 21404