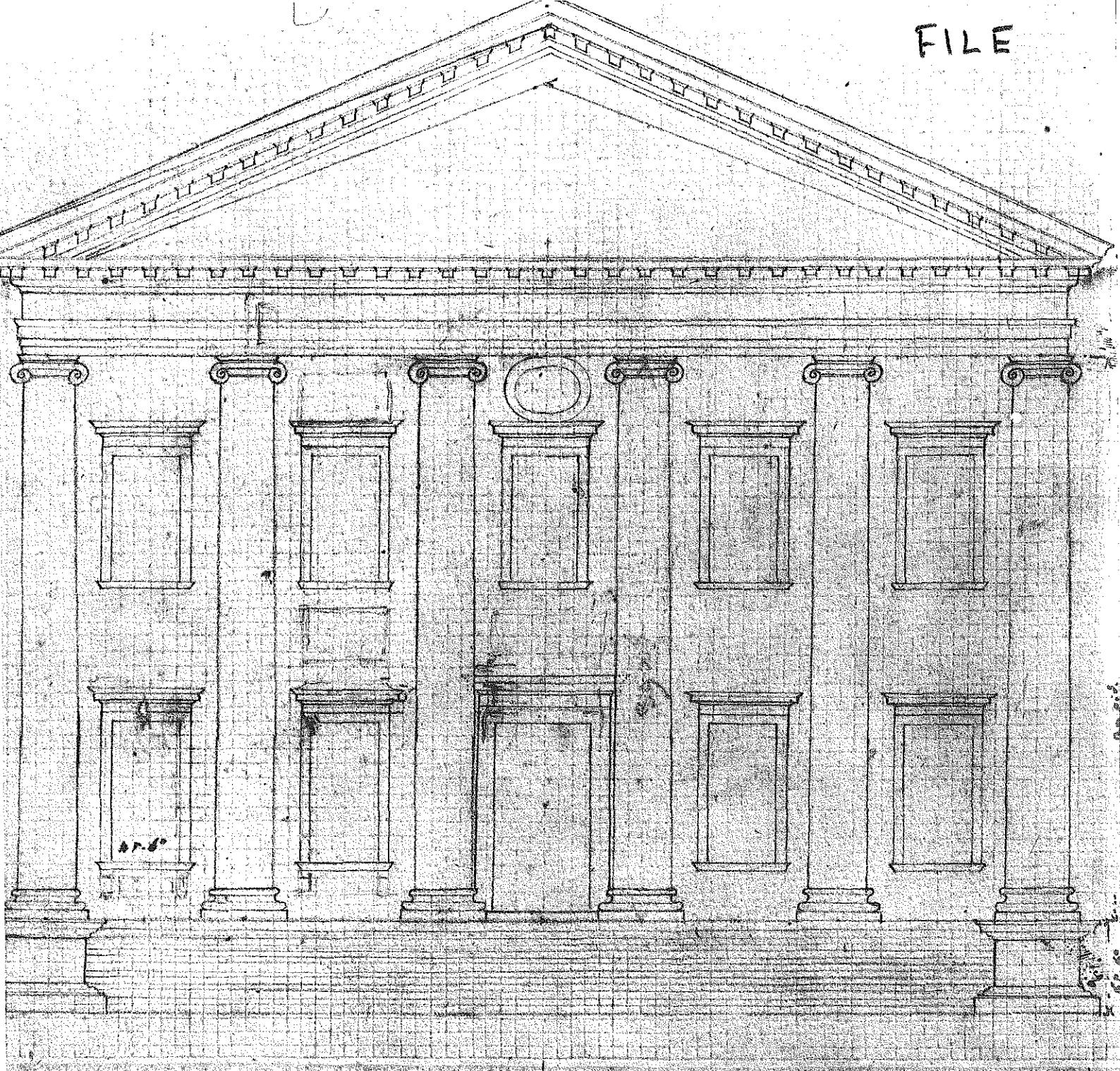

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Unsolicited articles, stories, and poems are welcome, but should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope in each instance. Reasoned comments are also welcome.

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The Contemporary Reader and Robert Frost

The Heavenly Guest of "One More Brevity" and *Aeneid* 8

Helen H. Bacon

For Kathleen and Theodore Morrison, who pointed me in the right direction and encouraged me to keep on looking.

"I almost think any poem is most valuable for its ulterior meaning. . . . I have developed an ulteriority complex.[1]"

Robert Frost said this in an interview in 1927, but it is only recently that we have begun to take him at his word and recognize *his* ulteriority—the dense literary texture of his poems in which lurk ulterior meanings that make extraordinary demands on the reader. Frost's well-known essay, "The Prerequisites," written about the same time as the poem I am about to discuss, is a classic formulation of what Frost hoped of a reader of what he liked to call "a little poem." There he describes how, repudiating the wrong, that is, academic, kind of help, he took nearly fifty years to acquire what he called "the prerequisites" for understanding Emerson's sixteen line poem "Brahma." What he came to understand in those fifty years was the meaning of Nirvana, "the perfect detachment from ambition and desire that can alone rescue us from the round of existence."

To experience the poem as poetry, as opposed to "mere information," the reader must independently rediscover its ulterior meanings. "The heart sinks when robbed of the chance to see for itself what a poem is all about. . . . Any footnote while the poem is going is too late. Any subsequent explanation is as dispiriting as the explanation of a joke. Being taught poems reduces them to the rank of mere information." And a little further on the often-quoted statement, "Approach to the poem must be from afar off, even generations off. A poem is best read in the light of all the other poems ever written. We read A the better to read B (we have to start somewhere; we may get very little out of A). We read B the better to read C, C the better to read D, D the better to go back and get something more out of A. Progress is not the aim, but circulation. The thing is to get among the poems where they hold each other apart in their places as the stars do."[2]

And this is the contemporary reader's dilemma. The prerequisites to experiencing the full richness, the ulterior meanings, of many of Frost's poems include knowledge of a literary tradition from which each high school generation is more remote than the last. And of that whole enormous tradition the least familiar part, and therefore the hardest to recognize, are the Greek and Latin classics. Though his classical education, his lifelong reading of Greek and Latin authors in the original, is now documented, the extent of Frost's use of them in his poems is barely suspected. The dilemma is that, even though most

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She delivered this essay, in an earlier version, as a Blegen Lecture at Vassar College.

of the poems stand by themselves, their ulterior meaning, what makes them most valuable in Frost's own terms, often depends on affinities and analogies with a literature little known and only with the greatest difficulty accessible to modern readers.

Further, the kind of commentary on a poem which I am about to make is that "dispiriting" explanation that robs the reader of the joy of discovery. However, if it can be understood as an example of how to "read A the better to understand B," etc., rather than as an attempt to reduce the poem to "mere information," perhaps it will not be out of keeping with the spirit of Frost's pronouncement about prerequisites.

Of many possible examples of Frost's method of evoking ancient poems I will mention briefly two which I have discussed elsewhere with fuller documentation. "Hyla Brook," which seems to be, and is, about a brook in summertime on Frost's New Hampshire farm, is also an almost line-for-line imitation of Horace's celebrated O *fons Bandusiae* (*Odes* 3.13), about a spring in summertime on *his* farm in the Sabine hills. Horace rather obliquely and unexpectedly celebrates his humble little Italian spring as a spring of those quintessentially Greek, and for Italians at least literary, divinities the muses. Only when we see that Frost is evoking Horace's poem can we recognize that he makes the same claim for his brook, and thereby gives a whole new range of meaning to the last line:

We love the things we love for what they are.

More complicated is a poem called "The Lost Follower," which seems to be, and is, an evocation of Browning's "Lost Leader." Both poems are about abandoning poetry for gold. Browning's poet deserts the ranks of true poets for material gain. Frost's poet deserts the "golden line of lyric" not for material gold, but to try to realize through social and political action a golden age of peace and brotherhood on earth. But beneath the explicit reference to Browning lurks a complicated set of allusions to another poem of Horace, *Epode* 16, which asserts that the only way that men can experience the golden age in this corrupt world is through poetry. In this context the function of Frost's poet becomes enormously more crucial, and his defection proportionately more devastating.

Explicit classical references or clues to classical connections in Frost's poetry are rare. But he does give little pointers. Apparently random details insisted on in the text that are very vivid, but not obviously connected with anything, should be scrutinized. For instance, by June the Hyla Brook, having vanished underground, is

A brook to none but who remember long.

And the poem makes other allusions to memory. Why is memory important? Memory is the mother of the muses, and Frost's spring, like Horace's, is a spring of the muses, translated to a, for them, unfamiliar landscape.

Another pointer is the way poems are grouped for publication. Frost placed "The Oven Bird" next to "Hyla Brook" in *Mountain Interval* (1916). The bird of dusty midsummer, hidden in the wood, who "knows in singing not to sing" and asks "what to make of a diminished thing," is a somewhat more explicit metaphor than the vanished brook for poetry's unquenchable power. Such groupings reinforce suggestions within poems, as do hints Frost dropped about the poems when he read them aloud.

Frost's evocations of other texts, ancient or modern, are never lifeless imitations. There are reversals, inversions, variations of themes and motifs. Frost replaces Browning's materialistic poet leader with an idealistic poet follower, and makes us see the desertion of poetry as morally paradoxical and the poet's function as morally crucial. Horace's spring of the muses never fails even in the dog days of August. Frost's brook dries up in summer. All the more does it symbolize the muses' unfailing creativity, because, through the power of memory, the spring, though no longer visible, continues to exist. His reticences and disguises are not mere tricks. They facilitate the experience of seeing for oneself that he insists on in "The Prerequisites."

What are the criteria for recognizing an allusion, whether to a classical or to any other poet? How can we be sure that what we take for a pointer really is not an accidental analogy? If a possible connection reveals an unsuspected economy and consequent richness of language, an increased coherence, both internal and external, it is probably intended. If it enables us to see that every word of the poem relates to a single theme, that what seems like merely vivid detail reinforces what the poem says by connecting it with some other work of literature, it is probably valid. If the surrounding poems reinforce and are reinforced by what that poem is saying, that is further confirmation, as are Frost's own comments and collocations when he read the poem aloud.

Using these criteria I am going to present in detail one poem that will illustrate how discovering "the prerequisites" (in this case they happen to be largely classical) affects the way one reads a poem. It vividly illustrates both the reader's dilemma, and what Frost meant by "ulteriority."

The poem, "One More Brevity," is about Sirius, the brightest of the fixed stars, the "dog star" in the constellation Orion. With one significant deviation, it is in rhymed couplets. It was Frost's Christmas poem for 1953, composed about the same time as his description of the way a poem should be read in "The Prerequisites."

One More Brevity

I opened the door so my last look
Should be taken outside a house and book.
Before I gave up seeing and slept
I said I would see how Sirius kept
His watchdog eye on what remained
To be gone into if not explained.
But scarcely was my door ajar,
When past the leg I thrust for bar
Slipped in to be my problem guest,
Not a heavenly dog made manifest,
But an earthly dog of the carriage breed;
Who, having failed of the modern speed,
Now asked asylum—and I was stirred
To be the one so dog-preferred.
He dumped himself like a bag of bones,
He sighed himself a couple of groans,
And head to tail then firmly curled
Like swearing off on the traffic world.
I set him water, I set him food.
He rolled an eye with gratitude
(Or merely manners it may have been),
But never so much as lifted chin.
His hard tail loudly smacked the floor
As if beseeching me, "Please, no more;
I can't explain—tonight at least."
His brow was perceptibly trouble-creased.
So I spoke in terms of adoption thus:
"Gustie, old boy, Dalmatian Gus,
You're right, there's nothing to discuss.
Don't try to tell me what's on your mind,
The sorrow of having been left behind,
Or the sorrow of having run away.
All that can wait for the light of day.
Meanwhile feel obligation-free.
Nobody has to confide in me."

'Twas too one-sided a dialogue,
And I wasn't sure I was talking dog.
I broke off baffled. But all the same,
In fancy I ratified his name,
Gustie—Dalmatian Gus, that is—
And started shaping my life to his,
Finding him in his right supplies
And sharing his miles of exercise.
Next morning the minute I was about
He was at the door to be let out
With an air that said, "I have paid my call.
You mustn't feel hurt if now I'm all
For getting back somewhere or further on."
I opened the door and he was gone.
I was to taste in little the grief
That comes of dogs' lives being so brief,
Only a fraction of ours at most.
He might have been the dream of a ghost
In spite of the way his tail had smacked
My floor so hard and matter-of-fact.
And things have been going so strangely since,
I wouldn't be too hard to convince,
I might even claim, he was Sirius
(Think of presuming to call him Gus),
The star itself—Heaven's greatest star,
Not a meteorite, but an avatar—
Who had made an overnight descent
To show by deeds he didn't resent
My having depended on him so long,
And yet done nothing about it in song.
A symbol was all he could hope to convey,
An intimation, a shot of ray,
A meaning I was supposed to seek,
And finding, wasn't disposed to speak.

According to the official biography this poem is "about a dog very much like [Frost's dog] Gillie, whose death in 1949 had robbed him of his most constant companion since 1940."[3] Frost would not have disagreed. He read the poem often—seven times at Bread Loaf, with teasing and suggestive comments. After one of these readings he hinted at the importance of the couplet form. "I've got a poem somewhere about how couplets symbolize metaphor. There's a pairing that deeper down in is the pairing of thought that is the metaphor. . . . The couplet is the symbol of the metaphor."[4]

What then are "the prerequisites" for detecting "the pairing of thought" deeper down beneath the pairing of couplets in this poem? What is

A meaning I was supposed to seek,
And finding, wasn't disposed to speak?

(Note the felicitous couplings—supposed/disposed within the lines, as well as seek/speak at the end, or, earlier in the poem, smacked/matter-of-fact.)

First of all we have a pattern story quite widespread in European and Asiatic folklore—the rewarding of a humble host who offers hospitality to a divine visitor in disguise. In this case the reward is some kind of unexplained illumination. A classic example is Ovid's story of Baucis and Philemon (*Met.* 8.618–724). But beyond this easily recognized pattern, is there a more specific reference? Let us get to those vivid and expressive but apparently unrelated concrete details that I have already mentioned.

First and most important is the dog's name—Dalmatian Gus, emphasized in its first mention by the only triple rhyme in this sequence of couplets.

So I spoke in terms of adoption thus:
"Gustie, old boy, Dalmatian Gus,
You're right, there's nothing to discuss."

And again, after telling the dog he needn't say anything,

I fancy I ratified his name,
Gustie—Dalmatian Gus, that is—

And finally,

I wouldn't be too hard to convince,
I might even claim, he was Sirius
(Think of presuming to call him Gus).

Then 'Dalmatian' is used twice, and also alluded to in the phrase, "an earthly dog of the carriage breed." Dalmatians, of course, are carriage dogs. There is no need for the dog to speak, for the poet has found his name, and a name establishes identity and makes explanation superfluous. Naming is itself a kind of coupling, a way of creating a relationship by recognition.

Who then is Dalmatian Gus who is also Sirius? What Augustus, Gus for short, has connections with Dalmatia and Sirius? I do not know that anyone has asked this question. I think I can show that Frost wanted us to associate Dalmatian Gus with Augustus Caesar as Vergil presents him in *Aeneid* 8 directly, and in *Aeneid* 10 through the figure of Aeneas, linked with the star of destiny, the Julian star, which Vergil associates with Sirius, celebrating his triple triumph of 29 B.C. for victories in Dalmatia, Actium, and Alexandria. To understand Frost's allusion we do not need to understand what Augustus' triple triumph means to historians, but only what Vergil wants it to mean.

In book 8 the triple triumph and its attendant celebrations are the climax of a series of images on a shield presented to Aeneas by his mother, Venus, forged at her prompting by her spouse, Vulcan. These images are scenes from future, from the point of view of Aeneas, Roman history. Vergil's language stresses military achievement—"Italian events, and the triumphs of the Romans. . . the whole race to come. . . and, in sequence, the wars [which will have been] fought" (8.626–629). But, except for the last group of scenes, they are not conventional military episodes. They are rather a series of spiritual achievements, triumphs of light and order over chaos and darkness. I mention only the first—the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus. In what sense is this a Roman triumph? It is an expression of Vergil's vision of Rome's civilizing mission, the taming of natural savagery and its integration into a higher order of peace and brotherhood. Only the final scenes of the shield refer to a literal military victory—Augustus' naval victory at Actium over Antony and Cleopatra (8.675–731). As the forces of darkness take flight Augustus, "standing in the high stern," *stans celsa in puppi,* is transfigured. Flames stream from his helmet, and over his head appears the father's star, the *patrium sidus,* the star of the deified Julius Caesar, Augustus' father by adoption. The comet which appeared at the funeral games for the murdered Julius Caesar was immediately identified as Caesar's soul transported to the realm of the gods. Augustus was then saluted as the son of a god, ultimately himself to become a god and join his "father" in the sky. In the *Aeneid* the Julian star is a recurring symbol of the savior hero (Aeneas, Romulus, Augustus) chosen to help realize on earth some part of the Roman ideal and then join the gods on Olympus.

Throughout the *Aeneid* Vergil makes Aeneas prefigure Augustus in his battle with the forces of darkness. This is nowhere more explicit than in the passage in book 10 where Aeneas is transfigured. Here all the elements of Augustus' transfiguration, the ship, the flames, the Julian star, recur. The words used of Augustus, "Standing in the high stern," *stans celsa in puppi,* are now used of Aeneas as he descends the Tiber bringing reinforcements to the beleaguered Trojans. And as he salutes his comrades by raising the shield, the divine gift of his goddess mother, which has on it the image of the transfigured Augustus, flames stream from his helmet, and from the shield. Perhaps because Aeneas is only at the beginning of the historical process which the shield envisions as culminating with Augustus, the star is not literally present. It is intro-

duced in a characteristically complex and indirect way through a double simile (10.260–275). The streaming flames are first compared to a comet "glowing blood red and mournful through the clear night," in the context an almost inescapable allusion to that other comet, the Julian star. The second part of the simile likens the flames to "the burning heat of Sirius which brings thirst and sickness to suffering mortals when it rises and saddens the sky with sinister light," an evocation of the scene in the *Illiad* where Achilles, clad in divine armor, the gift of *his* goddess mother, about to confront Hector in their final duel, is compared to Sirius, bringer of suffering and disaster (22.26). The comet links Aeneas to the future, to Julius Caesar's death and the culmination of the vision in Augustus' victory at Actium. Sirius links him to the past and the beginnings of the great historical process in Hector's death and Achilles' victory, itself the prelude to Achilles' own death. Both images have a double message. The comet signalled not only mourning for the murdered leader, but also his deification and the eventual deification of his son. The rising of the dog star signalled not only the "dog days" of August, with the suffering and privations of heat and drought, but also the eventual coming of the season of fruition, of the vintage and the autumn rains. Both comet and star allude to the suffering and destruction that inevitably accompany the attempt to realize the ideal.

To come back to the shield—the three final scenes of Vulcan's masterpiece offer a vision of the fulfillment through Augustus of the ideals which are the goal of all the struggles of the *Aeneid.* These scenes are the moment of victory at Actium, and its sequel, Augustus celebrating the triple triumph of Dalmatia, Actium, and Alexandria, and finally, enthroned, godlike, on the threshold of the newly restored temple of Apollo on the Palatine, receiving the homage of a pacified world, and inaugurating a new golden age of peace and brotherhood. The imagery of comet, star, and flame, which links every stage of the attempt to realize this vision from the fall of Troy, through the ordeals of Aeneas and his descendants, to its culmination in Augustus' victory, stresses the cost in human suffering (Hector's death, Caesar's death, and all the other deaths and losses of the poem) as well as the greatness of an ideal that can culminate in deification. If Dalmatian Gus really represents the spirit of the deified Augustus briefly returned to earth with a message for the poet, the message should be something about the pain and struggle involved in trying to give social and political reality to a spiritual ideal.

Here are some further coincidences between *Aeneid* 8 and "One More Brevity" which tend to confirm this reading.

The theme of hospitality in a humble home to a god in disguise is central in both. The association with Sirius is more than a hint of Gus's heavenly origins, and Frost wants us to be aware of his hospitable concern for his guest's comfort.

I set him water, I set him food...

and later,

[I] started shaping my life to his,
Finding him in his right supplies
And sharing his miles of exercise.

Near the beginning of *Aeneid* 8 Aeneas arrives at the site of what will one day be Rome. An Arcadian exile named Evander has found refuge there. It is a wilderness with a stream running through the valley where the forum will someday be, and cattle lowing on the slopes of the Esquiline. Evander after offering Aeneas friendship and alliance and sharing his rustic feast with him, welcomes Aeneas into his little thatched hut on the Palatine. He reminds him that Hercules, recently deified, had also deigned to be entertained there, after slaying the fire-breathing monster, Cacus, that was devastating the region from his cave on the nearby Aventine. At this point Aeneas is a refugee and a suppliant, but like the savior hero Hercules, to whom he is repeatedly assimilated in the *Aeneid,* and like Augustus, Aeneas is destined to achieve godhood for his efforts to save humanity by realizing a golden age of peace and brotherhood. Evander welcomes both Hercules and Aeneas, savior gods in human guise, in a little thatched hut on the Palatine hill, the very hill on which Augustus, another savior god in human guise, will one day have a studiedly modest residence.

The word 'avatar' (the only occurrence in all of Frost's work) is a further reinforcement of the theme of the god in disguise. Maybe, Frost suggests, the visitor really *was* Sirius, the brightest of the fixed stars—

Not a meteorite, but an avatar.

Avatar is a Hindu term for a brief manifestation of a savior god in earthly form, a temporary incarnation of deity. Frost might have learned this from Emerson or Thoreau, two favorite authors of his, both of whom were saturated in Hindu mythology, or from Bulfinch's *Age of Fable,* a work he consulted often. One of the few things Bulfinch says about Hindu mythology concerns the nature of an avatar. Certainly the brief visit of Dalmatian Gus is associated with a brief visit to earth of a god in disguise.

Frost's description of the dog's condition, physical and emotional, also has Hindu associations which evoke a theme of *Aeneid* 8. He is "an earthly dog of the carriage breed," who has "failed of the modern speed." He is out of step with the world and so exhausted that he can barely roll an eye and thump his tail. He takes a carefully indicated position of withdrawal.

He dumped himself like a bag of bones,
He sighed himself a couple of groans,
And head to tail then firmly curled
Like swearing off on the traffic world.

Head to tail is the position of that image of detachment and eternity, the "tail eater," the *ouroboros*. The dog in this position, "swearing off on the traffic world" (traffic in all its senses), is seeking "the perfect detachment from ambition and desire that can alone rescue us from the round of existence," that state of Nirvana which Frost had only recently learned about. The weariness, like the sorrow, that is inseparable from the attempt to realize the spirit on earth through the recreation of the golden age is another major theme of the *Aeneid*. The young poet of "The Lost Follower," who is trying to realize the golden age through social and political action experiences a comparable sorrow and exhaustion. If Dalmatian Gus is intended to evoke the spirit of the deified Augustus his exhaustion is the exhaustion of this struggle.

Still another detail which this poem shares with *Aeneid* 8 is the sense of election. The poet

. . . was stirred
To be the one so dog-preferred.

He is then awed by the thought that Sirius himself

. . . Heaven's greatest star,
Not a meteorite, but an avatar—

has brought him a personal, though enigmatic, message, which he understands and accepts.

A symbol was all he could hope to convey,
An intimation, a shot of ray,
A meaning I was supposed to seek,
And finding, wasn't disposed to speak.

Aeneid 8 is about the moment when Aeneas finally accepts election as founder of the new order. With that acceptance comes renunciation of all earthly fulfillment, and, ultimately, deification. He receives the message from heaven in three forms. First Venus most unconventionally thunders in a clear sky. That she should, against all precedent, be wielding the thunderbolt, Jove's emblem, indicates that the message comes with his concurrence. Aeneas' response, "I am summoned on Olympus," *Ego poscor Olympo*, is both a recognition and an acceptance of election, a decision to act and take on the frightful burdens of his mission. The second form which the message of election takes is the poignant moment when Venus, bringing the divine armor, briefly ("One More Brevity") presents herself undisguised to her son, and for the first and only time in the *Aeneid* allows him to embrace her. Aeneas has two other encounters with Venus—in book 1, where she is disguised as a mortal maiden and reveals her identity only as she is disappearing, and in book 2, where, though she briefly appears in person to present a vision of Troy in ruins, she offers no contact. Only here, in book 8, do god and man have the kind of real communion, brief though it is, that occurs between poet and dog in "One More Brevity." Vulcan's masterpiece bears the third form of the message of election, the prophecy of Rome's spiritual achievement, which Aeneas initiates when he accepts the burden of election. The theme of exhaustion is associated in book 8 with this burden. Whether for Aeneas, or Hercules, or Augustus, the attempt to realize the spirit on earth is exhausting. Throughout the *Aeneid*, but particularly in book 8, where Hercules' victorious fight with the monster Cacus is narrated, Vergil makes Hercules' labors, *labores*, prefigure the labors of Aeneas and Augustus as saviours of humanity, struggling to dispel chaos and darkness by giving reality to the vision of peace and brotherhood. The last line of the book, which describes Aeneas shouldering the shield with its only half understood message, stresses in its movement as well as its sense the strain of this effort—"Lifting on to his shoulders the fame and fate of his descendants," *attollens umeris famamque et fata nepotum*. The cost of this effort is part, but I would like to say only part, of the message Dalmatian Gus brings to the poet.

Another significant detail that connects Dalmatian Gus with Augustus, is the idea of Sirius as a watch dog.

I opened the door so my last look
Should be taken outside a house and book.
Before I gave up seeing and slept
I said I would see how Sirius kept
His watchdog eye on what remained
To be gone into if not explained.

Sirius is imagined as keeping an eye on things and, characteristically, the poet is keeping an eye on Sirius. Vergil makes no direct allusion to Sirius as a watchdog, but he takes pains to make us aware that the rising of Sirius coincides with the feasts of the deified saviors and guardians of order, Hercules and Augustus. Aeneas arrives at the site of Rome on the feast of Hercules, which Evander and his followers are celebrating, at the time of the rising of the dog-star, which is also the date on which Augustus celebrated his triple triumph, in the month of August, named for Augustus after the fact. This rather tenuous association of Sirius with the functions of the guardian or watchdog is made explicit in other ancient authors. For instance, both Manilius, a didactic poet of the Augustan period, and Plutarch refer to Sirius as a watchdog. Whatever his source, the watchdog image for Sirius is not an invention of Frost's, but part of Sirius' ancient associations.

These are the principal coincidences that suggest that *Aeneid* 8 is one of the prerequisites for understanding "One More Brevity." It is a reading validated by the criteria I suggested earlier. When the connection is perceived, the poem gains coherence and intensity. Every commonplace detail of dog and human behavior proves to be related to the idea of election, or of the grief and exhaustion associated with the struggle to bring the spirit to earth, or of the poignant brevity of an encounter between god and man. Above all the dog's name has no other explanation. The connection gives poetic purpose to an otherwise aimless insistence on an apparently ordinary name. I am open

to suggestions of a meaning that works better. This increased coherence and intensity is the best evidence that Frost wanted us to associate Dalmatian Gus with Augustus, and through him with Aeneas, Hercules, and all the other figures of the *Aeneid* who will become gods after a brief sojourn on earth. In this series of brevities Gus makes one more.

The context of the poem reinforces the suggestion that Gus brings a message about the cost of trying to recreate the golden age. In the collection in which it was first published (*In The Clearing*, 1962) "One More Brevity" is preceded by "America Is Hard To See," a poem about Columbus' failure to find the gold of the orient in the New World, and his inability to envision the opportunity to create a new age of peace and brotherhood there. The poem stresses a missed opportunity for godhood and the inevitable weariness of trying to realize the ideal.

The two poems that follow in different ways evoke the themes of struggle and the new order. The first, "Escapist-Never," is about a pursuer pursuing a pursuer and a seeker seeking a seeker in what Frost called "an interminable chain of longing." I suggest that this is the "round of existence," the endless and unrealizable attempt to actualize the ideal. Perhaps we should think of Orion with his dog Sirius, forever pursuing the Pleiades across the heavens and never overtaking them. The second poem, "For John F. Kennedy, His Inauguration," has several explicit and implicit references to a new golden age of Augustus. I mention three. First, the opening lines—

Summoning artists to participate
In the august occasions of the state.

Then the explicit allusion to the adapted Vergilian phrases about the golden age that appear on our dollar bill (spiritual and material gold) above and below the image of a pyramid surmounted by an eye which radiates rays of light. *Annuit coeptis* (*Georg.* 1.40, also *Aen.* 9.625) *novus ordo saeclorum* (*Ecl.* 4.5)—literally, "the new order of the ages gave the nod of assent to the enterprise." Frost's version is,

Now came on a new order of the ages
That in the Latin of our founding sages
(Is it not written on the dollar bill
We carry in our purse and pocket still?)
God nodded his approval of as good.

For "our founding sages" and for Frost, though unfortunately not for the contemporary reader, the Vergilian context made it plain that the new order being proclaimed was a recreation of the golden age, the theme of both passages adapted on the dollar bill. Finally there is a reference to the challenge of the present.

It makes the prophet in us all presage
The glory of a next Augustan age
. . . . . .
A golden age of poetry and power
Of which this noonday's the beginning hour.

One further kind of confirmation. The poems Frost associated "One More Brevity" with in his Bread Loaf readings also emphasize the themes I have been discussing. He read it with "The Lost Follower" (that poem about forsaking the gold of poetry for the attempt to realize the golden age through social action), and with "The Gift Outright," which is the other part of the Kennedy poem. Another time he followed it with a passage from "Kitty Hawk," about incarnation—

But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit
Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation—

and commented, "See, we've got to risk spirit in substantiation and we mostly fail."[5] Twice he read it with his better known poem about Sirius, "Take Something Like A Star," which is also about matter and spirit. Once he prefaced it with "How Hard It Is To Keep From Being King," a poem about election and the attempt to realize spiritual ideals through the art of government.

"Take Something Like A Star" brings up a final point. Frost's lifelong preoccupation with astronomy in general and Sirius in particular is well-known. It goes back at least to his discovery when a boy of British astronomer Richard Proctor's book *Our Place Among the Infinities*, with its chapter on Sirius entitled "A Giant Sun." In a 1935 letter, Elinor Frost quotes him as saying he is "down here in Key West now to find out if Canopus is as good a star as Sirius."[6] In "One More Brevity" he wonders if his visitor was not

The star itself—Heaven's greatest star,
Not a meteorite, but an avatar—
Who had made an overnight descent
To show by deeds he didn't resent
My having depended on him so long,
And yet done nothing about it in song?

What is this very special relation to Sirius that would make him say, ten years *after* "Take Something Like A Star" first appeared in print, that he had "yet done nothing about it in song?"

"Take Something Like A Star" is about what Sirius can mean to everyone.

Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may take something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

"One More Brevity" is about a relationship with Sirius so personal that the star *does* stoop from its sphere, to pay a personal visit and deliver a personal message which incorporates the reason for this special dependence of poet on star. The message is best understood in connection with one more aspect of *Aeneid* 8.

Not surprisingly it is about being an artist. Aeneas' shield which embodies the dream of the golden age restored is Vulcan's masterpiece, in Vergil's words, "an indescribable fabric," *non enarrabile textum*. The inspiration for its creation is a night of lovemaking with Venus. The thrill of love experienced by Vulcan is compared to lightning. This simile makes Venus once again, as when she sends the sign of election to Aeneas, the unlikely wielder of Jove's thunderbolt. Inspired by Venus' fire from heaven, forged in Vulcan's subterranean fires, the shield bears on it the flaming birth portent of the new golden age, the star of Julius. Fire is both instrument and emblem of creation. It links the creation of the great work of art to the act of love, and, since the thunderbolt is Jove's instrument, both are seen as expressions of his cosmic purpose. Like Vergil, Frost often associated the impulse of love with the impulse of art, for instance in "Take Something Like A Star."

Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says, "I burn."

Aeneas, Hercules, Romulus, perhaps even Augustus, will die before the golden age becomes a social reality. It is only on the shield, the work of the artist Vulcan, ultimately of the artist Vergil, that Romans and we, their successors, can fully experience it. So perhaps another part of the message brought by Dalmatian Gus is about the role of the artist in keeping alive a vision which generations of statesmen and political idealists will exhaust themselves trying to realize. To be "dog-preferred" is to be elected to risk spirit in substantiation, to bring back the golden age by making poems under the inspiration of love.

I would not like to imply that in getting among the poems to try to understand this poem I have succeeded in discovering the whole of the message that the poet "was not disposed to speak." One can reveal unsuspected ulterior meanings of a poem by finding its relation to other poems, but, as Frost said of his star,

Some mystery becomes the proud.

I would hope that this demonstration makes it seem at least credible that Frost wanted to be read as he has frequently compelled me to read him, by getting among the poems (in this case ancient ones, but they are not always ancient), and that it would further serve as an illustration of what the abandonment of the poetic tradition can do to poetry, even, perhaps I should say particularly, to recent poetry. Not only the poems of Frost, almost all great poems, ask "of us a certain height," ask us to repossess our past so that we may experience them fully by discovering their "ulteriority." There exists something calling itself poetry that does not make such demands. But the great tradition has always been to "get among the poems." The muses are daughters of memory in more ways than we realize.

Poets know, Frost knew, there is only one tradition of literature. We scholars, locked in our specialties, tend to forget. Classicists in particular should remember that not only do we "read A the better to understand B" but "D the better to go back and get something out of A." We cannot read Vergil unless we know Homer, but having read Vergil we will read Homer differently, and having read Milton, or Frost, we will read Vergil differently. We need to know the poets of the past to be good readers of modern poetry, but, just as important, to be good readers of ancient poetry we should read Frost and as many other modern poets as we can. "Progress is not the aim, but circulation." The great poets give us back our past by forcing us to circulate.

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1 L. Thompson and R. H. Winnick, *Robert Frost: The Later Years*, 1938–1963, New York 1976 (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 214.

2 "The Prerequisites: A Preface," in *Robert Frost: Poetry and Prose*, ed. E. C. Lathem and L. Thompson, New York 1972 (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 416–418.

3 Thompson and Winnick, *Frost: The Later Years*, 204.

4 Reginald Cook, *Robert Frost: A Living Voice*, Amherst 1974 (The University of Massachusetts Press), 135.

5 Cook, *Robert Frost*, 148.

6 Thompson and Winnick, *Frost: The Later Years*, 501.

From *The Hills as Waves*

Etta Blum

At Yad Vashem
(Holocaust Memorial)

1
The Light

It's the first light,
the last

The candlelight
driven by our breath,
searching—
finding loss

Hope comes oddly
with the stumbling outside
to sun,
to the green
leaping at us with gold

2
Monument

Upward rising stack
and huge unfurling
to black flame

The summer air
assaulted by blackness
Shape of darkness
like the heart,
stilled

No room for shadow

Blackness
screams into sunlight,
forever condemned
O mightiest of shrouds

3
Remnant

We are the saved ones,
we are those
who were not slaughtered

Your faces are ours,
your eyes
We look with your eyes

We are living your lives for you,
we are safe
We are living your deaths

Etta Blum has just published a collection of poems, *The Space my Body Fills* (The Sunstone Press, Post Office Box 2321, Sante Fe, New Mexico). The poems that appear here come from an unpublished collection, *The Hills as Waves*, inspired on a trip to Israel.

Stranger

Neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard. . .
—Leviticus 19:10

I thank you, watchman of the grove,
for the fruit you did not pick,
for the grapes you left carelessly lying
in the fading sunlight when all things
glowed with a final burning, seared
to the oncoming wind of night.

You dreamed most certainly of a stranger
without vineyard or grove, who could
not calm his hand to sow, or await
as others do, the ripe harvest.

As I was passing, O watchman,
a stranger to every home,
I hurried over the earth as
one passing through corridors.
I picked the fruit you left,
the moist and trembling grapes.
Unseen your face, but kind as
that of perfect sister or brother.

Sun Rises, Sun Sets

There's nothing spectacular
about the sunsets here:
light
slips into darkness docilely
without fanfare; the moon
and stars appear on time.
(Because here is where it started?)
Sprinkled lights on hill-
humps look upward, questioning
the stars.
Dawn comes
as easily with a sliding
into unblemished brightness.
It's plain God separated
light from darkness,
working it both ways.

Hippie at Western Wall

Blue-jeaned, hair streaming
straight from the scalp (as
in the New York subway) she
leans on the Wall, forehead
resting on curve of rock
(how this stone shapes it-
self to flesh) and prays.
With
all of her angularity (which
is the shape of her loneliness)
she prays to the God of Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob. Beneath
the granny glasses, tears
fall to holy ground.
Within
her palm the small black prayer-
book lies, ready to succor her.
Almost, she sees the letters
flying apart, searching.
It's not
hare hare
krishna krishna now, but
ani ma'amin
ani ma'amin

Jerusalem

Note: "*Ani ma'amin*" means "I believe" in Hebrew.

Than Jonah

Constantly
I flee from self.
Constantly I stare
with bitter eyes
of hope.
In swift
kaleidoscope of lost
and found.
Tears
start from dry lids,
for I'm more prone
to self-pity
even
than Jonah who,
luckier,
fled only from God.

"The Story of My Life"

The room was too high
for the flies, but
the garbage smells
reached us all right.
On the narrow bed, the
beige blanket with brown
end-stripes was falling
apart. Still, it lasted
for us—a wonder.
The
door opened to the porch
where, above roofs and
treetops, we could see
all the way to Yafo Gate
and King David's Tower,
the walls of the Old City,
Mt. Zion, Ammunition Hill.
At twilight the shadows
(the Judaean Hills really)
emerged to clear folds—
more like the rumpled
cloaks of a Michelangelo.
Close by, palm leaves
tilted into sky.
It was
there you came and spoke
of your past, the Nazi
horrors. I held your small
perfect hands in mine.
Afterwards, with childish
contentment you said,
"Now you know the story
of my life."
That room's
like a box in my brain.

Soviet Hegemonism: Year 1

Raymond Aron

A year ago,* I analyzed the paradox or the contradiction in the present situation. Thanks to her military power, the Soviet Union approaches first place in international relations at the same time that she remains of secondary importance in world trade. She is of secondary importance not only because her vast spaces, which provide most of the raw materials her industry needs, free her from the kind of dependency on foreign trade characteristic of Great Britain, Europe, and even the United States, but also because she does not match the leading nations when she is measured in our times' standards: gross national product, *per capita* production, productivity. Because of this contradiction, commentators hesitate. Some, obsessed with the military power of this land empire, denounce like China the threat that an ideocratic despotism, that relies on arms to propagate its power and its truth, exercises over both Europe and Asia; others, struck by the lability of a state that excels only in missiles and submarines while borrowing computers for Olympic games and Western know-how for automobile production, refuse to let excessive Soviet armament frighten them.

In the last years, Western public opinion has finally come to see the change in the military balance. The ability of the USSR's heavy missiles, the SS-18's, to destroy every one of the United States' land-based missiles impresses the man in the street and some of the experts. A Soviet first strike that deprived the United States of its Minutemen would, of course, not disarm it. The United States could still resort to its Poseidon submarine missiles and its B-52 bombers. The United States has, however, lost the nuclear superiority so long averred and maintained, that had made up for Soviet superiority in conventional weapons.

Toward the end of the fifties, Mao's slogan spread through the world: "The East Wind is stronger than the West Wind." The "missile gap" took up the headlines and the speeches of presidential candidates. A few years later the wind blew in a different direction: the "missile gap" turned out not to exist and ceased to trouble the sleep of the men responsible for the fate of the West. Is the alarm today comparable to the alarm after *Sputnik*? What is the outlook for Europeans and Americans, still bound in the Atlantic alliance but not united by a common perception of events, and by mutual confidence?

The Military Balance—A Few Figures

The defense budget of the United States amounts to five percent of the GNP, the Soviet Union's to fifteen percent. This disparity began in 1965, when the defense budget of the Soviet Union started to increase five percent a year; in the same period the defense budget of the United States—apart from the bloated costs of the Vietnam war—declined steadily in real terms until 1978. The 1981–82 budget foresees increases; inflation and the rising price of fuel, however, make accurate calculations in real terms difficult.

Not all figures are instructive.** For instance, the disparity in numbers between fourteen American divisions and 165 Soviet divisions does not mean much. The Soviet army numbers 1,825,000 men, 47 armored divisions, 118 ordinary or mechanized divisions, eight airborne divisions; the American army counts 750,000 men, divided into four armored divisions, five mechanized divisions, five infantry divisions, and one airborne division. (There are in addition a number of regiments, brigades, or battalions.) The Soviet army, however, is divided between Europe and the

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This article first appeared in *Commentaire* in autumn 1980.

*In an article, "De l'impérialisme américain à l'hégémonisme soviétique," published in *Commentaire* in spring 1979.

**I refer to figures published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in *The Military Balance*.

Far East—and a part of it is not available for foreign intervention. But eight airborne divisions tell a different story, whose truth many events have proven: the bear is no longer locked in his den. The Soviet Union can now project its power far beyond its frontiers. In Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East, the Soviet Union can deploy more tanks, divisions, and artillery than any of its likely adversaries.

As for the air force and the navy, the figures do not betray quantitative inferiority of the same order of magnitude. Some figures, however, highlight Soviet advances: the International Institute for Strategic Studies records 180 American surface vessels against 275 Soviet; 80 American attack submarines (73 nuclear) against 248 Soviet submarines (87 nuclear).

Raw figures, however, do not yield strategic judgements. The American air force and navy probably remain qualitatively superior. In war, the mission of the United States Navy would be to keep the seaways open; in contrast, the Soviet navy would seek to wrest dominion of the seas from the West. Statistics do not tell the outcome of this potential war at sea.

I think forces should be analyzed in their distribution in various theaters. Although not entirely without significance, grand totals make for a superficial view—and a partially false one at that: the 165 Soviet divisions are not all of the same sort or equipped in the same way—and in peacetime, not at a uniform standard of training and readiness.

The European Theater

Europeans look first to the theater of operations that involves them directly. What is the relation of forces in the middle of the Old World? The first figures, the figures most often quoted, support received opinion: the superiority of the Soviets in conventional weapons. Not counting mobilization, 27 NATO divisions face 47 Warsaw Pact divisions (among them 27 Soviet). 7,000 NATO tanks face 20,500 Warsaw Pact tanks (of which 13,500 are Soviet). In artillery NATO inferiority is even more telling: 2,700 against 10,000. In addition, the Soviet Union can reinforce its armies more easily than NATO. Because of the threat of Soviet submarines and bombers to Western sea transport, Soviet divisions stationed east of Poland will reach the battlefields more easily than the divisions available in the United States.

The theater nuclear weapons of the two groups provoked debate upon publication of *The Military Balance* last year. Does the Warsaw pact have or is it about to achieve superiority in delivery of theater nuclear weapons? In such an event there will be no resolving the disputes about bare numbers of bombers, fighter-bombers, and missiles. How much chance does a fighter-bomber have of breaking through the Soviet Union's anti-aircraft defense network? How important are the nuclear warheads of the SS-20 missile, in comparison to the warheads of the medium range missiles (SS-4 and SS-5), aimed at Europe since the beginning of the sixties?

At the risk of simplistic exaggeration: *a direct, head-on, military attack on Western Europe remains the most improbable of all manifestations of Soviet hegemonism.* A Soviet attack against the heart of Europe, unless by surprise and with all weapons including nuclear, risks unleashing total war between the super-powers. If the Soviets resorted only to their conventionally armed divisions they would probably win. They would, however, expose their more or less clustered armored divisions to an American initiative in the use of theater nuclear weapons. Immediate employment of theater nuclear weapons, and even of chemical warfare, would make victory on the ground easier at the same time that it would increase the danger of American resort to strategic nuclear weapons.

Do the SS-20 and Backfire bombers change the balance in tactical nuclear weapons? If we limit ourselves to counting nuclear warheads and megatons, not necessarily. The Soviets can destroy some of the missiles deployed at the beginning of the sixties, crude in comparison to the SS-20 which has three nuclear warheads and has the same range of accuracy as American missiles, a few dozen meters from the target. NATO has nothing to compare to the SS-20. But the American commander of NATO has at his disposal several submarines that belong to the strategic forces, which are the subject of the SALT II accords.

Once one admits the two-fold improbability of a Soviet attack in the heart of Europe and of a European war that would not lead to total war, the behavior of the two camps invites reflection. Why do the Soviets assure themselves a crushing superiority in tanks and cannons at the same time that their books of strategy all speak of all-out battle with tactical nuclear weapons? The Soviets do not want to foreclose either the option of conventional battle in which preponderance in steel—tanks, cannons, shells—would bring victory; or of an all-out battle in which armored divisions would only play a subsidiary role, because nuclear warheads would have destroyed vital NATO defenses beforehand. That seems to me the only answer.

In politics as well as war the West condemns itself to the defensive. The commanders of NATO have to assume they will suffer the offensive. At the beginning of the sixties the civilian professors around Kennedy had the doctrine of "flexible response" officially imposed on the military. Kennedy's team believed the doctrine of "massive reprisals" would lose credibility the more the Soviet Union approached parity. Use of nuclear weapons only as a last resort would reinforce "deterrence"—they thought. In addition they tended to limit the escalation of response either to conventional or nuclear. There was no discernible dividing line, recognized by all belligerents, between a tactical nuclear shell and the apocalypse. This assumption, which came to be the first principle of United States and NATO thinking, is, fortunately, arbitrary and unlikely—in my judgement.

Because of this postulate, NATO divisions are not

trained in the use of tactical nuclear weapons, which are concentrated in a small number of depots. There will be time in a crisis to distribute the nuclear shells among the troops—that is the assumption. Not opposed to "flexible response," the partisans of the neutron bomb criticize the mystical notion of a "nuclear threshold." They do all they can to "rehabilitate" both conventional ground war and the neutron bomb, which will neither destroy towns nor contaminate battlefields.

What conclusions does this summary analysis afford? A massive attack against Western Europe remains as unlikely today as yesterday. Limited military attacks against Northern Europe are, for the moment, incompatible with the policy of *détente,* which the Soviet Union pursues in Europe at the same time that it expands in the Near East and Africa. In Europe the Politburo, however, pursues a strategy of intimidation: it increasingly strengthens its divisions in East Germany to maintain, even to accentuate, its conventional army's superiority over NATO; it sees to it that it has means for unlimited battle; it trains its soldiers to fight in contaminated territory; finally, its SS-20's give it the fearful power of destroying several hundred crucial points in the Western defense system with reduced collateral destruction.

Faced with a variety of hazardous threats, the West has come up with only two answers, one trivial, the other more to the point. Every European country has committed itself to a three percent increase in defense spending—a commitment of little importance in a time of inflation and of yearly increases in fuel prices. In addition Europe has accepted the United States' offer to deploy, during 1983, 108 Pershing 2 and 464 cruise missiles in the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and perhaps in Belgium and the Netherlands. The Soviets lost no time in unleashing a frantic campaign against the modernization of tactical nuclear weapons—a campaign which told on Europeans. Does American protection alarm as much as it reassures?

The modernization of nuclear theater-weapons does not seem to transform the situation, militarily. The Soviet Union has assured itself of threefold superiority: an armored army; integration of nuclear arms in its divisions; SS-20's. In addition, it alone—and this is an enormous advantage—will choose between peace and war and decide on the extent and intensity of hostilities. Despite everything, a head-on attack of any sort remains fraught with perils as long as the American presence in Europe means such a Soviet offensive runs the risk of general war. A surgical operation with SS-20's and Backfires, on its merits the least unlikely of the possibilities, increases the likelihood of a nuclear response from the United States— a response which would enjoy the advantage of a first strike. In theory less vulnerable because of their mobility, the Pershing and cruise missiles will complicate the task of Soviet strategic planners.

Will these missiles prevent "decoupling", in the jargon of strategists? To put it plainly, will they prevent the separation of the European theater from the central strategic balance? Specialists argue opposite sides with equal passion. The truth is that everything depends less on arms than on men: How do the Soviets size up the President of the United States?

In Europe the balance between the forces has worsened at the expense of the West; it has not been transformed fundamentally. The men in charge of NATO have never thought that they could repel an all-out Soviet attack without resort to nuclear weapons. Ten years ago these men probably thought they would retain the initiative in escalation, if escalation proved necessary. They no longer have any reason to assume they have any such freedom of initiative.

The Middle East and Afghanistan

With the fall of the Shah and the occupation of Afghanistan, the situation in the Persian Gulf changed completely. Pahlavi Iran was the policeman of the area; its troops succored the emirates threatened by revolt; its navy patrolled the Strait of Hormuz; it allowed the United States to install on its territory the electronic listening devices necessary to verify arms control agreements; it put six million barrels of oil a day on the world market; it furnished Israel with oil; most important of all, it provided the United States, in case of a crisis, with a base from which it could project its military power in the region. The *coup* in Kabul brought home his powerlessness to President Carter. He announced his resolve to defend the Persian Gulf with all means, even, if necessary, with nuclear weapons—declarations received with indifference and skepticism. A rapid deployment force was decided upon. But it will take several years, it seems, before the United States will be able to send several hundred thousand soldiers several thousand miles away from its shores, to a territory only hundreds of miles from the Soviet Union.

Do Soviet actions in Afghanistan show what the Chinese call hegemonism? Taken for a buffer state between Russian and Indian spheres of influence, Afghanistan in the nineteenth century saw the disastrous end of an English expedition from India. In the last twenty years Afghanistan moved more and more toward the Soviet sphere of influence: the Soviets spent more money in Afghanistan than the United States; Afghan officers studied, not at West Point, but in Moscow.

The first, crucial revolution occurred in April 1978. Conspirators, with the help of a few officers, either Soviet trained or inclined to the Soviets, overthrew the President, Mohammed Daud Khan—who himself had removed the King, his brother-in-law and first cousin, in 1973. Daud's replacement, Taraki, signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union. He was in turn overthrown by Hafizullah Amin—a second *coup d'état* that the Soviet Union put up with in distaste. Faced with Amin's inability to consolidate his regime and

to take charge in the country as a whole, the oligarchs in Moscow precipitated still another *coup* with their troops' entry. Babrak Karmal was supposed to ask the Soviet Union for help—like Kadar's work-peasant government against the Hungarians in revolt. Amin and his family were killed before his successor, Karmal, leader of the *Parcham* faction, arrived in Kabul to legitimize, at least, in appearance, the coming of Soviet troops. A badly conceived or badly executed scenario.

As usual, two interpretations face each other in the West. Taraki's treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, according to the first interpretation, turned Afghanistan into a socialist country—and the Soviet Union never stands for the desovietization of countries that have crossed the threshold of the socialist community. The military operation is more brutal and drawn out because of the warlike people's resistance. Other commentators go further. An Islamic republic in revolutionary ferment might have awakened religious passions in the Islamic republics of Central Asia: in the last analysis the *coup* in Kabul occurred for defensive reasons. Not a piece of a global strategic offensive toward the seas to the South, the invasion of Afghanistan is a local crisis, a feud between two factions of the popular party, the *Khalq* (Taraki and Amin) and *Parcham* (Babrak Karmal). After its exile of the principal members of *Parcham*, *Khalq* provoked increasingly widespread revolt with its attempts at radical reform. The Soviets returned the exiled *Parcham* leaders, who were and are incapable of exercising power without the Soviet army. The Soviet army cannot withdraw without giving the country up to chaos and anarchy.

The invasion of Afghanistan is yet another example of the way things go. A pessimistic interpretation contrasts with this optimistic assessment. The Soviets have completed yet another phase in their whole design, in their continuous expansion. They are hundreds of miles nearer the gulf. Additional airbases are at their disposal. They threaten Pakistan, wedged between India and the Soviet army. They are now near enough to manipulate the Baluchi tribes at the frontiers of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Even admitting that the Amin regime's repeated failures drove the Soviets to forceful measures, the invasion of Afghanistan shows their confidence in themselves, in their power, and in the weakness of their principal enemy, the United States.

Whatever the truth of either of these interpretations, the dispatch of a hundred thousand soldiers to a country that did not belong to the socialist community (a treaty of friendship and cooperation does not amount to a mutual assistance pact; it is less important) represents something new and dangerous that perhaps presages other undertakings. President Carter retaliated: he restricted wheat sales; suspended the sale of high-level technology, especially for oil exploration; initiated the boycott of the Olympic games; postponed the Senate debate on the ratification of the SALT II treaty. To emphasize the turn in American policy, the President proposed the reintroduction of registration to Congress—a step necessary for the eventual reintroduction of the draft.

The invasion of Afghanistan cost the Soviet Union both in moral and diplomatic terms. At Islamabad, the Moslem countries almost unanimously condemned Soviet aggression, One condemnation included both superpowers, the supporter of Israel as well as the conqueror of a people faithful to Islam.

The disparity between the "credibility," as it is usually called, of the United States and the Soviet Union, however, grows more marked. What does this word mean? Not prestige in its real sense; not the feelings of respect and admiration that a great power evokes. Perhaps a few incidents will shed light on the meaning of this American word. Iranian students seized the personnel of the American embassy in Teheran and held them; the Iranian crowds that headed for the Soviet embassy, in contrast, met with the revolutionary militia. Pakistan contemptuously refused American offers of help: what difference did a few hundred million dollars make? In some countries governments hesitate to accept American protection, because it might exacerbate the fervors of their revolutionaries and because they fear that, compromised by their relations with Washington, they will be abandoned on the day of reckoning.

I am not about to review the Iranian file or the file on the fall of the Shah or the hostages. But the place of Pahlavi Iran in the Americans' world-wide diplomacy has to be remembered. Brezhnev's team and the emirs and kings of the region did not imagine that the imperial Republic would abandon imperial Iran. Incapable of believing Washington's resignation to the fall of the Shah, the men in the Kremlin merely looked on for a long time. Prodigal in contradictory advice to the sick, will-less sovereign, Carter's team in the end imposed exile on him in the illusion that they could save the regime without the man who symbolized it. What can the King of Saudi Arabia and his countless relatives make of this?

All these "moderate" sovereigns wish for discreet American protection. They fear revolutionaries, Palestinians, and fundamentalists, those who look to Mecca as well as those who look to Moscow— even as they all set their eyes on Jerusalem.

The career of events in the Middle East provides a touchstone for the two doctrines on use of armed force in international conflicts, especially in the Third World, that confront each other in the United States and also in Europe. Iran and Afghanistan appear to teach contradictory lessons: for all its sophisticated weapons, the Shah's army showed itself powerless before infatuated crowds and Khomeini's propaganda cassettes. The unarmed prophet won. In Kabul not words but Antonovs in a few hours flew in soldiers and tanks that drove one faction (*Khalq*) out and put the other (*Parcham*) in power. Which of these examples—Teheran or Kabul—should stay with strategists? Both, obviously.

The example of Iran reminds us once more—if we need

reminding—that in our times a change of regime often brings a change in diplomatic orientation. The Ayatollahs curtailed oil production. A fundamentalist or revolutionary government in Riyadh might take similar measures. These facts lead to the belief that the destiny of the West will be decided in the Third World, not by intercontinental missiles, but by diplomacy and economics. To a certain extent, an indisputable teaching; but one-sided and dangerous. Arming a moderate regime shaken by popular reaction to violation of religious prescriptions and to the weakening of tradition may speed its destabilization. In the case of Iran the "modern" generals did not defend their sovereign to the end; they might, however, perhaps have saved him if they had imposed effective martial law when still in control of the situation.

A look at the prospects in the Persian Gulf shows that neither of the two doctrines is sufficient in itself. The Soviets can occupy the Strait of Hormuz without serious resistance if they so decide. They can also gamble on the precariousness of the so-called traditional or moderate regimes, on the potential rebels in this region that number in the hundreds of thousands: Palestinians drawn by the oil riches or Mujahiddin, militant Islamic socialists or Moslems with a Marxist veneer. Need I add that the correlation of forces, even when not employed, weighs on the minds of all the actors, on sovereigns and masses. The American abandonment of the Shah is not forgotten; the contrast between the proximity of Soviet troops and the distance of American troops is not overlooked.

Events in the Middle East have brought back to the fore the economic stakes of the political competition. In the last thirty years even dogmatic Marxists had a hard time finding economic motives for the great decisions made in Washington. The war in Korea, the war in Vietnam, were wars of defense on the edges of the sphere of influence, and the world market, of the United States. Neither of these two divided countries had important raw materials either in their northern or southern halves. To find economic motives, you had to suppose that containment of Soviet expansion aimed, in the final analysis, at the preservation of the integrity of the world market for the multinationals, who opposed Soviet armed conquest or the coming to power of Soviet-inspired parties for the sake of their expansion.

For the first time, in the Middle East, the doctrine of containment does not hide an objective that takes precedence: oil. The United States now imports forty percent of its oil; Japan imports nearly all its oil (which makes up the largest share of its energy [75%]). Oil still makes up about 55% of Europe's total energy consumption. Soviet control of the Persian Gulf would, for all that, not deprive Europe of oil in normal times, in times of peace. But who can underestimate the power of the oil weapon? Added to thousands of tanks and nuclear warheads, the increased capacity for pressure and blackmail at the disposal of the Kremlin would not make the Mecca of Socialism more attractive, but it would make its demands more imperative.

Western Dependence

It might perhaps be useful at this point to touch upon a too-often-neglected subject. It is all well and good to recall the enormous superiority of Western economies over Soviet bloc economies. As long as American power fashioned, not an empire, but at least an imperial area inside of which the world market prospered, we forgot our dependence on raw materials. OPEC reminded us of it. Economists conceive of production as the result of the combination of work and capital. Ecologists think of it as coming from the transformation of nature by human energy, intellectual or material. Without the raw materials to transform, capital becomes sluggish—and human energy by itself is no longer enough to keep up the steel and cement monstrosities where hundreds of millions of men in the industrialized nations live.

The United States depends on other countries for 100% of its cobalt, for 95% of its manganese, for 90% of its nickel, for 100% of its tin, for 100% of its chrome. All the raw materials the United States must import are found in southern Africa, especially in South Africa. By itself South Africa contains 77% of the manganese, 89% of the platinum, 64% of the gold of the Western world. Modern armament cannot do without raw materials like chrome, platinum, nickel, cobalt, titanium. The region where these metals that might be called strategic lie is another hot point in the world today. Any political upheaval in Zaire (cobalt), in South Africa (chrome, platinum, diamonds, titanium), would mortgage the West's supply of these strategic materials.

Why Do Present Crises Divide the Western Partners?

Regardless of whether it betrays a design to expand to the south, testifies to growing Soviet confidence in their power, or comes of a faulty diplomatic move, the invasion of Afghanistan provoked an international crisis and dissension in each camp. Rumania expressed reservations about the Soviet operation; the Polish Prime Minister intimated his unhappiness. In the West the Europeans showed their desire for autonomy in many ways—and not without criticizing Washington's actions.

Let's put aside the simplistic comments of some of the American press: the voluntary Finlandization of Europe. Let us also forget about the equally simplistic observations of some Europeans: the entrance of Soviet troops into Afghanistan represented a North-South, not an East-West conflict; we, we Europeans are not about to sacrifice the advantages of *détente* for the sake of a country already in the Soviet sphere of influence, when Washington, with hardly any protest, accepted the *coup d'état* of April 1978 that eliminated Daud, who for his part had set aside without bloodshed the King, his cousin. Europeans who retain some planetary sense know as well as Americans that

everything that occurs in Afghanistan interests the Persian Gulf and, thereby, the independence of Europe.

The crucial question is: Why do the present crises—in Iran, in Afghanistan, concerning Palestine—divide the Atlantic allies instead of tending to unify them like the crises in the past—Korea, Berlin, and Cuba? Yesterday the allies backed each other in the face of danger, today they bicker.

Some answers come to mind of their own accord. The Europeans have regained their rank and station in the world economy. The United States is still first, but without the same margin of superiority. Europe's dependence on the United States has now turned into interdependence. The American authorities who are in charge of the still irreplaceable international currency of the dollar must have the cooperation of the central banks, especially of the bank of the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, Europeans feel more dependent on the oil-producers. Already, during the Yom Kippur war, Europe refused the American air force the use of its airports. Only Salazar's Portugal facilitated the airlift that saved Israel. Europe feared that joining the United States, the protector of Israel, would compromise it before the oil governments. At the risk of further weakening the only Arab or at least Moslem leader who had thrown in his destiny with the West, Europe did not approve the Camp David accords. By mutual consent on either side of the Atlantic there was relatively little discussion of Europe's attitude during the Yom Kippur war. Europe's neutrality toward the Camp David agreements continues her attitude of 1973.

Circumstances made neutrality or indifference impossible in the instance of Afghanistan. With the Arab states for once blaming the Soviet Union instead of the United States, with the President of the United States, in words at least, siding with his advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and taking his distance from his Secretary of State, the Europeans had to condemn the *coup* in Kabul. Even more, they were joyous at the resurgence of American will. They willingly would have endorsed the sensational proposition of *The Economist*: the Soviets did not hesitate to invade Afghanistan because the United States had let its guard down and had, since the war in Vietnam, passively put up with Soviet-Cuban activities in Africa. Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen had not been enough to provoke the reflex of containment. In the first year of his mandate President Carter used to congratulate himself on his country's readiness to rid itself of its irrational fear of communism; he stopped taking a country's turn to communism for an American defeat. The same Carter worried the allies more than he reassured them when he declared that he had learned more about the Soviet Union in a few days than in the three preceding years. A conversion in view of the elections or for good?

After several days' hesitation, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing took on the firm language of the "unacceptable". At the same time he tried to take advantage of French diplomacy's independence from Washington. He turned down a dinner *à trois* in Bonn because this "informal" meeting had been announced ahead of time. On his own initiative or in response to a Soviet initiative through the Polish Prime Minister, he met with Leonid Brezhnev. Above all, he was anxious to keep diplomatic contact with Moscow at a moment when the current no longer passed between Moscow and Washington.

The real novelty came from Helmut Schmidt, or perhaps one should say, from the Federal Republic of Germany. The *Ostpolitik* Willy Brandt initiated now unfolds its unforeseen and at the same time logical consequences. Before the conclusion of the treaties with the other Germany, the managers of East Germany had launched the password *Abgrenzung*—in other words, the solidification of moral and political borders to compensate for the opening of the actual frontiers to visitors from the West. *Abgrenzung* seems to me to have enjoyed indifferent success at best.

The Germans on either side of the line that divides them have never been closer because of commercial exchanges, television, and personal encounters. The word *Ostpolitik* recalls the expression, *Ostorientierung*, I heard so often a half-century ago. A country in the middle, Germany looks either to the East or the West for a partner, for an ally to forestall encirclement. In 1931 and in 1932 at the Student Center in Berlin, which hummed with political discussion, some looked to the East, and, thereby, to the Soviet Union; others toward the West and the Western democracies. Both sides emphasized their German identity in face of the Tsarist knout or Bolshevik despotism on one side and the rationalism of the Western democracies on the other. Helmut Schmidt would not indulge in such rhetoric or cultural hermeneutics today. He counts himself—and the Federal Republic of Germany—unhesitatingly among the Western or pluralistic democracies. In spite of the sincerity of its *Westorientierung*, the government in Bonn, however, fears Moscow's bad temper as much as Washington's. The withdrawal of American troops? The Germans, the Europeans already show too much docility in the face of Soviet prohibitions and commands. The withdrawal of the American troops in Europe would turn docility into servility. Europeans know that the protection they owe America serves the interest, rightly conceived, both of protectors and protected.

The three hundred thousand Americans in Western Europe constitute at least an unreckonable risk for the Soviet Union in the event that she envisages military aggression. For his part, Kissinger could say at Brussels—he would have done better to keep his silence—that no President of the United States would unleash strategic missiles against Soviet cities in the certainty that American cities would suffer the same lot within an hour. The truth is that no one can say with certainty what the President of the United States would do in reply to a partial or total Soviet attack against the European members of the alliance.

This goes for the men in the Kremlin, too. This uncertainty has now become the normal, essential mode of deterrence between the superpowers. The Americans cannot, and do not desire to, take away this residual deterrence from their allies, even if they are ungrateful. And the allies for their part do all they can to supplement it with the *Ostpolitik*.

The *Ostpolitik* makes up the specifically national component in Bonn's diplomacy. As long as the Federal Republic of Germany clung to the Hallstein doctrine, she gave herself no room for maneuver and condemned herself to the role of model ally of the United States. Because she did not recognize the consequences of the War—the "Polandization" of the territories east of the Oder-Neisse and the formation of the German Democratic Republic—she remained the out-post of the Atlantic army. She was on the front line. She dedicated herself to economic well-being and to the unity of Europe (Europe west of the line of demarcation). An economic giant and a political dwarf—as someone put it. The economic colossus in the end lent political power to the so-called dwarf: the *Ostpolitik* showed her, not a field for immediate action, but prospects on the future.

The *Ostpolitik* has inherent limitations, to be sure. The workers' party, which rules the GDR and which will not submit its authority to the hazard of free elections, confounds its own and the Soviet Union's destiny. With its military and civilian technicians the GDR does her share in helping Sovietism to expand in Africa and the Americas. I do not think Schmidt harbors any illusions about "peace through commerce" crusades. Nor does he count on the mutuality of interests of the two countries on either side of the political and ideological dividing line. Without the alliance with Washington, cordial relations with Moscow would turn dangerous. But alliance with Washington has its perils when relations between Washington and Moscow grow tense.

A "cynical" analysis could go further in this direction. *Let us look at western Europe's situation without preconceived judgement: to the east the largest army in the world, to the south and farther east the Arab countries who for at least ten years have opened and closed the oil tap. Neither the Israelis nor the Americans have oil to sell. The United States still has enough military might to make the Soviets think; it hardly has any means left to pressure its allies. It can no longer dictate its decisions to them. It must come to an understanding with them. The Americans are not yet fully conscious of their decline.*

American Decline?

Do the Europeans shrink from American leadership because they have come to have confidence in themselves or because the power of the Soviet Union frightens them? Or is there a third reason that subsumes the other two: the decline of America?

Let's take a brief look at personal relations between Schmidt's team and Carter's. The Chancellor has not forgotten the episode of the neutron bomb. He will not forget the undiplomatic letter he received from Washington just before his trip to Moscow. . . The left wing of the Social Democratic Party and an important segment of public opinion and of the intelligentsia turn away from the United States either because the United States has disappointed them or for other reasons. They prefer *détente* to confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Many top German executives, in and out of government, are severely critical of the fiscal and economic management for which, in varying degrees, all Presidents since Johnson have been responsible. In this field they no longer accept Washington's leadership, even though the United States, because of its currency and importance, inevitably exercises considerable influence on all participants in the world market. For my part, the inflation, the fall in the growth of productivity, the inability of Nixon, Ford, and Carter to conceive and carry out an energy policy impress and disturb me less than the disappearance of a strategic doctrine, and of leadership capable of overcoming the chaos of pressure groups and setting a goal for the American Republic.

The East Coast establishment, which had supported the foreign policy of the United States from 1947 to 1965—from Truman's awakening to the frustrations of an endless war—split irremediably after defeat in Vietnam and Watergate. To put it bluntly, it committed suicide. Since 1975 the United States has had neither a policy nor a president. Remember John F. Kennedy's inaugural address. To preserve liberty the Republic would shoulder all burdens and refuse no sacrifice. Turn in contrast to the speeches of Teddy, the last of that illustrious, tragic dynasty. In domestic affairs liberal, in the American sense, he belongs to that group of senators who plead for reductions in the military budget and regularly vote against interventions abroad. The alliance that liberalism, the left, made in the past with the unions to encourage resistance to the Soviet Union is now all undone. The liberals—many of them at least—look down with contempt on the anti-communist obsession that inspired the American strategy of containment.

The conversion of George F. Kennan, although it occurred before the Vietnam war, is symbolic. The man who launched the very conception of containment, who opened the eyes of a President of the United States who knew nothing or next to nothing of Bolshevism, this man repudiates himself today, is ashamed of his prophetic writings, and sees one place alone, Berlin, where American interests directly oppose Soviet interests. As for the rest of the world, whether it be Mozambique or Angola, how do Soviet actions damage the security of the United States? Kennan does not suggest outright that the leaders of the Republic give up their interest in regions outside of Western Europe and Japan, its natural allies. He, however, no longer finds it necessary to contain the Soviet Union's expansionist whims more or less everywhere because he

no longer apparently believes in the inherent characteristics of the Soviet Union.

Containment is admittedly more an all-purpose word than a doctrine. This word, however, once recalled both the world-wide dimension of Soviet ambitions and, thereby, of Soviet-American rivalry, and the uniqueness of the regime in Moscow. This regime is not a banal despotism, oriental or not, but an ideocracy, animated and run by a party which, whether it believes or not, will not think its mission complete until its truth has reached the ends of the universe. Principles of American diplomacy until the disaster in Vietnam, these two corollaries of the word "containment" are today questioned or abandoned entirely.

The maturity and wisdom the Carter administration boasted of in its beginnings showed themselves in the abandonment of just these principles: a conquest of Sovietism in some far-off country of Africa no longer provoked "irrational fear," in the United States. Thanks to this lack of "fear" events in Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen did not disturb the serenity of the liberals come to maturity—including a part of Carter's team. Washington tolerated the use of Cuban troops in Africa. More than once Zbigniew Brzezinski evoked "the arc of crisis" around the Horn of Africa. The United States, however, only reacted unmistakably to the news of hostilities on the frontier between South and North Yemen—hostilities this time in the immediate vicinity of Saudi Arabia.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not arguing for a return to containment—if that doctrine was ever carried out in the sense of resistance at any price, anywhere, to advances of the Soviet Union or communism. The distinction between the Soviet Union and communism brings out the major difficulty: every victory of a Marxist-Leninist party does not imply a success for the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet schism makes it more difficult to identify the enemy. Is it the Soviet Union, progressivism, or communism? To some extent this ambiguity was responsible for the Vietnam war's, and containment's, fall into disrepute.

In Vietnam, on account of something like a conditioned reflex of containment, the Americans supported the republic in the south against the Marxist republic in the north. Whose imperialism were they fighting? Moscow's? Peking's? Hanoi's? We know the answer today. At different times the advisors singled out and announced different enemies. First Moscow. Then, the revolutionary romanticism of the Maoists. Nixon and Kissinger, who were resuming contact with Peking and sought accomodation with Moscow, blamed the North Vietnamese themselves—a version nearer the truth, although the Soviet Union supplied Hanoi with modern arms until the end. The equivocality of the cause, the brutality of the means employed by the American air force in questionable combat, the apparent impossibility of victory, the disproportion between what was at stake and the cost, in the end, roused public opinion and discredited the idea of containment. In 1975, Congress forbade a President weakened by Watergate to "punish" flagrant breaches of the Paris agreements. The liberals who bore some of the responsibility for the original American intervention beat Nixon's (whom they hated) and Kissinger's breasts with their *mea culpas*. After the fact and in the light of the events that followed, no one doubts that intervention was a political mistake. Was it a moral error? In its defense of South Vietnam the United States defended the lesser evil. The dominoes continue to fall.

James Carter wanted to learn one of the valid lessons of Vietnam: he wanted to rid himself of the compulsive imperatives of containment. This break meant two things: regimes, no matter how hateful, would no longer be supported simply because of fear of communism; everything possible would be done to avoid sending American troops to the aid of governments in jeopardy.

The Americans are doing all they can to apply this lesson to Central America and the Carribean. Washington had entertained cordial relations with the petty tyrannies (it had not made) in the little countries of this region. The revolutionaries in Nicaragua did not distinguish in their hatred between Somoza and his family and their protectors in Washington. After the victory of the *Sandinistas*, who were close to the *fidelistas*, Congress desired to make the respect of human rights a condition of a loan of seventy-five million dollars. The *Sandinistas* had it easy: the senators had never shown such fastidiousness in the respect of human rights in Somoza's time. In El Salvador the Americans support a *junta* of civilians and military men that at its beginning promised a third way between President Romero, creature of the big landowners, and Castroist and Maoist revolutionaries. Besieged on both sides by the *fidelistas* and by the extreme right, abandoned by a number of Christian Democrats, the *junta*, despite its announcement of land reform, pursues repression. It does not appear capable of forestalling civil war.

Successful in Korea, military containment led to disaster in Vietnam. In Latin America, especially in Central America, the pursuit of systematic containment—the indiscriminate support of anti-Communist regimes—ends in either explosions or in Castroist regimes. In Africa, American passivity allows free play to Cuban operations, whose persistence makes for lasting influence. From Ethiopia to the frontier of Pakistan crises intertwine without, however, losing their distinction. In the coming years, these crises will continue beyond present preoccupations (the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan,. . . the impasse in Israeli-Egyptian negotiations).

The complexity of the present career of events would make a mockery of the slogan: return to containment. The United States no longer holds sway over the interstate system or the world market. The revolt against the West of the countries that produce oil and other raw materials helps Soviet undertakings—but Moscow neither instigates nor manipulates it. A return to systematic containment in South America would not be better than passivity in the face of Soviet-Cuban expansion in Africa. East-West

rivalry now unfolds more and more to the south—and crises are not always in favor of the camp with the most arms....

...Reagan with good advisers may surprise even his supporters.... But the question goes beyond individuals....The American people have always been more concerned with their own affairs than with the world abroad. They had immense territory at their disposal and apparently unlimited resources. Politics did not attract the best. Without a strong state, with a limited central authority subject to pressure groups, society prospered. The force of circumstances drove the United States towards an imperial role. For barely a quarter century it dominated the world. Even in that short period the Soviet Union, inferior in every respect, had no trouble maintaining her positions. The United States should no longer aspire to an out-of-the-ordinary predominance that could not in any case have lasted. It must, however, reestablish the balance, not so much of power, but of will. The Soviet Union holds two cards: its armed might and the inclination toward Sovietism of some revolutionaries in the Third World. The United States holds others. But neither the gross national product nor the standard of living can match tanks and missiles.

The Crucial Question: the True Character of the Soviet Union?

The reader will probably judge this analysis too pessimistic. I agree. A commanding general knows the weakness of his own soldiers better than the weaknesses of his enemy, as Clausewitz wrote. In the eighties, according to all experts, the Soviet Union's economic difficulties will increase. Economic growth in the Soviet Union has always depended on capital accumulation and expansion of the work-force. There is, however, less and less surplus labor at the disposal of Soviet planners—and centralized management hardly allows for the possibility of increases in the intensity of work, in productivity. The diplomacy of Brezhnev's team has brought China and Japan, and China and the United States, closer. At the moment Japan only dedicates one percent of its gross national product to defense. In equipment the army of the People's Republic of China lags twenty years behind the Soviet army. With its invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union alienated many Moslem countries. She frightens many, but the fear she occasions today will disappear tomorrow if faced again with an America aware of itself and resolute.

...Massive swift rearmament would require unpopular measures from any President. There are no available surpluses in the budget or in industry. An additional deficit in the budget would increase inflationary pressures. The acceleration of the production of armaments, whether of tanks, airplanes, or missiles, would mean the transfer of resources, an extraordinary effort, an end to "business as usual".

Is rearmament a proper response to the challenge? On this question perhaps more than on any other no unanimity prevails in the United States. On the basis of the wrong lesson learned from Vietnam, the majority of liberals cling to the latest fashionable theory, which holds that arms are useless in the diplomatic conflicts of our time. According to this theory, the stability or instability of the states in the region will decide the destiny of the Persian gulf—more than tanks and planes delivered to local princes or installed on the spot by the United States. The theory holds that sophisticated arms did more to undo Pahlavi Iran than to save it. Afghanistan underlines the limits of these otherwise valid objections. Neither rebels nor princes are indifferent to the assumed relation of forces between the two superpowers.

The crucial question, however, lies beyond these controversies that concern means rather than principles: What Soviet Union are we dealing with? A great power, impatient for recognition as such, desirous of solving its economic problems, ready to seize upon any chance for success but without revolutionary passion and unlimited ambitions? Or an ideocratic despotism superior only in armaments, indifferent to the low standard of living of its population, animated always by the same view of the world, always dedicated to the same end: the spread of its ideological truth throughout the entire world? Nobody can choose between these two interpretations on the strength of an irrefutable demonstration. In 1936 no one could prove that Hitler would go to war. It was the same in 1938: neither those for nor those against Munich could prove their thesis. In 1936 and 1938, those who did not take Hitler at his word and believe in his desire for peace did not lack for arguments. The situation today is at once different and the same. The men in the Kremlin loudly proclaim that they are still Marxist-Leninists; that *détente* does not lessen the ideological conflict; that the capitalist West is destined to disappear with or without a last battle. The West of the eighties has this in common with the thirties: a half century ago people refused to take *Mein Kampf* seriously; today they do not pay attention to the language the oligarchs in Moscow use in addressing their people and their militants. There is, however, this difference today: Hitler wanted war; the Soviets want to enjoy its fruits without fighting.

We are not living the spring of 1914 or the thirties. In 1914 those who ruled unleashed an infernal diplomatic machine that they proved incapable of, in fact were not equally interested in, stopping before it exploded. During the thirties, the West, first France and then Great Britain, lost their cards and their arms. With or without summit meetings those responsible for governments today keep constantly in touch. In contrast to the men of 1914, they know what a great war would mean. Because of his conviction that he was the only man capable of conducting it, Hitler preferred to have the war break out when he was fifty years old and at the height of his powers. Today, Brezhnev and his comrades conceive of themselves as militants in a historical movement that existed before them and will outlive them. I am not even sure that they

intend to take advantage of "the window of opportunity"—at the suggestion of commentators in the West. For the moment, as is their practice, they are doing all they can to distract the attention of the world from Afghanistan in order to win definitive recognition and acceptance of the unacceptable.

Whether they take advantage or not of the coming years (Will the military balance have sensibly improved in four or five years?), they will continue their molelike activity. They will manipulate revolts against pro-Western regimes to their advantage; they will even possibly instigate these revolts when circumstances are favorable; they will buy Western technologies on credit; they will make advances at one moment to the United States, at another to Europe, in order to separate them; they will multiply their bases in the entire world; they will prepare for the war they hope to avoid—and to survive.

The Western world has neither a common strategy nor a firm will to oppose to this armed ideocracy. Ever since Vietnam and Watergate the American Republic has appeared torn between a bad conscience and the fanciful wish to pull itself together again. Without a governing class it is driven at one moment to undertake a new crusade (human rights) at another to retire from an incomprehensible universe. As for the Europeans, who are beginning to speak with one voice, do they profess their rewon self-confidence? Do they spell out their independence from the Soviet Union or the United States?

I did not give this article its title, "Soviet Hegemonism: Year 1" without hesitation. I had thought of another title inspired by Solzhenitsyn's warnings: "Western Blindness".

A friend of mine reported a remark he heard from a Soviet economist who, although fully aware of the defects in his country's economy, proudly declared: "We would be masters of the world if it were not for the Chinese." Would the West have triumphed over Hitler without Stalin? Do democracies always have to count on a brother of their enemy who hates his brother?

Translated by Nina Ferrero and Leo Raditsa

Thucydides and Perikles

Christopher Bruell

The three speeches of Perikles are a good place to begin one's study of Thucydides because Perikles is —in many respects—the most impressive human being and the most outstanding statesman in Thucydides' book. In many respects. . . not in every respect: Perikles is not, in Thucydides' view, simply admirable. In the following remarks, I will try to give an introduction to Thucydides' work as a whole by speaking of the place in that work held by Perikles and his speeches, of some differences which Thucydides points out between his perspective and that of Perikles, and of the significance of these differences for Thucydides' understanding of his theme.

Thucydides' theme is in the first place the war fought between the two leading Greek cities, Athens and Sparta, and their respective allies—the cities of the Athenian empire, and the Peloponnesians and their allies outside of the Peloponnesian peninsula. The war lasted for twenty-seven years and ended with the unconditional defeat of Athens and the dismantling of the Athenian empire. The Periklean speeches were speeches to the Athenians by a great leader of Athens—a man who in both influence and capacity was unrivalled among the Athenians of his time (I 139.4). What were his qualities of leadership? Perikles himself says that he was able not only to figure out what was needed, but to explain his thought to others, that he was a lover of his city and was above being influenced by bribes. For, as he explains, a knower who cannot teach clearly, is no better than one who lacks understanding; one who has both of these abilities but is hostile to the city, is unlikely to declare what is in her interests; while even one who is also loyal to the city but is overcome by his desire for money, would sell everything for this one thing alone (II 60.5-6). Thucydides' narrative confirms and expands on Perikles' self-assessment by incidents such as the following. When the Spartans and their allies first invaded the countryside of Athens, Perikles was afraid that the Spartan king, who happened to be his friend, might spare his estates—either out of friendship or, on the instruction of the Spartan authorities, to damage Perikles' standing with the Athenian people. Perikles therefore announced to the Athenian assembly in advance, that if the enemy did not ravage his estates together with those of the other Athenians, he would turn his estates over to the public to be public property, so that suspicion against him would not arise on their account (II 13.1). This incident not only tends to give a partial confirmation to what Perikles says of himself; it also helps to show how he was able to make his outstanding qualities—in this case his honesty and loyalty—*visible* to the Athenian people (cf. II 65.8). As a result of this, they trusted him as they trusted no other leader who appears in the book, though others may have been equally deserving of their trust. Similarly, Perikles may not have been the wisest Athenian leader known to Thucydides, but his wisdom was most visible to the Athenians—who, therefore, respected it and deferred to it to an extraordinary degree (I 145, II 14 and 65.2-4). As a result, Perikles' leadership was unusually free from the necessity to flatter or please the people to their detriment, from the necessity to give in to their unwise wishes or whims. Thucydides goes so far as to say that Athens was in Perikles' time a democracy in name, but in fact or deed the rule of the first man (II 65.8-9).

Perikles' speeches—including one that is merely summarized but not quoted by Thucydides (II 13)—all concern the war, either directly or indirectly. The first urges a policy of no compromise with the Spartans, or no yielding to the Spartan demands—a policy which made the war, likely in any case, inevitable. It also discusses Athenian resources for the war and addresses the question of the strategy that Athens ought to follow to survive or win the war. Resources and strategy are also the themes of the second speech (the one summarized). The funeral speech, like the others, speaks with approval of the imperial course which brought Athens to the brink of war; and the last speech defends the decision to go to war and urges perseverance in the chosen course. Perikles was the leader of what we can call the war party in Athens. Insofar then as he was partially responsible for the coming of the war, and the war ended in complete Athenian defeat, he bears some responsibility for that defeat, for the fall of Athens.

Thucydides, however, provides a ready defense of Perikles against this charge. He shows that the Athenian defeat was brought about by the Athenians' abandoning Perikles' war policy or strategy after his death (Perikles died two and one half years after the war began). Perikles had advised the Athenians not to seek to add to their empire during the war and not to fight the Peloponnesians—who were superior to them in numbers—on land in defense of their homes and farms. These were to be

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abandoned to the ravages of their enemies, while the Athenians withdrew into the city to guard its walls and to maintain, through their fleet, their grip on their empire and the sea. All that Athens needed to survive could be brought into the city from her overseas possessions by sea; but the subject cities could not be expected to remain quiet if the Athenians, through being defeated in a land battle, became so reduced in numbers as to be unable to suppress revolts (I 143.4–144.1, II 13.2–3). Some years after Perikles' death, with the war against the Spartans not yet completely extinguished, the Athenians decided, contrary to Perikles' advice, to try to conquer Sicily. This decision grew out of a political situation in Athens that had undergone a considerable deterioration since Perikles' death. The decline in the quality of Athenian political life, which brought about the abandonment of Perikles' policy, also made the consequences of abandonment worse than they would otherwise have been: not only did Athens attempt to conquer Sicily—she bungled the attempt. As a result, Athens suffered a defeat of such magnitude that her loss of the larger war became almost inevitable. A further deterioration in her domestic political situation—the overthrow of the democracy and the outbreak of civil war—brought her still closer to the end (II 65).

Perikles must be absolved then of responsibility for Athens' fall, because it was only with the abandonment of his policy, an abandonment brought on by the political deterioration of post-Periklean Athens, that the fall came. But Perikles' policy itself was not without costs for Athens—sound as it may have been with respect to the war (II 65.6). It required that Athenians give up, perhaps for a very long time (I 141.5), their country homes and farms, as well as their ancestral shrines or temples, to the ravages of the enemy. For most of the Athenians, who were rural people, this was nothing less than the giving up of their traditional way of life. Perikles' policy may have been militarily sound; it may have enabled an Athens wise and sober enough to stick by it to win the war; but it brought about a grave transformation of Athenian life (II 14–17). In this, and perhaps other ways, Perikles may have unwittingly contributed to the political decline which, in the end, undid his work.

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With this much as background regarding the place which Perikles and his speeches have in Thucydides' work, let me turn to the differences which Thucydides points to between his own perspective and that of Perikles, differences which Perikles' speeches help to bring to light. Both Perikles and Thucydides have to face the question of what brought on the war, or who was to blame for it. Perikles' answer is contained in his first speech. The answer is based on a thirty-year peace treaty between Athens and Sparta and the Spartan allies which still had fourteen years to run when the Peloponnesian war broke out (II 2.1; cf. I 115.1). This treaty called for disputes between the parties to it to be submitted to arbitration. Yet when they began to make complaints to the Athenians before the war, and to make demands on the Athenians, the Spartans did not ask for arbitration, nor did they accept it when the Athenians offered it. This showed, according to Perikles, that the Spartans were plotting against the Athenians, intending that their complaints be settled by war rather than words (I 140.2). Nor did the demands which the Spartans were making have any basis in the treaty (144.2). Perikles therefore characterized the response which he persuaded the Athenians to give to those demands as both just and at the same time befitting the dignity of the city: the Athenians were willing to offer arbitration, as the treaty required; they would not start the war; but once it was begun against them, they would defend themselves (144.2). In short, according to Perikles, the Spartans were to blame for bringing on the war: they were the aggressors, acting in contravention of a treaty still in force.

Perikles' position derives support from the fact that the first blow in the war was indeed struck by the Spartan side. Before war had been declared, the Spartan ally Thebes launched a sneak attack on the Athenian ally Plataea, in clear violation of the treaty. It is also noteworthy that this view of the question of responsibility for what came to be called the first war was later, in large part, tacitly accepted by the Spartans themselves. Even before the war, a Spartan king had ventured the opinion that it was not lawful to proceed militarily against those who were offering arbitration, and he had opposed the Spartan decision to go to war partly for this reason (I 85.2). He had been outvoted; but when the first war began to go badly for the Spartans, they in turn began to feel that the illegality was more on their side and that, accordingly, their bad luck was only what was to be expected. Afterwards, when the first war had been brought to an end and a peace treaty concluded, there was a reversal of this situation: it was the Athenians who refused the arbitration called for by the new treaty and who first committed an open breach of it. Accordingly, the Spartans turned eagerly to the renewal of the war (VII 18.2–3; cf. IV 20.2.).

Still, this Spartan-Periklean view of the responsibility for the coming of the war is not Thucydides' view. According to Thucydides, the truest cause or pretext for the war, though the one least mentioned, was that the Athenians, by becoming great (that is, by acquiring their great empire) and frightening the Spartans, *compelled* them to go to war (I 23.6, 88, 118.2). According to Thucydides, then, the Spartans cannot be blamed for starting the war because the Athenians compelled them to start it. Perikles' treatment of the issue was too narrow, too legalistic: the Spartans acted out of legitimate self-defense. The fault for the war lies with the Athenians. It lies with the Athenians for acquiring their empire, or for expanding it to the point that it encroached on areas of legitimate Spartan concern. It lies with the Athenians, that is, unless there is some reason why the Athenians cannot be blamed

for acquiring or expanding their empire. In order to settle the question of whether the Athenians can be blamed for the war, it thus becomes necessary to look into the question of the justice of Athenian imperialism. Here then is a second question on which we can compare the views of Perikles and Thucydides.

Perikles barely alludes to this question. In his last speech, he says that the Athenians now hold their empire as a tyranny, which it "*seems* unjust" to have taken but is dangerous to let go (II 63.2). So far as I know, this is the only statement of Perikles in Thucydides, which addresses itself to the question of the justice of Athenian imperialism—if even this statement can be said to do that. For Perikles apparently sidesteps the issue here. He does not openly admit that the acquisition of empire was unjust; nor does he argue that it was not unjust. (There is a connection between Perikles' sidestepping of this issue and his position on the question of who is to blame for the war. If he had not given the war question such a narrow or legalistic treatment, his consideration of that question alone—to say nothing of other reasons—would have forced him, as it forces Thucydides, to look more deeply into the question of the justice of Athenian imperialism.)

Thucydides examines the question of the justice of Athenian imperialism at length. The issue is prominently raised in the speeches of many characters other than Perikles, and it was Thucydides himself who chose which speeches to report, arranged their order of appearance, and was responsible, in the final analysis, even for their composition (I 22.1); moreover, some of the characters whose speeches are of interest here, are almost surely his inventions (Diodotos, the Athenian ambassadors at Melos, Euphemos). In addition, Thucydides' narrative is designed and arranged to cast further light on the issues raised and explored in the speeches. For example, after reporting what some Athenians had said in Sparta about the acquisition and expansion of the empire, and immediately after stating for the second time that the fear aroused by the enormous Athenian expansion was what led the Spartans to go to war, Thucydides, in a long digression (I 97.2), gives his own account of Athenian growth (I 89–118). Through both the speeches and the narrative, then, Thucydides indicates the seriousness with which he—as opposed to Perikles—takes the question of the *justice* of Athenian imperialism, and therewith of justice simply. If we wish to follow Thucydides' thought, we must follow his treatment of this question.

Is there some reason why the Athenians cannot be blamed for acquiring or expanding their empire? The Athenians who speak in Sparta before the war trace the background of Athenian growth. The great war prior to the Peloponnesian war was the Persian war, in which two Persian invasions of Greece had been repelled. The outstanding role in that war had been played by the Athenians, although Sparta, as the leading Greek power, held the leadership of the alliance of Greek cities. After the invasions had been repelled, however, the Spartans withdrew from active involvement in the alliance, while the Athenians were asked by the majority of the allies to take over the leadership. The Athenians in Sparta refrain out of tact from mentioning that the Spartans withdrew after dissatisfaction with the behavior of the Spartan commander had arisen among the allies and turned them toward Athens (I 73.2–75.2; cf. 94–96.1). The question of the justice of Athenian imperialism is largely the question of how Athens' voluntarily held leadership came to be transformed into what Perikles could describe as a tyranny over the formerly allied, and now subject cities (75.3; cf. 97.1).

According to the Athenians in Sparta, the Athenians were *compelled* to transform the alliance into an empire, their leadership by consent into leadership through compulsion. That is, they can be excused for the same reason that Thucydides excused the Spartans for starting the war. But what compulsion acted upon the Athenians? According to the startling assertion of the Athenians in Sparta, the compelling forces were fear, then honor, and in the end benefit (I 75.3, 76.2). If we confine ourselves for the moment to the question of fear, it is not hard to see that the Athenian claim has some basis. For as Thucydides indicates in his own treatment of the period between the two wars, the spectacular Greek victories which had turned back the Persian invasions had not put an end to the Persian threat: there might be more invasions in the future (cf. I 93.7 with 138.3). Athens, whose sufferings in the war had been unsurpassed (cf. I 74.2), might be expected to be especially worried by this prospect. The clearest way to safety was to hold together the Greek alliance. But as we know from more recent experience, in the absence of immediate obvious danger, few countries are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to maintain their military preparedness or to fulfill their obligations to their allies. So it was with the alliance led by Athens: the allies chafed under the strict Athenian leadership, as the Athenians insisted that they meet their obligations—whether in the form of money, ships, or service—to the full; the dissatisfaction of the allies led to revolts; and the Athenians, putting them down, led the cities no longer as their equals but as subjects (I 96–99). It is difficult to condemn the Athenians for this because it is difficult to know whether any other course would have been compatible with Athenian safety. Surely the decisive defeat of the Persians in Asia, a defeat which may have effectively ended for a time the threat from Persia, occurred, as Thucydides emphasizes, *after* the transformation from alliance to empire had taken place (I 100.1; cf. 93.7). And if the Persian threat ceased then to be worthy of consideration, and with it the original need for imperial rule, it may have become dangerous, by that time, for the Athenians to relinquish a rule that was already widely resented (cf. I 75.4).

To this extent then, there is substantiation, even in Thucydides' digression on Athenian growth, for the Athenian claim that they were *compelled*, compelled by fear, to acquire their empire. But as one reads through the digres-

sion as a whole, one finds it increasingly difficult to account for the remarkable range and extent of Athenian expansionist activity, activity which led them to attempt even the conquest of Egypt (I 104, 109–10), by recourse to a concern for the city's safety alone, however thoroughly pursued (cf. however Alcibiades' comment in VI 18.6–7). We should not forget in this connection that expansion itself has risks; that growth on one side may invite growth on another; and that Athenian expansion in particular brought on the war through which Athens lost all. On the other hand, it is far from clear that an Athenian policy of expansion inspired solely by concern for the city's safety, and limited to what could reasonably be expected to contribute to such safety, would have been sufficiently frightening to the Spartans to force them to go to war: they were generally quite slow to take such a step (I 118.2). It is true that as early as the revolt of the Thasians, we find the Spartans secretly promising to invade Attica to assist an ally seeking to leave the Athenian alliance (I 101.2); but this promise was given in the aftermath of the decisive defeat of the Persians mentioned above, a defeat which could have seemed to have ended the threat from Persia. That is, it was given only after continued Athenian imperialism ceased to be clearly authorized by that threat; and in any case, if only because Sparta was diverted by an earthquake accompanied by revolution, the Spartan promise remained unfulfilled. In Thudydides' view, it was the Athenian reaction to a related incident, a reaction culminating in *expansion* of the empire at the expense of Sparta and her allies, rather than the action of putting down the Thasians (that is, of maintaining the empire already acquired), that first inspired the intense hatred of Athens in Sparta's allies which eventually forced Sparta herself to a determined effort to bring Athens down (I 101.3, 102.3–103.4; cf., especially with 101.2, 118.2).

But the Athenians in Sparta do not even claim that it was fear alone that compelled Athenian expansion. To the extent that it was not compelled by fear, it was compelled, they claim, by honor and benefit—that is, by the Athenian longing for these things. Can such longings act with the force of compulsion? Can we admit such a thing without at the same time admitting that many more crimes than just those committed by the Athenians are excusable (or are not crimes at all)?

Thucydides' answer to this somewhat surprising question—which we are forced by the Athenians to raise—is difficult. I think the heart of it is conveyed in the Melian dialogue. The Athenians had forbidden the Melians to raise considerations of justice: the Athenians will not be influenced by such considerations which, in the circumstances (the vast difference in power between the two sides) are, according to the Athenians, quite out of place (V 89). The Melians refuse in effect to accept the separation of utility or advantage from right which they understand the Athenians to have insisted upon, for they take justice to be a common good (V 90). This, however, opens the way to the Athenians to demonstrate that *their* good consists now in the subjugation of the Melians (V 91–99), to demonstrate that there was no good common to the Athenians and Melians at this time, unless one considers that a Melian surrender on moderate terms would have been good for both parties (V 91.2 and 111.4). More generally, by pointing to our insistence that justice be (a common) good, the Melians point to the fact of the primacy of our concern with the good, a fact which comes to light even and precisely in the midst of any consideration of justice, provided that it goes far enough. But this means that the good compels us to its pursuit, at least to the extent that it remains always our most fundamental concern. And if this is so, what *appears* to us good—even if it is not truly good—may reasonably be held by us to compel us, and thus compel us in fact. It appeared to the Athenians that what was best for them was rule over all the Greeks (at the minimum: II 62.1–2; cf. 41.4 and VI 15.2). For, as Perikles put it in his last speech, "to be hated and burdensome in the present belongs to all who think fit to rule over others; but whoever accepts envy for the sake of very great things deliberates correctly: hatred does not hold out for long, but the brilliance of the moment is left behind even into the future as ever-remembered fame" (II 64.5). We can understand from this why one of the best and most generous of Athens' opponents, even while resisting the Athenians with all his strength, refused to blame them for their ambition (IV 61.5).

But is the Athenian ambition as free from reasonable criticism as this seems to indicate? Having sketched the argument we have sketched, we are obliged to add that it is important that the good be correctly understood (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1325a34–b3). Did the Athenians correctly understand what was good for them? If, as we have argued, the Athenians suffered severely from their all but limitless imperialism, the question becomes whether the glory or fame to which it led was worth the price. That such glory or fame is indeed worth the price was somehow *felt* by Perikles and, so far as one can judge from Thucydides, by almost all Athenians of quality. But we are obliged to accept their experience as authoritative with respect to the human good only if it is a genuine experience, that is, only if it is based on a clear view of themselves and of the object of their longing. Did the Athenians in question possess such a view?

The glory for which they long and which they pursue by their all but limitless imperialism is understood by them as something noble (II 64.6). It must therefore be *for* something noble, for actions noble and/or just (I 76.3, VI 16.5). But are not such actions characterized at least in part by the fact that they are not simply self-serving? This, at any rate, appears to have been the Athenian view. In the Melian dialogue itself, they assert that it is the Spartans who, in their relations with others, most manifestly hold that whatever pleases them is noble, whatever is to their advantage is just: the Athenians imply, that is, that they themselves do not make these equations. Or, as one can gather from remarks of Perikles, it is the actions of vir-

tue which are called noble (II 43.1, 42.2–4; cf. V 105.4), and it is especially action taken in disregard of advantage which is called virtuous. It was especially in praising the non-calculating generosity of the Athenians that Perikles claimed to be speaking of their virtue; he thus implicitly distinguished their virtue from what he had been speaking of just previously—the Athenian capacity to act, to take risks, on the basis of calculation leading to the clearest possible awareness of the terrible and pleasant things (cf. II 40.4–5 with 40.3; cf. 43.1; cf. also 35.1, 36.1, 42.2–3, 45.1, 46.1, and, on the other hand, 37.1 and 45.2).

Now as this implies, and as a noble imperialism in their understanding of it requires, the Athenians do not act, or at least do not understand themselves to act, in a simply selfish manner. Their spokesmen at Sparta claim that they are more just in the exercise of their rule than they have to be, given their superiority in power (I 76.3). And Perikles claims that the Athenians benefit others not out of calculation of advantage but from trust in their own generosity. (Indeed the Athenians at Sparta argue that Athens was hurt by her rather just or measured conduct toward her subjects: it permitted resentments to arise which a harsher rule might have avoided, resentments, we might add, which helped bring on the war [I 76.4–77.5]. Similarly, according to Perikles, Athenian generosity had the effect that the Athenians were firm in their regard for those they had benefited rather than *vice versa* [II 40.4].) On the other hand, the fact that the Athenians pursued, as they thought, a noble imperialism seems to have been inseparably connected with the limitlessness of their aims (as well as with their willingness to take risks to achieve them: V 107): it was the noble-minded Athenians, rather than the more cynical (and cautious) Spartans, who were led on by hopes (I 70.3–8, VI 24.3 and 31.6; cf. II 42.4)—as if the happiness they foresaw always eluded them or lay ahead.

But precisely because it was a noble imperialism they wished to pursue or believed themselves to be pursuing, and because they refused to follow the Spartans in simply equating nobility and justice with their own pleasure and advantage, the Athenians could not help becoming aware of the tension between this wish, or this view of their enterprise, and the fact that in seeking through such an empire above all *their* glory, they were pursuing what they took to be *their* highest good or advantage to the exclusion of that of all others. The attempt to defend the empire, in the series of great Athenian statements which address the question of the justice of Athenian imperialism, is testimony to this awareness—especially where these statements go beyond what a politic defense of the empire may have called for in the circumstances. (Cf., for example, what the Athenians say at Sparta with the statement of "Euphemos" at Kamarina [I 73.1, 75.3, 76.2 and, on the other hand, 75.4–5 with VI 82.1, 83.2 and .4, and 87.2]. The Spartan ephor correctly understands that the Athenian statement at Sparta leaves no room for Spartan-Athenian accommodation or avoidance of war on terms other than the subordination of Sparta, to take place sooner or later through loss of her allies, to Athens [I 86].) In other words, the sometimes shocking argument we have examined justifying, or rather excusing, limitless expansion is testimony not to the callousness of the Athenians but to their concern with the noble—and to the fact that the outstanding Athenians had reflected deeply on this issue. For there is little doubt that this argument also lay behind Perikles' ambiguous reference to the question of the justice of the acquisition of empire. That is, the conclusion which we drew from that reference and from the lack of any other Periklean discussion of the justice of Athenian imperialism, the conclusion that Perikles had failed to look deeply into this issue, is almost surely false. Nevertheless, it is not entirely misleading.

The Athenian leaders, and Perikles in particular, did not take the question of justice seriously enough to draw out the full implications of the argument to which their concern to defend the empire, their awareness that their imperialism needed defending, had led them. Their argument proved to be inseparable, as we saw, from a vindication of selfishness. The Athenians could not abandon this argument without abandoning the attempt, called for by their concern with the noble, to defend the all but limitless imperialism to which that same concern with the noble had helped to lead them; they therefore embraced the argument and proclaimed their acceptance of the standard of conduct it sets forth (I 76.2, V 105.1–2). The argument, however, confirms the very characterization of their enterprise which they (still) shrink from accepting, because to accept it is to cease to see that enterprise as noble (V 89). Hence the strange inconsistency of their statements, an inconsistency ranging from contradiction to incongruity of tone: the strong never put justice before advantage (I 76.2), but the Athenians are more just than they have to be, even though this does them harm (I 76.3ff.); they advance to conquer without seeking to color their intention with "noble words" or claims of justice (V 89), in clear-sighted recognition rather of the compulsion of human nature to rule where it can (V 105.1–2), yet they are not so crude as to hold, like the Spartans, that whatever pleases them is noble, whatever is to their advantage is just (V 105.4). Only the unpolitical Diodotos appears to have faced squarely the question of what imperialism of the Athenian sort looks like in the light of a thoroughgoing acceptance of the argument advanced in its defense (III 45; cf. VI 24.3 and 31.6; cf. also Nikias' comments at VI 9.3 and 13.1). The Athenian spokesmen whom we have considered turned from this spectacle, if only at the last minute, to contemplate instead what they regarded as Athens' less selfish actions. Since these appeared to concern rather small matters (see esp. I 76.3ff.), those spokesmen did not feel the need to explain to themselves how such selflessness is compatible with the argument they had embraced, at the core of which is the discovery of the primacy of the concern with the good. The Athenians thus sought to have it both ways. Their argument autho-

rizes the unrestricted pursuit of the good, and they understood themselves to be pursuing (without significant restriction) what they felt to be *the* human good. What they felt or experienced regarding this "good", however, was colored by the belief that their pursuit of it was noble, by which they meant: not dominated by concern with their own good. This appears to be the most important ground, in Thucydides' view, for refusing to defer to that experience, for doubting that the Athenians truly knew what was good for them.

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In conclusion, I wish to turn to some implications for Thucydides' thought of the differences between him and Perikles which have come to light.

When we compare Thucydides' book to the writings of the classical political philosophers, we see that it has a special place among the works left to us by antiquity. While Plato and Aristotle present us with beautiful pictures of "ideal" cities, Thucydides describes for us the life of actual cities. Actual cities turn out to be almost always cities at war or near to war whether foreign or civil. Thucydides chose to write about the biggest war known to him. As a result, as he himself notes, his book is full of descriptions of grim and terrible things (I 23.1–3).

Because Thucydides wrote of actual cities, his book was of special interest to the modern thinkers who wanted to construct a new political science on a realistic basis. Hobbes, for example, made a translation of Thucydides, and there are important echoes of Thucydides' unrivalled description of the horrors of civil war, in particular, in Hobbes' *Leviathan*. (Compare Thucydides' account of the Corcyraean civil war with Hobbes' description of "the natural condition of mankind" in the light of Hobbes' remark in the same chapter that, "it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into, in a civil war" [*Leviathan* I 13; cf. II 29].) The reaction of Hobbes, and later of Alexander Hamilton, to the sort of description presented by Thucydides may be roughly estimated from this comment of Hamilton in the Ninth Federalist Paper: "It is impossible to read the history of the petty republics of Greece and Italy without feeling sensations of horror and disgust at the distractions with which they were continually agitated, and at the rapid succession of revolutions by which they were kept in a state of perpetual vibration between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy. . . ." The "sensations of horror and disgust" were lessened only by the conviction of both Hamilton and Hobbes that the *civil* wars, at least, to which the Greek cities were subject are due to "vices of government" (Ninth Federalist) or to "imperfections. . . of policy" (*Leviathan* II 29), which they hoped their new political science would overcome. In the words of Hobbes, when commonwealths "come to be dissolved, not by external violence, but intestine disorder, the fault is not in men, as they are the *matter*; but as they are the *makers*, and orderers of them" (*ibid*). That is, with the right understanding, we can change things (cf. *ibid* II 31). While according to Hamilton, "the science of politics. . . like most other sciences, has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now well understood, which were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients" (Ninth Federalist).

For the moderns, then, the grimness of Thucydides' account of political life was relieved by their hope for fundamental political progress. It is not difficult to show that Thucydides did not share this hope: hence his remark that his work is intended to benefit those who wish to understand what has happened in the past and what will, given the way of humanity, happen in much the same form again (I 22.4; cf. III 82.2 as well as II 48.3). What then enabled Thucydides to bear the grimness of his own account, as he did bear it, with such dignity and calm? For not only is his work without any trace of "horror and disgust"; it is also free from taint of anger or bitterness, gloom or despair. The reason cannot be that he lacked feeling for the sufferings he observed and portrayed: his feeling shines through no less impressively for being conveyed with a manly gentleness. He was undoubtedly a man of immense natural strength, but Hobbes and Hamilton were not insignificant in this respect either. I suspect then that the reason has more to do with his *thought*: that Thucydides *saw* something which the later thinkers did not see, something which can be glimpsed by reflecting on the difference between Thucydides' perspective and that of Perikles. This is that human life, at least for any human being of quality, is never free from concern for the noble and the just. This has the result that we are dependent on the *belief* that we know what nobility and justice are. We remain dependent on that belief, unless it is replaced by what we can tentatively call the search for justice, for what justice truly is—unless it is replaced, that is, by philosophy. If I remember correctly, philosophy is mentioned in Thucydides' work only by Perikles, who in the same context suggests that thought and writing are subordinate to action and criticizes the inactive life (II 40.1–3. 41.4; cf. 63.2–3, 64.4). Thucydides, who clearly regarded his writing and thought, the substance and outcome of his search for truth (I 20.3), as superior to any possible action on his part, quietly presents the evidence for the alternative view. Thucydides, that is, shows us the necessity for philosophy; he shows us that human life, for all its apparent disorder, necessarily points in this direction. Beyond that, he shows us something of the philosophic life in action. All that we see in Thucydides' book—battles and speeches, intrigues and civil strife—we see through *his* eyes. In looking at all these things, then, we are also becoming acquainted with Thucydides himself. This, too, is part of the reason why his book, despite the many grim things that it necessarily contains, possesses also a very great beauty.

Not Quite Alone on the Telephone

Meyer Liben

I PICKED UP MY TELEPHONE, not mine, but the one I rent from the Telephone Company, and not all of it, but just the receiver, cradled in the slightly curved arms of the secure base, solid mother base, and I heard not the familiar dial tone, that serene hum which tells us that all is electronically well, and, by extension, for the imagination is so at the mercy of the immediate, that all is well in general, or in the words of Juliana (also known as Julian) of Norwich, moving now into the future, that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well," I heard, not the familiar dial tone, but an unfamiliar buzzing, rasping sound.

I picked up the telephone (the part for the whole—what is the word for it?) and heard silence, not a golden silence, but the silence of a far-off emptiness, a silence growing more and more ominous as time passed and no sound came to fill the unexpected void.

I picked up the phone, and after dialing my number, not *my* number, but the number I was trying to reach, the number of the other, the phone went dead, into an extraordinarily deep silence, a silence with bells on, the way J. D. Salinger describes sexual intercourse as masturbation with bells on, then suddenly came to life again, celebrated its resurrection with a piercing whistle, a kind of locomotive, clear-the-track whistle.

I picked up the phone, dialed a long-distance number, and instead of the voice I expected to hear, found myself in the midst of a conversation between a bank official and a man who was trying to borrow $12,000 to modernize a superette (examine that word for an instant), a small supermarket in a southern border state—is there any other kind of border state?—at least that was my guess by the accents of the pleasantly recalcitrant banker and the cagy would-be debtor. Feeling like the unknown and unwanted member of an audience at a real-life drama, I quietly hung up the receiver (not the phone).

I picked up the phone, heard a series of staccato noises, like that of a generator crying for help, hundreds and hundreds of these noises, part of an apparently endless wave of sound, one unit exactly like another in timbre, duration, volume—then quiet, this side of dead.

I picked up the phone. There was a click, as though two small metal objects had come together, perhaps in a magnetic field (this is the sheerest surmise of an electronic cretin), then the familiar reassuring dial tone, that marvelous golden hum we used to take so much for granted.

I picked up the phone and heard a shriek, imagined a woman in extreme distress, by some monster forced, the sound echoing as from the wall of a cave, and then slowly dying away.

I picked up the phone, and heard, for maybe thirty seconds, the pure tones of a string quartet.

Meyer Liben (1911–1975), whose work has appeared in *New American Review, Commentary, Midstream,* in these pages, and elsewhere, is the author of *Justice Hunger and Nine Stories,* (Dial Press 1967). *"Not Quite Alone on the Telephone"* is from an unpublished collection of stories, *Streets and Alleys.*

I picked up the phone and heard a blast, like that of a factory lunch whistle, followed by a kind of tinkling, the murmur of not altogether still waters...

I picked up the phone and heard...but let these few examples suffice. I decided that the phone was tapped, and that it was tapped for no specific reason (what could such a reason be?) but on a random basis, though no doubt part of an overall selective process, the way you might be chosen as a participant in the Neilson ratings or in *The Daily News* straw poll. It is, I analyzed, part of the selective policy of the F.B.I., the C.I.A., or some intelligence-gathering service that I had not yet heard of. But in our country the most secret agencies become well-known, we even hear of splits in the C.I.A. between liberal and conservative factions.

HAVING DECIDED THAT MY PHONE WAS TAPPED, I called the Telephone Company (more exactly, I called my Business Representative on the advice of the Operator) and that was the beginning of a series of conversations with a series of individuals of various ranks and in various positions in the hierarchy of the phone company's bureaucracy, individuals so numerous, so different in character, in temperament, that the content and nuances of the conversations I had, as I was plugged into this or that hole in the huge administrative switchboard, to say nothing of letters received and answered, plus calls following up unanswered letters—all that would take up considerably more space (and therefore time) than I intended to use up in my account of this episode. I finally wound up in the hands, rather the voice, of a young woman, who, as I understood, was in a kind of Public Relations Security branch of the company, and after a number of conversations, reports on cable checks, electronic checks and investigations, she, without firmly saying that my phone was *not* tapped, said that she was very sorry about the inconveniences I was experiencing, about the spectrum of noises, silences, and interruptions, that it was all part of the problems created by the unprecedented growth of the phone company, that the company was in the process of catching up with that unprecedented growth by the special training and employment of old and new personnel, by the installation of new, very sophisticated equipment, that once this newly-trained personnel was on the job and once this new equipment was in full use, she was confident that these clicks, interruptions, whizzing sounds, thunderous noises, hums, whistles, clangings, whirrings, buzzes, indeed all the varieties of noises and silence, would disappear. Added to this was a promise to check further, all said in a tone of voice so sweet, so agreeable, so understanding, so sincere and reassuring, that she made me quite ashamed of my complaints, my ignorance, my suspicious nature.

Then, when I came home that evening (I had spoken to the telephone representative from the office where I am employed) and picked up the phone to dial a number, all trustingly, in remembrance of the reassuring sonorities of the woman at the company, I heard, far from the dial tone I was prepared to hear, hoping and expecting to hear, a piercing whistle, as from a policeman who has sighted a thief, followed by a silence not quite long enough to be ominous, but close to it, and that followed by a familiar click, and that followed by a voice of a woman asking me what number I wanted. When I said that I was calling for Weather Information in New York City, she explained to me (more slowly and patiently than I thought necessary) that I had reached a number in Sacramento, California, that she would connect me with the operator, the wire went dead, there came the sounds of a kind of electronic music, and then, what used to be the most reassuringly *domestic* (all that electronic chaos out there tamed) of all telephone sounds, the equable, unwavering, steady, warm, and welcoming Dial Tone.

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD MIXED FEELINGS about the telephone in my house. Rats, mice, cockroaches, those thin silver-fish that sometimes appear in the bathtub, are living creatures which now and then make their presences felt. They do not play dead, like the telephone, fixed in its place forever, wherever you put it, there it stays (never, never, has a telephone moved by itself, never has a telephone *tried* to move by itself), and comes to life only by human intervention, though not necessarily with a human presence, for so often does a phone ring and nobody there to answer it. It has all that coiled power, and sometimes, when it rings, at odd hours of the night, or when I am in an absent-minded or bemused state, it is as though a wild beast has leapt into the room. The roach surprises, the mouse frightens, the rat scares, the telephone terrifies.

But the phone is so useful an object, brings so much pleasure, the voices of our far-off dear ones, or those close by, the simple pleasures of the temporarily parted, that one grows attached to a given phone. I shall go into that.

Nevertheless it is an instrument not continually under our control, therefore a stranger in the house, the way all machines are strangers, no matter how utilitarian or pleasure-giving. And when I heard that a phone could be bugged in such a way that it will record what is said in a room even when the receiver is *on the hook*, that reinforced my sense of its silent and forbidding animosity, its treacherous and inhuman nature.

(And yet—to again point up the ambivalence—what pleasure this same phone has given me over the years—the long, cozy conversations, the way on a miserable rainy or freezing night, I might choose to stay at home, thinking of all those I hadn't spoken to for so long, and how pleasant it would be (and was) to stay at home, exchanging telephonic pleasantries, confidences, ideas, jokes, gossip, while the wind rattled the window panes, the rain covered these panes with crooked streams, and the phone always available, responding to those needs, obedient, helpful,

accurate transmitter of your words, the sounds beneath the words, and the spirit beneath the sounds).

ONCE I WAS CONVINCED that the phone was tapped, my attitude toward it moved naturally, even dramatically, in the direction of suspicion, hostility, indeed to the limits of that suspicion and hostility. So do we foist a kind of human nature on a manufactured object. Let me say this: it is possible to have strong personal feelings about a telephone, but never have I heard of a telephone which has been given a name, the way a domestic animal (or a wild animal, for that matter) is given a name, never have I heard of a child giving a telephone a name, one's positive feeling for it does not go so far, the way it might go to a moving machine, like a truck (but automobiles are not given names apart from the company names), though the phone company is now beginning to name its phones, one being the generic name Princess. I've never heard anyone refer to this small bedroom phone by name, though Joyce Carol Oates has mentioned it in one of her works, casually, the way you'd mention a random character who never appears again.

I moved toward the negative ambivalent pole, first in a kind of respectful cautious way, the way you deal with a mysteriously powerful enemy, used the phone as little as possible, saw in it a new and unexpected power... Indeed, my next month's bill was the lowest I can remember, because of the absence of the Message Units so inexorably used up in those long cozy conversations (isn't talking on the phone sometimes like being in front of a pleasant fireplace fire?) which take the place of a visit, or a night at the theatre, or just out? And how many Message Units can you run up in a call to Weather, a call to the druggist or cleaner?

YES, MY PHONE was quite abandoned for a spell, though it was on my mind, both configuration and number. It is curious, by the way, how we remember, far back, our own old phone numbers, like the rock strata which the geologists make so much of. I remember very old numbers, ones when the Exchange was a name, like *Circle* or *Butterfield.* When you stopped *saying* the name, and started to dial it, you of course dialed only the first two letters, then the first two letters and a number (CI-2 is quite different from Circle, though if you *know* the name of the exchange, you are naturally always aware of it). And then came the takeover by the numbers, more of which later.

This feeling of respect, trepidation, in front of a mysterious power, particularly uncanny to one who is electronically backward, soon faded (uncanny or not) and was replaced by an amalgam of feelings, a many-sided thronging, not too easy to sort out—anger, scorn, sense of outrage, disbelief, among others—which brought me closer to this instrument (cannot initiate, can only be used), to an involvement, an engagement, a kind of confrontation.

The way I said it to myself was: If this phone is going to bug me, two can play at that game (see again how I treat the instrument as if it had a life of its own, a volitional sense).

Let me say right off that the fact of a government agency going to the trouble and expense of tapping my phone indicated to me (forget the random sampling) that I was a person of considerably more importance than I had ever imagined myself (since the daydreams of childhood) to be. Indeed, this situation reactivated those daydreams of childhood. I imagined, for example, that in a confusion of names, I was called before an Investigating Committee of the Congress, asked my name and occupation, which I gave, under oath. The committee members then proceeded to launch a barrage of questions at me, regarding dozens of trips I was supposed to have taken abroad, about contact with individuals I had never heard of, all of which made it as clear as the most perfect sentence ever written that I was being confused with another person with my name and occupation. I quietly answered "no" to hundreds of detailed questions about trips to Havana, Buenos Aires, Hanoi, East Berlin, Hong Kong, small towns in Cambodia and cities of which I had never heard in countries which I could not locate nor even identify.

"You are telling this committee, sir, on your sworn word, that you were not on the premises of the Swedish Embassy in Jakarta on January 9, 1967?"

"I am telling you just that."

"And you are telling us, sir, that on the afternoon of June 17, 1967, you did not meet a certain representative of the government of Albania in a tavern on O'Connell Street in the city of Dublin, and that certain documents were not exchanged on that occasion?"

"Sir, I am telling you just that."

After some three hours of this questioning, the form sometimes direct, sometimes involuted or oblique, sometimes coming right at you, sometimes seeming to bank off the ceiling or walls (so various are the deliveries), a man suddenly moves into the room, carrying a sealed envelope which he hands to the Chairman, after a short whispered interchange. The Chairman halts the proceedings, opens the envelope, reads the letter, shakes his head in a kind of weary puzzlement, calls a recess, confers with the other Committee members, raps his gavel, and calls the meeting to order. He has a rather strained, awkward look. So do the other Committee members.

"I have a statement to make," says the Chairman. "We sincerely regret that a serious error in identification has been made. There are apparently two gentlemen with similar names and occupations, approximately of the same age, height, and appearance, one of whom lived at an address which, with the transposition of two numbers, would be precisely the number of the house on the avenue at which the gentleman on the stand resides. It is the *other* gentleman we are seeking to interrogate. Again, we sincerely regret any inconvenience we have caused due to this unfortunate case of mistaken identities...."

THIS REACTIVATION of an earlier fantasy life (not childhood) helped to break down, after a while, the tentative reserve I had adopted toward my telephone. It was one of the factors that emboldened me in my dealings with that instrument.

In the formulation of Leon Trotsky (perhaps I shouldn't mention his name) I have skipped a stage in my description of this process, for, before the anger, emboldenment, etc., I went through a kind of intermediate stage, one of easy, impersonal contact.

During that period I called Weather, Time, Dial-A-Poem (started to write Dial-A-Phone!)—part of the spectrum of services I plan to write about later—the most neutral calls possible. I made calls to strangers which involved a minimum of conversation (these, of course, can be suspect, on the theory that they are coded), calls to the supermarket, other merchants, to have deliveries made, to the dry cleaner to find out if my jacket was ready, that kind of thing. It was a warm-up, where the call had a specific, circumscribed purpose, and to enable me to get the feel of the phone, after a period of disengagement. I succeeded in that, recovered the physical sense, the old comfort and flexibility in handling the instrument.

THERE FOLLOWED (that makes two stages skipped before the turnaround) a kind of cautious approach, on a more personal level. Actually, these two intermediate stages intermingled, because, though my voluntary use of the phone is as described above, the phone *did* ring, the way it does in the normal course of events. My deduction—for it was nothing more—that the phone was tapped (curious how *tapped* is a technical word, and *bugged* a word from the natural world, science and nature in this case seeming to conspire against our sense of privacy, the inviolability of home and intimacy) naturally had no effect on the telephone habits of my friends and associates, and to my amazement, for I had not set myself on such a course, I found myself reducing all the conversational exchanges to the blandest possible level, I found myself taking the sting out of all potentially partisan or politically controversial subjects.

Talking generally, our conversations, on phone and off, tend to fall into certain patterns, depending on so very many factors, but it is a rare conversation which does not include, at one time or another, mention of the day's news, or yesterday's news, so it would not be unusual (though, at this time of awareness, I noticed that a number of people shied away from touchy subjects, out of extraordinary prudence, a vague sense of discomfort, or because they were not sure of the absolutely private nature of these phones, imagined maybe that their own phones were tapped) for a friend to make mention of the Conspiracy Trial, with the idea of passing the time of night with a give and take on what we had both read in the newspapers or heard on the television, the news of the day, after all, being so staple a part of our daily conversations. But when I responded by repeating what he had said, or referring to some totally insignificant element in the matter, not pushing ahead to meaningful dialogue on the merits, or even, as I sometimes did, changing the subject—"How do you like the way the Knicks are going?"—(though, had I thought the matter through, I would have seen that this kind of trivialization and change of subject was more suspicious than the routine give-and-take of conversation) well, the manner of my response had a way of taking that first-mentioned particular subject off its track. It is surprising, by the way, how most people accept these conversational shifts, particularly if the subject they've brought up is of no pressing importance to them, as if it doesn't particularly matter *what* the topic of conversation, as long as the time passes agreeably. I am not thinking of those who use the phone for a given specific reason, to make an appointment, get some information, and who, if there were no phones available, would have to write for the given specific reason. But the phone company does not live off these limited calls, the money is in the out-of-town business and other long-distance calls, it is in the dawdling friendly conversations (the Message Units!) and in such a conversation, if a friend were to make mention of the latest development in the war, and I would respond by asking when he planned to take his vacation, he'd accept that conversational shift, seeing it maybe as a kind of impressionistic way of keeping the ball rolling, of filling the void which had initiated the call.

It is amazing how many subjects are potentially touchy, even controversial, so complex and interlocked is the world, I mean touchy from the point of view of telephone surveillance, though that is a visual word, and the tap or bug is an auditory intervention, but now we are approaching that era in the communications world where we will *see* the ones with whom we are conversing.

It is easy to turn away from the difficult, to reduce the thrust of the controversial, by a process of homogenization (that recently popular word from the dairy world), so easy to take the sting out of the thorny. You can do it by tone, by inflection, by showing no interest, so if a political assassination is mentioned, you swing it easily to the airplane crash (then it turns out *that* could have been sabotage, politically motivated). As I've pointed out, this kind of blanding—to coin a word—this obvious change of subject from the potentially controversial to the ordinary:

"What do you think of our chances in the Olympics?" (but this can lead to a discussion of the killed and jailed students in Mexico City) is, to any kind of trained listener, a most obvious indication of apprehension, and, further, conversation becomes extraordinarily boring if you cannot discuss a subject in depth, but must leap, like a gazelle on a mountaintop (why like a gazelle on a mountaintop?) from one conversational ridge to another, in an effort to throw off your trail some unknown listener telephonically stalking you.

NOW, THOUGH IN MANY RESPECTS, and likely deep down in my character structure, previously called human nature, I am a prudent, cautionary man, carefully weighing the next step, considering as best I can the distant possibilities, the hazards flowing out of present behavior, I am, also, thank God, a rather fun-loving person, who recognizes that all contingencies cannot be taken into account, that we have all been blessed with pleasure-possibilities, that joy attends us, that we scorn volatility, ebullience, at peril to our bodies, to our very lives. And, living as we do in a society full of all sorts of freedoms, we'd have to be pretty retarded not to take advantage of some of the pleasure-possibilities that inhere in the bureaucratic madnesses of the repressive elements.

So I decided that I'd have a bit of sport with my unknown tappers. The way to do it, obviously, was to present to these unknown listeners as wide a spectrum of views as I could possible manage. Indeed, I sat down to my desk and wrote a list of views, ranging from the fascist right to the terrorist left. On second thought, I excluded the extremes, for what would stop them from using *only* the extreme statements? My revised spectrum therefore ranged from reactionary to the limits of the constitutional left. Who has the patience to re-enumerate such a list? And then I threw in religious musings (omitting none of the great religions of the world), anti-political statements, all kinds of philosophical analyses on the nature of the state, the moralities of political behavior, threw in quotations from thinkers famous and unknown, copied quotations and passages from books, encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers. Working from this list, and from the free-associational, occasional spontaneous working of mind and imagination, I went to play.

Never had my friends, relatives, associates, even random callers and neighborhood shopkeepers been subjected, from me anyway, to such a farrago of thoughts, opinions, views, analyses, doctrines, probes, questions, descriptions, commentaries, on so wide a variety of subjects bearing in any way on the political scene. Plato's *Republic*, *The New Republic*, Tolstoy's views on non-violence, editorials from *The Manchester Guardian*, quotations from Hobbes, Aristotle on Politics, passages from Fourier, Kautsky, Eugene Debs, remarks on the Brook Farm experiment, Burke on the American colonies, comments from *The National Review*, Sukhanov (Carmichael's translation) on the concept of the power lying in the streets, critiques of nihilism, sections of the Kabbalah, *Daily News* editorials, thoughts out of Thoreau, Harold Lasswell, Myrdal, *Le Monde*, the *St. Louis Post Despatch*, Mahatma Gandhi, A. J. Muste, Thomas Jefferson, reasoned critiques of all sorts of revolutionary thinkers, opinions from Reston, Buchwald, Mark Sullivan, Walter Lippman, Westbrook Pegler, Heywood Broun, Wechsler, A. H. Raskin, Hentoff, Roger Baldwin (special emphasis on the great libertarians), passages from Leon Blum, Kierkegaard, Bosanquet, Yeats' airman, Freud and Einstein on war, Goodman, Mailer, Nelson, Feuer, Macdonald, Dorothy Day, Oswald Garrison Villard, Morris Hillquit, Barry Goldwater, the *New York Review of Books*, William Buckley, *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, Henry Clay, R. H. Tawney—a motley of names, views, magazines, books, pamphlets, dissertations, theories, manifestoes, for, against, neutral, a melange of all political positions and doctrines, revolutionary too (let *them* make head or tail of it). Anyway, for one week, I made tapes of all my conversations, which I carefully dated and have filed.

A WEEK OF IT, and that was all. A frenetic, chaotic week, and then one night, as I entered the apartment, the phone rang, and I had an ordinary conversation with a friend. I expressed my views as I felt them, the madness was over, my tapes carefully dated and filed away for any future eventuality, any legal confrontation. I was back to my old telephone, accepted the weird noises, silences, electronic beeps, as part of the growing confusion, part of the complexities of a growing America, part of the struggle for a better America. And I thought: In the old days you'd pick up the phone and put through your call, no problems at all. Now you pick up the phone to make a call, and the situation is fraught with possibilities. Isn't it more interesting this way?

MY OLD TELEPHONE. How, after all, can one do without a phone? Years back I'd occasionally hear of a person who could afford a phone and chose not to have one because he didn't want his privacy at the mercy of friends and strangers (it was before the expression "invasion of privacy" became popular). I don't hear of such people anymore, it is not in the current style of eccentricity. A telephone is as taken-for-granted as a sink.

My old telephone (rented but not mine) has been around for some fifteen years, indeed ever since I've been in my apartment, my rented apartment. You don't change a phone the way you do a car or an overcoat. The phone doesn't have moving parts, it rarely breaks down, and when it does, can most often be put in order from the Central Office. Think of it! a phone put in working order from a distance. Since it doesn't much break down, it is usually replaced when the style changes, or because some of us can't stand old worn objects around. I remember only two styles of phone (maybe also the wall phone, the one you cranked, but that likely is out of a fantasy, a dream, a movie, or a dream of a movie). The first phone was lanky, upright, sober, almost preacher-like, the receiver in its right-sided cradle (wonder if you could have requested a left-handed phone?) parallel with the instrument. I remember very well that skinny phone, weathered after a while like old Slim Summerville. It had no dial; you picked up the receiver, and the operator answered, saying "Hello Central" (later the name of a song, but one can make a song too about the serene dial tone, mildly telling you, as I've told you before, that all is in order, that all the

electronic complexity and circuitry await your instruction, your move). Back to the old phone: you told the operator the name of the exchange and the number, and waited till she got it for you, all quite personal, not intimate. She put through local and long distance calls ("put through" more for long distance than for local), covered the whole electronic spectrum, a one-to-one situation. We'd see the operator in the movies, a pretty girl with earphones.

Then came the dramatic change (was there really nothing in between?) to the dial phone, the one now on my desk—solid, squat, with the receiver snuggling, nestled in its cradle, with its round lettered and numbered face, its ten apertures for the finger to twirl, its four feet (now coming on to the market, into our home, is the push-button dial—farewell to the ten apertures—a swifter, computer-like mechanism, but that hasn't yet hit the city in force).

The old, squat, solidly-rooted telephone, with its worn, familiar number, more familiar than your auto license number, than your checking account or Social Security number, even more familiar than your age, which changes from year to year, and you must keep up with it. But your phone number never changes (unless you ask to have it changed, out of restlessness or objective need; you can even take your old number with you if you move from one apartment to another).

AS I'VE ALREADY POINTED OUT, to no one's surprise, the phone is not a living thing (what we *mean* by a thing is that it's not alive), does not have a nervous system, has wires instead of veins, does not move by volition, does not grow, merely weathers, but, because of its utility (forget for a moment all the complaints, such as, in the middle of a conversation, the entrance of a whizzing sound, as though a wind, a hurricane, were roaring over some distant prairie), because of its familiarity, precisely its unchanging physicality and special quality, because of the pleasure it has given, and promises to give, is capable of giving—for these reasons one develops a kind of attachment, not a deep, strong feeling, for the instrument, and that carries over to the name and numbers. One of the reasons we don't give a name to the phone is that it already has a name and number, assigned by the Company, and the fact that names have pretty much been replaced by numbers doesn't much alter the situation. One got so used to the name—Circle, Wadsworth, Trafalgar, Gramercy, Endicott—not because it refers to a geometric form, a historical figure (who Wadsworth?), the scene of a famous naval battle, a variant of "God's mercy," a Puritan worthy (might be interesting to make a study of the overall effects an exchange and number have over an individual, how the luck of the draw affects the course of his life) but simply out of long familiarity, out of everyday use, everyday contact with the unceremoniously assigned name.

And the feeling for a name can attach itself (a feeling of attachment attaching itself) to the numbers which replace the name. Such an attachment must bear on pleasure sources, so that, for example, if your public school life was to some extent enjoyable, meaningful, mention of the *number* of that school will bring a kind of glow to the features, indicating a speedup somewhere in the movement of the body's blood. That kind of familiar, even affectionate connection with numbers could be true of all sorts of numbers that become ours for a time—just gave such a list—but these numbers—though conceivably related to pleasure sources—are rarely used (your car license, Social Security), only occasionally written, hardly ever *uttered.*

Not so of our phone number (curious how some cling to the name of the exchange or the first two letters of the exchange, struggling against the spreading numeralization) which we see staring at us every time we make a call, which we have printed up on cards and letterheads, which we give to people—"This is my number," or, more cautiously, "Call me, I'm listed in the phone book."

ONE NIGHT, not so long ago, just before going to bed, I somewhat sleepily looked into my dictionary for the origin of the word *telephone.* I believe I know its *meaning.* It is, as I surmised, a Greek compound, but I hadn't thought that it meant "sound from afar." Between the sleepiness and the falling asleep, I considered this an excellent word origin, and fell asleep, dreaming (after a while, I guess, for I don't imagine you fall into dream as you sometimes fall into sleep) of a distant voice, then of a number of voices, all telephonically connected in error—a woman pleading; a man cajoling, another woman, with a younger voice, saying over and over again: "but this has to stop, but this has to stop," and that was the beginning, as far as I can recall, of a long dream, a mosiac kind of dream. I heard the insistent, the unrelenting *busy,* that sound which is like a wall cutting you off from the one you wish to talk to, the one otherwise occupied. I saw the coming visual phone (what will it be called?), a woman alone in a house having to throw on a house coat before approaching the phone! I heard two of the most popular songs relating to the telephone, namely the afore-mentioned "Hello Central" and "All Alone," and *saw,* in viginettes, the opposing contents of those songs—the young man flirting with the pretty operator, the fantasy of a date, a conquest, and the elderly man (or was it an elderly woman) sitting by the instrument, grimly, in trepidation, waiting and fearing for it to ring. I thought (in my dream) that there were so many more numbers to dial now, and wondered if the possible combination of numbers could finally run out. What then? I asked myself. I went through a speedy history of the use of numbers and letters—first the numbers alone, then the first two letters of the exchange plus the numbers, and now all numbers again, though very likely the first two numbers you'd dial (soon to push) don't necessarily have to be the first two letters of an exchange—farewell to *Academy, Atwater, Audubon,*

Judson, Lorraine, Murry Hill, Sacramento, Schuyler, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, Yukon (what can LL stand for? or LT? or LR?—not only do the numbers stand for nothing, neither do some of the letters). I saw myself, on a cold wintry night, curled up over the Manhattan Phone Directory (the Book Of The Living), looking up the names of friends, ex-friends, acquaintances, public figures, seeing who is listed first, and who is listed last (the stratagems, jockeyings for position, in the Yellow Pages of the Red Book!), thought (again) of the pleasure James Joyce used to have in listening to friends read to him from the Telephone Directory (name after name after name), saw the thin physicist (in our own apartment, think of it!) tear the Telephone Directory (Manhattan? Queens?) in half, remembered someone asking me: "What are you reading?" and my answering: "The Manhattan Phone Book," and he asking: "Who wrote it?" and then: "How do you like it?" and my answering: "The D's were pretty good, but I'm not so crazy about the S's." I saw myself taking care of my phone, washing and drying it at frequent intervals, occasionally oiling the surface, covering it in the bitter winter nights, keeping it in good working condition, the way you do a car or any machine or instrument that works for you. I saw the repair man come into the apartment, a tall Scandanavian chap, who checked out my complaint, a kind of intermittent buzz (this in the days before the Troubles) and wondered if he planned to replace the phone. Prepared for the change, he had a new instrument with him, which he started to unpack. "Can't you get the old one to work properly?" I asked. "I probably can," said the repair man, "but it's a pretty old machine, and I can replace it." "I like the old one," I replied, "I'm kind of used to it." "In that case," he said, and went ahead, made the necessary adjustments or replacements, and got rid of that intermittent hum. "The old ones are better," he said, in a kind of confidential manner, before leaving. "They don't make them that way any more." I thought again of the curious dichotomy of the words *bug* and *tap*, the differences between the natural and technological worlds, saw fields blooming with flowers, flooded with color, and saw the steely computer, humming away in some subterranean office. I thought (partly in a dream, partly in half-awake, half-analytic state) of the various services the phone company provided—Reporting A Fire, Emergency, or that you could buy, like (once more) Dial-A-Poem, remembered someone telling me that in Vienna you could call and have someone tell a bedtime story to a child, imagined a body of legal, medical advice, that could be offered, a place to call when lonely, upset, lost, disappointed (all such services no doubt exist), read in my mind's eye a letter advising how to deal with nuisance calls, profanities, curious suggestions, saw the phone as a unique artifact, the puzzlement on the faces of a crew digging thousands of years from now amid the ruins of ancient civilizations and coming up with this phone, squat, four-legged, cradle and dial. I heard myself explaining to an old woman who spoke little English that there was a difference between the small *o* which was shown on the dial together with *M, N,* and the number *6,* and the large *O,* above the word *Operator,* and it was the large O you had to use when you were dialing the number *0,* and because she was dialing the small *o,* she was getting a number *6,* and it was a wrong number, but the old woman had little English and she kept getting my number, and I kept explaining about the small *o* and the large *O,* and she kept not understanding, and the phone continued to ring, and I continued to explain about the big *O,* the Operator *O,* mentioned Oscar Robertson, said something about the *Marquis of O.* She couldn't understand hardly anything I was saying, and I started to holler: "Call the big O, call the Operator, not the little *o* with the *M, N,* and *6,* but the big *O,*" and I hollered so loud that I woke myself up and stared at the familiar phone on the desk (whatever happened to the telephone tables?) and it was just as quiet as could be.

And in the morning mail that day was a letter from the phone company explaining that "a low-pitched melodious hum will replace the familiar dial tone buzz.'

ANY STRONG EXPERIENCE, with a person, or an object (such as a telephone) on this or the other side of trauma, will permanently affect (I use the word in its psychoanalytic sense) your connection. Your connection with the telephone! Since the bugging idea came up, things have never been *quite* the same between us. Despite my ordinary common sense, my fun-loving spirit (akin to that of one of the Rover Boys) there is nevertheless a sense of intrusion, an invasion of privacy, surveillance by strangers, not that it would be very pleasant if the surveillance were by friends. So, now and then, when I think of it, I talk into the phone with the sense of that third party, human or technological, in mind. I do it by sometimes dramatizing the subject at hand, going into an extra bit of song and dance, pouring it on, making it memorable for the unknown listener (but how successfully does a bug or a tap catch the excitement of a voice? Loudness is not all, it is more the vibrancy, the thrill of interest).

One evening I explained to my Uncle Max the Kabbalistic notion of *Tsimtsum,* about which I had read, as I told my uncle, in Gershom G. Scholem's work, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*:

"This is what it is, in an over-simplified summary. God decided (think of it! God deciding) to make room for the world, he contracted, and that made the space. It is the *Tsimtsum.*"

My uncle is a *misnagid,* in the rabbinical tradition, and somewhat cool to the Kabbalistic doctrine, but he was naturally fascinated by this notion.

"How is it called again?"

"*The Tsimtsum.*"

"*Tsimtsum.* A curious word."

"Isn't it? And a curious notion too."

Then we discussed further, I forgetting after a while

the Third Ear, but then recalling it as I imagined this interchange as part of the variegated spectrum which the unknown listener would have to work on.

The noises continued intermittently—bleeps and blurps and bloops, sounds difficult to imitate with letters, delicate taps, interminable moans, riveting sounds, hammer sounds, file rasps, and the one that bugged me the most, the busy signal which starts up as you are halfway through the dialing. If the busy signal came when you were *through* with the dialing, then there'd be a chance that the line was indeed busy (circuits too can be busy, are you aware of that? whole circuits busy so that when you dial there is a nothing response, but to have the busy signal start when you're halfway through dialing, that is somehow insulting.

(Now and then I went into double talk or pig Latin, but that annoyed my friends, they think they're too old for that sort of thing, so I gave up on it.)

Well, I wasn't going to give up on the phone, I wasn't going to change to an unlisted number (such notions flashed across the mind) and talking to my friend Irving, with whom I sometimes swap jokes (though we are both complaining about the paucity of jokes) I told him (on the phone) two jokes that I had heard on two different T.V. talk shows:

"Dizzy Dean told the story about the baseball manager who protested a call on a play with such vigor and tenacity that the umpire threw him out of the game, whereupon the manager keeled over. One of the ball players said that the manager had been ill, that he might now be dead. 'Dead or alive,' said the umpire, 'out he goes.'

"Louis Armstong told the story about one of the guests at a wake who touched the forehead of the deceased and said to the widow: 'He feels warm.' 'Hot or cold,' said the widow, 'out he goes tommorow.'"

For my friend yes, but why do I tell such fine jokes to an unsolicited listener?

YES, ALL THESE MATTERS are part of the story of what's happening with my telephone, with me and my telephone. Things are not the same, they're never the same (for example, I notice that recently I don't like anyone to use my phone, find it unnerving. But since I have but the one phone [what difference would it make if I had two?] when a visitor asks to use it, I accede with a graciousness which I like to think covers my disinclination). The possibility of the phone being bugged has become part of the situation, and when I think of this possibility, I either react to it or not. What starts as a traumatic experience sometimes gets absorbed in the ongoing life process. In our country, with its vast reservoir of freedom, one likes to think that these inquisitorial tendencies, these inquisitorial actualities, will sink to the bottom of the clear waters and there dissolve.

An Outline of the Argument of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Joe Sachs

When Aristotle articulated the central question of the group of writings we know as his *Metaphysics,* he said it was a question that would never cease to raise itself. He was right. He also regarded his own contributions to the handling of that question as belonging to the final phase of responding to it. I think he was right about that too. The *Metaphysics* is one of the most helpful books there is for contending with a question the asking of which is one of the things that makes us human. In our time that question is for the most part hidden behind a wall of sophistry, and the book that could lead us to rediscover it is even more thoroughly hidden behind a maze of misunderstandings.

Paul Shorey, a scholar best known for his translation of the *Republic,* has called the *Metaphysics* "a hopeless muddle" not to be made sense of by any "ingenuity of conjecture." I think it is safe to say that more people have learned important things from Aristotle than from Professor Shorey, but what conclusion other than his can one come to about a work that has two books numbered one, that descends from the sublime description of the life of the divine intellect in its twelfth book to end with two books full of endless quarreling over minor details of the Platonic doctrine of forms, a doctrine Aristotle had already decisively refuted in early parts of the book, those parts, that is, in which he is not defending it? The book was certainly not written as one whole; it was compiled. Once one has granted that, must not one admit that it was compiled badly, crystallising as it does an incoherent ambivalence toward the teachings of Plato? After three centuries in which no one had much interest in it at all, the *Metaphysics* became interesting to nineteenth century scholars just as a historical puzzle: how could such a mess have been put together?

I have learned the most from reading the *Metaphysics* on those occasions when I have adopted the working hypothesis that it was compiled by someone who understood Aristotle better than I or the scholars do, and that that someone (why not call him Aristotle?) thought that the parts made an intelligible whole, best understood when read in that order. My main business here is to give some sense of how the *Metaphysics* looks in its wholeness, but the picture I will sketch depends on several hypotheses independent of the main one. One cannot begin to read the *Metaphysics* without two pieces of equipment: one is a set of decisions about how to translate Aristotle's central words. No translator of Aristotle known to me is of any help here; they will all befuddle you, more so in the *Metaphysics* even than in Aristotle's other works. The other piece of equipment, and equally indispensible, I think, is some perspective on the relation of the *Metaphysics* to the Platonic dialogues. In this matter the scholars, even the best of them, have shown no imagination at all. In the dialogues, in their view, Plato sets forth a "theory" by putting it into the mouth of Socrates. There is some room for interpretation, but on the whole we are all supposed to know that theory. Aristotle must accept that theory or reject it. If he appears to do both it is because passages written by some Platonist have been inserted into his text, or because things he wrote when he was young and a Platonist were lumped together with other things on similar subjects which he wrote when he was older and his thoughts were different and his own.

The Plato we are supposed to know from his dialogues is one who posited that, for every name we give to bodies in the world there is a bodiless being in another world, one

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while they are many, static while they are changing, perfect while they are altogether distasteful. Not surprisingly, those for whom this is Plato find his doctrine absurd, and welcome an Aristotle whom they find saying that being in its highest form is found in an individual man or horse, that mathematical things are abstractions from sensible bodies, and that, if there is an ideal man apart from men, in virtue of whom they are all called men, then there must be yet a third kind of man, in virtue of whom the form and the men can have the same name, and yet a fourth, and so on. You cannot stop adding new ideal men until you are willing to grant that it was absurd to add the first one, or anything at all beyond just plain men. This is hard-headed, tough-minded Aristotle, not to be intimidated by fancy, mystical talk, living in the world we live in and knowing it is the only world there is. This Aristotle, unfortunately, is a fiction, a projection of our unphilosophic selves. He lives only in a handful of sentences ripped out of their contexts. The true Aristotle indeed takes at face value the world as we find it and all our ordinary opinions about it—takes them, examines them, and finds them wanting. It is the world as we find it which continually, for Aristotle, shows that our ordinary, materialist prejudices are mistaken. The abandonment of those prejudices shows in turn that the world as we found it was not a possible world, that the world as we must reflect upon it is a much richer world, mysterious and exciting.

Those of you for whom reading the Platonic dialogues was a battle you won by losing, an eye-opening experience from which, if there is no going forward, there is certainly no turning back, should get to know this Aristotle. But you will find standing in your way all those passages in which Aristotle seems to be discussing the dialogues and does so in a shallow way. Each dialogue has a surface in which Socrates speaks in riddles, articulates half-truths which invite qualification and correction, argues from answers given by others as though he shared their opinions, and pretends to be at a loss about everything. Plato never straightens things out for his readers, any more than Socrates does for his hearers. To do so would be to soothe us, to lull us to sleep as soon as we've begun to be distressed by what it feels like to be awake. Platonic writing, like Socratic talk, is designed to awaken and guide philosophic thinking, by presenting, defending, and criticising plausible responses to important questions. The Platonic-Socratic words have only done their work when we have gone beyond them, but they remain in the dialogues as a collection of just what they were intended to be—unsatisfactory assertions.

One commentator finds eighty-one places in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle disagrees with Plato. It is not surprising that Aristotle himself uses Plato's name in almost none of those places. Aristotle is addressing an audience of students who have read the dialogues and is continuing the work of the dialogues. Many, perhaps most, of Aristotle's students would, like scholars today, find theories and answers in Plato's dialogues. Aristotle would not be earning his keep as a teacher of philosophy if he did not force his students beyond that position. Aristotle constantly refers to the dialogues because they are the best and most comprehensive texts he and his students share. Aristotle disagrees with Plato about some things, but less extensively and less deeply than he disagrees with every other author that he names. The *Metaphysics* inevitably looks like an attack on Plato just because Plato's books are so much better than anything left by Thales, Empedocles, or anyone else.

My first assumption, then, was that the *Metaphysics* is one book with one complex argument, and my second is that, in cohering within itself, the *Metaphysics* may cohere with the Platonic dialogues. I assume that discussions in the dialogues may be taken as giving flesh to Aristotle's formulations, while his formulations in turn may be taken as giving shape to those discussions. One need only try a very little of this to find a great deal beginning to fall into place. For example, listen to Aristotle in Book I, Chapter 9 of the *Metaphysics*: "the Forms . . . are not the causes of motion or of any other change . . . . And they do not in any way help either towards the knowledge of the other things . . . or towards their existence . . . . Moreover, all other things do not come to be from the Forms in any of the usual senses of 'from.' And to say that the Forms are patterns and that the other things participate in them is to use empty words and poetic metaphors." A devastating attack on Plato, is it not? Or is it? Aristotle says that positing the Forms explains no single thing that one wants to know. But doesn't Socrates say in the *Phaedo* that to call beauty itself the cause of beauty in beautiful things is a "safe but stupid answer," that one must begin with it but must also move beyond it? Again, everyone knows that the Platonic Socrates claimed that the forms were separate from the things in the sensible world, off by themselves, while Aristotle insisted that the forms were in the things. Recall the *Phaedo* passage just referred to. Does not Socrates say that the cause of heat in a hot thing is not heat itself but fire? Where, then, is he saying the form is? Aristotle taught that the causes of characteristics of things were to be looked for not in a separate world of forms but in the primary instances of those characteristics right here in the world. This doctrine may seem to be a rejection of Plato's chief postulate, but listen to Aristotle himself explain it in Book II, Chapter 1 of the *Metaphysics*: "of things to which the same predicate belongs, the one to which it belongs in the highest degree is that in virtue of which it belongs also to the others. For example, fire is the hottest of whatever is truly called 'hot', for fire is cause of hotness in the others." Do you hear an echo? Again, Aristotle teaches that form is to be understood as always at work, never static as is the Platonic form, or is it? Do not the Stranger and Theaetetus agree in the *Sophist* that it would be "monstrous and absurd" to deny that life, motion, and soul belong to the intelligible things? Do they not indeed *define being* as a power to act or be affected? Does not Socrates in the *Theaetetus* entertain the same

definition when he construes the world as made up of an infinity of powers to act and be affected? Plato's dialogues do not set forth a theory of forms. They set forth a way to get started with the work of philosophic inquiry, and Aristotle moves altogether within that way. Much in his writings that is a closed book to those who insist on seeing him as Plato's opponent opens up when one lets the dialogues serve as the key.

We shall not hesitate to take whatever light we can find in the dialogues and shine it on Aristotle's text, at least to see if anything comes into the light. And this brings me to a third assumption: the English word substance is of no help in understanding Aristotle's word *ousia*. The central question of the *Metaphysics* is, What is *ousia*? Aristotle claims that it is the same as the question, What is being? and that it is in fact the question everyone who has ever done any philosophy or physics has been asking. Since we do not share Aristotle's language we cannot know what claim he is making until we find a way to translate *ousia*. The translators give us the word substance only because earlier translators and commentators did so, while they in turn did so because still earlier translators into Latin rendered it as *substantia*. Early modern philosophy, in all the European languages, is full of discussions of substance which stem from Latin versions of Aristotle. Though oral traditions keep meanings alive, this written tradition has buried Aristotle's meaning irretrievably. We must ignore it, and take our access to the meaning of *ousia* from Plato's use of it, but before we do so a quick look at where the word substance came from may help us bury *it*.

The earliest Latin translations of Aristotle tried a number of ways of translating *ousia*, but by the fourth century A.D., when St. Augustine lived, only two remained in use: *essentia* was made as a formal parallel to *ousia*, from the feminine singular participle of the verb *to be* plus an abstract noun ending, so that the whole would be roughly equivalent to an English translation being-ness; the second translation, *substantia*, was an attempt to get closer to *ousia* by interpreting Aristotle's use of it as something like "persisting substratum." Augustine, who had no interest in interpreting Aristotle, thought that, while everything in the world possesses *substantia*, a persisting underlying identity, the fullness of being suggested by the word *essentia* could belong to no created thing but only to their creator. Aristotle, who is quite explicit on the point that creation is impossible, believed no such thing, and Augustine did not think he did. But Augustine's own thinking offered a consistent way to distinguish two Latin words whose use had become muddled. Boethius, in his commentaries on Aristotle, followed Augustine's lead, and hence always translated *ousia* as *substantia*, and his usage seems to have settled the matter. And so a word designed by the anti-Aristotelian Augustine to mean a low and empty sort of being turns up in our translations of the word whose meaning Aristotle took to be the highest and fullest sense of being. Descartes, in his *Meditations*, uses the word substance only with his tongue in his cheek; Locke explicitly analyzes it as an empty notion of an I-don't-know-what; and soon after the word is laughed out of the vocabulary of serious philosophic endeavor. It is no wonder that the *Metaphysics* ceased to have any influence on living thinking: its heart had been cut out of it by its friends.

What does *ousia* mean? It is already a quirky, idiomatic word in ordinary use when Plato gets hold of it. By a quirk of our own language one may say indeed that it means substance, but *only*, I repeat *only*, in the sense in which a rich man is called a man of substance. You may safely allow your daughter to marry him because you know where he will be and what he will be doing tomorrow and twenty years from now. *Ousia* meant permanent property, real estate, non-transferable goods: not the possessions we are always using up or consuming but those that remain—land, houses, wealth of the kind one never spends since it breeds new wealth with no expense of itself. When Socrates asks Meno for the *ousia* of the bee he is not using a technical philosophical term but a metaphor: what is the estate of a bee that each one inherits simply by being born a bee? A man of substance who has permanent wealth is who he is because of what he owns. A bee is to his permanent and his variable characteristics as a man is to his permanent and his spendable wealth. The metaphor takes a second step when applied to virtue: the varying instances of virtue in a man, a woman, a slave, and the rest must all have some unvarying core which makes them virtues. There must be some single meaning to which we always refer when we pronounce anything a virtue. This is the step Socrates continually insists that Meno must take. But remember, in the slave-boy scene, Socrates twice entices the slave-boy into giving plausible incorrect answers about the side of the double square. Is there an *ousia* of virtue? Socrates uses the word not as the result of an induction or abstraction or definition, but by stretching an already strained metaphor. People have disposable goods which come and go and ousiatic goods which remain; bees have some characteristics in which they differ, and others in which they share; the virtues differ, but are they the same in anything but name? Even if they are, must it be a definition that they share? Not all men have *ousia*. Ordinarily only a few men do. The rest of us work for them, sell to them, marry them, gather in the hills to destroy them, but do not have what they have. Perhaps there are only a few virtues, or only one.

The word *ousia*, as Plato's Socrates handles it, seems to be a double-edged weapon. It explicitly rejects Meno's way of saying what virtue is, but implicitly suggests that the obvious alternative may fail as well. If virtue is not simply a meaningless label used ambiguously for many unconnected things, that does not mean that it must unambiguously name the same content in each of the things it names.

Since *ousia* is our metaphor, let us ask what *wealth* means. If a poor man has a hut and a cow and some stored-up food, are they his wealth? He is certainly not wealthy. On

the other hand, King Lear says that "our basest beggars Are in poorest thing superfluous"; no human life is cut so fine as to lack anything beyond what satisfies bare need. The beggar, like the family on welfare, does not have the means to satisfy need, but need not for that reason forego those possessions which give life comfort or continuity. His wealth is derived from the wealth of others. The small farmer may maintain something of the independence a wealthy man enjoys, but one bad year could wipe him out. He will either accumulate enough to become wealthy himself, or his life will remain a small-scale analogy to that of the wealthy. Wealth means, first of all, *only* that which a few people have and the rest of us lack, but *because* it means that, it also, at the same time, means secondarily something that all of us possess. There is an ambiguity at work in the meaning of the word "wealth" which is not a matter of a faulty vocabulary nor a matter of language at all: it expresses the way things are. Wealth of various kinds exists by derivation from and analogy to wealth in the emphatic sense. Indeed Meno, who spontaneously defines virtue by listing virtues, is equally strongly inclined to say that the power to rule over men and possessions is the only virtue there is. He cannot resolve the logical difficulties Socrates raises about his answers, but they are all resolvable. Meno in fact believes that virtue is *ousia* in its simple sense of big money, and that women, children, and slaves can only have virtue derivatively and ambiguously. Socrates' question is one of those infuriatingly ironic games he is always playing. The *ousia* of virtue, according to Meno and Gorgias, is *ousia*.

When the word *ousia* turns up in texts of Aristotle, it is this hidden history of its use, and not its etymology, which is determining its meaning. First of all, the word fills a gap in the language of being, since Greek has no word for *thing*. The two closest equivalents are *to on* and *to chrema*. *To on* simply means whatever is, and includes the color blue, the length two feet, the action walking, and anything at all that can be said to be. *To chrema* means a thing used, used up, spent, or consumed; any kind of possession, namely, that is not *ousia*. *Ousia* holds together, remains, and makes its possessor emphatically somebody. In the vocabulary of money, *ousia* is to *ta chremata* as whatever remains constant in a *thing* is to all the *onta* that come and go. *Ousia* also carries with it the sense of something that belongs somehow to all but directly and fully only to a few. The word is ready-made to be the theme of Aristotle's investigation of being, because both the word and the investigation were designed by Plato. For Aristotle, the inquiry into the nature of being begins with the observation that being is meant in many ways. It is like Meno's beginning, and it must be subjected to the same Socratic questioning.

Suppose that there is some one core of meaning to which we refer whenever we say that something is. What is its content? Hegel says of being as being: "it is not to be felt, or perceived by sense, or pictured in imagination . . . it is mere abstraction . . . the absolutely negative . . . just *Nothing*." And is he not right, as Parmenides was before him? Leave aside all those characteristics in which beings differ, and what is left behind? To Aristotle, this means that being is not a universal or a genus. If being is the comprehensive class to which everything belongs, how does it come to have sub-classes? It would have to be divided with respect to something outside itself. Beings would have to be distinguished by possessing or failing to possess some characteristic, but that characteristic would have to be either a class within being, already separated off from the rest by reference to something prior, or a non-being. Since both are impossible, being must come already divided: the highest genera or ultimate classes of things must be irreducibly many. This is Aristotle's doctrine of the categories, and according to him being means at least eight different things.

The categories have familiar names: quality, quantity, relation, time, place, action, being-acted-upon. The question Socrates asked about things, What is it?, is too broad, since it can be answered truly with respect to any of the categories that apply, and many times in some of them. For example, I'll describe something to you: it is backstage now; it is red; it is three feet high; it is lying down and breathing. I could continue telling you what it is in this fashion for as long as I pleased and you would not know what it is. It *is* an Irish setter. What is different about that last answer? To be an Irish setter is not to be a quality or quantity or time or action but to be a whole which comprises many ways of being in those categories, and much change and indeterminacy in them. The redness, three-foot-high-ness, respiration, and much else cohere in a thing which I have named in its thinghood by calling it an Irish setter. Aristotle calls this way of being *ousia*.

Aristotle's logical works reflect upon the claims our speech makes about the world. The principal result of Aristotle's inquiry into the logical categories of being is, I think, the claim that the thinghood of things in the world is never reducible in our speech to any combination of qualities, quantities, relations, actions, and so on: that *ousia* or thinghood must be a separate category. What happens when I try to articulate the being of a thing such as an Irish setter? I define it as a dog with certain properties. But what then is a dog? It is an animal with certain properties, and an animal is an organism with certain properties, and an organism is a thing with the property of life. At each level I meet, as dog, animal, organism, what Aristotle calls secondary *ousia* or secondary thinghood. I set out to give an account of what makes a certain collection of properties cohere as a certain thing, and I keep separating off some of them and telling you that the rest cohere as a whole. At my last step, when I say that an organism is a living *thing*, the problem of secondary thinghood is present in its nakedness. Our speech, no matter how scientific, must always leave the question of the hanging-together of things as things a question.

Thus the logical inquiries bequeath to the *Metaphysics* its central question, which we are now in a position to

translate. The question that was asked of old and will always be asked by anyone who is alive enough to wonder about anything is, What is being? in the sense, What is a thing? in the sense, What is the thinghood of things? What makes our world a world of things at all? We are here at the deepest postulate of Aristotelian philosophizing: the integrity of the world as a world and of anything in it which endures as itself for any time at all, is not self-explanatory, is something to be wondered at, is *caused.*

We are taught that a moving thing, if nothing disturbs it, will continue moving forever. Do you believe that? It is certainly true that a heavy thing in motion is as hard to stop as it was to set in motion, and that we cannot step out of moving automobiles without continuing, for a while, to share their motions. But these are evidences of persistence of motion, not at all the same thing as inertia of motion. There is no evidence of the latter. In principle there cannot be, because we cannot abolish all the world to observe an undisturbed moving thing. There is a powerful and in its way, beautiful, account of the world which assumes inertia, appealing to those experiences which suggest that motion at an unchanging speed is a state no different from that of rest. The hidden premise which leads from that step to the notion of inertia is the assumption that rest is an inert state. If it is not, the same evidence could lead to the conclusion that an unchanging speed is a fragile and vulnerable thing, as unlikely and as hard to come by as an unchanging anything.

How can a balloon remain unchanged? It does so only so long as the air inside pushes out no harder and no less hard than the air outside pushes in. Is the air inside the balloon at rest? Can it be at rest as long as it is performing a task? Can the balloon be at rest if the air inside it cannot be? It can certainly remain in a place, like other apparently inert things, say a table. If you pulled the legs from under a table the top would fall, and if you removed the top the legs would fall. Leave them together and leave them alone and they do not move, but is the table at rest? Surely no more so than a pair of arm wrestlers, straining every muscle but unable to budge each other, can be said to be resting. But can't we find an inert thing anywhere in the world? How about a single lump of rock? But if I throw it in the air it will return to find a resting place. It seems to rest only when something blocks it, and if I let it rest on my hand or my head, *something* will make me uncomfortable. Can the rock be doing nothing? And if we cannot find inertia in a rock, where could it be? An animal is either full of circulating and respirating or it is rotting, and the same seems true of plants.

But what in the world is not animal-like, plant-like, rock-like, or table-like? The world contains living and non-living natural beings, and it contains products of human making, and all of them are *busy*. From Aristotle's wondering and wonderful perspective, everything in the world is busy just continuing to be itself. This is not a "theory" of Aristotle's; it is a way of bringing the world to sight with the questioning intellect awake. Try that way of looking on for size; the world has nothing to lose by ceasing to be taken for granted. Consider an analogy. Ptolemy is content to say that Venus and Mercury happen to have the same longitudinal period as the Sun, and that Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn all happen to lag just as far behind the Sun in any time as they have moved in anomaly. Copernicus, in the most passionate and convincing part of his argument, shows that these facts can be *explained.* Lucretius (whom we may substitute for Aristotle's favorite materialist, Empedocles) thought that cats and dogs and giraffes just happened to come about by accumulation, like the sands on the beach. Lucretius' failure to wonder at a giraffe, his reduction of the living to the blind and dead, is, from Aristotle's standpoint, a failure to recognize what is truly one, what is not just a heap, what is genuinely a thing.

The least thoughtful, least alert way of being in the world is to regard everything which remains itself as doing so causelessly, inertly. To seek a cause for the being-as-it-is of any thing is already to be in the grip of the question Aristotle says must always be asked. To seek the causes and sources of the being-as-it-is of everything that is, is to join Aristotle in his Copernican revolution which regards *every* manifest tion of persistence, order, or recurrence as a marvel, an achievement. That everything in the world disclosed to our senses is in a ceaseless state of change, most of us would grant. That the world nevertheless hangs together enough to be experienced at all is a fact so large that we rarely take notice of it. But the two together—change, and a context of persistence out of which change can emerge—force one to acknowledge some non-human cause at work: for whichever side of the world—change or rest, order or dissolution—is simply its uncaused, inert way, the other side must be the result of effort. Something must be at work in the world, hidden to us, visible only in its effects, pervading all that is, and it must be either a destroyer or a preserver.

That much seems to me to be demonstrable, but the next step is a difficult one to take because the world presents to us two faces: the living and the non-living. The thinghood of living things consists in organized unity, maintained through effort, at work in a variety of activities characteristic of each species; but a rock or a flame or some water or some dirt or some air is a thing in a much different way, unified only by accidental boundaries, indifferent to being divided or heaped together, at work only in some one local motion, up or down. Which is the aberration, life or non-life?

For Aristotle the choice need not be made, since the distinction between the two forms of being only results from a confusion. Flesh, blood, bone, and hair would seem inorganic and inanimate if they were not organized into and animated as, say, a cat. But earth, air, fire, and water, all of it, is always organized into and animate as the cosmos. The heavens enclose an organized body which has a size, a shape, and a hierarchical structure all of which it maintains by ceaseless, concerted activity. You

may think that in believing this, Aristotle betrays an innocence which we cannot recover. But not only Aristotle and Ptolemy, but also Copernicus and Kepler believed the visible heaven to be a cosmos, and not only they, but also, amazingly, Newton himself. In our century, Einstein calculated the volume of the universe, and cosmology has once again become a respectable scientific pursuit. Moderns, for whom the spherical motion of the heavens no longer indicates that the heavens have boundaries, draw the same conclusion from the fact that there is darkness. Anyone who would take the assertion that his outlook is modern to include the denial that there is a cosmos would make a very shallow claim, one having more to do with poetic fashion than with reasoned conviction. The question of the cosmos has not been made obsolete, and the very least we must admit is that the appearance of an inorganic, inanimate nature is not conclusive and would result from our human-sized perspective whether there is a cosmos or not.

If the world is a cosmos, then it is one more instance of the kind of being that belongs to every animal and plant in it. And if that is so, there is nothing left to display any other kind of being. Try it: take inventory. What is there? The color red is, only if it is the color of some thing. Color itself is, only if it is some one color, and the color of a thing. The relation "taller than" is, only if it is of two or more things. What has being but is not a thing must depend on some thing for its being. But on the other hand a mere thing, mere matter as we call it, using the word differently than Aristotle ever does, is an impossibility too. Relatively inert, rock-like being is the being of a part of what comes only in wholes—cosmos, plant, or animal. And all man-made things must borrow their material from natural things and their very holding-together from the natural tendencies of the parts of the cosmos. To be is to be alive; all other being is borrowed being. Any comprehensive account of things must come to terms with the special being of animals and plants: for Lucretius, living things are not marvels but a problem which he solves by dissolving them into the vast sea of inert purposelessness. For Aristotle, as for Plato, wonder is not a state to be dissolved but a beckoning to be followed, and for Aristotle the wonderful animals and plants point the way to being itself, to that being *qua* being which is the source of all being, for we *see* it in the world in them and only in them.

Thus when Aristotle begins in Book 7 of the *Metaphysics* to ask what makes a thing a thing, he narrows the question to apply only to living things. All other being is, in one way or another, their effect. He is asking for their cause. At that point, his inquiry into the causes and sources of being itself, simply as being, merges with the inquiry in Book 2 of his *Physics*, where the question is, What is nature? The answer, as well, must be the same, and just as Aristotle concludes that nature is form, he concludes that being is form. Does the material of an animal make it what it is? Yes, but it cannot be the entire or even principal cause. If there is anything that is not simply th sum of its parts, it is an animal. It is continually making itself, by snatching suitable material from its environment and discarding unsuitable material. Add some sufficiently unsuitable material, like arsenic, and the sum of parts remains, but the animal ceases to be. The whole which is not accounted for by the enumeration of its parts is the topic of the last section of the *Theaetetus*, where Socrates offers several playful images of that kind of being: a wagon, a melody, the number six, and the example discussed at most length, which Aristotle borrows, the syllable.

Aristotle insists that the syllable is never the sum of its letters. Socrates, of course, argues both sides of the question, and Theaetetus agrees both times. Let's try it ourselves. Take the word *put*, p-u-t. Voice the letters separately, as well as you can, and say them in succession, as rapidly as you can. I think you will find that, as long as you attempt to add sound to sound, you will have a grunt surrounded by two explosions of breath. When you voice the whole syllable as one sound, the u is already present when you begin sounding the p, and the t sound is already shaping the u. Try to pronounce the first two letters and add the third as an afterthought, and you will get two sounds. I have tried all this, and think it's true, but you must decide for yourself. Aristotle says that the syllable is the letters, plus something else besides; Socrates calls the something else a form, while Aristotle calls it the thinghood of the thing. When I pronounce the syllable *put*, I must have in mind the whole syllable in its wholeness before I can voice any of its parts in such a way as to make them come out parts of *it*.

Now a syllable is about as transitory a being as one could imagine: it is made of breath, and it is gone as soon as it is uttered. But a craftsman works the same way as a maker of syllables. If he simply begins nailing and gluing together pieces of wood, metal, and leather, he is not likely to end up with a wagon; to do so, he must have the whole shape and work of the wagon in mind in each of his joinings and fittings. Even so, when he is finished, what he has produced is only held together by nails and glue. As soon as it is made, the wagon begins falling apart, and it does so the more, the more it is used.

All the more perplexing then, is the animal or plant. It is perpetually being made and re-made after the form of its species, yet there is no craftsman at work on it. It is a composite of material and form, yet it is the material in it that is constantly being used up and replaced, while the form remains intact. The form is not in any artist's imagination, nor can it be an accidental attribute of its material. In the *Physics*, nature was traced back to form, and in the first half of the *Metaphysics* all being is traced to the same source. But what is form? Where is it? Is it a cause or is it caused? Most important of all, does it have being alone, on its own, apart from bodies? Does it emerge from the world of bodies, or is a body a thing impossible to be unless a form is somehow already present for it to have? Or is there something specious about the whole effort to make

form *either* secondary to material or primary? Are they perhaps equal and symmetrical aspects of being, inseparable, unranked? Just as ultimate or first material, without any characteristics supplied by form, cannot be, why should not a pure form, not the form *of* anything, be regarded as its opposite pole and as equally impossible? Or have we perhaps stumbled on a nest of unanswerable questions? If form is the first principle of the science of physics, might it not be a first principle simply, behind which one cannot get, to which one may appeal for explanation but about which one cannot inquire? Aristotle says that if there were not things apart from bodies, physics would be first philosophy. But he calls physics *second* philosophy, and half the *Metaphysics* lies on the other side of the questions we have been posing. It consists in the uncovering of beings not disclosed to our senses, beings outside of and causal with respect to what we naively and inevitably take to be the whole world.

Aristotle marks the center and turning point of the *Metaphysics* with these words: "One must inquire about (form), for this is the greatest impasse. Now it is agreed that some of what is perceptible are *things*, and so one must search first among these. For it is preferable to proceed *toward* what is better known. For learning occurs in all things in this way: through what is by nature less known toward the things more known. And just as in matters of action the task is to make the things that are good completely *be* good for each person, from out of the things that seem good to each, so also the task here is, from out of the things more known to one, to make the things known by nature known to him. Now what is known and primary to each of us is often known slightly, and has little or nothing of being; nevertheless, from the things poorly known but known to one, one must try to know the things that are known completely" (1029a 33—b 11). The forest is dark, but one cannot get out of it without passing through it, carefully, calmly, attentively. It will do no good to move in circles. The passage just quoted connects with the powerful first sentence of the *Metaphysics*: "All human beings are by nature stretched out toward a state of knowing." Our natural condition is one of frustration, of being unable to escape a task of which the goal is out of reach and out of sight. Aristotle here likens our frustration as theoretical beings to our condition as practical beings: unhappiness has causes—we *achieve* it by seeking things—and if we can discover what we were seeking we might be able to make what is good ours. Similarly, if we cannot discern the goal of wisdom, we can at least begin examining the things that stand in our way.

The next section of the *Metaphysics*, from Book 7, Chapter 4, through Book 9, is the beginning of an intense forward motion. These books are a painstaking clarification of the being of the things disclosed to our senses. It is here that Aristotle most heavily uses the vocabulary that is most his own, and everything he accomplishes in these books depends on the self-evidence of the meanings of these expressions. It is these books especially which Latinizing translators turn into gibberish. Words like essence, individual, and actuality must either be vague or be given arbitrary definitions. The words Aristotle uses are neither vague nor are they conceptual constructions; they call forth immediate, direct experiences which one must have at hand to see what Aristotle is talking about. They are not the kinds of words that books can explain; they are words of the kind that people must share before there can be books. That is why understanding a sentence of Aristotle is so often something that comes suddenly, in an insight that seems discontinuous from the puzzlement that preceded it. It is simply a matter of directing one's gaze.

We must try to make sense of Books 7–9 because they are crucial to the intention of the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle has an argument independent of those books, which he makes in Book 8 of the *Physics* and uses again in Book 12 of the *Metaphysics* that there must be an immortal, unchanging being, ultimately responsible for all wholeness and orderliness in the sensible world. And he is able to go on in Book 12 to discover a good deal about that being. One could, then, skip from the third chapter of Book 7 to Book 12, and, having traced being to form, trace form back to its source. Aristotle would have done that if his whole intention had been to establish that the sensible world has a divine source, but had he done so he would have left no foundation for reversing the dialectical motion of his argument to understand the things in the world on the basis of their sources. Books 7–9 provide that foundation.

The constituents of the world we encounter with our senses are not sensations. The sensible world is not a mosaic of sensible qualities continuous with or adjacent to one another, but meets our gaze organized into things which stand apart, detached from their surroundings. I can indicate one of them to you by the mere act of pointing, because it has its own boundaries and holds them through time. I need not trace out the limits of the region of the visual field to which I refer your attention, because the thing thrusts itself out from, holds itself aloof from what is visible around it, making that visible residue mere background. My pointing therefore has an object, and it is *an* object because it keeps being itself, does not change randomly or promiscuously like Proteus, but holds together sufficiently to remain the very thing at which I pointed. This way of being, Aristotle calls being a "this". If I want to point out to you just this red of just this region of this shirt, I will have to do a good deal more than just point. A "this" as Aristotle speaks of it is what comes forth to meet the act of pointing, is that for which I need not point and say "not that or that or that but just this," but need do nothing but point, since *it* effects its own separation from what it is not.

A table, a chair, a rock, a painting—each is a this, but a living thing is a this in a special way. It is the author of its own thisness. It appropriates from its surroundings, by eating and drinking and breathing, what it organizes into and holds together as itself. This work of self-separation

from its environment is never finished but must go on without break if the living thing is to be at all. Let us consider as an example of a living this, some one human being. Today his skin is redder than usual, because he has been in the sun; there is a cut healing on his hand because he chopped onions two days ago; he is well educated, because, five years ago, his parents had the money and taste to send him to Harvard. All these details, and innumerably many more, belong to this human being. But in Aristotle's way of speaking, the details I have named are incidental to him: he is not sunburned, wounded on the hand, or Harvard-educated because he is a human being. He is each of those things because his nature bumped into that of something else that left him with some mark, more or less intended, more or less temporary, but in any case aside from what he is on his own, self-sufficiently. What he is on his own, as a result of the activity that makes him be at all, is: two-legged, sentient, breathing, and all the other things he is simply as a human being. There is a difference between all the things he happens to be and the things he necessarily is on account of what he is. Aristotle formulates the latter, the kind of being that belongs to a thing not by happenstance but inevitably, as the "what it kept on being in the course of being at all" for a human being, or a duck, or a rosebush. The phrase *ti ĕn einai* is Aristotle's answer to the Socratic question, *ti esti*? What is a giraffe? Find some way of articulating all the things that every giraffe always is, and you will have defined the giraffe. What each of them is throughout its life, is the product at any instant for any one of them, of the activity that is causing it to be. That means that the answer to the question, What is a giraffe? and the answer to the question, What is this giraffe? are the same. Stated generally, Aristotle's claim is that a this, which is in the world on its own, self-sufficiently, has a what-it-always-was-to-be, and *is* just its what-it-always-was-to-be. This is not a commonplace thought, but it is a comprehensible one; compare it with the translators' version, "a *per-se* individual is identical with its essence."

The living thing as it is present to my looking seems to be richer, fuller, more interesting than it can possibly be when it is reduced to a definition in speech, but this is a confusion. All that belongs to the living thing that is not implied by the definition of its species belongs to it externally, as a result of its accidental interactions with the other things in its environment. The definition attempts to penetrate to what it is in itself, by its own activity of making itself be whole and persist. There is nothing fuller than the whole, nothing richer than the life which is the winning and expressing of that wholeness, nothing more interesting than the struggle it is always waging unnoticed, a whole world of priority deeper and more serious than the personal history it must drag along with the species-drama it is constantly enacting. The reduction of the living thing to what defines it is like the reduction of a rectangular block of marble to the form of Hermes: less is more. Strip away the accretion of mere facts, and what is left is that without which even those facts could not have gained admittance into the world: the forever vulnerable foundation of all that is in the world, the shaping, ruling form, the incessant maintenance of which is the only meaning of the phrase self-preservation. Indeed even the bodily material of the living thing is present in the world only as active, only as forming itself into none of the other things it might have been, but just this one thoroughly defined animal or plant. And this, finally, is Aristotle's answer to the question, What is form? Form is material at work according to a persisting definiteness of kind. Aristotle's definition of the soul in *De anima*, soul is the being-at-work-staying-the-same of an organized body, becomes the definition of form in Book 8 of the *Metaphysics*, and is, at that stage of the inquiry, his definition of being.

Book 9 spells out the consequences of this clarification of form. Form cannot be derivative from or equivalent with material, because material on its own must be mere possibility. It cannot enter the world until it has achieved definiteness by getting to work in some way, and it cannot even be thought except as the possibility of some form. Books 7–9 demonstrate that materiality is a subordinate way of being. The living body does not bring form into the world, it must receive form to come into the world. Form is primary and causal, and the original source of all being in the sensible world must be traced beyond the sensible world, to that which confers unity on forms themselves. If forms had no integrity of their own, the world and things could not hang together and nothing would be. At the end of Book 9, the question of being has become the question of formal unity, the question, What makes each form one? In the woven texture of the organization of the *Metaphysics*, what comes next, at the beginning of Book 10, is a laying out of all the ways things may be one. Glue, nails, and rope are of no use for the problem at hand, nor, any longer, are natural shapes and motions, which have been shown to have a derivative sort of unity. All that is left in Aristotle's array of possibilities is the unity of that of which the thinking or the knowing is one.

This thread of the investigation, which we may call for convenience the biological one, converges in Book 12 with a cosmological one. The animal and plant species take care of their own perpetuation by way of generation, but what the parents pass on to the offspring is an identity which must hold together thanks to a timeless activity of thinking. The cosmos holds together in a different way: it seems to be literally and directly eternal by way of a ceaseless repetition of patterns of locomotion. An eternal motion cannot result from some other motion, but must have an eternal, unchanging cause. Again, Aristotle lays out all the possibilities. What can cause a motion without undergoing a motion? A thing desired can, and so can a thing thought. Can you think of a third? Aristotle says that there are only these two, and that, moreover, the first reduces to the second. When I desire an apple it is the fleshy apple and not the thought of it toward which I move, but it is the thought or imagining of the fleshy ap-

ple that *moves* me toward the apple. The desired object causes motion only *as* an object of thought. Just as the only candidate left to be the source of unity of form among the animals and plants was the activity of thinking, so again the only possible unmoved source for the endless circlings of the stars is an eternal activity of thinking. Because it is deathless and because the heavens and nature and all that is depend upon it, Aristotle calls this activity God. Because it is always altogether at work, nothing that is thought by it is ever outside or apart from it: it is of thinking, simply. Again, because it is always altogether at work, nothing of it is ever left over outside of or apart from its work of thinking: it is thinking, simply. It is the pure holding-together of the pure holdable-together, activity active, causality caused. The world is, in all its being most deeply, and in its deepest being wholly, intelligible. So far is Aristotle from simply assuming the intelligibility of things, that he requires twelve books of argument to account for it. All being is dependent on the being of things; among things, the artificial are derived from the natural; because there is a cosmos, all natural things have being as living things; because all living things depend on either a species-identity or an eternal locomotion, there must be a self-subsisting activity of thinking.

The fact that there are a Book 13 and a Book 14 to the *Metaphysics* indicates that, in Aristotle's view, the question of being has not yet undergone its last transformation. With the completion of Book 12, the question of being becomes: What is the definition of the world? What is the primary intelligible structure that implies all that is permanent in the world? Books 13 and 14 of the *Metaphysics* examine the only two answers that anyone has ever proposed to that question outside of myths. They are: that the divine thinking is a direct thinking of all the animal and plant species, and that it is a thinking of the mathematical sources of things. The conclusions of these two books are entirely negative. The inquiry into being itself cannot come to rest by transferring to the divine source the species-identities which constitute the world, nor can they be derived from their mathematical aspects. Aristotle's final transformation of the question of being is into a question. Books 13 and 14 are for the sake of rescuing the question as one which does not and cannot yield to a solution but insists on being faced and thought directly. Repeatedly, through the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says that the deepest things must be simple. One cannot speak the truth about them, nor even ask a question about them, because they have no parts. They have no articulation in speech, but only contact with that which thinks. The ultimate question of the *Metaphysics*, which is at once What is all being at its roots? and What is the life of God?, and toward which the whole *Metaphysics* has been designed to clear the way, takes one beyond the limits of speech itself. The argument of the *Metaphysics* begins from our direct encounter with the sensible world, absorbs that world completely into speech, and carries its speech to the threshold of that on which world and speech depend. The shape of the book is a zig-zag, repeatedly encountering the inexpressible simple things and veering away. By climbing to that life which is the being-at-work of thinking, and then ending with a demonstration of what that life is not, Aristotle leaves us to disclose that life to ourselves in the only way possible, in the privacy of lived thinking. The *Metaphysics* is not an incomplete work: it is the utmost gift that a master of words can give.

In the Audience

Robert Roth

For Pete Wilson

1

A man in his late forties sits on a bench in Washington Square Park. He is disheveled and out of sorts. He gestures casually in the air as he makes his point. Ideol, ideology, ideol, he says over and over again. His manner is that of a teacher in front of a small class. Or that of a man, a man of opinion, being interviewed on television. A woman not yet old rocks violently back and forth a few benches away trying to release some violent inner pain.

2

It is Christmas time. On sale, green shower soap in the shape of a microphone.

3

Maxwell throws Allison's book aside. It is a study on language. He is jealous and in a rage. Perceptions formalized. Thoughts codified. Maxwell Berman cannot follow what is being said. His mind is in a blur. A real emptiness is slipping through those structures, he thinks, angrily. No, a passionate heart is beating through those structures. His own heart beats wildly. And he lies stricken, almost as if in love.

Inside a car. A scene remembered. In the front seat a dialogue. Karla, dark, intense, a fine public speaker, turns to her friend Norman and says, "You can always interpret what I have to say. You make clear sense of it." Norman suddenly pink faced answers, "You're the one with so much to say."

Short little outbursts. Short political essays. That is the limit of Maxwell's work. A year of thought into thirty words, maybe three hundred, maybe twelve hundred. And the words definitely need an easily recognizable context to give them any sort of meaning. For by themselves they do not create a world. He cannot "invent" a world. In such a way is his imagination limited. So he cannot call himself a poet. He is a marginal polemicist, attached to the moment, engaged in obscure skirmishes.

Maxwell picks up Allison's book again. Why does she want him for a friend? Why would any of them want to know him? It was as if he were a girl who had learned how to flatter, smile, be bright. And they could imagine him as they wished him to be. Those of the world of books. Resigned caretakers of Knowledge, he thinks; suddenly angry again. Why do they take it for granted that he knows what they know?

Maybe they are drawn to him the way social scientists are drawn to shrewd peasants or bright-eyed black children: to accummulate and codify and pepper their works with vignettes and little quotations of life. He is repelled and he is frightened. He wants their acceptance.

4

The shutters are closed bringing the room into darkness. "For final relaxation, everyone in the corpse position," the voice of the Yoga instructor, authoritative, reassuring. "On your back, eyes closed, feet a foot and a half apart, arms slightly away from your sides, palms up, turn your head from side to side, until comfortable." The voice changes: "By the process of auto-suggestion..." It is no longer authoritative, rather it is mechanically commanding. A mind control machine, thinks Maxwell. More precisely it is as if a small cassette recorder had been implanted in his brain. "By the process of auto-suggestion you will relax, completely relax. My toes will relax," the voice continues, " my toes will relax, my toes are relaxed. My ankles will relax, my ankles will relax..."

Allison lies alongside Maxwell. Her toenails are painted bright orange. The room is at rest. Maxwell lies still, sweat from his forehead running down the sides of his face. Subtle smells released by the sweat from his groin enter his nostrils. Maxwell remembers resting after masturbation: Licking my semen from my fingers, I relax, completely relax.

But for the voice, the room is silent. And the voice soon will disappear. This is the part of the class Maxwell most looks forward to. The *asanas* are arranged to bring one into a state where consciousness is altered. And the room itself is transformed into a sanctuary, a place for meditation, reflection. Occasionally the silence will be broken, and Maxwell jarred, by a loud noise from the street or by the sweet chiming front door bell of the *ashram* itself.

Allison's thin arms rest by her side. Her fingers are relaxed, completely relaxed. She is aware of the absence of pain. Deeply etched lines on her forehead disappear during final relaxation. Life force energy flows through her body and she feels herself very young and supple.

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From the very first moment they met, Maxwell had felt a powerful, though peculiarly limited, almost compulsive pull towards Allison. It was as if Allison had drilled two fingers through his chest, touching his heart but for an instant, then pulled her fingers out as quickly as she could, leaving the part that she touched burning with love. And so a part of his heart no bigger than a quarter was totally in love with Allison. And for the full year they have known each other it has never increased or diminished in size.

During the first months of their friendship Maxwell and Allison would meet every couple of weeks for half an hour or forty-five minutes, usually in the late afternoon in a coffee house or a restaurant. They would meet in a space in Allison's tight, carefully structured schedule. Maxwell who had less to do could more or less be the one to accommodate.

Their meetings were often tense and peculiar. They would speak past each other. They would both be dull. Allison would look up at the ceiling. Maxwell would talk past her shoulder. Allison would withdraw. Maxwell would grow panicky and start speaking compulsively, speaking loudly with uncharacteristic bravado. And the more Maxwell would talk the more Allison would withdraw. And the more she would withdraw the more he would talk. Allison would feel she was drowning or she was being consumed. Once, in the street, she grabbed her chest and grew faint. "Please, no more," she demanded. Whenever he left her Maxwell would be relieved. It's not worth it, he would think. And then half an hour later he would be flooded with affection and longing.

The tension between them in part was over aspiration and life style. Allison, the author of a book on linguistics, though in the grip of a tenure struggle, was in a partial way being rewarded for her work. She felt, however, that she did not allow herself free rein, either in her work, for her theories always seemed to stop at the point of breakthrough, or in her life style, which was subtly but significantly upwardly mobile. Allison in short was the very good student who had grown up to be the very good scholar. In turn she was to receive the proper social rewards. She was extremely competent in her work and she would defend her areas of competence with a ferocity that she hated, for it symbolized her own complicity in the limits placed on her imagination. She could not allow herself to imagine herself as more than competent. She was the Prisoner of Competence. She wanted to break free.

Maxwell in turn was not able to write a book or produce a body of work. He didn't even try. He was the poor student who had either been broken by the system or had somehow managed to cut himself free from its socialization and was brilliant and daring. His essays were usually very short, condensed, and often beautiful. They were small meditations. To Maxwell they seem alternately slight and deep. He wrote them only occasionally. There were long periods of inertia.

"You are either a writer or you are not," someone once told him. "And you write thirty variations of the same fantasy," he replied, rupturing their friendship.

His short pieces, while having a validity of their own, symbolized for Maxwell his own imprisonment. They legitimated his passivity. They suggested unusual potential and yet they hid the full range of Maxwell's concerns and understandings which if revealed might be less significant than he wished to imagine.

And Maxwell always imagined himself on a grand scale. Important thinker, huge recognition, tremendous respect and influence.

Maxwell and Allison, two talented insecure people, symbiotically locked, would meet fairly regularly. One day, Maxwell blew up. "I'm always in the interstices of your life," he said with a flourish. "I'm neither your friend nor your colleague. I'm neither in your public life nor your private life."

Allison answered, "There are certain things, very intimate things, that I can tell you. Other things I make a conscious decision not to. It must be painful and confusing. Our conversations are stilted. There is something twisted in our friendship." And with a flourish of her own, "From now on I will be consistently less intimate."

Except for an occasional chance encounter where they would both be polite and formal, Allison and Maxwell did not speak for two months. One cold dismal afternoon marching in a demonstration Allison came over to Maxwell and after a few moments asked him whether he would like to take Yoga with her. "It might help center you," she said with a smile. She herself had been taking it for a couple of months and was feeling very good about it.

Maxwell came to Yoga initially to be near Allison. But their meetings in class have been only random and occasional. Maxwell came alone more often than not and the classes themselves have taken on a certain importance.

There are moments of unease, even dread. He always enters the room with caution. Painful memories surface as body tension is released. Maxwell is not very loose yet or supple. He has trouble with the *asanas*. His legs feel like match sticks, thin, brittle. And he can feel naked in his awkwardness.

"This is not a competitive environment," an instructor inevitably says when either Maxwell or someone else is particularly clumsy or slow. And Maxwell can always hear the unease just barely concealed by these words. The instructors' startling grace, thinks Maxwell, is not the result of inner quiet but is achieved by sheer will. They fear abandonment as persons and are ashamed of their bodies.

The experience in Yoga is charged and dangerous. Bodies sweaty, vulnerable. Intense awareness and the suggestion of common understanding. Something powerful is taking place. Strange unexpected feelings surface and consciousness is altered. Possibilities for betrayal hang heavy in the room. A chance word, a foolish observation, can be particularly painful. Comments such as, "We are not a Mickey Mouse organization. The weekend retreat is well organized and efficient." Or, "Yoga sure can make

your day," can be particularly jarring. They underline the split in consciousness of people who are deep within a common experience.

Contemplation, silence, community, a dark sexuality are at the core of Maxwell's social vision. Fear of death and of life freeze the body and the spirit. Destruction, war machines, grinding social injustice, brutal nation states grow out of this terror. And the social structures take on a life and history of their own, and constrict human and social possibilities even further. In Yoga, as in absorbing conversation, or in an intense sexual encounter, one briefly is able to glimpse a state different from what is. It is terrifying and often not very clear. But one has stepped outside everyday experience and consciousness. Things can be different. And even if only that has become clear, something significant and dangerous has taken place.

And so when Maxwell distances himself too sharply from the people in the room, seizing on their vulgarity or their narrowness, he does so as much out of his own fear of illumination as out of a desire to protect himself from false experience.

Our fingers will touch, our fingers will touch, our fingers touch, a hidden smile forms inside his restful face.

Loud disco music from the street, loud frantic voices from the street break into the room. And across Maxwell's mind an exuberant Christopher Lasch, wearing silver pants and a scarlet jersey, skates and dances to the pounding disco beat. And as suddenly as he had appeared, he disappears as the music and voices fade up the block.

And somewhere in the corner of his mind a long forgotten scene emerges. And he watches as it passes before him.

A fund raising event for the then faltering now defunct Free University. Allison, whom he had not yet met, was being introduced by Joan McBride, economist, workplace organizer, movement heavy.

"I would like to introduce my very dear friend who will sing some songs that she has written."

They theorize, they organize, and they sing their very own songs Maxwell remembers thinking.

Allison's hair, dark blonde, was cut much shorter then. He noticed her gold wedding ring as she played her guitar. She wore a dark blue work shirt with a red star on her collar.

Maxwell remembered how uneasy he felt as he watched her. He hoped her songs would be good. He hoped her songs would be bad. Never quite comfortable with the people at the school, he would often make clumsy attempts at friendship. He, however, was very difficult. He was insistent, often unyielding. He would polarize and provoke. He felt beleaguered. But if there was one thing that defined the Free University it was that everyone felt as if they were part of a beleaguered minority. There was much unease and rancor. But little lasting bitterness. People without much social power had gathered to form a place to share ideas, study, and in some cases work out political strategy. The people were often paranoid and defensive. And Maxwell was no exception. He admired some of the people, basically he respected everyone, but more often than not he was in a state of agitation.

Maxwell remembers how his mind strained that night as he juggled hollow perceptions, idle perceptions to make himself feel important.

Wedding ring. Worldly. Adult. Domesticated. Complacent. Worn out. Defeated. Red Star. Adventure. Break from domestic stranglehold. Identification with people in struggle. Anger at injustice. Sexy. Sexy symbol of entrenched state power.

The event took place three years ago, two years before he met Allison, one year before the break up of her eight year marriage. It is the impressions of her songs, more than the actual words, that have remained with him.

The songs could not be easily categorized. They had within them conflicting strains. One would emerge, then fade, quickly replaced by another. It was as if some conflict and struggle were taking place within the songs themselves. The songs would cut deep and then pull back, becoming almost compulsively lighthearted. Her songs had a sad playful humor, but it was humor more debunking than radically subversive. Maxwell sensed at the time a tension between an almost timid venturing forth and a wild yet still inhibited rage.

Later in the night the room broke into a chorus of song. Folk songs, political songs, popular songs, religious songs. As is often the case, the folk and political songs were sung with an earnest, animated enthusiasm. And the pop and religious songs with an ironic, self-satisfied, near manic frenzy. There was plenty to drink, dope to smoke, food to eat.

And in walked Joe DePerri. Short and round, rosy cheeked from the cold winter night, Joe DePerri joined the chorus of voices. Someone handed him a beer. "Sonorous music," he once wrote in an essay on mass culture, "maintains routine perception by being sweet and soothing." Joe DePerri took a drink from his beer, hitched up his pants, deepened his voice, giving it a rough edge. But his voice soon became melodious and high pitched. Occasionally it would crack. And he would collect himself and his voice would deepen then grow high again.

Joe DePerri's presence charged the room. Singing became more animated. People more alert. This was often the case. Even rooms that were dull often became transformed when he entered.

Joe DePerri had a galvanizing personality. He set things in motion. He started magazines, political organizations. He helped start the Free University. Joe DePerri was a fine public speaker, a good careful inspiring teacher, with an acute social imagination and powerful analytic gifts. He had if not a deeply poetic nature, a forceful and almost joyous polemical style. His written work could be dense, even labored, but more often than not it had the feel of a working class ballad. If there were one major flaw in his character, it would be that he was morally obtuse. He could not be trusted.

Maxwell enjoyed watching Joe DePerri when a serious new problem arose: sensing the confusion and the shifting opinion in the room, Joe DePerri would panic at his loss of control, and then make up arguments on the run, leapfrogging ahead to resume his place of leadership. There would be a slight break in his voice, a slight color to his cheeks, revealing to Maxwell just when Joe DePerri had lost his integrity.

Round, long-winded, shiny-faced men have always had a special place in Maxwell's heart. He would, for example, make it a point to be home whenever Hubert Humphrey would defend the Vietnam War on television. Something in his enthusiasm, in his earnestness, would draw him to the man. Hubert Humphrey would say and, more importantly, believe whatever it was that was required of him. He was in the fullest sense the suppliant. Maxwell imagined him as the servant of the people.

One night in a heavy rainstorm, Hubert Humphrey greeted President Johnson at the airport. He stood there so erect, holding his umbrella over President Johnson's head, the rain pouring down his beautiful wet face, the floodlights shining off his shiny bald head. He had given himself over totally to his President. Hubert Humphrey looked almost saintly that night, deeply transformed by sacrifice.

Joe DePerri, charismatic, inspiring, morally obtuse, occasionally abusive, generated resentment as well as admiration. People felt manipulated by him. "It's as if we were puppets on a string, here to play out his fantasies," was a common complaint.

In one rare and revealing outburst, Joe DePerri answered a room full of people angry at what they perceived to be his cavalier treatment of them by saying, "The movement is fragmented and there's no sense of community. I know almost everyone here. I brought you all together and there is no other way you would have met. This project grew out of my imagination and out of my inspiration. It had to grow out of someone's imagination. I'm limited, I'm just a person. This project can be redeemed, transformed by all of you working together. I'm tired. And God damn it leave me alone." And he dashed out of the room and sat on the steps trembling.

Arbyne all night stood off to one side. She did not join the singing. Looking through slightly tinted glasses, her eyes, clear and excited, would dart curiously from person to person, taking in everyone in the room. Her curly hair, black and gray, formed a bluish halo around her.

The communal singing ended. Allison had left much earlier, but she was not all that important to Maxwell that night. People moved about starting conversations. Others went to another room where there was music to dance to. Joe DePerri moved from person to person, speaking intimately and with animation. Each conversation, however brief, would end only after a small but significant catharsis. Arbyne came up to him. He greeted her warmly. "What did they think about my piece?" she asked before even saying hello. "We decided that it wasn't quite right for our purposes," he said officially.

"What do you mean 'we'. Two days ago you said that you liked it. Well I'm upset."

"That's tough," he said suddenly his face freezing into the face of a tough guy. He grew silent as he savored the force in his voice.

Arbyne wanted to cry but wouldn't. The thought of him trying to console her, of his putting his arm around her made her almost shake with disgust.

"I'll bring it somewhere else then."

This is not what he wanted. "If you only rework it," said Joe DePerri. He panicked, his voice softened. "I think you just have to fix up the beginning."

Liar, she thought. Her head pounded. She said, "I like the beginning. And I don't want to talk about it anymore. Besides I don't like you."

Joe DePerri grew despondent and he started to speak very fast, charmingly.

Arbyne felt herself weaken. She tightened up her body and her face became a mixture of anger and disdain.

Joe DePerri crumbled into sudden depression. Arbyne walked away. Joe DePerri looked quickly, anxiously around the room. He settled upon a young man, a psychiatrist, and soon they became locked, absorbed, in conversation.

"Feel the awareness come back into your body," a distant voice reaches Maxwell. "Everybody sit up. Om. Om. Om. Om Shanti, shanti, shanti." One final prayer. Maxwell's eyes are still half closed and he smiles at Allison. It is not so much desire he feels, thinks Maxwell, but the need to be near her, wake up next to her. Still imagining himself just waking up, he brushes her shoulder as he passes. Allison quickly thanks the instructor for a very fine class. Whoever is dressed first will wait for the other on the stoop outside.

5

Allison, alone in her bed, strokes her belly gently. She touches a nipple playing with it until it is firm, licks her fingers, sucking them half unconsciously.

It is still raining hard as it had all weekend. "To be in bed with someone on such a rainy day, huddled together under the covers doubly emphasizes the idea of shelter," she thinks as she pulls the covers over her head. "Lovers always rush to meet in the monsoon season. It is a relief from the barrenness."

Her face flushes with sudden erotic feeling. And as suddenly she feels broken, dried out. "Burned out," she thinks. Pain grips her stomach. And she does not want to come out from under the covers.

The paper she will deliver comes into focus. Important faculty members will be there. To displease them might jeopardize even further her chances for tenure. But some students of hers will be there as well as some faculty members who support her. She won't be totally alone.

Her hair feels stringy, damp. The fingers on her hand

ache. Arthritic hands and I'm so young. It can only get worse. And the pain in her fingers, though not often severe, appears to foreshadow a lifetime of pain. It is something she does not often think about. She has put it to one side. But it is there, muted but continuous.

The weekend had been one of controlled panic. She would look at her paper, then type up whole new pages at a time, only to discard what she had just written. She would read sections of her paper into her tape recorder, and play it back imagining herself a member of the tenure committee, sitting in the lecture hall, holding the frightened candidate's future in her hands. And she even read the beginning of her paper into her own telephone answering machine. "This is Allison Kramer, the subject of my paper is patterns of speech differences according to sex and class in the urban Northeast, if you wish to critique me please wait until you hear the tone." She had actually done this and would not answer her phone for five hours. She smoked dope on and off all weekend. Her mind would float out into reverie and then crash back into anxiety.

Allison washes her hair, combing it out slowly, relaxing herself. She smokes a cigarette, and then puts it out quickly. She makes toast and tea. She puts on a little eyeshadow, a little rouge and some lipstick. She puts on hooped earrings, a silver necklace and an elegant if not extravagant blouse. She flirts with herself in the mirror, touches her cheek. Allison's hands begin to tremble. The pain in her fingers increases, an intense throbbing pain. She swallows two aspirin. Throws on her raincoat. And leaves for school.

On the subway Allison carefully observes the passengers. She divides them into age, sexual, and racial groupings. She imagines whom she would like to sleep with, what combinations of people and where. She knows the stations by heart, but starts testing her memory. She feels a brief satisfaction as each predicted station comes into view. It was a game she had played with her brother as a child. They would compete with each other over whose memory was better. They liked to make faces at the passengers on the subway and at each other. Their faces so beautiful and rubbery.

Allison's mind unexpectedly focuses on the last night she and Joe DePerri had ever spent together as lovers. It was not a love affair that she often thought about. It was brief and not very memorable or painful. And it had been well over a year since it ended. And now she can think only of that night. The scenes of that night replaying themselves with astonishing clarity. She has almost completely forgotton that they had been lovers. There is a casualness and affection and mutual regard that they now have for each other. But she feels bitter as she remembers that night.

Joe DePerri answered the door carrying a saucepan. I'll be with you in a minute, he said, rushing back into the kitchen. Allison walked into the living room, and she noticed herself gazing upon it as if for the first time. She had been there four or five times before. Now she was seeing it in a totally different light.

The tenure pressure had been severe that week. She had come here in order to be catered to, waited on, to luxuriate in being attended to. Joe DePerri had said, "Tonight you will just sit and relax. And you'll see what a really fine cook I am."

But Allison could not relax. She found herself rather detached and anthropologically observant. She looked around the room and for the first time had a real sense of unease. For the first time the bookshelves, the art objects, everything about the room seemed to be arranged for effect. The room in fact was impressive. Everything about it suggested a person of a genuinely serious and critical intelligence, a person of fine taste.

The books were arranged by topic. Excellent books, serious topics. Allison felt cold as she made her observations. The mahogany stained bookshelves were bracketed to the walls. The shelves on one wall contained fiction, both contemporary and classical, while on another wall were arranged scholarly and critical works of history and social science. Previously she had been impressed by the range and taste of his reading, but now she felt, and for reasons she could not fully understand, that there was something manipulative about it all. She tried to pull herself away from her perceptions. But she could not do so for more than a few seconds. She felt not so much that Joe DePerri was trying to manipulate her or any passing stranger into outright subservience, but rather as if the structure of the bookshelves provided a framework or scaffolding for his own egotism. This reflected not a conscious desire to control or manipulate, thought Allison, but rather a massive self-absorption whose effect was the same.

Allison thought of Joan McBride, whose books were piled helter-skelter on her bookshelves, other books lying on tables and chairs. And she thought of Joe DePerri's own work room, his bedroom with papers scattered on his desk, his clothes thrown on the floor and chairs. But it was the living room that he presented to the world. Allison became upset again. There is nothing wrong with beautiful books she told herself. His books are not detached from his main concerns, thought Allison, they are books that he has read, books that he has studied.

Joe DePerri called from the kitchen. "I'll talk to you in a minute," he said. "Why don't you pick out a record." She was relieved to be able to perform a task. But similar thoughts came to her as she attempted to choose a record. The records were not arranged in such impeccable order. But they were placed on a beautiful shelf. There were fewer records, but well chosen. The best jazz, best rock, best blues, best classical. Pairs of names as if mocking her flashed in front of Allison's eyes. Vivaldi and Mozart, Charles Mingus and Charlie Parker, Bessie Smith and Billie Holliday, Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones. A new thought made her smile: occasionally Joe DePerri would spend hours listening to records of social protest, mostly militant workers' ballads, and he would sing along with

them, his voice breaking as always whenever he would get too excited.

Allison picked Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons.*

"Oh, *The Four Seasons,*" Joe called from the kitchen. "I particularly like Neville Marriner's performance."

Allison checked the cover quickly with annoyance to see if it were the Neville Marriner recording. It was. She was both curious and upset, suspicious and off balance. Was he patronizing her, she wondered. Was he just showing off his general knowledge of music, or, as she wanted so badly to believe, was he just expressing simple enthusiasm about the recording?

She smoked a cigarette but could not listen to the music.

"I'm making lemon and garlic salad dressing. Come in and smell it as I put it together. I discovered the recipe just a couple of days ago."

Allison went into the kitchen. "Do you like your roast beef rare?" asked Joe.

"Yes," she answered.

Joe looked at the clock. "I'd better take it out within five minutes then. While I'm making the salad dressing do you think you could pull apart the lettuce leaves and slice the tomatoes?"

The roast beef, the fresh lemon and garlic, the olive oil carried her along with the impetus of their good smells. She found herself separating the lettuce leaves and quartering the tomatoes. He said he was going to do it all himself. "I'm going to do it all by myself from scratch," he had said. And for an intense moment, Allison felt resentful and constricted. But Joe looked so engaged and earnest, even loving, as he prepared his dinner for her. But the ambiguity of the situation did not leave her. For once she was aware of the disparity between Joe's genuine concern and interest and his massive egotism, subtly manipulative while hardly noticeable.

Allison had been uneasy in the living room, and now she was standing in the kitchen preparing the meal. She was confronted by false promises subtly broken. Allison turns over the phrase in her mind as she sits on the subway still not halfway to school.

"I spoke to Robert Laszlo," Joe DePerri said as they sat down to eat. "I told him how excited I was about your book. He told me that he remembered Fischer's review in my magazine and was interested in it. And he'd meant to get around to reading it. And now that I brought it up, he will definitely review it for *The Nation.*"

"Robert Laszlo will review my book," Allison screamed out, her whole face lighting up.

Joe smiled at her, a smile mixed with delight and pleasure.

So that's my reward for being a good lay. The thought sprang suddenly and unexpectedly. It almost choked her. God, that's unfair. And her face turned into a mask. But quickly the pleasure and excitement of Robert Laszlo reviewing her book returned.

Taking a chance, she asked, "Did you finally work things out with Arbyne?"

"She's a very bright women," answered Joe, "but she's being totally unreasonable."

"What do you mean?" asked Allison.

"Each new manuscript becomes crazier and crazier. A whole new section of this one is devoted to the occult and astrology. She calls them the female sciences. It's pseudo-spiritual nonsense. She won't change a sentence. And she's not writing metaphorically. She means every word of it."

"Well, I'm sure there is more to it than that."

"I don't care if there is more to it. It's regressive and it's empty."

Allison grew stone silent. You boorish pig, her mind screamed, any creative woman is going to be driven crazy in this culture.

As Allison now remembers her thoughts she is filled with shame. She had been thinking like a stupid social worker. Who was she to imagine Arbyne as crazy? Nine out of ten times Arbyne will make wild bizarre leaps and land on her head. Her theories are often half-baked and compulsively thrown out. But she has also illuminated the darkness, if only briefly, and she has penetrated, if only randomly, areas of concern seldom if ever explored.

Allison returns to that night.

"It will be a long hard haul," Joe said speaking of tenure. "The cutbacks, the firings, make each opening that much more precious and difficult to secure. As radicals and as Marxists it's difficult enough. They tell us," his voice grew indignant, "that our ideology," he said the word with a bitter mockery, "informs and distorts our objectivity. They have no ideology, right? Their ideological hegemony is so taken for granted. They think *that* is the world." Joe's face grew soft. "And as a woman," he continued, "it is doubly and triply oppressive. Only so many positions can be filled. No one will say it outright. But we all know that it's true."

"Well," he said trying to be kind, "security can be its own prison." He paused for a moment and then smiled. "Well, if you don't get it, you can always raise a family."

Allison laughed. She answered with a retort that she cannot remember.

And the next morning she woke all knotted inside.

Where did he get the nerve to put up bookshelves that would be so imposing. To have such impeccable taste. To know that it was Neville Marriner. He asks me over to dinner and I have to help him prepare the salad. I can always raise a family. Very, very funny.

Jokes like that blunt the edge of sexual hatred, thinks Allison as she nears her stop. They allow us to get through dangerous situations. But they camouflage the social conflict and they obscure the true extent of oppression. She thinks how often she would joke back, share a laugh, be petulant. But deep down she always felt humiliation and rage. Filled with embarrassment and self-loathing, she thinks of how often she has acquiesced to such a process.

One more relationship down the drain, Allison remembers thinking as she left Joe DePerri's apartment.

Allison pulls out the paper she is to deliver. This whole fucking nightmare is going to go on forever. Any mistake, a wrong word and it all can explode. She always has to be careful. She has to flatter but not be too obvious about it. Every moment she is on edge. Every step is like being on a minefield. Every sentence is a semantic minefield. She must mute her radical perceptions, reducing them to scattered insights. She must keep her prose stiff and dense and be scrupulous with her references. Why don't I ditch the whole thing, she constantly asks herself. But security is very important to her. She does not want to float, to flounder about. And jobs are not that easy to come by.

Allison has become edgy and paranoid. She read a crucial paragraph to four different friends. Three said it should stay in. One said that she should cut out the whole paragraph, that it was too politically charged. And Allison screamed that her friend was just out to kill her.

The rain has turned into a gentle drizzle. Somewhere between dream and nightmare Allison Kramer walks the five blocks to the campus. Twenty minutes early the lecture hall is already half filled.

6

Sarah Kendall is giving a reading. The crowd is steadily filling up the spacious auditorium of the Greenwich Village school. Maxwell Berman stands by the doors watching people as they enter.

"Are you still an intellectual?" Suzanne says approaching Maxwell. She leans forward, "Or are you now into using your hands?" She has always been this way. She would ask a question, aggressive and intimate and totally unpleasant. Suzanne's face looks gaunt and haunted. "God, she's aged," thinks Maxwell. He has not seen her during the two years since the Free University folded. "Some of us from the old school have taken over an old precinct house," says Suzanne. "We're going to build a garden on the roof." "That sounds nice," answers Maxwell, sneaking a look around the room wondering who else had come.

"I just recovered from a nervous breakdown," she continues. "The tranquilizers have dehydrated my body. I've lost twenty pounds" "Are you okay?" asks Maxwell, wishing she would leave. He knows he should feel concerned, but he can't. "Do you know that I just got out of the hospital," Suzanne says, moving to a new person. "I had a nervous breakdown. They put me on tranquilizers that dehydrated my body. I lost twenty pounds. Did you hear that we've renovated the old precinct house? We don't know whether we should concentrate on theory or practice. I think we should do both. Don't you?"

It is already twenty minutes after Sarah Kendall was scheduled to read.

"There's Joe DePerri," someone shouts out. Joe DePerri nods to the voice and scans the room.

Allison walks in with a group of friends. She waves casually to Maxwell. He has the feeling that she is still annoyed with him. He had spoken to her on the phone yesterday and read her a statement he had written. It called for the release of Dan White, the murderer of gay rights leader Harvey Milk, on the grounds that the type of hatred which leads to murdering "deviants" and the fear which leads to locking up murderers amount to the same thing. When Maxwell asked Allison if she would sign the statement she exclaimed, "God, Maxwell, you're always trying to provoke people. Well, this statement I'm not going to sign." Robert Laszlo also would not sign the statement. He told Maxwell that he didn't disagree with it, but he said that as a gay man he wanted to talk about institutionalized homophobia, not about the nature of punishment. Maxwell sees Joan McBride. He goes over to her and asks, "Have you read my Dan White statement?" "I thought it was basically amoral," she answers.

Her comment makes no sense. There is too much noise, too much activity to ask her what she means.

Sarah Kendall enters the auditorium. The applause is heartfelt. She responds to the greeting with a slight, almost timid wave. She seems both shy and overcome as she makes her way to the stage. Sarah smiles broadly to a friend, hugs two or three people, squeezes an arm. Throughout the room people turn to friends and say, "God, isn't she wonderful." Affection and love pour out to her as she approaches the microphone; there is a sense of well being. The people this night have come as much to celebrate her for the person she is as to hear her read. She is an artist of rare gifts and a public figure of rare courage. She speaks with wisdom and simplicity and this has endeared her to her public. And it is these very qualities that Maxwell Berman will focus on this night with such dark and bitter rage.

There is a terrible defensiveness, analyzes Maxwell, as she introduces the first story she is planning to read. He understands the source of her defensiveness all too well. The projected wisdom of her persona, like his own stumbling incoherence, protects her from the academicians and the intellectually accomplished; people she at once fears and is greatly drawn to. They in turn are often struck by her vitality and her intelligence. But she knows that she is not one of them; they fear her. And she herself fears her own vitality, thinks Maxwell. She has let her folksiness limit the full range of her subversive spirit.

When Sarah Kendall speaks, a simple anecdote, a shrug of the shoulder can unravel the most sophisticated apologetics for injustice and death. Yet somewhere within the simplicity of her manner there lies a rigid ideological mind, thinks Maxwell, a mind that negotiates its way through the world along a narrow corridor of concerns. And for Sarah Kendall to venture outside this narrow corridor causes her terrible anxiety. In the face of a politics that challenges her own, she can turn vicious.

Maxwell remembers a night many years before when Sarah Kendall was asked how young men should respond to the draft. Her voice grew thin as she answered. "It is our moral obligation to do whatever is necessary to stop this war. Look at the terrible sacrifices of the Vietnamese

people. It is a moral obligation for young men to turn in their draft cards." And her tone implied that there was something unforgiveably self-indulgent about not exposing oneself to danger in the struggle against injustice. Whether vicious or puritanical, it was very cruel, thinks Maxwell, suddenly re-experiencing the sense of guilt he had felt while listening to her answer. And he knew there would have been no way for him to challenge her that night without being humiliated, for Sarah Kendall, in moments of panic, could treat even people of vision as if they were agents of death.

The room has grown very hot. People throughout have remained very attentive, engaged in the experience, deeply responsive. And the more enthusiastic the response the more Maxwell withdraws into himself. Each turn of phrase repels him. Each word, each gesture, each response. The appreciative laughter makes him cringe. The affirmation of community further separates him from the rest of the audience.

He thinks of Arbyne secluded in her vision, driven to near madness by abuse. "The differences between what you and the others have to say are significant," Maxwell would tell her, "but not all that significant." "You'll see some day how serious they are," she would answer. Tiny seemingly obscure skirmishes, she would insist, might very well determine the whole direction and spirit of a movement.

Sarah Kendall's voice breaks as she reads. There are sobs in the room, and then laughter.

Headlines shape your consciousness, Maxwell's thoughts accuse the audience. Code words substitute for thought. You rest so secure in a closed arena of consciousness. Half of you are always filled with new concerns: nuclear power plants, sterilization abuse, medical cutbacks. Always instant anger, instant analysis, instant all the facts, instant full of opinions. Instantly mobilized. And the rest of you, the independent-minded, can't get absorbed in anything that is new. You choose so carefully which issues will engage you, at which injustices you will draw the line. You remain so complacent with explanations worked out so long ago.

Maxwell's eyes grow distant as he remembers two recent scenes.

At a conference on pornography a civil liberties lawyer was talking to a small group of people who had gathered around him. He took his pipe out of his thin, slightly opened mouth and said, "You should have seen the response when I defended the Klan." There was a twinkle in his eyes. The civil liberties lawyer was very pleased with himself. "I recognize all the dangers and complexities of the situation, but nonetheless I believe..." Nonetheless he remains so manly, willing to risk all for a principle. And in the face of women acting so irrationally against pornography, he knows how to maintain a consistent point of view.

Three women against pornography appeared on morning TV in front of a studio audience made up largely of midwestern housewives. "We have some trouble with the civil libertarians," one of them said to a whole roomful of people who had no sense of freedom. One woman from the audience spoke about how pornography pollutes. The three women against pornography nodded encouragingly. They would not speak about the hidden violence of the family. They would not speak about the everyday sexual and psychic dread of the women in the audience.

Maxwell is enraged by his recollections. He takes out the notebook that he always carries with him and writes: "The civil liberties lawyer does not understand the pervasive social madness, the manipulation of consciousness. He is secure in his homilies, for way down he thinks this is a free society. He thinks passing ERA will solve the problem of misogyny. He goes through life with his little formulations. He turns red in the face during heated discussion. Basically he is complacent."

Maxwell continues writing: "In the society of docile, frightened people, largely without will, the three women against pornography offer mind control as their program for social transformation. Destroy dangerous images, they say. They manipulate the fear and bigotry of imprisoned midwestern housewives. This to build a movement!!"

The reading will go on forever. His head spins, tears fill his eyes. He is slumped in his seat. The common understanding. The common pain. The common outrage. So deeply connected to the people. So split off. Everything is unraveling, unraveling. They are being thrown into different worlds. It is a rupture of love. The bond between Sarah and the audience grows stronger. "This is my favorite story," he hears a voice whisper. The separation is permanent.

The air in the auditorium has grown oppressively hot and damp. Suddenly the reading is over. He files out with the crowd. He lingers outside, breathing in the cool spring air, resting against a car. The light from the street lamps comes from far overhead. He feels less enclosed.

Some people gather about in small circles, others leave quickly. He waits a while longer. Joe DePerri walks outside talking excitedly with two friends. Suzanne looks needfully from side to side. Joan McBride, busy as always, walks away with a strong determination.

"This is the community in resistance," thinks Maxwell. "The comic individuation of people," he writes in his notebook. "The comic individuation of the people in the community of resistance."

What does that mean, wonders Maxwell. Each person is ludicrous, partly distorted yet partly free. Does it matter? For a moment the people he knows seem like figures in a landscape, but a landscape of buildings and human activities. They were shaped by the society, they shaped the resistance to the society—well, he thinks, it can't be otherwise. He laughs at himself. He feels calm.

Allison calls over to Maxwell. Clearly she is no longer annoyed at him. She and a few friends are speaking with Sarah. "Hi," says Maxwell. Allison extends her cheek to him. Maxwell kisses her quickly, then turns to Sarah and says, "It was a very beautiful reading." Sarah Kendall grabs his arm, squeezes it and smiles warmly.

Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance,"

A Model of American Eloquence

Eva T. H. Brann

The document entitled "To the Honorable the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, A Memorial and Remonstrance" is a jewel of republican rhetoric.[1] Nor has this choice example of American eloquence gone without notice. And yet, compared to the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, it has remained obscure—more often quarried for stately phrases than conned by heart, more often admired at a distance than studied in detail. This lack of popularity can in part be accounted for by the circumstances of the document. Addressed to the legislature of a state rather than to the people of the nation, it is concerned with an issue which is critical only sporadically, though then critical indeed. The Supreme Court has, to be sure, searched the document on several occasions for help in interpreting the "establishment" clause of the First Amendment. (See the Appendix.) But this naturally narrow judicial mining of the text has itself served to draw away attention from the depth of its political precepts and the fitness of its rhetorical form, discerningly lauded, for example, by Rives, Madison's nineteenth century biographer.[2] In part, again, Madison's work has been kept off the roster of canonized public prose because it lacks Jefferson's heady generalities and Lincoln's humane grandeur. But I know this: To study it is to come away with a sense of having discovered, under the veil of Madison's modesty, the great rhetorician of the Founding, whom John Marshall called "the most eloquent man I ever heard." The immediate and the historical efficacy of Madison's appeal shows that despite the deprecating modern estimate that he "could not mesmerize a mass audience" but "only those who sought. . . illumination,"[3] Madison was master of that true eloquence which sometimes turns the former kind of audience into the latter. It is an eloquence of measured passion and sober ardor, which knows what to say when and to whom without bending the truth.

I. The Circumstances Surrounding the Remonstrance[4]

On December 3, 1784, a bill "establishing a provision for Teachers of Religion" was reported to the General Assembly of Virginia. Its preamble said:

> Whereas the general diffusion of Christian knowledge hath a natural tendency to correct the morals of men, restrain their vices, and preserve the peace of society, which cannot be effected without a competent provision for learned teachers, who may be thereby enabled to devote their time and attention to the duty of instructing such citizens as from their

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Eva Brann recently published *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

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> circumstances and want of education cannot otherwise attain such knowledge; and it is judged such provision may be made by the Legislature, without counteracting the liberal principle heretofore adopted and intended to be preserved, by abolishing all distinctions of pre-eminence amongst the different societies or communities of Christians...[5]

The author of the bill, Patrick Henry, had introduced it with a fervent speech tracing the downfall of ancient and modern polities to the decay of religion: the repeal in 1776 of the tithe law, which meant the end of a state-salaried clergy and amounted to the disestablishment of the Anglican Church, was a source of such decay in Virginia. Other eminent Virginians, even more anxious about an increase in laxness of morals and lawlessness than about the precipitous decline of church attendance during and after the Revolution, saw nothing wrong with the bill. Among them were George Washington and John Marshall.

Madison, absolutely opposed, debated Henry on the floor of the Assembly late in November. These speeches contain revealing anticipations of—and contrasts to—the Remonstrance.[6]

Even with the bill still in committee, Madison's arguments had told. There had been a short-lived attempt to de-christianize it extending it to all "who profess the public worship of the Deity," be they Mohametans or Jews. The bill reported out was, furthermore, no longer the General Assessment bill which had sought in effect to re-establish Christianity (though, of course, not Anglicanism) by a general levy on taxpayers in support of a Christian church. It had been transformed into a Christian education bill, designed partly, as evidenced by the reference in the preamble to those who cannot afford private education, to be a defense against Jefferson's long tabled secular public education bill of 1779, and partly, as is apparent from its more restricted aims, to be a response to Madison's pressure.

Meanwhile Madison also engaged in some practical politics. In order to remove the oratorical Henry from the scene, Madison had hit on a device both kinder and more efficacious than Jefferson's suggestion "devotedly to pray for his death": he had conspired to elevate him to the governorship. The proud governor-elect had retired to his estates, "a circumstance very inauspicious to his offspring" as Madison wrote with satisfaction to James Monroe.

Also, in exchange for the withdrawal of his opposition to a companion bill for the incorporation of the Episcopal Church, Madison had won postponement of final action on the bill to 1785, so that there might be time to publish its text for consideration by the people. This move was crucial, since in 1784 the bill would probably have passed the legislature with an overwhelming majority.[7] Here as ever, the two facets of Madison's statesmanship—practical maneuvering and principled rhetoric—complemented each other. He had gained a year.

Throughout spring of 1785 Madison's own inclination was to wait quietly for the popular opposition to manifest itself. The Episcopalians, as old beneficiaries of establishment naturally, and the Presbyterian clergy to their shame, supported the bill; the laity and clergy of the dissenting sects were solidly opposed. By May several suporters, but no opponents, of the bill had lost their seats. As late as June 21 Madison was assured enough of its unpopularity merely to echo the rebellious common feeling, that although the legislature "should give it the *form*, they will not give it the *validity* of a law...—I own the bill appears to me to warrant this language of the people."[8]

Some of his associates in the battle, however, George Mason and the brothers Nicholas, were anxious for more pointed action. They had reason to fear civil disturbances if the legislature, in which the favoring tidewater counties were overrepresented, should attempt to force the law on the people. They hoped to deter its passage with a large number of well-subscribed identical petitions from all parts of the state, the best device then available for conveying the power of a public sentiment to the legislature. They asked Madison to compose the text.

He wrote the "Memorial and Remonstrance" sometime soon after June 20, 1785, intending it to circulate anonymously. The few friends who knew of his authorship respected his wish, which arose, presumably, from his desire to maintain good working relations with all parties in the legislature. At the time some attributed the work to George Mason, who had drafted the religious liberty clause of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Though a printer had put his name on a reprint as early as 1786, Madison acknowledged only late in life, in a letter of 1826 to Mason's grandson, that "the task of composing such a paper had been imposed upon him."

Mason had the petition printed as a broadside in Alexandria, having seen no reason for changing even one word of the text. The Nicholases saw to its distribution throughout the state. It met, Madison noted in retrospect, "with the approbation of the Baptists, the Presbyterians [who had recanted], the Quakers, and the few Roman Catholics, universally; of the Methodists in part; and even of not a few of the Sect formerly established by law, [the Episcopalians]."[9]

The Remonstrance was solidly successful in drawing subscribers. The thirteen circulated copies collected 1552 signatures; 150 freeholders signed one petition in a day. Yet, successful though it was, another, still anonymous, petition, based on the fervently Christian argument that the bill contravened the spirit of the Gospel, ran up more than three times as many signatures on twenty-nine copies. All in all, about eighty opposing petitions with 10,929 signatures came in to Richmond, and only a few in support.

After a brief consideration the bill died in committee in the fall of 1785, lost, however, by a mere three votes. Madison's petition may well have been crucial.

On January 22, 1786, Madison reported the results of that session to Jefferson in Paris in a modestly jubilant vein:

> The steps taken throughout the Country to defeat the Gnl. Assessment, had produced all the effect that could have been wished. The table was loaded with petitions and remonstrances from all parts against the interposition of the Legislature in matters of Religion.

In the same letter he had already told Jefferson even greater news. One element alone of Jefferson's six-year-old revisal of the laws of Virginia had that year been passed into an act, his bill for establishing religious freedom,[10] the most celebrated of all documents concerned with religious liberty.

Advantage had been taken of the crisis produced by the crushing of the religious assessment bill to carry through the Jefferson bill, as Madison put it. The two events were closely connected. The impetus of the collapse of a regressive measure carried over—as sometimes happens—into a sudden advance. The religious clause of the Virginia Declaration of Rights had guaranteed the free exercise of religion to all Christians, but it had not unequivocally banned—witness the assessment bill—the establishment of a non-sectarian state church. During the next nine years the legislature had passed a patchwork of special exemptions, tolerances and particular measures favoring dissenting sects. Jefferson's bill, which happened to attack compulsory support of religious teachers in its preamble, rode in, as Madison recollected in 1826, under the "influence of public sentiment" manifested in the death of the assessment bill, as a "permanent Barrier agst. future attempts on the Rights of Conscience as declared in the Great Charter affixed to the Constitution of the State."[11] Madison interpreted the petitions against the assessment bill as demands for the enactment of Jefferson's law concerning religious freedom; he thought it an advantage that it had been sanctioned by what was in effect a plebiscite. The Remonstrance had advanced it as a principle that there should be such invitations to the people to express their sentiments in the course of law-making.

II. The Arguments of the Remonstrance

The Remonstrance is a petition addressed to the General Assembly of Virginia that remonstrates on fifteen counts (listed in summary in Note 12) against a bill before it establishing a provision for teachers of the Christian religion. Each of these points is set forth in one paragraph in the form of a reflection on one aspect of the right relation between religion and politics. Madison clearly intended to make the argumentation as complete, as principled, as fundamental, and yet as concise as possible.

The fifteen counts are, furthermore, composed into a symmetrical structure. The eighth, that is, the middle point, addresses the concern immediately central to the occasion—the fear of the decline of social stability—by arguing that state support of religion is not necessary to the civil authority. Clustered about that central claim are the other prudential and cautionary points to be addressed to the Christian communities which hoped to profit from the law. Points 6-7 and again 9-11 display the bill as internally and externally deleterious to Christianity in particular.

By contrast, Points 1-4 and again Points 13-15 have a wider, more encompassing matter: humanity in general. The intoductory points proceed on the grandest scale. The first asserts a positive theological principle—the absolute priority of man's relation to God over his social bonds—as the ground for the inalienable character of the right to religious freedom; the second deduces from the first the prohibition of legislative interference in religion. The third point draws the political principle of prompt resistance to civil interference out of the uncompromisably absolute separation of the realms, the fourth draws from the philosophical principle of human equality the political injunction against state support of religion.

The closing numbers cite the forms and practices of popular government which proceed from the foundations established in One through Four as they bear on the bill. Thirteen warns against unenforceable laws, Fourteen states the majoritarian principle, and the last point recalls the principle of limited government to the offending legislature. The rhetorical force of this structure will, I think, tell even on a reader who does not apprehend it explicitly.

III. Rhetorical Analysis of the Text[13]

PREAMBLE

To The Honorable the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia
A Memorial and Remonstrance

We the subscribers, citizens of the said Commonwealth, having taken into serious consideration, a Bill printed by order of the last Session of General Assembly, entitled "A Bill establishing provisions for Teachers of the Christian Religion," and conceiving that the same if finally armed with the sanctions of a law, will be a dangerous abuse of power, are bound as faithful members of a free State to remonstrate against it, and to declare the reasons by which we are determined. We remonstrate against the said Bill,

The preamble alludes to the postponement resolution which had requested the people of the counties "to signify their opinion respecting the adoption of such a Bill"—the resolution is quoted in the next to last paragraph. The petition, then a common political instrument, is intended to elicit popular opinion in the course of law-making. Such moments of communication between the people and their representatives are an important part of Madison's theory of self-government, set out in the penultimate paragraph of the petition.

Not Madison but "We . . . the citizens" speak. His style could well accomodate itself to a canonical anonymity. He had been trained in a school of rhetoric which eschewed idiosyncracies, and he never engaged in the luxuriously indignant periodicity peculiar to Jefferson.

This petition is presented in the form of a *remonstrance*, that is, a protest, a protest, suggestively, of the "faithful," but it is not a mere protest, as are most present-day petitions. It is also a *memorial*, a declaration of reasons—every paragraph begins with a "because"—in the tradition of the Declaration of Independence.

First Paragraph

1. Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, "that Religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence." The religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right. It is unalienable, because the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds cannot follow the dictates of other men: It is unalienable also, because what is here a right towards men, is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render the Creator such homage and such only as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the General Authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign. We maintain therefore that in matters of Religion, no mans right is abridged by the institution of Civil Society and that Religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance. True it is, that no other rule exists, by which any question which may divide a Society, can be ultimately determined, but the will of the majority; but it is also true that the majority may trespass on the rights of the minority.

The first is the most philosophical and the most rhetorically artful paragraph.

Madison begins by reminding the legislature of its own fundamental law; he quotes, as he notes in the margin of his copy, from Article XVI of the "Declaration of Rights and Frame of Government of Virginia," adopted in 1776. Madison himself intervened crucially in George Mason's draft of that article, though not in the clause here cited. (The sentence he affected is given in the fourth and fifteenth paragraphs.) In accordance with the symmetrical structure of the petition the Virginia Declaration is cited in the first, the fourth, the eleventh, and the fifteenth paragraphs.

The quotation from Article XVI is here introduced in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence—the Virginia Declaration has no such language—as an axiom, an undeniable truth. The consequences of that axiom are then developed in an enchained sequence of sentences which has something of the quality of a liturgical responsion, a kind of rondel of reason. The enchaining brings with it a non-periodic style. (A period, speaking technically, is a circuit-like sentence, whose meaning is not delivered until the whole is complete.) Several sentences are grammatically simple; conjunctions and relatives, regarded in school rhetoric as weakening the vivacity of writing since their function should be carried by the diction,[14] are avoided; the continuity indeed comes from the incantation-like diction.

"The religion of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man": he restates the phrase "reason and conviction" of Article XVI alliteratively and tactfully, avoiding the everlasting dwelling on the reason by which some of the defenders of religious liberty had made themselves suspect.

The recurrent phrase "every man," rather than "all men" as in the Declaration of Independence, carries a subtle emphasis: as Madison's logic notes from college point out, when one turns "all" into "every," the predicate is logically distributed so that it "belongs to every individual."[15] Since religion consists of "voluntary acts of individuals singly and voluntarily associated," Madison's use of "every" rather than "all" conveys the *individual* nature of religion implied by the fundamental axiom: no religious dogma is to be imposed and no religious exercise interfered with—the First Amendment in germ.

Each key word is picked up and elaborated as the argument continues: ". . . it is the *right* of every man to exercise" religion freely. "This *right* is . . . an *unalienable right*. It is *unalienable*, because the opinions of men" are free. "It is *unalienable* also, because what is here a *right* toward men, is a *duty* towards the *Creator*. It is the *duty* of every man to render the *Creator* such homage" as seems right to him. "This *duty* is precedent . . . to the claims of *Civil Society*." "Before a man can be considered a member of *Civil Society* . . . ," etc.

The rhetorical form emphasizes the mutual involvement of the terms. Free exercise of religion is a right and

moreover an inalienable right because of an ineradicable feature of human nature—its freedom. This human freedom, the ground of civil liberty, is understood as a bondage of the mind to the dictates of reason and evidence—a dependency clearly expressed in the original opening paragraph of Jefferson's bill on religious freedom, which was deleted by the General Assembly with Madison's reluctant acquiescence:

> Well aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds. . .[16]

Madison, who had earlier displayed a lively interest in the philosophical question of mental liberty and misgivings about its possibility,[17] must indeed have been sorry to see this pertinent passage disappear from the bill, bartered away for its passage.

The right to religious liberty is inalienable because of man's nature, but also because of man's relation to God, which is that of a subject bound by a duty to his Creator. Religion as defined in the passage from the Declaration of Rights which Madison quotes is a conflation of the Roman notion of obligatory performance and the biblical idea of obedience to the Creator, with the Christian salvational sense, to be introduced in the middle paragraphs, here missing.

The inalienability of the right is, then, rooted in man's nature as free and as created; it is therefore inalienable by the very reason which makes it a right, namely that it is a *divine* duty that must be *individually* discharged. Succinctly put: "What is here a right towards men, is a duty towards the Creator."

Now comes the crux of the paragraph and indeed of the work. Man's relation as a creature is prior both in time and in degree to his membership in a polity. Before he can be thought of as a citizen of civil society, he must be considered as a subject under the Governor of the Universe; as the former he has rights, as the latter duties. This priority in time may mean that these duties were his before this or any polity was instituted, even in the Garden of Eden, or that they precede adult citizenship and obligate even children. Precedent in "degree of obligation" must mean that moral duties supersede political obedience and that religion governs citizenship—indeed a creed for citizen-resisters to the usurpations of the civil powers.

Although Madison himself later cites Jesus' "own declaration that his Kingdom was not of this world" in behalf of the separation of worlds,[18] his own remarkable theory is quite distinct from the scriptural doctrine of the two realms, the secular and the spiritual. That doctrine holds this world inferior—Roger Williams, for example, demands a hedge between the *garden* of the Church and the *wilderness* of the World.[19]

In contrast the precedence of the religious realm set out in the Remonstrance is not seen from the perspective of the world beyond, but from the position of a practicing citizen of *this* world, albeit with prior obligations. That is precisely why the functionaries of civil society may not invade the realm of religion—because that realm is here conceived as belonging to the active life of the world, not to civil society but certainly to society. The suspicion and contempt of the world, on the other hand, against whose intrusions the soul and the church must be guarded, belongs to *Christian* liberty—a *theological condition* and not a *civil right.* (The defense of religious liberty from the scriptural point of view is rousingly made in Milton's *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*; Madison may have known it.)

Madison is proposing a civil theology[20] in which the political arena is circumscribed by religion. From the point of view of political theory men come out of (though in a sense they never leave) the Lockean state of nature and its right to self-preservation; from the point of view of the civil theology man first and last remains "a free-born subject under the crown of heaven owing homage to none but God himself."[21]

Madison, however, does not advocate the cause of a deistic super-sect with its positive rationalistic doctrines, so confidently set out in Jefferson's bill concerning religious freedom which knows and approves "the plan of the holy author of our religion. . . to extend it by the influence on reason alone." Encompassing all religions, whether propagated by reason, revelation, or force of tradition, Madison's civil theology is a genuine grounding for religious pluralism.

The conclusion is that rights of conscience are reserved from the authority of the political power. As Jefferson puts it in Query XVII of the *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781):

> Our rulers can have authority over such natural rights only as we have submitted them. The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God.

There follows an intricately wrought analogy containing more subtleties than bear articulating:

> As 1. a member of Civil Society 2. who enters into any subordinate Association 3. must always do it 4. with a reservation of his duty 5. to the General Authority,
>
> Much more so must 1. every man 2. who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society 3. do it 4. with a saving of his allegiance 5. to the Universal Sovereign.

The climax of the deduction from the axiom of religion as a duty to God is the radical proposition that "no man's right is abridged by the institution of Civil Society and Religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance." That is to say: 1. individual religious rights are not alienated upon entering civil society and 2. the realm of common religious observance is wholly out of its jurisdiction.

This is the seminal secular statement concerning reli-

gious liberty as a civil right in the public realm, since Jefferson's law, to which Madison later gave the honor of being the standard of expression on the subject, was, though prior in the drafting (1779), posterior in publication (1785).

The political consequences are reserved for the last paragraph of the petition. Madison, however, here adds an afterthought which brings these fundamental principles into the political arena. It is an antithesis acknowledging in capsule form the paradox of majoritarianism, a clash of truths in the world of action:[22] "True it is" that the will of the majority alone can settle divisive differences, "but it is also true" that the majority may try to infringe the rights of the minority. The penultimate paragraph will counterbalance this reservation by an expression of full faith in the majority as a last court of appeal in cases of infringements on liberty.

SECOND PARAGRAPH

2. Because if Religion be exempt from the authority of the Society at large, still less can it be subject to that of the Legislative Body. The latter are but the creatures and vicegerents of the former. Their jurisdiction is both derivative and limited: it is limited with regard to the co-ordinate departments, more necessarily is it limited with regard to the constituents. The preservation of a free Government requires not merely, that the metes and bounds which separate each department of power be invariably maintained; but more especially that neither of them be suffered to overleap the great Barrier which defends the rights of the people. The Rulers who are guilty of such an encroachment, exceed the commission from which they derive their authority, and are Tyrants. The People who submit to it are governed by laws made neither by themselves nor by an authority derived from them, and are slaves.

Now the doctrines of the first paragraph are applied, *a fortiori*, to government: if religion is beyond the political community, so much the more is it beyond the legislature. For as human beings are God's creatures, so the legislature is civil society's creature. (The manner of this legislative subordination is again taken up in the corresponding next to last paragraph.) The double limitation on its jurisdiction is stated in a succinct presentation of the theories of checks and balances and of limited government. It displays Madison's genius for articulating a full complement of fine but fundamental distinctions in the smallest compass: he speaks of the "metes and bounds" (a phrase possibly adapted from Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*[23]) that contain the departments of government, and of the "great Barrier" that circumscribes government itself.

That barrier, the limitation of legislative jurisdiction, is the political palisade before the "wall of separation," in Jefferson's famous metaphor for the First Amendment, which is to be erected between church and state.[24]

The language of the following sentences grows terse and absolute (although Madison manages to tuck in definitions of both tyranny and slavery): the rulers who encroach are tyrants, the people that submits, slaves. The theory of prompt resistance to be set out in the next paragraph is prepared.

THIRD PARAGRAPH

3. Because it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it. Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other Religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other Sects? that the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever?

The first sentence is often quoted, and "viewing with alarm" has, of course, become a cant phrase of American rhetoric. Here the key word "liberties" first appears; the phrase "religious liberty" is missing from the work.

The Revolution is invoked in favor of a "noble" mode of political response. In the remarkable phrase "prudent jealousy" Madison conflates republican duty with the principle of honor, the citizen's calculation of consequences with the nobleman's propensity for quick offense.

The necessity for a ready response lies, of course, in the fact that absolute principles, not compromisable interests, are involved; "the least interference with religion would be a flagrant usurpation." The Revolution, being the complex event of both principle and interest, was in fact slow in coming:

> . . . mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. (Declaration of Independence.)

Nevertheless Madison here propagates the view, for the sake of the "revered lesson" it contains, that the three-penny tax on tea moved the "free men of America" to revolt because it was a first signal of oppression, not the last straw.[25] This view was evidently dear to him, for later he wrote:

> The people of the U.S. owe their Independence and their liberty, to the wisdom of descrying in the minute tax of 3 pence on tea, the magnitude of the evil comprized in the precedent.[26]

The lesson he urges is immediate recognition of and resistance to breaches of principle, and especially of the principle of religious liberty, because it stands and falls as a whole. As Locke says: "The civil power can either change everything in religion,... or it can change nothing."[27]

Two balanced rhetorical questions next address first the churches and then the individual citizens: as the authority to establish Christianity implies the power to establish one sect, so the authority to touch a citizen's property implies the power to force him into religious conformity. This passage reveals Madison's universal view of religious liberty. He writes here, in hopeful suppression of the fact admitted in the eleventh paragraph, that Virginia still had a Christian establishment, as if the establishment were an incipient event to be feared by the sects. His vigorous promotion of Jefferson's bill concerning religious liberty shows that he knew otherwise. An episode that occurred during its consideration in the Assembly shows where his sentiments lay:

For the sake of passage Madison acquiesced in several deletions urged by men who objected to the aggressively deistic tone of the bill, although he thought these defaced the text somewhat—to him its expressions were ever the "true standard of religious liberty," even if his own inclination was to phrase that liberty as a right to the "full and free exercise" of religion rather than to its non-exercise. What he refused to agree to was an insertion that was attempted; as Madison much later recalled it:

> ...an experiment was made on the reverence entertained for the name and sanctity of the Saviour, by proposing to insert the words "Jesus Christ" after the words "our lord" in the preamble.[28]

Madison, ever vigilant of words, fought the insertion and it was dropped. On January 22, 1786, he reported in a spirit of modest triumph to Jefferson in Paris that the enacting clauses had passed without alteration and, "I flatter myself, have in this country extinguished forever the ambitious hope of making laws for the human mind." The rejection of the insertion proved, Jefferson later said, that "the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mohametan, the Hindoo and Infidel of every denomination" were within the mantle of its protection. Those were exactly Madison's intentions, and indeed he was to receive expressions of gratitude from American Jews and to give encouragement to them.[29]

So, although in the Remonstrance he writes to and for and—unemphatically but unquestionably—as a Christian, there can be no question about the universal application of his principle of religious liberty. No more can there be doubt about his uncompromising steadfastness in its application. Of many proofs let me choose only three.

His early draft of those amendments to the Constitution which were to become the Bill of Rights specifically prohibit the establishment of a "national religion."

Even in later life he retained his rhetorical vigor in fighting Christian establishments. He apostrophises his country:

> Ye states of America, which retain... any aberration from the sacred principle of religious liberty, by giving to Caesar what belongs to God, or joining together what God has put asunder, hasten to revise and purify your systems...[30]

As ever, he attacks the perverse wedlock of church and state on the ground of Christianity itself.

The most striking, almost comical, examples of his scrupulous avoidance of even the slightest trespass are his presidential Thanksgiving Messages during the War of 1812. Forced from him by a Congressional resolution, he phrased them rather as exhortations to free choice of worship than to public piety.[31]

The strong Madisonian meaning of the word "liberty" as applied to religion, to be adumbrated throughout the petition, begins to emerge:

Religious liberty is a civil right which is grounded in relations of duty to God antecedent to political society and therefore incapable of being abrogated. These relations are determined by the nature of the human conscience which is free in a philosophical sense, that is, determined not by external force but only by the internal compulsion of evidence, be it reason or revelation; they are also determined by the original nature of the human being which is dependent in a theological sense, that is, created by God. (Para. 1.) Delicate because it must be maintained absolutely (Para. 3), this liberty requires the government to abstain completely from interference, either for the purpose of supporting or of obstructing the exercise of religious obligations (Para. 2). The government must protect religion, but only by abstaining evenhandedly from interference and by safeguarding each sect from the intrusions of the other sects (Para. 8). As a right held on the same political terms as the other natural rights which are reserved to the individual, religious liberty stands or falls with them (Para. 15).

FOURTH PARAGRAPH

4. Because the Bill violates that equality which ought to be the basis of every law, and which is more indispensible, in proportion as the validity or expediency of any law is more liable to be im-

*peached. If "all men are by nature equally free and independent," all men are to be considered as entering into Society on equal conditions; as relinquishing no more, and therefore retaining no less, one than another, of their natural rights. Above all are they to be considered as retaining an "*equal *title to the free exercise of Religion according to the dictates of Conscience." Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to embrace, to profess and to observe the Religion which we believe to be of divine origin, we cannot deny an equal freedom to those whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us. If this freedom be abused, it is an offence against God, not against man: To God, therefore, not to man, must an account of it be rendered. As the Bill violates equality by subjecting some to peculiar burdens, so it violates the same principle, by granting to others peculiar exemptions. Are the Quakers and Menonists the only sects who think a compulsive support of their Religious unnecessary and unwarrantable? Can their piety alone be entrusted with the care of public worship? Ought their Religions to be endowed above all others with extraordinary privileges by which proselytes may be enticed from all others? We think too favorably of the justice and good sense of these denominations to believe that they either covet pre-eminences over their fellow citizens or that they will be seduced by them from the common opposition to the measure.*

The proposed bill violates the natural equality of men affirmed in Article I of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, now quoted by Madison. Such equality is presented here as an *internal* condition of all law. The more liable a law is to the charge of invalidity or inexpediency, the more important such equality becomes. The dictum that equality "ought to be the basis of every law" refers to the inner equity of the law, which ought to affect everyone equally, not to the familiar demand for equality of treatment under the law; the law must be such as to be *capable* of equal application.

A succinct statement of the contract theory of rights which underlies this demand is given: All men being by nature equally free, they must enter civil society on equal conditions; they must give up and retain exactly equal rights. "To embrace, to profess, and to observe the Religion which we believe to be of divine origin," to join, to declare, and to exercise whatever religion seems to us to be truly a religion, is the essence of these rights with respect to religion.

In the conclusion of his *Letter Concerning Toleration* Locke says that "the sum of all we drive at is that every man may enjoy the same rights that are guaranteed to others." Madison italicizes this one word in the petition—*equal*—when he quotes for the first time that clause of Article XVI of the Virginia Declaration of Rights for whose form he himself was responsible. Equality of application was for Madison, as for Locke, important above all else. Although it intends to preserve the "liberal principle" of Article XVI, by "abolishing all distinctions of pre-eminence" among the different sects, the Assessment bill is inequitable because it burdens all in support of a religious service that will peculiarly burden non-Christians and peculiarly exempt those Christians who do not wish to take advantage of its benefits. The rhetorical question what sects besides those mentioned would fall under the latter category would have the obvious answer: above all the Baptists, whose opposition to any kind of state intervention was a matter of theological principle.

There can never be a moral or theological pretext for interference, because the abuse of the right of religion is not subject to human punishment. Madison had restricted Mason's broad reservation in the original draft of Article XVI, that the magistrate might restrain free exercise if, "under colour of religion, any man disturb the peace, the happiness, or the safety of society" to the condition that "the preservation of liberty and the existence of the State are manifestly endangered." His record shows that as a magistrate he would have found no occasion to apply it; presumably he was glad finally to see the whole clause drop out.[32]

A bilaterally symmetrical sentence, the only one in the petition to contain the word "God," presents this central point.

Early American documents mention the names of God profusely enough to intrigue a medieval theologian.[33] In this petition he is the Creator to whom man owes the duties of a dependent creature; the Governor of the Universe to whom man is a subject rather than a citizen (Para. 1); God before whom alone man can sin (Para. 4); the Author of our Religion who hands down its teachings in scripture (Para. 6); the Supreme Lawgiver of the Universe from whom illumination of the legislature is requested (Para. 15). Not mere unreflective Enlightenment epithets, these names must be genuine expressions of Madison's understanding of the facets of humanity's relations to God, for they delineate just such a God as would be the ground of religious liberty.

In his work on Article XVI of the Declaration of Rights,[34] the young delegate to the Revolutionary Convention of May 1776 had offered but one draft article, on religion. Patrick Henry, who had himself sponsored it, had quickly disclaimed it when challenged on the floor to explain whether he actually intended to disestablish the Church. Madison had, of course, intended just such disestablishment:

> That Religion or the duty we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, being under the direction of reason and conviction only, not of violence or compulsion [a stylistic emendation of Mason's "force or violence"], all men are equally entitled to the full and free exercise of it according to the dictates of Conscience...

No man or class of men, the article continues, should receive special privileges or be subjected to special penalties for religious reasons, a prefiguration of the two prongs of the First Amendment, the establishment and free exercise clauses.

Madison, having been forced to withdraw his own draft, scrutinized Mason's version, which promised "the fullest *toleration* in the Exercise of religion." He alone, perhaps, in that assembly took one word of it seriously enough to forestall a danger.[35]

That word was "toleration," which implies not a right to religious liberty but a privilege granted. That was absolutely insufferable for Madison, for toleration accorded with, and so confirmed, ecclesiastical establishment (as in modern times it can accompany an anti-clerical policy).[36]

Although he wrote respectfully of the Dutch "experiment of combining liberal toleration with the establishment of a particular creed,"[37] Madison would certainly have rejected Spinoza's views in the *Theologico-Political Treatise* (Ch. XIX), that the possessor of sovereign power has rights over spiritual matters but should *grant* religious liberty on matters of outward observancy, only inward piety being private and inalienable. In any case, it is unlikely that he knew Spinoza's writings, especially since Locke, whose *Letter* he had probably read (as external likelihood and internal evidence in the Remonstrance indicate), admitted to little acquaintance with Spinoza's work.[38] Although called a "Letter Concerning *Toleration*," Locke's work, by a typical cunning twist, shifts the meaning of the term: not *granted* to dissenting Christians by the ecclesiastical establishment and its state sponsors, toleration is *required* of the magistrate toward all churches—Mohammetan, Pagan, idolaters (though *not*—and here Madison differed—to atheists); the magistrate has no right to interfere with either the internal or the external aspects of religion. This "tolerance" was not the notion Tom Paine excoriated in the *Age of Reason* as "not the *opposite* of Intolerance, but...the *counterfeit* of it," but a demand for a right under cover of a less aggressive term. Madison might well have taken his lead from the thought of the *Letter Concerning Toleration* at the same time that he balked at the use of the term "toleration" in fundamental law.

Fifth Paragraph

5. Because the Bill implies either that the Civil Magistrate is a competent Judge of Religious Truth; or that he may employ Religion as an engine of Civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension falsified by the contradictory opinions of Rulers in all ages, and throughout the world: the second an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation.

This brief but resounding paragraph ("arrogant pretension"—"unhallowed perversion") appears to have been retained from the debate on the floor of the Assembly. Madison's notes show that he employed his large theological erudition[39] to bring home to the Assembly, with that muted irony of which he was capable, the politico-theological consequences of the bill. It would require a legislative definition of Christianity: it would require that the law-makers choose an official Bible—Hebrew, Septuagint, or Vulgate, decide the method of its interpretation, confirm a doctrine—Trinitarian, Arian, Socinian—as orthodox, and so forth. The sentiment of the paragraph is Lockean: "neither the right nor the art of ruling does necessarily carry along with it the certain knowledge of other things and least of all of the true religion."

In this paragraph alone Madison speaks of religion as a "means of salvation," in contrast to its employment as an "engine of civil policy." In the argument for religious liberty the obligations of religion, not its blessings, count most.

Sixth Paragraph

6. Because the establishment proposed by the Bill is not requisite for the support of the Christian Religion. To say that it is, is a contradiction to the Christian Religion itself, for every page of it disavows a dependence on the powers of this world: it is a contradiction to fact; for it is known that this Religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them, and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence. Nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a Religion not invented by human policy, must have pre-existed and been supported, before it was established by human policy. It is moreover to weaken in those who profess this Religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence and the patronage of its Author; and to foster in those who still reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies to trust it to its own merits.

Madison leaves the universal considerations of religious liberty to attend to the particularly Christian interest in it. The seven core paragraphs of the petition are devoted to that Christian point of view, an arrangement that tellingly mirrors both the encompassing necessity for a philosophical foundation and the immediate fact that a Christian

constituency is speaking. Establishment, prohibited in a purely political context for the sake of the free exercise of religion, is to be yet more eschewed for the sake of Christianity itself.

His notes for the floor debate show that he intended to divert the argument from the preoccupation with the social need for religion to the "true question": Are religious establishments necessary for religion? The proponents' concern with "the peace of society" were, so he implies later, in part a cover for concern with the declining importance of the churches. The end of war, laws that cherish virtue, religious associations which would provide personal examples of morality, the education of youth, and precisely the end of governmental intrusion, not state intervention, were the "true remedies" for the decline of religion which he recommended to the legislature. Note the neo-classical notion that the laws should promote virtue.[40]

Madison's Christian defense of liberty is in the great tradition of Protestant dissenting writings, especially Milton's *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes* (1659), in which he shows "the wrong the civil power doth; by violating the fundamental privilege of the Gospel,. . . Christian libertie,"[41] that is, freedom from forcible impositions in matters of worship. Indeed Milton's whole argument is drawn from scripture, especially from the Pauline letters.

Madison, too, alludes to scripture: "every page" of religion "disavows a dependence on the power of this world." The Baptists, whose whole petition was based on the grounds that the bill was "repugnant to the Spirit of the Gospel," however, outdid him in this line of argument. For them, as for other opposing Christians, disestablishment dated literally from Jesus himself. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (*Mark* 13, 17).

The paragraph next exposes the contradictions of the bill's premise that Christianity cannot be diffused "without a competent provision" for its teachers. The contradiction *of fact* is that Christianity has indeed flourished at all times without aid—and Madison gives a believer's capsule history of its two epochs, the era of miracles and the era of ordinary providence. The more serious contradiction *in terms* is twofold: the dependence of religion, which is pre-existent, on human policy and the failure of the faithful to trust in God for its support. The argument is rendered in beautifully branching and balanced cola.

Fifty years later, Madison would feel entitled to answer the "true question" definitively from the accumulated evidence of the American experience, which had "brought the subject to a fair and finally decisive test." Left to itself, religion would flourish; indeed the danger lay rather in its extravagances.[42] Madison insisted that "every successful example of a perfect separation. . . is of importance," and that he regarded such success as an indispensible empirical test of the principle of religious liberty. At the same time, he was certain that the test would never fail since "there appears to be in the nature of man what insures his belief in an invisible cause. . ." But what would Madison have said in the face of an observable decline of "religious commitment"?[43]

Seventh Paragraph

7. Because experience witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of Religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution. Enquire of the Teachers of Christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest lustre; those of every sect, point to the ages prior to its incorporation with Civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive State in which its Teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall. On which Side ought their testimony to have greatest weight, when for or when against their interest?

Proof positive that religion could flourish on its own was a half-century in the future, but the evidence of fifteen centuries, that is, dating back roughly to the Conversion of Constantine, showed that legal establishments corrupted Christianity, because they hampered freedom of conscience, "the truly Christian principle."[44]

Here, as elsewhere, Madison allows himself the most spirited language for clerical degeneracy, without, however, giving way to that automatic anti-clericalism that possessed Jefferson. Even in his youth, in an early letter to his friend William Bradford (Jan., 1774), he had given a similar catalogue of clerical and lay vice, of the "Pride ignorance and Knavery among the Priesthood and Vice and Wickedness among the Laity," evident in his home country; worst of all:

> That diabolical Hell conceived principle of persecution rages among some and to their eternal Infamy the Clergy can furnish their Quota of Imps for such business.

The Protestant supporters of the bill would preach the life of early Christianity, but they do not want to live like the first disciples, much less like the first Teacher himself. This passage deals with church business without resorting to the word "church," which never occurs in this petition. Madison opposed not only the "incorporation with Civil policy" effected by a bill proposing state-salaried religious teachers, but the "encroachments and accumulations" encouraged by the legal incorporation of churches.[45] He desired neither state-supported nor richly endowed churches, but small congregations which would directly support their ministers.

EIGHTH PARAGRAPH

8. Because the establishment in question is not necessary for the support of Civil Government. If it be urged as necessary for the support of Civil Government only as it is a means of supporting Religion, and it be not necessary for the latter purpose, it cannot be necessary for the former. If Religion be not within the cognizance of Civil Government how can its legal establishment be necessary to Civil Government? What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on Civil Society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the Civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wished to subvert the public liberty, may have found an established Clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just Government instituted to secure & perpetuate it needs them not. Such a Government will be best supported by protecting every Citizen in the enjoyment of his Religion with the same equal hand which protects his person and his property; by neither invading the equal rights of any Sect, nor suffering any Sect to invade those of another.

At the middle count, Madison takes up the main point supposedly agitating the proponents of the bill: the dangerous decline of morality which the bill was supposed to halt.

In his very first extant expression concerning religious liberty, a youthful letter to Bradford (Dec., 1778), Madison had asked this politico-theological question: "Is an Ecclesiastical Establishment absolutely necessary to support civil society in a supream Government?"

In this petition Madison has prepared the ground for answering the question in such a way that he can dispose of it by a mere syllogism (*modus tollens*): Only if religion is within the cognizance of government can the question of necessary legal establishment arise. But it is not, by the first paragraph. Therefore establishment is not necessary. With equal logic, he disposes of the circular arguments of the supporters, who say that establishment is necessary to government only insofar as government is a necessary means of supporting religion; since the latter contention has been shown false by the preceding paragraph, the former falls also.

So logical a resolution of the great question was not universally appealing. After he heard these arguments, Henry Lee wrote to Madison: "Refiners may weave as fine a web of reason as they please, but the experience of all times shows Religion to be the guardian of morals." Not really in disagreement with Lee's premise, Madison only disclaimed the inference that government ought to support the churches; he certainly never went as far as Jefferson, who claimed that "the interests of society require observation of those moral precepts only on which all religions agree,"[46] which amounts to saying that any church is unnecessary to society.

There are some instances of establishments supplanting governments, many instances of their upholding tyrannies, none of their supporting liberty. "A just government, instituted to secure and perpetuate it, needs them not," concludes Madison, in the language reminiscent of the Declaration of Independence: "That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed."

How does a just government protect religious rights? It protects them precisely as it protects property and other rights. In a short essay "On Property,"[47] written in 1792, Madison elaborates a remarkable theory of religious rights which goes further: Rights *are* property: "In a word, as a man is said to have a right to his property, he may be equally be said to have a property in his rights..." And earlier in the same essay: "He has a property of peculiar value in his religious opinions, and in the profession and practice dictated by them...." Just government is instituted to secure property, in the large sense in which the term includes anything which a person values as his *own* (leaving to everyone else a like advantage), of which dominion over external things is only a part. Religious rights so conceived establish a kind of internal personal, and external sectarian, territoriality which government is to protect by "neither invading the equal rights of any Sect, nor suffering any Sect to invade those of another."

NINTH AND TENTH PARAGRAPHS

9. Because the proposed establishment is a departure from that generous policy, which, offering an Asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every Nation and Religion, promised a lustre to our country, and an accession to the number of its citizens. What a melancholy mark is the Bill of sudden degeneracy? Instead of holding forth an Asylum to the persecuted, it is itself a signal of persecution. It degrades from the equal rank of Citizens all those whose opinions in Religion do not bend to those of the Legislative authority. Distant as it may be in its present form from the Inquisition, it differs from it only in degree. The one is the first step, the other the last in the career of intolerance. The magnanimous sufferer under this cruel scourge in foreign Regions, must view the Bill as a Beacon on our Coast, warning him to seek some other haven,

where liberty and philanthrophy in their due extent, may offer a more certain repose from his Troubles.

10. Because it will have a like tendency to banish our Citizens. The allurements presented by other situations are every day thinning their number. To superadd a fresh motive to emigration by revoking the liberty which they now enjoy, would be the same species of folly which has dishonoured and depopulated flourishing kingdoms.

Now Madison inserts two complementary considerations, humanitarian and practical, which had figured in the floor debates under the heading of "Policy." The bill might close Virginia as a religious asylum and also drive out dissenters, and might thus at once prevent much-needed immigration and further thin a population already moving westward at an alarming rate. Madison did not have to spell out to his fellow farmers the bad economic results of this policy: a yet greater shortage of labor power and further declining land prices.

The politically regressive consequences, however, needed telling. Citing again his maxim of the contiguity of the least and the greatest breach of liberty he does not hesitate to compare, though with reasonable qualifications, a Protestant Establishment with the Catholic Inquisition.

The springiness of style that derives from the adroit use of the two dictions of English, the long latinate and the short Anglo-Saxon, is noteworthy; for example: "What a *melancholy mark* is the Bill of *sudden degeneracy?*"

Eleventh Paragraph

11. Because it will destroy that moderation and harmony which the forbearance of our laws to intermeddle with Religion has produced among its several sects. Torrents of blood have been spilt in the old world, by vain attempts of the secular arm, to extinguish Religious discord, by proscribing all difference in Religious opinion. Time has at length revealed the true remedy. Every relaxation of narrow and rigorous policy, wherever it has been tried, has been found to assuage the disease. The American Theatre has exhibited proofs that equal and compleat liberty, if it does not wholly eradicate it, sufficiently destroys its malignant influence on the health and prosperity of the State. If with the salutary effects of this system under our own eyes, we begin to contract the bounds of Religious freedom, we know no name that will too severely reproach our folly. At least let warning be taken at the first fruits of the threatened innovation. The very appearance of the Bill has transformed "that Christian forbearance, love and charity," which of late mutually prevailed, into animosities and jealousies, which may not soon be appeased. What mischiefs may not be dreaded, should this enemy to the public quiet be armed with the force of a law?

A crowd of notions familiar in early American rhetoric is now brought to bear on the threat of sectarian strife raised by the bill: Time has revealed, and America is the stage to test and prove, the remedies to old problems; liberty once instituted, innovations may be dangerously regressive.

The paragraph permits itself some hyperbole, in the claim of complete religious freedom in Virginia, which flies in the face of the fact that the same Article XVI which Madison cites establishes Christianity, if not as a state church, at least as *the* public morality; moreover, in 1781 Jefferson had indignantly noted that although "statutory oppression" had ceased, common law permitting all sorts of persecution was still on the books.[48]

In this section Madison prudently suppresses his opinion that a vigorous variety of sects is an even more practically efficacious guarantee of liberty than a bill of rights,[49] and that disestablishment promotes church prosperity very much as factions well managed produce political stability. The unstated premise is, of course, that doctrinal enthusiasms are as much an irrepressible force of human nature as special secular interests.

I can detect no strain in this opinion of Madison which might equate it with the insouciant dogma that truth is a private predilection and that everything is "true for" them that believe it. His preference for sectarian variety rests on the limits and necessities of observed human nature, not on a doctrinal disavowal of the search for truth.

Twelfth Paragraph

12. Because the policy of the Bill is adverse to the diffusion of the light of Christianity. The first wish of those who enjoy this precious gift ought to be that it may be imparted to the whole race of mankind. Compare the number of those who have as yet received it with the number still remaining under the dominion of false Religions; and how small is the former! Does the policy of the Bill tend to lessen the disproportion? No; it at once discourages those who are strangers to the light of revelation from coming into the Region of it; and countenances by example the nations who continue in darkness, in shutting out those who might convey it to them. Instead of Levelling as far as possible,

every obstacle to the victorious progress of Truth, the Bill with an ignoble and unchristian timidity would circumscribe it with a wall of defence against the encroachments of error.

In his notes for the floor debate Madison had proposed to himself at about this place in the argument a vindication of disestablished Christianity, a "panegyric of it on our side." He omits it in the Remonstrance in favor of an appeal to the missionary urge. The offending bill is altogether too parochially conceived. Not only in Virginia but throughout mankind should Christianity be propagated. Instead the bill will act to prevent conversions by discouraging "strangers to the light of revelation," that is, infidels, (Madison had first written "light of truth" and then christianized the term) from "coming into the Region of it," which implies that a free America ought to be the natural ground on which revealed religion may be experienced.

The final sentence of the Christian section is reminiscent of the great peroration of Jefferson's bill establishing religious freedom,

> that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself: that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate,

except that the truth of this paragraph is truth of revelation, and the freedom here called for Christian liberty, a very Madisonian harmonizing of the spirit of enlightenment and the claims of Christianity.

THIRTEENTH PARAGRAPH

13. Because attempts to enforce by legal sanctions, acts obnoxious to so great a proportion of Citizens, tend to enervate the laws in general, and to slacken the bands of Society. If it be difficult to execute any law which is not generally deemed necessary or salutary, what must be the case, where it is deemed invalid and dangerous? And what may be the effect of so striking an example of impotency in the Government, on its general authority?

Again balanced phrases: "enervate the laws . . . slacken the bands," "necessary or salutary . . . invalid and dangerous." The rhetorical questions are intended to give pause to legislators who are ignoring the dangerous political effects of an unenforceable law: Madison's associates anticipated rebellion in some counties.

FOURTEENTH PARAGRAPH

14. Because a measure of such singular magnitude and delicacy ought not to be imposed, without the clearest evidence that it is called for by a majority of citizens, and no satisfactory method is yet proposed by which the voice of the majority in this case may be determined, or its influence secured. "The people of the respective counties are indeed requested to signify their opinion respecting the adoption of the Bill to the next Session of Assembly." But the representation must be made equal, before the voice either of the Representatives or of the Counties will be that of the people. Our hope is that neither of the former will, after due consideration, espouse the dangerous principle of the Bill. Should the event disappoint us, it will still leave us in full confidence, that a fair appeal to the latter will reverse the sentence against our liberties.

In accordance with the symmetry of the composition, the penultimate paragraph returns to the beginning. The resolution which occasioned the petition is cited, though with a little rhetorical interjection ("indeed") reflecting on its insufficiency.

Self-government, Madison argues, demands both that the voice of the majority be determined *and* that its influence be secured. That is to say, the legislature's occasional solicitation of petitions is not a methodical enough polling of opinion, and electoral qualifications as well as legislative apportionment are not fair enough for either the Delegates or the Senators to be truly representative.[50] Truly representative representatives, namely those elected from districts fairly apportioned and responsive to their constituents, would have been less likely to support the dangerous abuse of power perpetrated by the bill. The petitioners hope, however, that even the legislature as presently constituted can be brought to reconsider its dangerous course. The paragraph concludes with a veiled threat of an organized grass-roots campaign for repeal should the bill nonetheless be passed.

Here is set out an important aspect of Madison's theory of self-government. It is the idea that when major and controversial legislation is in progress, the people should be given some systematic opportunity to express themselves, because such a plebiscitic element is a trustworthy preventive of legislative usurpation and an added sanction for laws. (There is, however, no evidence that Madison was proposing that this "method" for determining the voice of the majority be incorporated in the constitution.)

Accordingly, the fact that Jefferson's law on religious liberty had been overwhelmingly passed in the wake of this and other petitions was regarded by Madison as a consummating factor: it had the "advantage of having been the result of a formal appeal to the sense of the Community and a deliberate sanction of a vast Majority. . . ."[51] The majoritarian faith Madison expresses here is, of

course, qualified in other contexts where he designs devices, "moderations of sovereignty," for protecting liberties from the people as well as from the legislature.

Fifteenth Paragraph

15. Because finally, "the equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his Religion according to the dictates of conscience" is held by the same tenure with all our other rights. If we recur to its origin, it is equally the gift of nature; if we weigh its importance, it cannot be less dear to us; if we consult the "Declaration of those rights which pertain to the good people of Virginia, as the basis and foundation of Government," it is enumerated with equal solemnity, or rather studied emphasis. Either then, we must say, that the Will of the Legislature is the only measure of their authority; and that in the plenitude of this authority, they may sweep away all our fundamental rights; or, that they are bound to leave this particular right untouched and sacred: Either we must say, that they may controul the freedom of the press, may abolish the Trial by Jury, may swallow up the Executive and Judiciary Powers of the State; nay that they may despoil us of our very right of suffrage, and erect themselves into an independent and hereditary Assembly or, we must say, that they have no authority to enact into law the Bill under consideration. We the Subscribers say, that the General Assembly of the Commonwealth have no such authority: And that no effort may be omitted on our part against so dangerous an usurpation, we oppose to it, this remonstrance; earnestly praying, as we are in duty bound, that the Supreme Lawgiver of the Universe, by illuminating those to whom it is addressed, may on the one hand, turn their Councils from every act which would affront his holy prerogative, or violate the trust committed to them: and on the other, guide them into every measure which may be worthy of his [blessing, may re]dound to their own praise, and may establish more firmly the liberties, the prosperity and the happiness of the Commonwealth.

The right of religious liberty is now examined not insofar as it is grounded in transpolitical conditions, as in the opening paragraph, but with respect to its situation in the political realm. Madison again quotes his free exercise clause of Article XVI, as he evidently had in the floor debates, together with a sonorous adaptation of the full title of the Virginia Declaration of Rights:

> "A declaration of rights made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention; which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government."

The purpose of the citation in the fourth paragraph was to emphasize the equal *application* of the right; the point now is the equal, or even superior, *standing* that it has compared with the other fundamental rights. The religious right is equal with them in its natural origin, in its importance, and in its place of promulgation in fundamental law. (It had in fact been given the ultimate, most emphatic, position, even beyond the article of exhortation to virtue and "frequent recurrency to fundamental principles.")

Since it is coequal with the other fundamental rights, religious liberty stands or falls with them. The argument, presented in two parallel sets of alternatives, recurs to the all or nothing reasoning of the third paragraph which is now extended: The least breach of the religious right endangers all the rights at once: Either the will of the legislature is unlimited or this particular right is untouchable; either they may sweep away all rights or they cannot enact the present bill. All the phrases are precise and suggestive: "Will of the legislature" is opposed to "voice of the people" of the previous paragraph; the "plenitude of their authority" conveys legislative high-handedness; "sacred" is used in the double sense of holy and inviolable. The rights of which the legislature "may despoil us"—Madison had first written "may abolish" but then remembered that natural rights cannot be abolished—are then enumerated from the Declaration, but their order is almost exactly reversed, ending with the most specifically political right, a "fundamental article in Republican Constitutions," the right of suffrage.[52] The whole appeal is couched in terms of the constraints of reasonable speech: "Either we must say...or we must say...." It concludes determinedly: "We the Subscribers say, that the General Assembly of this Commonwealth have no such authority."

The final pronouncement of the citizens, then, supersedes all the previous considerations. It is the principled denial of legislative authority to enact the bill at all. —The legislators may not arm it "with the sanctions of a law," in the words of the preamble. Into the last paragraph of his law concerning religious freedom Jefferson had written just such a denial: No assembly can constrain a future one equally elected by the people, but it is free to shame it by declaring that if it should repeal or narrow the law, "such an act will be an infringement of natural right."

The subscribers' pronouncement introduces the submission of the Remonstrance in a peroration which counters the simplicity of the opening with a grand, intricately branching rhetorical period, praying, as religious duty demands, that two coordinate illuminations might descend on the law-makers, that they may both refrain from violating their trust, and pass measures which will make them

worthy of God's blessing, will procure for them the praise of men, and will establish for the citizens liberty, prosperity, and happiness.

Observe the careful enumeration of goods in triads and subtriads; such triples belong to the familiar rhythms of American rhetoric: "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" rise most immediately to the ear. The prayer for the establishment of these goods echoes Jefferson's title: "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom," which proclaims the republican appropriation of the offending term. The petition ends as it began, with a reference to the Commonwealth.

IV. Madison's Rhetoric

How is the rhetoric of the Remonstrance to be characterized and how is it to be accounted for, reticent and rousing, calculated to persuade and designed for truth-telling, concisely compendious and artfully structured, as it is?

In his essay "Of Eloquence," Hume complains of the definciency of modern eloquence. It is "calm, elegant, and subtile," but also lacking in passion and sublimity as well as order and method: it is mere "good sense delivered in proper expressions." The Remonstrance has the precise virtues and precisely lacks the shortcomings Hume names. It is at once "argumentative and rational," grandly passionate and carefully constructed. It is almost as if Madison had composed to Hume's standards, standards probably more appropriate to written than to spoken eloquence. —Unlike Jefferson, whose style failed him on the floor, Madison, incidentally, was a persuasive though undeclamatory speaker. He seems to have addressed assemblies with just the same educated elegance with which he wrote, suiting his matter rather than his form to the occasion.

The terms and criteria for judging style used to be fairly fixed; they were to be found in textbooks of rhetoric, or—the preferred word in the eighteenth century—of eloquence, and they were universally employed in characterizing and judging productions. The loss of such a set critical vocabulary is not much mourned by modern writers on rhetoric who regard it as meaningless and unprofitable, and demand more fluid, sophisticated criteria. But its disappearance is a loss. To be sure, a writer was unlikely to improve his style through learning Quintilian's maxim that the first virtue of eloquence is perspicuity or clarity, that vivacity or liveliness of imagery is next in order of importance, that elegance or dignity of manner is also required, and that the intellect has the prerogative of being always the faculty ultimately addressed in speech. (My source here is Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric,* 1776, a work based mainly on Humean principles of human nature and popular as a textbook in the colleges of the early Republic.[53]) Yet it seems to me a suggestive fact that in the era when these criteria were considered significant, prose was produced which indeed satisfied them. Certainly they describe Madison's style with accuracy.

They were, I suppose, not so much the instigators as the precipitates of a well-defined and uncompromising taste—well-defined insofar as a deviation truly offended, and uncompromising because no one, certainly not Madison, lowered his language for any audience or occasion. All the manifestos, pamphlets, correspondences, petitions, memoranda, and memorials of the time that come in one's way show the same educated correctness of style.

Such correctness, then called purity, that is, speech true to its rules, is said by Campbell to be the lowest—and indispensible—rhetorical virtue: "Where grammar ends, eloquence begins." It was in such basic studies that Madison, and everyone of his class, was amply trained, and that early, in boyhood.

At twelve, Madison recalls in his Autobiography, he was learning Greek and Latin, studies which, if not absolutely indispensable to good style, at least insure that knowledge of syntax and vocabulary which prevents illogical constructions and faulty diction, while shaping the latinate English appropriate to the political writing. "Miscellaneous literature" was also embraced by the plan of the school he attended. Madison devotes a special paragraph to one such work of literature which he read early to great advantage, namely the *Spectator,* especially Addison's numbers, and in recommending it late in life to his nephew, he writes:

> Addison was of the first rank among the fine writers of the age, and has given a definition of what he showed himself to be an example. 'Fine writing,' he says, 'consists of sentiments that are natural, without being obvious'; to which adding the remark of Swift, another celebrated author of the same period, making a good style to consist 'of proper words in their proper places,' a definition is formed, which will merit your recollection. . .[54]

Madison has here conjoined precepts from one writer of satiny sweetness and another of mordant savor. Both together evidently guided his taste.

The young student apparently had an interest in rhetorical lore; at one point he copied out and annotated a long poem on the tropes of rhetoric:

> A metaphor compares with out the Sign
> [Madison's marginalia: "as, like, etc."]
> Virtue's A star and shall for ever shine.[55]

Studies conducive to good style and rational discourse continued in Princeton. There he filled a copybook with notes on a course of logic, probably given by the president, Dr. Witherspoon, much of which naturally bore on argumentation.[56] There, too, he is very likely to have heard Dr. Witherspoon's lectures on eloquence, of which extensive notes taken, among others, by Madison's college friend William Bradford in 1772, are still extant.[57] Witherspoon was fully conscious that he was speaking to young men destined for political responsibilities, who might one day have to address "promiscuous assemblies." He tried

to convey to them the dignity and efficacy of rhetorical studies. He deals with the usual topics: types of language, such as the sublime and the simple; the use of tropes or figures of speech; his own set of characteristics for eloquent writing—for example it is just if it pays "particular attention to the truth and meaning of every sentence" and elegant if it employs "the best expression the language will afford." Furthermore he treats of invention, organization, and style, always giving examples, and among them Addison and Swift.

But what seems to me most likely to have penetrated to his young auditors was his introductory list of five rules for good writing: 1. "Study to imitate the greatest examples." 2. "Accustom yourselves to early and much composition and exercise in speaking." 3. Acquaint yourselves with the "branches subordinate" to eloquence, namely grammar, orthography, punctuation. 4. Notice and guard against "peculiar phrases," namely idiosyncracies of speech. 5. "Follow nature," meaning, gain clear conceptions and follow the truth. Who now is bold enough to give such good advice so authoritatively?

Rives thought that Witherspoon had had a major part in forming Madison's style. Both show

> the same lucid order, the same precision and comprehensiveness combined, the same persuasive majesty of truth and conviction clothed in a terse and felicitous diction,

words which surely describe Madison's style faithfully. —Evidently good style, if not great eloquence, *can* be taught.

One far from negligible feature of this early training was the prodigious amount of studying Madison—and Jefferson as well—did in their youth. Madison reports that he lost his health and nearly his life at Princeton through all too successfully cramming two year's work into one. But as a result both men were masters of their style early: Jefferson was thirty-three when he wrote the Declaration and Madison composed the Remonstrance at thirty-four. Yet these efforts, being completely self-imposed, never spoiled the savor of study for either man. Madison went to his books throughout his life; for example, no sooner had he been appointed deputy of the Constitutional Convention than "he turned his attention and researches to the sources ancient and modern of information and guidance as to its object. Of the result of these he had the use both in the Convention and afterwards in the 'Federalist'." And later, at the close of his public life, he devoted himself to his farm and his books.[58] Such continuous, ready recourse to reading both for private pleasure and political practice is surely a chief contributor to fluent expression.

But of course, the most minute history of his studies is as insufficient to account for Madison's eloquence as the most time-honored rubrics of eloquence are to describe it. Finally, it seems to me, his rhetoric is shaped by that rare aptitude for conjoining speech and action, which caused Jefferson in his own Autobiography to couple in his noble description of Madison "the powers and polish of his pen, and the wisdom of his administration." That capacity was part of a

> habit of self-possession which placed at his ready command the rich resources of his luminous and discriminating mind.... Never wandering from his subject in vain declamation, but pursuing it closely in language pure, classical, and copious, soothing always the feelings of his adversaries by civilities and softness of expression.... With these consummate powers were united a pure and spotless virtue which no calumny has ever attempted to sully.

In the traditional understanding the rhetorical art has three parts: first, and least, elements of style such as copious diction and felicitous syntax; next, devices of persuasion such as "civilities," prudent ommissions and emphases together with well-placed passion; and finally, the very conditions of good speech, the veracity of the speaker and the verity of his thought. By these criteria, Madison was a consummate rhetorician.

Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance" seems to me in truth among the finest of those works of republican rhetoric in which adroit enunciation of the principles of liberty elicits their practice. In particular, that strict separation of church and state which implies the total secularization of public life and which, when promoted with heedless or rabid rationalism causes me, at least, some unease, is set forth in the Remonstrance with such respectful, even reverent, reasonableness that my scruples are dissolved in a certain enthusiam for Madison's principles and in the gratitude that a Jew and a refugee must feel for the safe haven he made.

And yet the question obtrudes itself whether such texts, for all their fineness, are not relics of an irrecoverable art. A document to whose phrases the highest court of the land has recourse in formulating decisions affecting every school in every district of the country can, of course, hardly be relegated to history. Nonetheless, it is perhaps no longer a possible model of public discourse. I ask myself why that might be.

I can imagine four reasons which would be readily forthcoming. It will be said that the public will no longer listen to educated speech, and it will be said that politicians can no longer be expected to have the requisite training. And again, it will be claimed that the level of language itself has fallen, and also that the complexity of our condition precludes any grandly perspicuous statement of principles.

These may be true reasons, but they are also bad excuses. They merit indignant refutation as miserable collusions with mere or imaginary circumstance. How we will be spoken to, how we and our representatives will be educated, to what level the language will rise, how our thought will dispose the world—these matters are not yet in the hands of Society or the Historical Situation, but in ours. And in the exercise of the liberties in which that truth is realized Madison is not only a possible, but the best possible, model.

APPENDIX
The Remonstrance in Supreme Court Decisions

The after-history of the petition is chiefly that of its citation by the Supreme Court.[59] The Court has recurred to the Remonstrance for elucidation of the "establishment" clause of the First Amendment, both because the latter was also drafted by Madison and because the Remonstrance is concerned with religion in education, as are so many cases involving that clause.

The relevant part of the First Amendment runs:

> Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

It includes two clauses, one prohibiting aid, and the other obstruction, to religion. That is to say, the "establishment" clause prohibits official support of religious institutions, while the "free exercise" clause guarantees absence of coercive invasions of any individual's religious practice. (Justice Clark, 1963). In this country, happily, the court has to deal far more often with putative attempts at establishment than with more direct interference with the free exercise of religion. Therefore the question of the precise meaning of the term "establishment" remains continually acute.

Madison's wording of the establishment clause is not vague but extremely careful, careful, that is, to use the most encompassing language. Thus the phrase "a law respecting" an establishment conveys a wider notion than would have been contained in the briefer phrase "a law establishing" religion, and, as Justice Rutledge points out, an "establishment of religion" is a wider notion than would have been an "establishment of a church." Such observations, however, are only the beginning of an interpretation; the central matter is the recovery of Madison's meaning of the word "establishment" itself, and here the Remonstrance, which was composed to combat an establishment of religion, is naturally the most pertinent document.

The Remonstrance played its chief role in the *Everson* decision of 1947. Everson, as a district taxpayer in New Jersey, filed a suit challenging a statute authorizing local Boards of Education to reimburse parents of parochial school students equally with parents of public school students for money expended on bus transporation. The argument was that such state aid to religious education constituted an establishment of religion under the First Amendment as made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth. Although the Court held that this particular statute did not constitute such an establishment, Justice Black in the course of his opinion paraphrased the Remonstrance at the climax of his argument for a very strong interpretation of the First Amendment:

> The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another.

Justice Rutledge canvassed the Remonstrance at yet greater length for his dissent, to find in it that broad meaning of the word "establishment" which would be consonant with the evident breadth of language of the First Amendment just pointed out. He found the word to have a wider scope of application than that current in England, where it usually meant a state church established by law.[60] Establishment, he showed, could encompass measures of all sorts and degrees, including, above all, state aid to any activity associated with religion, especially when coming out of tax money. He argued that all such government support whatsoever was vigorously proscribed under the name of establishment by the Remonstrance and hence by the First Amendment. Therefore the New Jersey statute supporting the children's way to parochial schools was unconstitutional. Rutledge thought the Remonstrance so fundamental a document that he appended it to his dissent.

In short, the justices who have cited the Remonstrance have almost all understood it as enjoining an absolute separation of church and state, and have construed the First Amendment accordingly—a construction named by a Jeffersonian phrase the "wall of separation" doctrine. Justice Frankfurter cites the Remonstrance once again in 1948, in the *McCollum* opinion, finding unconstitutional the device of so-called "released time," which permitted religious groups to come into public schools to instruct children who were released from the classroom for that purpose. He alone, incidentally, had an ear for that note of the document which could hardly get full hearing in a judicial context: its "deep religious feeling." Again, in 1963 Justice Clark quotes from the third paragraph, that "it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties," to support prohibition of even minor incursions of the state into religion, such as the reading of a super-sectarian prayer in school.

But this agreement on intent has not been sufficient to decide cases. The Remonstrance has several times been used on both sides, as in the *Everson* case and, much earlier, in the Mormon marriage case of 1879. There Judge Waite endorsed its doctrine that religion was not within the cognizance of the government, but found nevertheless that it did not protect religious practices made criminal under the law of the land, such as polygamy. Madison himself had confessed "that it may not be easy, in every possible case, to trace the line of separation between the rights of religion and the Civil authority,"[61] though he thought that the doubts would arise on inessential points. In other words, like all fundamental documents, the Remonstrance is necessary but not sufficient for determining cases.

It should be noted that the one judge who wished to give the Remonstrance and Madison's views a narrowly historical interpretation, Justice Reed in his *McCollum* dissent, cites as traditionally permissible involvement of the government in religious affairs the existence of chaplains of Congress and of the armed forces—evidently unaware that Madison had most emphatically opposed the first and only tolerated the latter.[62] (Such toleration is rationalized by present day courts under the category of "neutralizing" aids, breaches of the wall of separation permitted to counterbalance restrictions on the free exercise of religion incidental to meeting governmental demands, such as service in the armed forces.) Madison, however, excused such practices only reluctantly by the aphorism "the law ignores trifles."[63]

Furthermore the judge who rejected most forcefully "a too literal quest for the advice of the Founding Fathers" (Brennan, 1963), largely on the grounds that conditions of education have changed, failed to recall that the two new issues he mentions, universal public schooling and religious diversity, were precisely among the chief preoccupations of both Jefferson and Madison.

It is as hard to find fault with the strong interpretation of the First Amendment in the light of the Remonstrance as it is to deny the principles themselves of the Remonstrance. Yet one must wonder whether, were Madison alive now, he would not recognize certain complicating circumstances, especially where education is concerned.

Within the context of the Constitution the establishment clause is essentially ancillary to the free exercise clause. —It is because state aid to religion inevitably in some way restricts someone's free exericse that it is prohibited. Furthermore, the Court has repeatedly held that irreligion, secularism, humanism are all entitled to protection under the First Amendment, that is to say, they are in some manner of speaking religions, "belief systems": "the day that the country ceases to be free for irreligion it will cease to be free for religion..." (Justice Jackson, *Zorach v. Clauson*, 1952). Consequently there is, by the Court's own admission, a sense in which secular schools are not neutral in respect to religious doctrine.

Might not Madison, the fairest of men in such arguments,[64] have honored the point, if moderately made, that the enormous preemption of a child's time for secular purposes implied by modern school-attendence requirements, considered together with the financial hardship which Justice Rutledge admits the policy of total separation imposes on parents wishing to give their children religious schooling, amounts to a state invasion of religious rights? Would he not have lent an attentive ear to the admission made by Justice Black (*Epperson v. Arkansas*, 1968) that non-religious schooling cannot help but be, as for example in the teaching of evolution, in some sense anti-religious, and that the mandated secularism[65] of the public schools is indeed in the sense before explained, a kind of religious establishment, possibly in need of counterbalancing by fairly vigorous "neutralizing aids?" To study Madison's writings on religious liberty is to conceive an ardent wish that he might be here to consider these dilemmas.

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1. Printed with introduction and notes in *The Papers of James Madison*, Robert A. Rutland and William M. E. Rachal, eds., (Chicago) Vol. 8 (1784–1786), pp. 295–306.

I know of no detailed study of the Remonstrance.

2. William Cabell Rives, *A History of the Life and Times of James Madison* (Boston 1859), p. 632:

> In this masterly paper, he discussed the question of an establishment of religion by law from every point of view,—of natural right, the inherent limitations of the civil power, the interests of religion itself, the genius and precepts of Christianity, the warning lessons of history, the dictates of a wise and sober policy,—and treated them all with a consummate power of reasoning, and a force of appeal to the understandings and hearts of people, that bore down every opposing prejudice and precluded reply.

"This noble production of the mind and heart of Mr. Madison" is, he concluded this perfectly just appreciation, a triumphant plea in the great cause of religious liberty, "never surpassed in power or eloquence by any which its stirring influence have called forth."

3. Neal Riemer, *James Madison* (New York 1968), pp. 12–13. Riemer does not rate Madison's rhetorical gifts very high, particularly when compared to those of Jefferson and of Paine. He describes the style as earnest, forthright, simple, unadorned, quiet. "His writings convince but do not take fire." I think his estimate too much reduces rhetoric to oratory.

4. Sources: *Papers*, Vol. 8, pp. 295–98; Madison's "Detached Memoranda" in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, III, (October 1946), pp. 555–56; Irving Brant, *James Madison*, Vol. 2, *The Nationalist; 1780–1787* (New York 1948), pp. 343–55; Charles F. James, *Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty* (New York 1971), pp. 128–41; Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison* (London 1971), pp. 162–68; Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, Vol. I (New York 1950), pp. 339–45; Manfred Zipperer, *Thomas Jefferson's "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia" vom 16. Januar 1786*, Dissertation (Erlangen 1967), pp. 24–28.

5. James, p. 129.

6. The speeches are extant in the form of notes; see *Papers*, Vol. 8, pp. 195–99.

7. Gaillard Hunt, "Madison and Religious Liberty," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1901), Vol. I, p. 168.

8. Rives, p. 631.

9. "Detached Memoranda," pp. 555–56.

10. *Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 473.

11. *Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 298.

12. To display the bare bones of the argumentation I have stripped it of Madison's diction and added connectives.

1. Because of the unconditional priority of religious duties over civil obligations, religion is wholly exempt from any secular direction.
2. So much more so is it exempt from governmental interference.
3. Therefore even the smallest infringement of religious liberty constitutes an insupportable breach.
4. Governmental aid to religion is necessarily discriminatory and therefore violates the basic principle of equality.
5. Furthermore it constitutes officials the judges of orthodoxy and enables them to use religion politically.
6. At the same time it weakens Christianity by making it depend on secular support.
7. Moreover, such aid contaminates the purity of Christianity.
8. Above all, it is unnecessary to the security of a free government; indeed it is dangerous.
9. It discourages immigration by signalling possible persecution.
10. And it encourages emigration of dissenting citizens.
11. It encourages violent animosity among the sects.
12. In thus hindering free movement it in fact restricts the spread of Christianity.
13. The attempt to enforce so unpopular a law will undermine social stability.
14. Therefore before the bill is enacted into law the will of the majority should be fairly ascertained and represented in the legislature.
15. Ultimately, however, religious liberty being coequal with the other natural rights, the legislature has in any case no authority to abridge it, unless it is granted to have unlimited power to take away all rights.

13. Since the texture of the Remonstrance will sometimes be best brought out by comparison with Madison's other writings on religious liberty, that dearest of his causes, a list of his chief expressions on the subject is subjoined. I want to observe here that while Madison's language soon acquires a certain canonical quality it never becomes formulaic. —Iteration does not wear away its warmth.

1. 1773–1775. A series of youthful letters addressed to his friend from Princeton, William Bradford. These were written when Madison was in his early twenties and express in youthfully vigorous language his disgusted preoccupation with evidences of religious persecution in Orange County and in Virginia.
2. 1776. His first small but important contribution as a law-maker, his amendment of George Mason's draft of Article XVI for the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Also his own rejected version.
3. 1785. The "Memorial and Remonstrance," his most extensive writing on the subject.
4. 1788. A note on the value of a multiplicity of sects, meant for the Virginia Convention.
5. 1789. An early version and the final form of the first article of the Federal Bill of Rights, the First Amendment.
6. 1792. Essay "On Property," expressing a theory of rights, and particularly religious rights, as constituting personal property.
7. 1811. Presidential Veto Message, against the incorporation of the Episcopal Church.
8. 1811, 1813. Presidential Thanksgiving Messages, with caveats about publicly ordered prayer.
9. 1819–1822. Letters demonstrating that state support is not necessary to the religious sects.
10. 1823. Letter to Edward Everett, on the secular university.
11. "Detached Memoranda" (fragmentary essays separated from his main works in the nineteenth century), containing historical notes and exhortations concerning religious liberty, and an account of the events around the Remonstrance.

12. 1832. A late letter to the Rev. Jasper Adams giving proofs from American history that Christianity is not in need of state support.

The sources for these texts are: 1. *Papers*, Vol. I (1751–1779), pp. 100–161 passim; 2. *ibid.*, p. 174; 3. *ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 298–304; 4. James Madison, *The Forging of American Federalism*, Saul K. Padover, ed. (New York 1965), p. 306; 5. Stokes, p. 345; 6. *ibid.*, p. 551; 7. *Forging*, p. 307; 8. Adrienne Koch, *Madison's "Advice to My County"* (Princeton 1966), pp. 33–34; 9. *Forging*, pp. 308–10; 10. Stokes, p. 348; 11. *op. cit.*, pp. 554–62; 12. *The Writings of James Madison*, Gaillard Hunt, ed., Vol. IX, 1819–1836, (New York 1910) pp. 484–88.

14. George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), Lloyd F. Blitzer, ed. (Carbondale, 1963), p. 365.

15. *Papers*; Vol. 1, p. 38.

16. Frank Swancara, *Thomas Jefferson vs. Religious Oppression* (New York 1969), p. 124.

17. Samuel Stanhope Smith sent him a disquisition "on that knotty question of liberty and necessity," for light on which, Madison had "frequently attacked" him. Madison's response is lost, but Smith observes in a later letter: "I have read over your *theoretical* objections against the doctrine of moral liberty; for *practically* you seem to be one of its disciples." (*Papers*, Vol. I, 1751–1779, pp. 194, 253). For Madison's theory of human nature in general see Ralph L. Ketcham, "James Madison and the Nature of Man," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XIX, (1958), pp. 62–76.

18. "Detached Memoranda," p. 556.

19. Wilber G. Katz and Harold P. Southerland, "Religious Pluralism and the Supreme Court," *Religion in America, op. cit.*, p. 273.

20. Alexander Landi, "Madison's Political Theory," *The Political Science Reviewer*, Vol. VI (Fall 1976), pp. 77–79.

21. John Wise in *Vindication of the Government of New England Churches* (1717), quoted in Sidney E. Mead, "The 'Nation with the Soul of a Church'," *American Civil Religion*, Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds. (New York 1974), pp. 53 ff.

22. On Madison's views of the problems of majoritarian rule, see above all Federalist, no. 10; also Landi, pp. 84 ff.

23. See *Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 297.

24. See Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists, 1802; On Roger Williams, see Loren P. Beth, *The American Theory of Church and State* (Gainesville 1958), p. 65.

The American author of the separation doctrine was Roger Williams, with whose ideas Madison was probably acquainted through his connection with the Baptists of his county.

25. John Adams' entry in his Diary shows how the Boston Tea Party caught the imagination as a beginning: "This is the most magnificent Movement of all. There is a Dignity, a Majesty, a Sublimity, in this last Effort of the Patriots, that I greatly admire. . . . I cant but consider it as an Epocha in History." (December 17, 1773).

26. "Detached Memoranda," p. 557.

27. John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, J. W. Gough, ed. (Oxford 1976), p. 149.

28. Swancara, pp. 123–32; "Detached Memoranda," p. 556.

29. To Mordecai M. Noah, 1818; to Jacob de la Motta, 1820.

30. "Detached Memoranda," p. 555.

31. Koch, p. 33; cf. "Detached Memoranda," pp. 560–61.

32. *Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 172–75.

33. For example, in the Declaration of Independence there is "Nature's God," man's "Creator," "the Supreme Judge of the World." In his law Jefferson used one designation that pleased the devout, "holy author of our religion," the very one employed by the Baptists in their resolution against the assessment bill (James, p. 138).

34. See *Papers, op. cit.*, pp. 170 ff.

35. See Hunt, "James Madison and Religious Liberty," *op. cit.*, p. 166.

36. Stokes, pp. 22–26.

37. Letter to Edward Livingston, 1822; to Rev. Adams, 1832.

38. Locke started writing on toleration in the decade before Spinoza's *Treatise*, which appeared in 1670, though the *Letter* postdated it (1683–4). For Locke's lack of interest in Spinoza see Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago 1974), p. 211.

39. See, for example, the theological catalogue for the library of the University of Virginia which he hastily tossed off at Jefferson's urgent request, listing an astonishing number of church writers of the first five Christian centuries. (Rives, pp. 641–44).

40. Landi, pp. 80–84.

41. John Milton, *Selected Prose*, C. A. Patrides, ed. (Penguin 1974), p. 316.

42. Letter to Rev. Jasper Adams, 1832. The opinion here expressed seems to have been current. For example, just the preceding year Tocqueville had asked a Catholic priest whom he had met in his travels through the Michigan Territory this very question: "Do you think that the support of the civil power is useful to religion?"—and had received the same answer Madison was to give to Rev. Adams, a decided negative. See George Wilson Pierson, *Tocqueville in America*, Dudley C. Lunt, ed. (Gloucester 1969), p. 203.

43. Evidence for such a long term decline in the second half of this century is given in Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*, Vol. I (Berkeley 1970) pp. 204 ff. Of course, the question would become moot, should a massive religious revival refute the sociological projections.

44. "Detached Memoranda," p. 554.

45. "Detached Memoranda," p. 556–57.

46. Beth, p. 66. Madison's own church allegiance was so vanishingly weak a factor in his opinions about religious liberty that it can be relegated to a footnote. He was, in fact, a born Episcopalian with strong Presbyterian associations from his Princeton days, apparently a communicant of no church, who displayed unfailing respect for the faiths of the sects.

47. Stokes, p. 551. The starting point of the essay appears to be Locke's definition of property as life, liberty and estate in the *Second Treatise of Government*, Ch. IX.

48. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII.

49. Madison liked to quote Voltaire's Article on "Tolerance" in the *Philosophical Dictionary*: "If one religion only were allowed in England, the government would possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people would cut each other's throats; but as there are such a multitude, they all live happy and in peace." See Koch, p. 76.

50. Jefferson, too, had complained of the under-representation in both houses of the middle and upper counties, and of the arms-bearing population in general.

51. "Detached Memoranda," p. 554.

52. *Forging*, p. 36.

53. Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric, op. cit.*, pp. 215–16, 285, 35. I. A. Richards, for example, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York 1965), p. 70, decries the use of just such terms as "misleading and unprofitable."

54. Rives, p. 25, n. 1. It is the spirit of Swift's definitions which I. A. Richards' rhetoric is intended to oppose.

55. *Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 32–42.

56. *Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 18–19.

57. Microfilm, Princeton University Library.

58. "James Madison's Autobiography," Douglas Adair, ed., *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, II, no. 2, pp. 202, 207. See also Robert A. Rutland, "Madison's Bookish Habits," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 176–91.

59. Sources: Irving Brant, *The Bill of Rights, Its Origin and Meaning* (New York 1967), pp. 400–18; *The Supreme Court and Education*, Classics in Education No. 4, David Fellman, ed. (New York 1976), Pt. I, pp. 3–124.

60. Stokes, pp. 26–30, gives a history of the term. The contemporary political use of the phrase "The Establishment" is, of course, quite different since it has no reference to legal confirmation.

61. Letter to Rev. Jasper Adams, 1832.

62. "Detached Memoranda," pp. 558–60; Letter to Edward Livingston, 1822.

63. *Religion in America*, William C. Mclaughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston 1968), p. 275; "Detached Memoranda," p. 559.

64. An example is his reply to Rev. Adams, 1832.

65. For the definition of secularism, see Stokes, pp. 30–31. Just this year the secular religion issue has again been raised in *Seagraves vs. State of California.*

Cicero's Teaching on Natural Law

Thomas G. West

We are in the midst of a crisis—not always evident in the comfortable lives we lead, but a crisis nonetheless. A sign of the crisis is the ongoing political collapse of the West; the liberal democracies of America and Europe are barely willing to defend themselves against the insolence of petty tyrants and the armed imperialism of the Soviet Union.

Why this somnolent slide into voluntary weakness? Because we are not convinced that we have anything to fight *for*. We are ready to believe the worst of ourselves, and the best of our adversaries, because we no longer fully believe that we deserve to survive. That is because we no longer know what the West is, and why its preservation matters for nurturing and sustaining the noblest and best of human activities. In particular, we in America no longer know why the United States is the best hope for the modern world.

The core of the West is not only worth saving; it is perhaps the highest reason for living. Our best moral traditions and political institutions foster a rational thoughtfulness that enables all of us, to the extent of our abilities, to use words, human speech, to discover and articulate the natures of things. This unique feature of Western peoples became most evident to me when I taught classes that included both Americans and non-Western foreigners, especially students from the Middle East. Because their characters were formed by different kinds of laws and habits, such foreigners are inclined to look upon reason and speech as manipulative tools by which people impose their will on each other rather than as aids to bringing forth truth from darkness. Truth, then, is the opinion of the stronger, of whoever has or appears to have the power to make it stick. A *Newsweek* reporter expressed his bafflement over this attitude when he visited Iran in December of 1979 and found everyone convinced that Khomeini would make America turn over the ex-Shah to Iran—even though our laws and our self-interest forbade it. The Ayatollah said it, so the people believed it.[1]

Americans are different. You can argue with them and get them to see, by means of the argument, what you see. A successful argument is not just a victory of one person over another, for what the discussion is about is never merely personal. Even when Americans fling their convictions at one another in barroom disputes—who is the better quarterback, Bradshaw or Staubach?—they are dimly aware that the issue they are controverting is something real, independent of their boisterous claims, and that the truth about it can be brought to light through words. When students raised in non-Western traditions appear in one's classes, they do not grasp that the purpose of talk is insight, not power; as a result, they usually suppose that the teacher only wants his students to remember and parrot his own opinions. On the contrary, proper teaching provides an example of thinking which students at first imitate; later, they begin to be able to repeat the thought on their own, and finally, if ability and effort suffice, to think by themselves without such help.

To learn the connection between rationality and republican political institutions, education is needed. And to perfect one's own rationality, education is needed. But education today most often means getting through college quickly and moving on to one's career. I do not believe such an education is enough to enable students to withstand the assaults of positivism, socialism, and the other defeatist doctrines that dominate current fashion in most professional and graduate schools, not to mention the "real world" outside. As ever, the best education consists principally of a patient, dedicated study of political history and the outstanding Western authors, particularly the classical authors, of history, literature, and political philosophy.[2] The revival of this education—and it has already begun—is probably the only thing that can save the liberty of our country and of our minds. Cicero deserves inclusion in such a curriculum, no less for his admirable statesmanship than for his philosophical work.

* * *

Cicero has a prominent place in most histories of political philosophy, but few scholars regard him as a thinker of the first rank. His ideas, it is typically asserted, are mostly platitudinous and second-hand, taken over from second-rate Hellenistic philosophers. His philosophical works, which educated men read as recently as the eighteenth century for rational guidance in the conduct of

Professor of Politics at the University of Dallas, Thomas G. West has recently published *Plato's Apology of Socrates* (Cornell University Press 1979).

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life, are now studied chiefly by antiquarians engaged in source-criticism and historical research.[3] Even among his scholarly admirers, few would seriously look to Cicero for instruction in living their own lives. His eclipse rivals that of Xenophon, that allegedly simple-minded hanger-on of Socrates who wrote such surprisingly charming prose. I believe that what Leo Strauss accomplished in his interpretations of Xenophon—he rediscovered Xenophon the philosopher by conceding to subtlety the benefit of every doubt—can also, in part, be done on behalf of Cicero.[4]

Besides this scholarly depreciation of Cicero, another and deeper critique is posed by Martin Heidegger. Cicero, or rather Roman philosophy generally, represents for Heidegger an important stage in the gradual forgetting of the Greek discovery of nature, a forgetting process which has marked the whole history of the West. According to Heidegger, the very translation of Greek philosophy into Latin effaced that insight. Roman philosophy conceived *natura*, the nature of things, as present-at-hand and readily available to easy philosophic contemplation and the formulation of ethical doctrines. It thereby failed to renew the vibrant amplitude of the Greek *physis*, which embraces the emergence and coming-to-be of things no less than their distinct standing-forth in full presence before the mind's eye. The Roman narrowing of nature therefore prepared the way for the modern view of beings as mere disposable resources, easily accessible to human projects and manipulation.

The scholarly view of Cicero, being less serious, can be addressed more easily. But Heidegger's more profound charge can also be met.

Cicero faced a philosophical-political situation in Rome in some ways similar to our own. As today, philosophical writings about how politics ought to be conducted, and more broadly, about how life ought to be lived, were widely known. But their effect on the formation of the characters of future politicians, not to speak of direct influence on public life, was small. Nor did political philosophy temper the philosophers' nearly exclusive preoccupation with private morals, theory of knowledge, the nature of the gods, and the order of the physical world. By tremendous efforts Greek philosophy had achieved its insight into the distinction between and yet necessary belonging-together of nature and convention, being and appearance, truth and opinion, an insight anticipated in the dark lyrics of the pre-Socratic thinkers and given its consummate expression in the works of Plato and Aristotle. But now, in the moribund Roman republic, this grasp upon the tense unity of nature and convention was forgotten by politicians unformed by philosophy and philosophers disdainful of politics.

In all of his writings, from the practical orations to the theoretical excursions into epistemology and theology, Cicero strove to reyoke the sundered pair. He sought thereby not only to revitalize philosophy, which in its late Greek appearance and Roman transplantation had become routinized in a set of contesting schools of thought, each with its characteristic jargon and dogma; he also tried to revive the wilting prospects for political liberty in Rome, where the despotic acquisitiveness and imperialism that had long marked its foreign policy were increasingly employed within Rome itself by ambitious factions and generals, acting against their fellow Romans. Julius Caesar's conversion of Rome into a popular dictatorship late in Cicero's career openly displayed whither Roman politics were tending. Cicero's teaching on law, the peak of his reflections on the nature of the political, epitomizes his twofold intention: to render politics more rational and reason more politically responsible, on the ground that reason and politics are inseparable.

Only in the first two books of *De legibus (On Laws)* does Cicero give a sustained account of his legal doctrine. There is a famous passage on law from the third book of his *De re publica* (III.33), but its value is doubtful because it is a fragment whose context is lost and because it is put into the mouth of one of the dialogue's characters, Laelius, whose views do not always coincide with Cicero's. In any event, Laelius's statement on law is not much different from what we find in the *Laws*, where Cicero speaks in his own name and the question of law is amply developed.

At first glance the *Laws* offers an array of comforting certitudes. True law is grounded in the eternal verities of God, reason, and nature; and Rome's law, with some modifications, seems to be a fitting exemplar. Rhetorical flights in praise of law-abidingness and piety, apparently nothing more than variations on Stoic commonplaces, grace the pages of the book.

Cicero is of course fully responsible for this initial impression, and if many scholars penetrate no further than this surface, they at least grasp the first level of his teaching. The surface provides a standard for politicians and professors who incline toward private gain at the expense of public duty; by "private gain" I mean the pleasure of pursuing wisdom apart from the commonwealth no less than the acquisition of wealth and honor to its actual detriment. For the law teaches politicians that man's end is to know and to choose the good, which requires philosophy and "pure religion," and it teaches philosophers that the soul is born for political society and not merely for private contemplation of eternity (I.58–62).

It takes only a modest attentiveness to the order and argument of the work to see beyond this first impression. The *Laws* is a fictitious dialogue between Cicero himself, his brother Quintus, who was active in Roman public life and composed some tragic poetry, and Cicero's closest friend, Atticus, the Epicurean philosopher and wealthy Roman knight. Like many Roman political men, Quintus is liberally educated in Greek philosophy and poetry (II.17), though not philosophically inclined, and he is an uncritical adherent of government by his own peers, the aristocrats or optimates (III.17). He is possessed by a certain excess of the love of one's own that typifies the citizen and gentleman at all times and places.

Atticus has the opposite defect. His very name, "the man from Attica," signals his long removal from his native Italy to the academic center Athens. His interest in the conversation on law is purely theoretical—one might even call it aesthetic, for he pursues it for the personal pleasure it affords and the trans-political themes it develops, not because of any practical good he might gain from it (I.13–14, 28). He is particularly delighted by the setting of their dialogue, in the summer shade, along the banks and islands of a cool stream in the country (I.14, II.6–7). In his attention to these pleasures of body and mind he displays himself as the unpolitical Epicurean that he is.

Cicero's two interlocutors, then, represent the two divergent Roman tendencies mentioned at the outset, unphilosophical politics and unpolitical philosophy, but with this difference: both men are close enough to Cicero that they can be persuaded to follow his lead—Quintus because of his admiration and affection for his brother, Atticus because of his friendship with Cicero and of his probable awareness that law-abidingness protects the wealth that sustains his philosophic leisure. Cicero comprises in himself the qualities possessed separately by his two companions. He shares exclusively with Quintus a serious political vocation and a poetizing avocation, and with Atticus, a dedication to philosophy and admiration for Plato (I.1, 15, III.1).

These three topics—politics, poetry, and philosophy—are prominent themes in the *Laws*, and the conversation opens with an exchange on the nature of poetry. Poetry, it seems, has the capacity to immortalize what is by nature mortal; the old oak that stands before the three men will live forever in Cicero's poem, just as the olive tree on the Athenian acropolis is believed to have been planted by Athena and hence to be sempiternal. But poetry, says Cicero, affords pleasure rather than truth; truth is rather the standard for history. And since history too is full of innumerable fables—Herodotus is the example named—Cicero will shortly turn from history to philosophy to bring forth the truth about law and justice (I.1–5, 17). The prefatory conversation to the *Laws*, then, sets forth an implicit antithesis between poetry, pleasant but untrue, and philosophy, which is true. The contrast raises this question: does Cicero mean that the truth exposed by philosophy is unpleasant?

This seemingly inconsequential talk about poetry arrests our attention as soon as we notice a possible similitude, not explicitly stated by Cicero, of poetry to law. Poetry renders the mortal immortal, and, more generally, it bestows life and memory on that which does not exist by nature. By mentioning the example of Romulus's apotheosis in the context of this discussion of poetry's truth, Cicero implies that poetry allots to the gods themselves their being and qualities (I.3). Does not law, too, share this capacity to implant convictions in the minds of men, convictions that surpass by far in importance and degree the voluntary suspension of disbelief that we concede to a well-wrought novel or poem? Poetry and law (law taken in a wide sense, like the Greek *nomos*, to include custom and tradition) appear to immortalize the transient or even to bring non-being into being by touching our minds and memories through words. If philosophy, which strives uncompromisingly to unveil the true natures of things, is the antithesis of poetry, it would likewise seem to be the enemy of the traditions and beliefs on which law depends and which in some measure law *is*. The beginning of Cicero's *Laws* unobtrusively questions whether law contains any truth whatever. Law, like poetry, may be nothing more than a fiction that furnishes pleasure by establishing trust in eternally binding precepts and practices.[5]

Cicero forestalls this positivist inference by drawing a distinction between two senses of the word law: the popular sense, according to which law is "that which sanctions in writing whatever it wishes, either by commanding or prohibiting," and the more learned sense, derived from nature itself, according to which law is "the mind and reason of the prudent man" (I.19). This explanation serves the law's truthfulness by limiting merely arbitrary enactments to the vulgar notion of law. But the unambiguous clarity we might expect from Cicero's employment of this distinction is not forthcoming. For he immediately adds that "it will sometimes be necessary to speak popularly" about law, since "our whole discussion is involved in the people's way of reasoning (*in populari ratione*)" (I.19).

We wonder why Cicero must speak at all in the vulgar manner, for he has just said that he will draw his account of law from the heart of philosophy (I.17). We will return to this question later, but a preliminary answer is suggested by the parallel treatment of morality in Cicero's *On Duties*. Morality (*honestum*) in the strict sense is wisdom, says Cicero, possessed (if by anyone) by extraordinary men such as Socrates. But the morality that is discussed in *On Duties*, he says, is only "a certain second-grade morality," and the great statesmen who come to mind as examples of virtue, such as the two Scipios and Marcus Cato, have only "a sort of similitude and appearance of wise men." Nevertheless, "we [ordinary men] ought to watch over and preserve that morality which falls within our [more limited] understanding. . . . For otherwise it is not possible to maintain such progress as has been made toward virtue" (*De officiis*, III.13–17, I.148). We infer that a forthright presentation of morality as wisdom would discourage progress in virtue, because genuine wisdom is exalted too far above the common intellectual capacity and moral taste to be a plausible aim for most men. Most Athenians regarded Socrates as an object more of curiosity or annoyance than of emulation. By concealing the wisdom requisite for strict morality, Cicero allows "second-grade morality" to retain the luster that would otherwise be robbed from it. Nevertheless, the concealment is not absolute, for part of Cicero's purpose is to explain the truth about virtue.

The *Laws* treats law as *On Duties* treats virtue. Cicero will indeed be seeking true law, but he will also speak with a view to "strengthening republics, establishing cities, and

making peoples healthy" (I.37). Therefore he will not admit Epicureans into the discussion, "even if they speak the truth," because by referring everything to the criterion of pleasure and pain, they corrode the convictions of those who believe that "all correct and honorable things are to be sought for their own sake" (37, 39). Even the skepticism to which Cicero adheres in other works is excluded, so that the grounds for their dialogue will not be destroyed (39). In short, since the *Laws* has a twofold purpose of revealing the truth about law and promoting salutary political usages, Cicero will speak about law in both the strict and vulgar sense—and he does not spell out at what times he will speak in which sense. The truth frankly displayed would not only cause displeasure, like poetry debunked, but it would also mar the intended practical effect.

Before we pursue further Cicero's intricate weaving of the two senses of law, let us first look at some of his explicit statements on the subject. His first is a report of the "most learned": "Law is the highest reason, seated in nature, which orders what is to be done and forbids the opposite. This reason, when it is settled and accomplished in the mind of a human being, is law" (I.18). In his own name Cicero restates the formulation as follows: "[Law] is a force (*vis*) of nature, the mind and reason of the prudent man, the standard of the just and of injustice" (I.19). In the three other places in Book I where law is defined, it is "correct reason" (I.23) or "correct reason in ordering and forbidding" (I.33, 42). Law is natural in the same way that reason is natural, as a gift of nature bestowed on every human being (I.33). But only in the prudent man, whose reason is developed as far as it can be, does reason become "correct," and so only *his* commands and prohibitions are truly "law."

In spite of the exalted tone in which Cicero delivers these pronouncements, we note that law is nothing more than the reasonable orders of the sensible man. There is no trace whatever here of a table of definite, eternally binding precepts, of the sort characteristic of the natural-law doctrine, actually medieval, that scholars generally attribute to Cicero.[6] His formulation avoids entirely the notorious dilemma between inflexible rules of scholastic natural law and the Machiavellian renunciation of any natural law whatever. Cicero's alternative is so simple, yet so radical, that cognizance of it has rarely been taken. True law—Cicero himself persistently avoids the term "natural law" (*lex naturalis* or *lex naturae*)—true law, then, to put it bluntly, is whatever the wise man orders.[7] If he commands you to worship Zeus, then worship of Zeus is part of the true law. If he says, "believe that you are sprung directly from the earth itself and that your soul is compounded of gold or silver or bronze," then such beliefs too will be enjoined by true law. Far from being eternal, the true law will be subject to change whenever the sensible man sees that circumstances call for it. And conflict between the positive law of the actual political order, infused as it must be with concessions to particularity, and a higher law whose demands cannot be met in this world, need not occur. To the extent that the government is prudent or that the wise orders of the original law-giver continue to fit present conditions, the statutes on the books and the true law will be one and the same.

In light of all this, how can Cicero maintain that law is "one"? (I.42). What center governs the seemingly indefinite latitude granted to the prudent man and prevents it from spinning off into orderless multiplicity and caprice? How can what is one be many? Cicero provides an oblique resolution of these questions in the lengthy set-piece oration that occupies the bulk of Book I. The nature of the just, he begins, must be sought in the nature of man (17), and human nature, like the divine, achieves its peak and perfection through virtue (25). Virtue, in turn, is the steady and continuous rational conduct of life, in which prudence follows the naturally honorable and avoids the naturally dishonorable courses of action; virtue is "reason perfected" (45). And since reason, "when it is full-grown and perfected, is duly called wisdom" (23), prudence involves the full development of man's rationality and thoughtfulness.

From these statements we might expect Cicero to proclaim unambiguously that wisdom, acquired by philosophy, comprising knowledge of self as well as the nature of all things, is *the* human good (cf. 58–62). Such a standard would furnish the prudent man with a reliable guide as he crafted his laws for a given polity, just as the legislator of Plato's *Republic* looks up to the idea of the good as a pattern for his artful lawmaking (484c–d). The laws would then prescribe such educational practices and institutional arrangements as would issue in habits of body and mind conducive to the development of reason in everyone so far as that is possible. The variety of prudent legislative codes would betoken an application of the one truth about the human good, qualified by the vagaries of local circumstances. Laws and customs appropriate to men who look up to Jove and honor martial valor would be far different from those suited to men who believe in human equality and regard the career of a businessman as more respectable than that of a general.

This interpretive expectation, however, stumbles over the fact that Cicero disclaims such precise knowledge of the good. It is true that Cicero allows us to form the impression that he believes he knows not only the good but the nature of the cosmos and the gods themselves. In considering his grandiloquent foray, however, we must not fail to notice the light, bantering exchange that touches it off, in which the Epicurean Atticus, who can be presumed not to believe it, agrees to Cicero's assertion of Divine rule over the cosmos (21). He perhaps accepts Cicero's teleo-theology because he is aware of its usefulness in supporting the rights of property from which he benefits and which provides leisure for his philosophizing (cf. III.37).[8] And Cicero's own joking over this solemn matter is far from reassuring.

We particularly wonder about Cicero's true convictions in light of his surprising admission at the end of his long

speech that the controversy over the end or highest of goods, the *finis bonorum*, will not even be investigated in their conversation (I.52–57). This theme, which provides the title for that book of Cicero's which according to himself is most worth reading, *On the Ends of Goods and Evils* (*finibus bonorum et malorum*, I.11) would divert the inquiry into an extended and perhaps endless weighing of the alternative accounts of the good. We infer this because although in that book Cicero refutes the Stoic and Epicurean teachings on the good, he will not affirm there any definite opinion of his own. To be sure, he finds the Peripatetic doctrine "probable" or "praiseworthy" (*probabilis*), but this, he says, in no way qualifies his skeptical stance toward all of them (*De finibus*, V.7, 75–76). Although Cicero does not advertise his skepticism in the *Laws*, his explicit omission of an account of the good points to his knowledge that he does not know it. Neither here nor elsewhere does Cicero claim to have resolved this first of all moral and political questions.

Quintus, however, is quite satisfied with Cicero's speech, and he even believes that the nature of the good has been sufficiently brought to light (I.56). Certainly all those fine words about honor, virtue, and the gods lend themselves to Quintus's sanguine conclusion, but it appears that his urgent concern for a code of law to live by distracts him from the central question of the good, for he now asserts that that question has nothing to do with the subject of law (57). Quintus's urgency springs from the same source as the urgency of law itself, which cannot hold in abeyance its dispensations of what it holds to be just and unjust without endangering the political order. So Quintus calls Cicero and Atticus back from the leisure of philosophy to the practical problems of everyday life that demand instant attention, and thus he unknowingly draws a veil over the unsolved problem. Cicero remarks ironically that Quintus speaks "most prudently" (57), and he accommodatingly closes the discussion of the highest good.

How then are we to understand Cicero's account of law? Or, putting the question another way, what constitutes the correctness or reasonableness of reason if no final criterion of good is forthcoming by which reason can orient itself?

Even if complete knowledge of the good is unavailable, as Cicero's skepticism implies, we may infer that an approximation to wisdom is accessible through the assiduous exercise of the understanding. Cicero's final peroration to Book I paints a picture of perfect wisdom that can be a standard, even if unattained, of human striving (58–62). Self-knowledge is the key. For once we thoroughly examine and test ourselves, says Cicero, we learn that we are equipped by nature for acquiring wisdom, and we sense that the mind, as a sort of image of the gods, is worthy of care and cultivation (59). But Cicero does not promise a consummation of wisdom; using the future perfect tense, he speaks as one not yet wise, but aiming to become so: "when [the soul] *will* have examined . . . the nature of all things . . . ." (61). Cicero's own wisdom extends no further than the "human wisdom" of Socrates, who, by knowing his own ignorance, is spurred on to an active pursuit of knowledge to supply that defect.[9]

The law laid down by such a man would, I think, have a double aspect aiming at the single end of wisdom. First, like the legal code mentioned above, it would nourish decorous moral habits and vigorous thoughtfulness by means of appropriate rules of conduct and education. Cicero says, "Law should be a commender of virtues and detractor from vices" (58). Second, the law's formulation would itself be both an example of and an incentive to, thought. Perhaps, like the religious laws that Cicero proposes in Book II, the law's proclamations could be discerned, by a close observer, to be deliberately incomplete or ambiguous or an image of something else. The theological preface that Cicero attaches to those laws declares at once that "the gods are lords and governors of all things" and that "it is sacrilege to say that any thing stands above the nature of all things" (II.15–16). Are the gods governed by nature or are nature's habits subject to divine exception? The philosophic inquiry into the relation of nature and the will of the gods is as it were built into the law itself, for a self-contradiction embedded in an authoritative statement can only be resolved by rational consideration of the doubtful point.[10]

I would propose another, deeper sense in which law can be an exemplary embodiment of philosophy or human wisdom. This sense can also help to explain our earlier questions: how the law's variety, which we attributed to the prudent man's adaptation of wisdom to conditions, can be reconciled with its alleged oneness, and how and why the vulgar and precise senses of law are mingled in the dialogue. Philosophy for Cicero is inseparable from its beautiful presentation in particular form: "I have always judged that philosophy to be complete which is able to speak about the greatest questions abundantly and with suitable adornment (*ornate*)."[11] One of Ciceros' characters in *de oratore* identifies the complete philosopher with the complete orator (III.56–73), since the capacity to think well necessarily involves the capacity to speak well about what one is thinking. Similarly, if we take a larger, synoptic look at Cicero's teaching on law, we are inclined to the conclusion that the perfect philosopher is the perfect legislator, and that law in the strictest sense *is* philosophy. If "law is taken as one possible form of wisdom's displaying itself "with suitable adornment," then a well-crafted legal code would be constructed like any other philosophically informed work of art. The variety and particularity of true laws would therefore derive not only from the disparity of men and nations, but also from philosophy's inherent need to show itself forth. For reason only becomes visible in display, and a display is always cast in particular form. Unless the truth that is thought is given "a local habitation and a name," it does not manifest itself and therefore is not itself, for the essence of truth is to be the

unconcealment of what is naturally hidden. It has to be brought out into the open, usually through words. And once truth is given concrete shape, it of necessity appears as a partial, particular, incomplete fragment or image of what is inherently one.[12]

Let us return to the two senses of law deliberately interwoven in Cicero's text. There is a difficulty with my earlier argument that now must be faced. One law, the true one, is "the reason and mind of the wise man for ordering and deterring," which is "eternal" and can never be repealed (II.8, 14). About law popularly understood Cicero says: "those things that have been drawn up for peoples variously and for the times have the name 'law' more by indulgence (*favore*) than in fact (*re*)" (II.11). The statements quoted here require that true law be eternal and exclude from it the element of timeliness. Yet I continue to maintain that true law is whatever the wise man orders, which will vary according to circumstances. How can this be? Can one and the same law be both law and not law, both eternal and temporal? Can law in truth and law by convention be the same? I believe they can, for it all depends upon how the one "law" is understood. Insofar as it is thought through from the rational perspective of the philosophizing legislator, the law is true; insofar as it is understood "popularly," that is, to the extent that its rational conception and intention are missed, then the law is only conventionally or "by indulgence" a law, not in fact.

At the moment when law is conceived in the mind of a prudent man, a discovery occurs and truth becomes manifest to him, so far as he grasps it, in the artifact he is about to produce. Truth remains present in the law only when it is being thought or rethought in its originating sense. So its truth is eternal only equivocally, during such thoughtful occasions, as the fruit of the mind's vigorous exertion. It is not something lying there present at hand, open to the view of anyone who casts an idle glance in its direction. But neither is its truth a Nietzschean contrivance of the mind or will, that imposes itself on an otherwise meaningless external world. The truth of the law is like that of any well-crafted dramatic or philosophical work. Consider the Platonic dialogue. If the reader grasps only its obvious surface teaching, no "philosophy" will be transmitted or rather will occur, since "the philosophy of Plato" is an event that only happens through an active thinking about the work by the reader, in such a way that he repeats the thought of its author by discerning the weave of its dramatic action and its explicit argument. Such also is true law.

True law, as philosophy, seeks to discover what it is.[13] To the extent that it does so, law reveals nature. But nature's own end, its core, is reason perfected, as can be inferred from Cicero's identification of virtue and perfected reason (I.45), and of virtue and perfected nature (I.25). (Cicero's attribution of reason to the whole cosmos shows that reason is not confined only to *human* nature.) But since Cicero also links law with correct reason (I.23), and since correct reason is presumably reason perfected, then law and perfected nature are one. So Cicero's account of law, his "politics," is also his account of nature and nature's end, his "physics" and "metaphysics." A sign of this is that the doubleness of law, which both reveals and conceals, remaining one while adapting to particular conditions, is like the doubleness of nature itself. Its principle is one, its forms diverse; it shows itself but loves to hide.[14] When Cicero says that law is "something eternal that directs the whole world by its wisdom in ordering and prohibiting" (II.8), he is personifying, for the sake of his proposed civil law, the truth that nature aims at and that rational man grasps in part.

Why is it that when people accept law as a rule to live by, they rarely recover or repeat the discovery that generated its founding? Most men are blind to the single truth that unites the variety of good institutions found in well-governed cities and nations or in books like Cicero's *Laws*. Once established, law becomes routine, obvious, boring—it becomes a convention that reflects only dimly the tremendous thought lying behind it and in it. Why is this so? Cicero's comparison of law to poetry suggests an answer. Like poetry, law as convention is sweet. We take comfort in the simple answers affirmed in its familiar cadences, and we do not gladly expose ourselves to the uncertainty that goes with sustained inquiry into its truth. Even when we moderns, enlightened as we are, question our religious and moral upbringing, we mostly do so in the name of a yet deeper unexamined faith in such received opinions as the value of learning, compassion for our fellow men, or the vulgar notion that wealth, fame, and enjoying oneself constitute happiness. Seeing through convention to nature, from law by indulgence to law in fact, means repudiating the comforts of convention. Only when the law's "poetry," its affirmations of eternity, are read "philosophically" does it become more than an untruthful instrument of slothful pleasure.

Alfarabi succinctly epitomizes the teachings on law that I am attributing to Cicero, as follows:

> "Now these things [namely, the images representing the theoretical things, and proper convictions about the practical] are *philosophy* when they are in the soul of the legislator. They are *religion* when they are in the souls of the multitude. For when the legislator knows these things, they are evident to him by sure insight, whereas what is established in the souls of the multitude is through an image and a persuasive argument. Although it is the legislator who also represents these things through images, neither the images nor the persuasive arguments are intended for himself. As far as he is concerned, they are certain. . . . They are a religion for others, whereas, so far as he is concerned, they are philosophy."[15]

Although Cicero's specific legal proposals presented in Books II and III appear to be a hodgepodge of traditions from the Roman past, they present a different aspect when read with this twofold sense of law in mind. His polytheistic theology in particular deserves scrutiny for its

covert truth, as is indicated by his replacement of the expression "the wise and prudent man" with "highest Jupiter" (II.10) in the context of composing prefaces to his proposed laws. From here we begin to make sense of the fact that the only gods mentioned by name in Cicero's religious law are Jupiter and Ceres (representing, respectively, wisdom and grain from the earth), the household gods of the hearth (the Lares), apotheosized human beings of exemplary virtue, and deified excellences such as Mind, Piety, and Virtue (II.19–22). Evidently a purgation of the Roman pantheon is in process. The very inclusion of a god called "Mind" in the list ought to give pause, since there is no record as far as I know of any Roman tradition assigning divinity to this name. Religion is the people's image of philosophy. It is opium indeed for those who fail to think, but a stimulant to the rest.

We are now prepared to speak to Cicero's most profound critic—indeed, the most profound critic of the philosophical tradition stemming from Plato—Martin Heidegger. Speaking of the translation of Greek philosophy into Latin by Cicero and others, Heidegger says: "The event of this translation of Greek into Roman is nothing indifferent and harmless, but rather the first chapter of the course of the exclusion and alienation of the original essence of Greek philosophy." The rest of the course of Western philosophy, Heidegger claims, leads us through Christianity and modernity to the predicament of today, where an "emasculation of the spirit" reigns, where, in the grip of technology, which reduces all things to raw materials and resources to be exploited for an indefinite variety of indifferent purposes, "all things reach the same level, a surface that is like a blind mirror that reflects no longer, that throws back nothing."[16]

The impoverished spirit of the present has come about as the result of a progressive narrowing of the meaning of being in Western philosophy. For the Greeks, being, or rather *physis* ("nature"), which comprehends beings as a whole, is that which spontaneously emerges out of itself and endures, standing steadily by itself and manifesting itself. *Physis* also designates the process of emerging, the effort and struggle through which things become what they are by finding their completion and end. This process includes not only the generation of plants and animals but also and especially the bringing-forth-into-the-light achieved by our thought and speech. Heidegger maintains that the post-Aristotelian tradition, presumably including Cicero, was formed directly or indirectly by a superficial Platonism that forgot the becoming- and thinking-aspect of *physis* and reduced it to what can be gazed at by the mind's eye (the ideas) and what can be an eternal model for human life to imitate (the good). This forgetting took place in part because of the incapacity of the Latin language to capture the philosophically indispensable resonances of such decisive Greek words as *logos* (speech), *aletheia* (truth), and especially *physis*. Thus they inadvertently deprived *physis* of its richness and depth. In its place they installed, we may infer, a less ambiguous world of concepts and facts that could be described, to the extent that human knowledge reached, in propositional formulations suitable for dissemination in schools and treatises. This change, in turn, which made *physis* far more accessible to man, became the foundation for the modern transformation of nature into manipulable material available for an indefinite array of projects of the will.[17]

If Cicero truly bears part of the responsibility, however remote, for the degradation of man and thought that threatens to overwhelm us today, it would be wrong for us to defend him. But our discussion of his teaching on law shows that Greek thinking, far from being smothered, was recovered in Cicero's work. Cicero was no stale Platonist. If he had contented himself with being a mere translator, of which Heidegger almost accuses him, then he would indeed have failed to convey the thought of the Greeks, for the Latin language simply cannot perform what Heidegger shows that Greek can do.[18] Cicero overcame this obstacle by the arrangement of what he wrote; he created complex dialogues and double-edged speeches that retained and re-presented the Greek insight into truth and opinion, the one and the many, being and appearance. Cicero's teaching on law is from this perspective a restatement and rethinking of the Greek *physis*, which Heidegger was the first to recover in our century.

Cicero's teaching on law instances the decisive characteristic of the writings of the best philosophers, namely, exotericism. By "exotericism" I mean a manner of writing that presents an apparently straightforward outer doctrine which however is substantially qualified and deepened by the reader's reflection on the movement and details of the argument.[19] By using such a twofold outer and inner teaching as I have described in this essay, Cicero and the other thoughtful successors of Plato recapitulated in their writings the doubleness vibrating in *physis* itself that was discovered by the Greeks. Nature both shows itself and withdraws; it affords a surface appearance that comes to a stand and yet comprises an inner development, grasped in thought, that gives the lie to that surface permanence. Similarly, the books of Plato and Cicero in their weave of surface and thought imitate and thereby reveal nature's nature.

Although Heidegger recovered the original sense of *physis* through his rereading of the pre-Socratics, he was unaware of the exotericism employed by Plato and later authors, and so when he compared the early Greek *physis* to the doctrines that followed in the later history of philosophy, beginning with Plato, he plausibly concluded that a forgetfulness of being has dogged the thinking of all the philosophers. Whence followed his thesis that philosophy's history describes the course of a gradual withdrawal or self-concealment of being, culminating in the present "night of the world."[20] When Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein rediscovered the exoteric character of the writings of ancient and medieval philosophers, partly under the impetus of Heidegger's recovery of *physis*,[21] the Heideggerian presumption about the philosophers' forgetfulness

of being could be strongly challenged. The multitude of philosophical doctrines among Greek, Roman, and Christian thinkers is not necessarily a consequence of the blind dispensation of fate, as Heidegger's radical historcism would aver. Some of these writers may have chosen their doctrines quite deliberately, with a view to the changing circumstances of the people they were addressing and as the particular embodiment of the writers' insights. The history of philosophy, at least in pre-modern times, may chronicle the thoughtful responses to these circumstances and the various depictions of a "common" truth, rather than the shifting conceptions of being over which the thinkers have no control. Their deepest insights may well be the same. Hence the recovery of exotericism is the condition for the refutation of historicism.

Cicero employed exotericism to redeem philosophy from its Roman and late Greek tendency toward doctrinalism, which treated nature as eternally present to view, lying open to the propositional descriptions and contented gaze of apolitical contemplatives like Atticus. Cicero also directed his teaching toward the educated politicians like his brother Quintus who, being ignorant of the unity of true and popular law, saw no need to engage in abstruse philosophical considerations as a prelude to decent political practice (I.56–57). By directing Atticus's attention from nature to politics and Quintus's from politics to nature, Cicero points each of them to the one truth of which each touches only a part. He thus made available to the Latin-speaking world if not a salvation from the impending tyranny of the Roman empire, at least an example from which a later revival of liberty and philosophy could take its bearing.

1. *Newsweek*, December 17, 1979, 34.
2. See my three-part essay, "On Education," *Improving College and University Teaching* 28/1 (Winter 1980), 3–7; 28/2 (Spring 1980), 61–66; and 28/3 (Summer 1980), 99–104.
3. This is particularly so in the case of Cicero's *Laws*: Elizabeth Rawson, "The Interpretation of Cicero's 'De legibus,' " in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. Hildegard Temporini, Berlin 1973, Part I, vol. ' 340.
4. Exem[illegible] ' Strauss on Xenophon is *On Tyranny*, New York 1963.
5. This ot[illegible] - tion on law, and the point to be pursued later connecting the particular laws of Book II with law in the strict sense, were first developed in part by Eric Salem in a graduate seminar paper at the University of Dallas.
6. The scholarly consensus on Cicero has changed little since George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 3rd ed., New York 1961, 163–167. As for the medieval doctrine, even St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, I–II.100.8) appears more rigid than he is, for although he maintains that the ten commandments are indispensably part of the natural law, he qualifies this by admitting that the only moral precept that admits of no exception is "that nothing undue be done to anyone and that each one be rendered his due; for it is according to this reasoning that the precepts of the decalogue are to be understood." The spirit of Acquinas's doctrine comes very close to the spirit of Cicero's. For a different account of Acquina's natural law—but one that agrees with the tendency noted here—see Ernest L. Fortin, "Thomas Aquinas and the Reform of the Augustinian Natural Law Doctrine," paper delivered at the 1975 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, mimeographed.
7. Quintus uses the expression "law of nature" at I.56, but Cicero himself never does. As a man of the city, Quintus is unaware of the problem embedded in that facile formulation. As far as I know, the only other occurrences of "natural law" in Cicero are in *On the Nature of the Gods*, I.36, and in *On Duties*, III (several times). In the former instance, the expression is attributed to the Stoic Zeno by an Epicurean critic, who may be exaggerating the Stoic claim in order to refute it more easily. And in *On Duties* Cicero has deliberately adapted the imprecise manner of speech about morality described on page 76 above. Apparently Cicero himself, when speaking in his own name, hesitated to yoke nature and law (convention) in an unqualified bond. Cicero does occasionally speak in the *Laws* of *ius naturae*, the right or justice of nature (I.36, 40); this expression grates less because of the wide range of *ius* from "legal enactment" to "that which is right." Helmut Koester argues persuasively that there is no natural law teaching properly so called either in the pre-Ciceronian Stoics or in Cicero himself: natural law in the sense of an eternally valid binding rule of moral conduct first appears in the Jewish author Philo of Alexandria (Koester, "*Nomos Physeos*: The Concept of Natural Law in Greek Thought," in *Religions of Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Leiden 1970, 521–41). Hence Leo Strauss's remarks in *Natural Right and History*, Chicago 1953, 154–55, on Cicero's relation to Stoicism are misleading insofar as they appear to attribute to the Stoics a natural law that commands particular moral duties.
8. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 154.
9. Plato, *Apology*, 20d–23b.
10. The "preludes" to the laws in Plato's *Laws* perform a similar function, as is shown by Thomas L. Pangle, *The Laws of Plato*, New York 1980, 445–49, commenting on *Laws* 718b–724a,
11. *Tusculan Disputations*, I.7. The importance of *ornatus* for Cicero's thought is discussed by Raymond DiLorenzo, "The Critique of Socrates in Cicero's *De Oratore*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 11 (Fall 1978), 247–61.
12. The conception of truth informing the latter part of this paragraph is the Greek one, as explained by Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, New Haven 1959.
13. Cf. Plato, *Minos*, 315a: "Law wishes to be a discovery of being."
14. Besides Heraclitus's Fragment 123—*physis kryptesthai philei* (nature loves to hide)—compare this remark made by one of Cicero's characters in *de finibus*, V.41: "...at first, at any rate, nature is marvellously hidden and can be neither observed nor known; as we grow older, however, we gradually or rather tardily come, as it were, to know ourselves."
15. "The Attainment of Happiness," in *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi, Ithaca 1969, 47.
16. *Introduction to Metaphysics*, ch. 1; the quotations are on pp. 13, 45, and 46 (translations mine); "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, New York 1977.
17. *Introduction to Metaphysics*, especially ch. 2 and 4.
18. Consider, for example, his discussion of *physis* (*Introduction to Metaphysics*, 13–17, 100–101), *aletheia* and *doxa* (102–105), and *logos* (119–136).
19. Leo Strauss has written widely on this topic. See, for example, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Glencoe 1952.
20. *Introduction to Metaphysics*; the expression "forgetfulness of being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*) appears in *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt 1967, 243; "night of the world" in "What are Poets For?" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York 1971, 94.
21. Leo Strauss, "An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John's," *Interpretation* 7 (September 1978), 2; "Klein was the first to understand the possibility which Heidegger had opened without intending it: the possibility of a genuine return to classical philosophy, to the philosophy of Aristotle and of Plato, a return with open eyes and in full clarity about the infinite difficulties which it entails." See also Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," *The College* 22 (April 1970), 1, 4.

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