THE BROKEN ARCH

…truth, indeed, may not exist; science avers it to be only a
relation; but what man took for truth stares one everywhere in the
eye and begs for sympathy…Simplicity may not be evidence of
truth, and unity is perhaps the most deceptive of all the
innumerable illusions of the mind; but both are primary instincts
in man, and have an attraction on the mind akin to that of
gravitation on matter. The idea of unity survives the idea of God
or of the Universe; it is innate and intuitive. Thought floats much
more easily towards than against it…(Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-
Michel and Chartres*)

Lorrie Shadbolt Tussman

I

THE INVERTED PERSPECTIVE

"My life is a broken arch," Henry Adams wrote at the beginning of this century. And today Jean-Paul Sartre writes these words in an essay about the art of Giacometti:

> Between things as between man, the bridges are broken, and
> emptiness seeps in everywhere, every creature concealing his
> own.

Sartre sees Giacometti struggling with the problem of the insuperable distances and solitudes between objects and individuals as a result of the broken architecture of the cosmos.

> A line is used to separate the container from the contained. But
> vacuum does not contain…He (the Object) is there, the wall is
> there, and that is all. Nothing encloses, supports or contains him.
> *He appears*, all alone, within an immense frame of empty space.

The problem of Giacometti is essentially the problem of creation without perspective. How is the artist to define an object that exists only in itself…an object without connections, without external relationships…form not in relationship to other forms and to space, but form *en vacuo*?. In other words, how is the artist to define that which is free?

The paradox is not only one of art but in the widest sense of life itself. How are we to define either ourselves or others if we are freed from our traditional contexts and connections? How are we to understand life itself without a common perspective?

The modern artist has made a leap from paradox to absurdity. Today we find him attempting to create in terms of these three inter-related principles:

> 1) The inversion of the part to the whole.
> 2) The inversion of image to process.
> 3) The inversion of freedom to a framework..

The artist, by granting an object its freedom, is attempting to intensify its "objectivity." As Claude Lévi-Strauss describes it, he "objectifies" it in order "to realize all its potentialities." By removing an object from an external context he inverts a part into a whole. But in order to liberate the object not only from an external framework, but from its own limitations, the artist in search of freedom turns the boundaries of the object into a frontier.

Sartre suggests that Giacometti attempted to solve the problem of perspective by rejecting both image and perspective…by trying to represent reality as "flashes of lightening." He "refuses to be more precise than perception" and perception reveals figures as "fluctuating between continuity and discontinuity." Thus, Giacometti accepted freedom as a framework and moved from the inversion of the part to the whole, from image to process.

But what are the potentialities of the freed part? How does one order process? Can it be done on its own terms…or are order and process irreconcilable? Paul Klee wrote in his diaries: "Ingres is said to have ordered the motionless; I want to go beyond pathos and order motion (the new Romanticism)."

Giacometti, according to Sartre, believed that form cannot be imposed from without. Man's boundaries must come from within; therefore, his "multiple lines are *interior* to the form he is describing…they represent the intimate relationship of being with itself…all these lines are centripetal…the boundary of the body is nowhere indicated." One cannot discover the truth of these figures by focusing upon them. Their truth emerges only when the viewer renounces his traditional perspective and no longer attempts to grasp them as a bounded whole.

Art has become particularization, the recognition of the world not as a related whole but as a multitude of fugitive, transitory, dissipating images…a world without bridges. The artist denies these bridges "in order to start again at creation." The scientist, starting with matter, has arrived at anti-matter. The artist, starting with form, has arrived at anti-form. Having lost the clue to the relationship of the one to the many, of form to content, the artist as well as the scientist—as inverse creators—initiate not the cosmos, but the anti-cosmos.

We have sought to escape the center of our cosmos…that rock, shrine or temple that revealed to us a unifying vision of experience. At some point in our history we reversed our direction. We became pioneers instead of pilgrims—expanding and redefining the contours of the world, opening horizons, converting our boundaries into frontiers. It is from those ever-shifting frontiers that we have attempted to derive our perspective. But now we find that we have lost focus. The cosmos has disappeared in a confusion of dissolving views and we no longer are able to form a unified image of what we see.

Actually, the world today presents not a picture, but a condition of explosive liberation from the traditional controls of nature and society. This condition denies the interaction between perspective and prospect—between how one sees and what one sees. There no longer are connections between viewer and viewed. Freedom has broken out of form. Like contemporary art, the world seems to demand a moratorium on judgment, a willingness to accept the reversal of image into process.

The rejection of perspective by the artist reflects our own rejection of perspective and of the connections provided by the past. We feel that our traditional vision no longer reveals the truth about the world; therefore, in order to "see" at all we must deny that vision. We believe that we must not impose a boundary upon things...that they will appear formless unless we accept them essentially as process, or as "fluctuating between continuity and discontinuity." ("The body is a current passing between two extremities.") Then, mysteriously, they will begin to define themselves.

But will they? Can the failure of faith paradoxically become a new faith and initiate a new world on its terms?

In accordance with the modern artist we accept the three inversions. We believe that our conventional categories of sight and reason are not capable of apprehending a world of broken bridges, where every individual and object is cut off from every other individual and object—where each of us is "his own envelope." We accept the inversion of the part into the whole, of the image into process. We accept the frontier rather than the boundary as reality.

But must we abandon perspective, reject form, desert Apollo for Dionysus—seeking understanding, if at all, not through reason, but through any means of heightened or mystical sensation available to us? Must we artificially invoke an inner vision in order to grasp our disintegrating universe? We have sought to experience the world directly, discarding the parables that helped us to interpret our experience, discarding the miracles of faith that enabled us to act. But in substituting reality for religion we find that it has "taken away from us even what we hath." Reason, in service of religion, discovered truth, connections, unity. Reason, in service of reality, has been a failure

II

FREEDOM AS A FRAMEWORK

The most significant force at work in the modern world is one that we can perceive in modern art: the attempted inversion of freedom to a framework.

No idea has been so exciting, so revolutionary and uniquely Western as that of freedom. We have sought to liberate ourselves from the traditional tyrannies of man, society and nature. We have chosen freedom as an end in itself. Can we now accept the consequences of this choice?

For the first time in history we find ourselves on a true frontier, free to experiment deliberately not only with the content of our lives…but with Form itself, in areas formerly proscribed from experimentation. But, ironically, just at this point of mastery over form, like the modern artist we reject it. Suddenly all form has become chimeric and man a kinetic cipher.

Our growing purposelessness, insecurity, confusion, clearly indicate that we are not at home in this "free" domain that we have created for ourselves. Without realizing it most of us are actually fugitives from it, nostalgically seeking the last unities of the Old World, or choosing more profound slaveries of mind, spirit and body than those ever known before. Paradoxically, as a cure for our condition, we desperately seek more and more freedom instead of less. We seek always to shatter one more imagined restriction.

At some point before completely rendering ourselves to this novel condition, we must ask if freedom has not set up its own unique categories of limitation more profound and disturbing than those from which we have struggled to free ourselves? Are not the Lonely Crowd, the Alienated Individual, the Monoculture[1], the Fascist State, all manifestations of this new tyranny.? If so, we now experience the essence of absurdity: i.e., a condition extended to the point where it becomes its own contradiction, its own negation. Has freedom, as a total value, become a kind of framework in itself, imposing confusion and dis-order rather than order—and circumscribing both thought and action rather than liberating them?

If freedom has joined the side of tyranny, it obviously becomes the ultimate tyranny. Once accepted as an absolute it upsets all categories of reason. It inverts our perspective so that we tend to discover absurdity, not in our own position, but externally—in society, in nature, in life itself. This accounts for our confusion when we are confronted with the modern paradoxes of alienation and conformity, of chaos and hypercosmos, of disorder and super-order. This also

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[1] "Humanity has taken to monoculture, once and for all, and is preparing to produce civilization in bulk, as if it were sugar beets; the same dish will be served to us everyday." (Claude Levi-Strauss*: Trustes Tropiques*)

explains the strong appeal of the philosophies and attitudes of absurdity that have resulted from attempts to reason from this inverted perspective. We desperately are trying to adjust our vision to the absurd.

III

BETWEEN UNITY AND COMPLEXITY

> …growing complexity and multiplicity and even contradiction in life. He could not escape it…he struck it in everyday life, as though he were still Adam in the Garden of Eden between God who was unity, and Satan who was complexity, with no means of deciding which was truth. (Henry Adams: *The Education*)

At the beginning of this century perhaps the most interesting and enigmatic of American writers, Henry Adams, wrote his autobiography. On reading *The Education* we have a peculiar sense that he has deliberately reversed the nature of autobiography from confession to concealment and mystification. Like Kierkegaard he seemed to believe that the author's right "is never to utter verity but is to keep verity for himself and only let it be refracted in various ways." The most mysterious statement in the book is that in which he compares himself to Adam…between God "who is unity" and Satan "who is complexity." It is this statement that actually contains the key to Henry Adams and his interpretation of the human condition.

Of all the philosophers, Henry Adams probably would have liked to discover correspondences with Thomas Aquinas…because the latter proved, at least for his age, "which was truth"—"God who was unity," or "Satan who was complexity." Long before Paul Klee, Saint Thomas had attempted to order motion and had provided an equation for image and process, for unity and multiplicity. He was an architect of bridges of the highest order. But the problem of the "broken arch" leads us back to the Bishop of Hippo.

Like St. Augustine Henry Adams was essentially a fugitive from complexity. Like St. Augustine he looked at the world around him and cried out for some unity of understanding. Like St. Augustine he wrote his "confessions" as a search for unity, but the technique and the results were notably different. Augustine as a confessor required a judgment from God and society. He revealed himself in all his naked and passionate immediacy. His search for unity was in reality a transmigration from the outer to the inner, from society to the self. At the same time he looked forward to the realization of a future age of unity based on the *Civitas Dei*. Henry Adams reversed this process.

In order to understand the mystery that Henry Adams created of himself and to discover the significant message he had for the modern world we must turn, not only to his autobiography, but to another work that he wrote simultaneously. It was by writing two books as a kind of dialogue that he chose to reveal what he considered the crucial paradox, the key struggle in his life. We find him admiring the technique of Thomas Aquinas…the drawing of all lines to a center, the spanning of contradictions. But for Adams the arch was broken, the

lines were irrelevant and perhaps all one could do was indicate the struggle between form and process. He quotes somewhere these words of Poincaré:

> Doubtless if our means of investigation should become more and more penetrating we would discover the simple under the complex; and then the complex under the simple; then anew the simple under the complex; and so on without ever being able to foresee the last terms.

Poincaré describes a process with the last terms unforeseeable. Henry Adams saw a conflict with the last terms predictable. Philosophers traditionally have seen the human condition in terms of a struggle between self and society, between form and freedom, between the individual and the state, between reason and passion, etc. Henry Adams, like the pre-Socratics, saw this struggle in its profoundest sense as between unity and multiplicity.

Henry Adams wrote that he based one of his books upon "the point of history when man held the highest idea of himself as a unity in a unified universe…1150-1440--expressed in Amiens Cathedral and the works of Thomas Aquinas…" This was "a volume which he mentally knew as *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*: a study of Thirteenth Century Unity! From that point he proposed to fix a position for himself which he could label: the *Education of Henry Adams*: a study of Twentieth Century Multiplicity. With the help of these two points of relation, he hoped to project his lines forward and backward indefinitely, subject of correction from anyone who should know better,"[2]

In an important sense Adams seemed to play out the destiny of his family and of his society. There was a progression from hope—in John Adams—to doubt in John Quincy Adams, to disillusion in Henry Adams. The "original sin" was inchoate in the American experiment. A new world was opposing itself to the old, denying traditional relationships, destroying frameworks, creating frontiers. The Adams' need for unity was in tragic opposition to what Henry called the multiplicity of the twentieth century.

The modern artist sees the self as a frontier with all lines breaking away from a center. The drive is for freedom…freedom from form, freedom from limits, freedom from unity. Henry Adams regarded "our present society, its ideals and purposes, as dregs and fragments of some primitive essential instinct now nearly lost." That "primary instinct" was the "innate and intuitive idea of unity." We discover that Adams interpreted this as a need for a cosmic architecture, for connections, for some kind of world view—a need for a perspective that would harmonize the many with the one. Henry Adams saw that this need had once been recognized and served by society, but that now it was frustrated by the modern world.

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[2] Henry Adams, *The Education*

At one time man had viewed the world as a whole. His perspective was determined by what Adams called a "despotic idea." This "medieval habit of mind" was challenged during the Renaissance and later destroyed by science. Adams recognized that science had provided new organizing beliefs, new perspectives, and consequently had furnished society with new energy to construct its institutions. But at the same time, in furnishing means to manipulate and to control, to dissect and to analyze, to radically change man's total environment, science became a victim of its own changes.. It had substituted a new organizing belief for that of religion, but a belief that was in essence against belief. It established a climate of infidelity, of agnosticism, leading to what Adams interpreted as a permanent and irrevocable loss of social unity.

As an historian and a believer in history Henry Adams projected his lines backwards and forwards in history. The lines forward intersected his own life and projected a world of disorder. His "I", the passionate and poignant "I" of Saint Augustine, became a third person. In order to universalize his condition he chose to mask his own personality, somewhat as Kierkegaard had masked himself with the religious parable of the prodigal son. From this perspective modern society itself played out his inner drama of lack of faith, failure of will, disintegration of energy. Psychological chaos was translated into social chaos.

Henry Adams' lines backwards to the thirteenth century projected a *lucidus ordo* under the aegis of God and the Virgin, who along with the Beau Christ and Saint Michael had temporarily conquered Satan and multiplicity. His masterpiece, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, opens with a powerful and significant image, that of Saint Michael on the boundaries of the medieval cosmos, the place "where the danger was greatest." This was the definitive point, the separation of the cosmos from the pagan chaos. From that perspective, from those heights, Saint Michael defended a unified world from the threat of disunity.

> So he stood for centuries on his Mount in Peril of the Sea, watching across the tremor of the immense ocean—*immensi tremor oceani*—as Louis XI, inspired for once to poetry, inscribed on the collar of the Order of Saint Michael which he created. So soldiers, nobles, and monarchs went on pilgrimage to his shrine; so the common people followed, and still follow, like ourselves.

Saint Thomas Aquinas saw motion—saw the universe activated by the energy derived from a "despotic idea." Henry Adams saw a different kind of motion—that which resulted from the breakdown of the machine…a last final burst of energy due to a loss of unity, the failure of the "despotic idea." Freedom had broken down the boundaries and man was released to expend his energy in all directions. It was this disintegration of energy that assumed the central problem for Adams. In choosing to write about the Middle Ages as a "study in

unity," he wanted to show the "*intensity of the vital energy of a given time*, and of course that intensity had to be stated in its two highest terms—*religion and art*."

When Henry Adams turned to the Cathedral of Chartres he saw in its construction a triumph of the arch, a victory of perspective. Wherever the eye turned, there were connections. He saw expressed in this his own and mankind's need for unity—"a passion flung to the skies." It represented a metaphor of the Christian cosmos, a splendid attempt to define and demarcate the Christian landscape; to invent a form that in all its dimensions would satisfy man's need for form; that functioned as a nexus between society and heaven, between body and spirit, between time and eternity.[3]

Adams observed that just as the medieval cathedral represented an attempt to defeat spatial chaos, so the philosophical system of Aquinas was an attempt to defeat intellectual chaos, contradiction, complexity—an attempt to bend all the diverging lines of thought to a center. That center, of course, was God. The architecture of Chartres and Amiens as well as Thomist theology reflected an organic unity that disciplined divergence, that protected from the threat of uncontrolled multiplicity. During the Middle Ages man constructed an architecture that dominated and directed his imagination, will and energies.

For awhile man had realized the City of God. If it satisfied his need for unity, why then did it fail? Saint Augustine had asked, why do men become evil if they are created good? Henry Adams asked, why do men seek multiplicity if they have an instinct for unity? The clue lay in Genesis. It was in essence the Original Sin. Man contained a tragic flaw—that of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Both Adams and Augustine define it as the inability to maintain a focus upon God and unity; the temptation to turn away from the center of the cosmos to explore and transcend its boundaries. Because of this, man eventually escaped the limits of the Christian cosmos. Because of this, freedom broke out of form…unity turned into multiplicity.

But whereas Augustine had insisted that man and society could and must choose unity, Henry Adams decided that this loss of focus was inevitable—that it was the result of man's "many-sided soul" responding to a many-faceted universe. He concluded that "the trouble was not in the art or the method or the structure, but in the universe itself which presented different aspects as man moved."

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[3] "…every inch of material, up and down, from crypt to vault, from man to God, from the universe to the atom , had its task, giving support where support was needed, or weight where concentration was felt, but always with the condition of showing conspicuously the curves which controlled divergence; from the cross of the *flèche* and the keystone of the vault, down through the ribbed *nervures*, the columns, the windows, to the foundation of the flying buttresses far beyond the walls, one idea controlled every line; and this is true of Saint Thomas' Church as it is of Amiens Cathedral." (Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*)

Unity turned itself into complexity, multiplicity, variety, and even contradiction. All experience, human and divine, converged. How was he to know that these lines ran in every conceivable and inconceivable direction, and that at least half of them seemed to diverge from any imaginable center of unity?[4]

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[4] Ibid

IV

SATAN AND UNITY

Henry Adams saw that the uniqueness of our modern predicament lies in the fact that we have lost faith, not only in the traditional beliefs that have ordered, defined and integrated experience, but also in Unity itself as a way of viewing the universe. Life is a "broken arch." "The bridges are broken." "Emptiness seeps in everywhere." We have lost our connections with each other, with the world around us, with the past and the future. Moreover, we seem to have destroyed irrevocably the attitude of mind that would make it possible to create new connections. We are faced with "a growing complexity" in life that not only defies the imposition and limitations of any organizing idea, but demands acceptance on its own paradoxical terms, whatever these are. How are we to create in a vacuum?

Henry Adams' statement of his dilemma-"between God who was unity, and Satan who was complexity, with no means of deciding which was truth"—is a poignant witness to the fact that we inherit a profound sense of the irreconcilable separation of unity from multiplicity. There is ample affirmation of this not only in the writing of Adams, but in the whole range of contemporary expression of the human condition. We have built a civilization upon a logic of antithesis.

A kind of vital tension resulting from our polarizations has furnished us with the energy to manipulate and to control nature; to establish complex social institutions; to develop and to exploit individual diversity to a transcendent degree. But at the same time, by necessarily opposing self to society, we have had to seek unity in two different directions, thereby negating the principle of unity. ("The effort for Unity could not be a partial success; even alternating Unity resolved itself into meaningless motion at last."[5]) By opposing freedom to form, order, security, we have had to compromise and eventually invert these concepts. By opposing unity to multiplicity we have reached an impasse where it appears that we will have the choice of neither.

The antitheses that traditionally have endowed Western society with meaning, now only involve us in meaninglessness. Our confusion and lack of conviction have led us away from seeking unity for society in terms of a single demanding organizing concept. Moreover, we have lost faith in belief itself—not only, as Henry Adams claimed—because of the apparent failure of dogma to accommodate change and chance, and to express and organize the increasing complexity of experience; but also because recent political history has revealed Unity with the face of Satan rather than God. Traditionally man opposed Form, Order, Belief, Stability, Security, to Chaos…and there was no question which

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[5] Henry Adams: *The Education*

was to be pursued. Now these are regarded, not as in opposition to Chaos, but as in opposition to Freedom.

Camus, Arendt, Popper—the protagonists of Rebellion, Pluralism, the Open Society, etc.—have all effectively pointed out something that was always implicit. Every organizing principle bears within it the potentiality for totalitarianism, violence and evil. In fact, power derives from a belief—and evil, to be really effective, requires its framework of belief.

For this reason we fear unity. But, paradoxically, in accepting change, chance, progress, process, rather than stability and order as the nature of things, we find ourselves increasingly preoccupied with trying to predict and control. In acknowledging multiplicity rather than unity we find a growing conformity destroying the diversity of our world. In affirming freedom rather than authority we find our lives governed by a multiplication of irrational factors. In affirming individual creativity rather than meaningless drudgery or mass consumption, we find human responses increasingly conditioned by machines. We discover the Lonely Crowd in the place of the individual. In the place of democratic government we discover ever more subtle tyrannies…or the direct threat of totalitarianism.

What is the reason for this? Is it, as Albert Camus claimed, that man has a "passion for unity;" that "our period is built on unity to the point of madness?' In other words, despite our alleged belief in freedom, do we nourish a subversive desire for security, conformity, order—a compulsion that expresses itself insidiously in bureaucracies, crowds, fascism—a compulsion that constantly menaces or defeats the liberal individual and his values? Is it, as Sigmund Freud suggested, "a struggle against freedom" reproduced in man's psyche as the "self-repression of the repressed individual?" Thus, are we still not yet free enough to defeat our primitive "passion for unity," and unconsciously continue to enslave ourselves? Is it, as Pablo Neruda, the Chilean "poet of disorder" writes?

> Tal vez la debilidad natural de los seres recelosos y ansiosos
> busca de súbito permanencia en el tiempo y límites en la tierra,
> tal vez las fatigas y las edades accumlades implacablemente
> se extiendan como la ola lunar de un océano recién creado
> sobre litorales y tierras angustiosamiente desiertas.[6]

Or is this "passion for unity" in reality a fundamental human need for connections that cannot be ignored without distortion to the human personality and to society. Is it this frustrated need that basically accounts for the phenomenon of modern political totalitarianism? Has it led to the development

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[6] ("Perhaps the natural weakness of distrustful and nervous beings/urgently seeks permanence in time and earthly limits/ perhaps an age-old fatigue/ spreads like the lunar wave of a newly created ocean/ over parched shores and lands." Pablo Neruda: "Significa Sombras" Translation by D. Tussman)

of a kind of totalitarianism of the Self and that impasse at which the theologians, the existentialists, the political philosophers--and men everywhere--now find themselves?

V

THE INSTINCT FOR UNITY

Henry Adams said that driven by the force of his "primitive essential instinct" for unity, man had traditionally "created his own universe and pursued his own phantoms." Is freedom the most dangerous phantom of his mind?

Despite his "many-sided soul" there is evidence that man has always been disturbed by the random, accidental nature of phenomena. He has always required some core of predictability, some model of the world—even if loosely constructed. If God did not pattern the universe, then science or history must. The search to bring order from chaos, unity from complexity, in reality has been the search for meaning. Wherever the mind has awakened in man it has seen an abyss that must somehow be bridged, alienated landmarks that somehow must be connected. If man has broken out of the boundaries that contained him, if he has explored uncharted territories, he has done it in terms of some kind of unity.

If today we attempt to escape our boundaries, we do it in the name of contradiction, absurdity, nihilism, instead of unity. But between its poles contradiction must have its connections, absurdity its logic, nihilism its structures. Thus we continue to connect, to construct, to rationalize our situation. We attempt to give form to what essentially is anti-form. By so doing we have defined a certain unique realm of creation and have released certain forces in man and society. But these forces are ultimately destructive…against the community, against harmony, against nature. We have reached a point where in giving absurdity, freedom, nihilism, a logic, we have liberated in society and in the self what Paul Tillich calls the "demonic principle."

> It is the vital forces which support the living form; but when they become overpowerful and withdraw from the arrangement within the embracing organic form, they are destructive principles.[7]

The energies released by the inversion of the part to the whole, the inversion of image to process, the inversion of freedom to a framework, are destructive energies.

A "free society" is a contradiction. An "open society" will eventually destroy itself. How many of us are capable of understanding and existing freely and independently in the world today? Are we properly educated in freedom from childhood to deal with our world?

Psychologists have attempted to explode the myth of innocence, of "carefree" childhood. They have only confirmed what most of us remember from our own childhood: the insecurity, the obsession for order, the need for

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[7] Paul Tillich: *Interpretation of History*

some kind of authority, the irrational and powerful fears. As Erik Erikson points out in *Childhood and Society*, these fears arise in good measure from the very fact of being human…that not only is the outside world threatening, but more important, fears arise from the conflicts within the human personality. There is a "whole arsenal of fear which is left in each individual from the mere fact of his childhood." While the growing curiosity and intelligence of the child leads him to test his limits, occasionally to transcend them, at the same time he needs some center to which to return. If he has that center, he can extend the limits of his world without destroying himself. If he has no center, he destroys limits without transcending them. He pulls walls in upon himself. Fear creates limits within a narrowing circle.

Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, discovered that children seem to have an active need to create unity. They display a marked tendency to make connections.

> When a child is asked the reason for something, and does not know, he will always and at any cost invent an answer, thus testifying to this particular desire to establish connections between the most heterogeneous objects…the idea of chance is absent from the mentality of a child.[8]

Piaget noted that at about three years of age the child begins to construct an imaginary model of the world and he organizes and interprets his experience in terms of this model.

> …the whole necessary apparatus for the beginnings of formulated reasoning begins to be incorporated into the language of the subject. Now the function of this reasoning is to construct, over and above the immediate world of sensation, a reality supposedly deeper than the merely given world. And all these transformations have this fundamental trait in common, that they indicate an act of conscious realization.[9]

The child's sense of reality, as Piaget explains it, is "both more arbitrary and better regulated than for us." That is, he accepts everything as possible until it happens—but whatever happens must then conform to a set framework of rules. There is no room for accident. Thus, according to Piaget, the child's ideas actually "hinder his observation, and his observations hinder his ideas, whence his equal and correlative ignorance of both reality and logic."

The child somehow is compelled to discover unity. How do his family, his teachers, his society, treat this need? Piaget, in his observations of Swiss children, discovered that as the child matures, he begins to lose his sense of

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[8] Jean Piaget: *The Language and Thought of the Child*
[9] Ibid

universal harmony and necessity. He begins to "accept chance." At about seven years old he learns to distrust the authority of the adult world. Instead of society furnishing him with a network of connections to the world around him, he is taught to dissolve those "illogical" connections that he himself has attempted to make.

> The child's increasing skepticism towards adult thought is of the greatest importance in this connection, for this it is which will give rise to the idea of the given as such, of chance.[10]

Piaget, of course, believed that the growing skepticism of the child liberates him from thinking in terms of connections, of unity.. It adapts him for the logic of the adult world…that is, of adult Western society.

Actually, it is only Western civilization that has forced the child to define himself as distinct from others; to relinquish that tendency to regard the world as an harmonious unity and to accept chance, freedom, process, etc., as reality. Modern society, instead of transforming that strange, threatening and open world of the child into the secure, closed world of the community, stresses isolation, change, chance. Instead of creating stronger and deeper connections with the surrounding world, it tends to break bridges. We discover evidence of another reversal. While the child "accepts everything as possible until it happens," the modern trend is to order the world of the potential, to create unity in the sphere of the hypothetical. While the child accepts the necessity of what has happened and attempts to impose an orderly pattern upon it, the modern trend is to accept the given as entirely arbitrary, that whatever has unity is essentially unreal.

What happens when a civilization attempts to teach not form but freedom, not unity but multiplicity? Freud claimed that the moment man became aware of himself, he was no longer free, that the definition of the self inevitably provoked a conflict with society. In a primeval state the sharp limits between the ego and the outer world do not exist. Instead, Freud recognized in the child and in primitive man a condition of unity,, a sense of "oceanic oneness," a "primary ego feeling," an "inseparable connection of the ego with the external world." In a simpler state of existence man retains his connections with the world about him, but in Western civilization the ego gradually emerges from this "oceanic oneness" and defines itself by separating and establishing boundaries against the external world.

Freud saw that religion attempted to restore man to that feeling of "indissoluble connection" with the Other, but the religious experience was essentially unreal for him. He claimed that what he himself felt most vitally was a sense of isolation from others; that what was most immediate and real to him was the Self. "Normally there is nothing we are more certain of than the feeling

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[10] Ibid

of our self, our own ego. It seems to us an independent unitary thing, sharply outlined against everything else."[11]

Freud was convinced that the self was necessarily opposed to the world. He believed that the unity of the self could only be gained at the destruction of its connections with the outside world and by the formation of boundaries between the two. However, at the same time, self-unity must be gained by breaking down the internal boundaries of the self. Freud used all his energies towards unity in attempting to show that the self was not just the ego, but extended inwards without limits. Thus, in the West while man defined himself as a unity in terms of his relationship with others, from an internal perspective he was undefined, chaotic—driven by unconscious forces. As such he could not really be a unity.

Since Freud's perspective lay rooted in the self, since he believed that the "pleasure-principle…draws up the programme of life's purpose," he could only conceive of unity as individual and of society as essentially diverse and repressive. Nature and society were the basic enemies of the self and its drive for pleasure. Beyond the self lay only the "dreaded outer world" against which man must somehow defend himself. Man was faced with the dilemma of the necessity of his civilization as opposed to his most vital urges.

In *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud saw the struggle between man and society in terms of the struggle between Eros and Thanatos and he could suggest only compromise as a means of resolving the struggle. He discussed three forms of defense against the "dreaded outer world:"

1) Retreat and isolation;

2) Combining with the human community and taking up the "attack on nature; thus forcing it to obey human will, under the guidance of science. One is working then with all for the good of all;"

3) "Influencing the organism itself." Man could try to change himself in order to live on terms with the world. These changes could be through the following:

   a) Self-intoxication by means of chemicals;

   b) The control of "internal sources of needs"—Eastern mysticism, yoga, Zen, etc.;

   c) Sublimation—the "transferring of instinctual aims" to art, science, etc…or to work, in the case of the untalented majority.[12]

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[11] Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and its Discontents*

Freud deepened Western man's sense of self as separate from society and we find ourselves today faced with the same dilemma and attempting to formulate the same defenses. Our condition has evoked a tendency towards compromise decisions that are not really decisions but are meant somehow to enable the majority of us to live a paradox: both to accept and to reject, to remain and to flee, to protest and to affirm. We have been driven, in a Kierkegaardian sense, to "embrace our paradox;" to exist within our "free and open society" by accepting its fundamental premises while at the same time we attempt a kind of "piecemeal engineering" that only involves us in further confusion. We accept the rebel but not the revolutionist. Both our consent and our rejection lack conviction and involvement. We withhold ourselves from wholehearted investment in and dedication to any organizing belief that would either restore the traditional cosmos or initiate a new one.

We do not behave like free men making free choices. We seek a pattern for individual orientation and adjustment that allows internal rejection along with external acceptance, attempting to serve the two swords of self and society. But we find it more and more difficult to reconcile our individual needs, our taste for freedom, with social demands. At the same time we cannot escape society. We compromise by seeking salvation…not through the community as a whole…but through groups. We seek plurality as a compromise between unity and multiplicity. In our concern with freedom we pursue action for its own sake, rejecting form for process.

But this compromising tendency does not create a unity of self or of society. Karen Horney in *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* describes two "opposing human tendencies: one, to sharply define the self as unique from others" (a tendency she notes as most strongly evident in our culture); the other as "the tendency to break through the shell of individuality and be rid of its limitations and isolation."

Jean Piaget writes of the activity of the child who "at any cost must invent answers to the universe." At great cost to both self and society we have invented answers to the universe in terms of the totality of the self. Our perspective has been turned inwards, breaking the relationship of the self with the other. Giacometti's figures express the nature of our condition: perpendicular lines with a finite extension, united to each other only by their solitude.

Instead of discovering a greater freedom in the separation of self from society we find ourselves more profoundly imprisoned than ever before. Instead of being bound by traditional limits, we are bound by ourselves, unable to reach out to our nearest neighbor. Is it any wonder that, as Horney states, "there is scarcely any neurosis in which the tendency to get rid of the self does not appear

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[12] Ibid

in a direct form;" where there is not a strong desire for the "dissolution of individual boundaries"?

Paradoxically Horney notes that at the same time the individual has a profound fear of self-relinquishment. Christian salvation has rested upon the paradox that he who loses himself shall gain himself. But in a society where the self is the last reality, where "normally there is nothing we are more certain of than the feeling of our own self, our own ego," those words are no longer meaningful. No one struggled more profoundly with that conflict than Dostoevsky, and he concluded that those capable of renouncing themselves must be of necessity a kind of "Idiot."

In the modern world there is no value outside the self that could give meaning to self-renunciation. It is only in desperation that man seeks to escape himself and we find this desperation everywhere today. Actually, Horney's two tendencies derive from the same need to discover connections. The emphasis on individualism in our society has been both the result and the cause of the loss of connections between the one and the many. The more sharply defined the self, the more separated it is from society. It is this terrible isolation and burden of the self that drives one from Apollo to Dionysus.

Horney points out that primitive societies provided means for a Dionysian loss of self. But the significant difference from modern society lies in the fact that just as the community defined the self solely in terms of its relationship to others, so did it enable the self to pass beyond the boundaries of everyday experience in order to experience a more profound relationship with nature and the community. Primarily, Dionysian rites were communal. Today, just as the individual must seek his own definitions, so must he seek a solitary solution to his isolation. The bridges with nature and society are broken. The only connections with the "dreaded outer world" seem to be the Freudian alternatives of "self-intoxication by means of chemicals" or Eastern mysticism, or other forms of irrational self-loss.

Freud regarded the frustration of the pleasure drives as leading the individual to a desire for death. However, Freud recognized that this concept of the death instinct could not adequately explain the complexity of the human condition. Interestingly enough, Freud struggled with what he observed as a mysterious human tendency to "make one out of many." This tendency did not quite correspond to the pleasure drive. Freud had noted that in the case of love or disease the sharp limits between the ego and the outer world did not exist. The self seemed to have returned to a state of "oceanic oneness." Freud interpreted this tendency as a manifestation of Eros in its broadest sense. It is when man is frustrated in making "one out of many"—when Eros fails—that he turns to self annihilation—to Thanatos.

Freud was troubled by the terrible force of Thanatos, by its mysterious opposition to the drive for self-preservation. However, one could consider that the death instinct derives its force from a frustrated desire for "unity;" that the "passion for unity" becomes a "demonic principle" in modern society; that the search to "make one from many" turns away from rational and communal means to illusions, hallucinations, nirvana.

Plato wrote in the *Statesman* that "fate and innate desire reversed the motion of the world." Freud considered that man's conflicts derived from those social mores that had formed the superego. That which for Freud essentially defined the self was something that could not legitimately be referred beyond the self. Thus he could never really understand that the paradox of the one and the many could ever be solved. He suggested compromise rather than resolution within a larger framework. He had no answer for that final search for unity that tragically leads one to Thanatos—to the destruction rather than the creation of form.

VI

COSMOS AND OURANOS

Today we reject the notion of human nature as part of a wider nature. Rather we attempt to derive unifying principles for society from the individual himself. We attempt to create connections, not between parts within a whole, but between parts liberated from the whole and themselves become whole. Freud turned from society to search for unifying principles within man, but these latter seemed to be in conflict with social principles. Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* asserts that Freud was wrong, that a non-repressive civilization is possible after all. Marcuse observes that "intensified progress seems to be bound up with intensified unfreedom…the most effective subjugation and destruction of man by man takes place at the height of civilization, when the material and intellectual attainments of mankind seem to allow the creation of a truly free world." Furthermore, "promises and potentialities [are] betrayed and even outlawed by the mature, civilized individual."

Marcuse finds hope in the concept of individual unity. Once the ego and id are unified, one can postulate a new society in terms of this new internal relationship. He denies that the gratification of instinctual pleasures is only possible on an unconscious level. Marcuse believes that reason can help man to "regress," that the hope of civilization lies in the rational gratification of instinct, the release of the libido in society.

Marcuse identifies both freedom and unity with this liberation of the libido. He extends the Freudian notion of Eros as the "passion for unity," the drive for order, and suggests that its true satisfaction lies within the social framework. Marcuse claims that Plato realized that "in attaining its objective, it [sexuality] transcends it to others." A particular desire, if not repressed, can lead to the love of the general; therefore Eros is essentially an instinct for community and once liberated creates its own order. The common gratification of pleasure provides both its own force and the justification for social cooperation. By the eroticization of the entire personality and the transformation of labor into communal "work," man could achieve a new kind of Eden…one based on technology.

Marcuse accepts the basic premises of our civilization: irreversible time, change, chance, progress, freedom. His new society is postulated in these terms, but transformed by the gratification of pleasure. He suggests even greater alienation from nature and the renunciation of "the maternal principle" in favor of industrial society and greater "freedom." The organizing principle for society should be the self since the greater freedom for the latter will lead to greater freedom for all. He accepts Freud's second point for dealing with the "dreaded outer world:" the combining with others to attack and to control nature rather than attempting to create an harmonious relationship with it. He emphasizes the

importance of communal effort since that which unites is necessary even if it represses. He claims that the difference between neurosis and sublimation is that the former isolates and the other unites. However, he suggests that this communal effort need not sublimate but rather could release desires.

Can man find within himself a truly satisfying unifying principle, a *raison d'être*, on the basis of his pleasure drives? Will this be a strong enough basis for social cooperation and can it compensate for his alienation from the wider framework of nature itself--from the "maternal principle"? Can it adequately provide connections? Can it supply the energy for the creation of the art and architecture of civilization? Does it place man in meaningful context within the universe? Does it provide an answer for the profound mystery of life itself?

Pablo Neruda writes that communication with man is not enough; we must communicate with animals, with trees, with rocks, with shells. We must penetrate the secret language of the universe.

Today we reject the possibility of that primeval communication. Today we reject the notion of a cosmos governed in all its dimensions by one principle. By doing this we deny the cosmos itself. The concept of cosmos in the original Greek sense no longer exists. Our condition today is one that the Greeks might have called "ouranic" after their god Ouranos.

In Greek mythology Gaia, the Earth Goddess, represented stability, fixity, permanence, whereas Ouranos, the God of Heaven, represented change and becoming—the characteristics of the horizon, the boundary between chaos and the earth. The harmonious interplay of permanence and change, of Gaia and Ouranos, composed the relationship of multiplicity within the unity of cosmos—as opposed to the formlessness of chaos. Michel Collinet describes it thus:

> De tout temps le ciel et la terre sont apparus aux hommes unis et
> opposé. La terre est solide, fixe, permanente, et a tous les
> caractères d'une infrastructure, base d'une vie et d'une logique.
> Le ciel est fluide, mobile, changeant, source d'une rêverie ou de
> ce qu'on pourrait nommer une dialectique. Mais, hormis les
> météores imprévisibles, le ciel, par la regularité de ses
> mouvements, a créé la notion de temps. Le rythme des jours,
> lunaisons de saisons, anime la vie terrestre, lui donne son visage
> et, coordonnant les pulsations physiologiques, apporte à
> l'individu le cadre naturel et social où il insère son existence.
> Dans le couple Ciel-Terre, le Ciel est actif et la Terre, passive; le
> Ciel ensemence et la Terre est féconde.[13]

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[13] "From all time the sky and the earth have appeared to men as united and opposed. The earth is solid, fixed, permanent, and has all the characteristics of an infrastructure, base for a life and a logic. The sky is fluid, mobile, changing, source of a reverie, or of what one could call a

The Greeks themselves revolutionized this harmonious relationship of heaven and earth and initiated the destruction of this "natural and social framework" where he (the individual) inserted his existence. Walter Otto in his book *The Homeric Gods* discusses this important change in the emphasis of Greek religion. Prehistoric religion was "earthbound and as much constricted by the elemental as ancient existence itself." He considered it as essentially dominated by the feminine. However, by the time of Homer these primal ties with the earth had already been broken. The Olympian gods of the Homeric world were predominantly masculine, heroic and lived on the boundary of change and becoming.

From the time of the Greeks Western man has attempted to structure a world not in terms of an harmonious cosmos—of a reconciliation of stability and transformation—but in terms of ouranos—of uncontrolled change and becoming. We have converted cyclical time—time as the ancients understood it—into the irreversible, vertical, progressive time that we understand as history. The god Ouranos in the Greek cosmos played the role of the Transformer, the Magician. It is he, freed from the stabilizing control of Gaia, who has become a model for our own lives. We have profoundly alienated ourselves from earthly and feminine and conservative values in order to transform the world and to exist as gods on the boundary.

Those differences between Cosmos and Ouranos are the crucial differences between the primitive world and the modern. The primitive world reveals itself in a fascinating way as corresponding to the world of the child described by Piaget. It seems to have been constructed to operate upon the premises of the child that everything can be connected…that there is no chance. It attends directly to the "instinct for unity." Its principal function appears to have been to provide bridges between the one and the many.

Piaget says that the child is "too much of a realist to be a logician—too much of an intellectual to be a pure observer." The child accepts everything within his experience as intimately related. He seems to demand not multiplicity, contradiction, antithesis…but unity.

> …if the questions of children frequently relate to new and
> unexpected subjects, it is very often because the child wants to
> know whether things are really as he sees them, whether the new
> elements can be made to fit into the old framework, whether there

dialectic. But except for the unpredictable meteors, the sky, by the regularity of its movements, has created the notion of time. The rhythm of the days, of the moon cycles, of the seasons, animate the terrestrial life, giving it its countenance and, coordinating the physical pulsations, provides the individual with the natural and social framework within which he inserts his existence. In the Ciel-Terre pair, the sky is active and the earth passive, the sky plants and the earth is fertile" (Michel Collinet: "Mythe et Realité du Cosmos," *Preuves*: January 1964)

is a 'rule.' But what should be especially noticed is that this rule is not merely factual: it is accompanied by a sort of ethical necessity.[14]

The perseverance of form, the emphasis on stability is directly based on the child's feeling that all form possesses an inherent necessity. Claude Lévi-Strauss explains this as characteristic of primitive societies:

> Chacune de ces sociétés considère que son but essentiel, sa fin dernière, est de persévérer dans son être, de continuer telle que les ancêtres l'ont instituée et pour la seule raison, d'ailleurs, que les ancêtres l'ont faite ainsi; il n'y a pas besoin d'autre justification: 'nous avons toujours fait de cette façon-la' c'est la réponse que nour recevons immanquablement, quand nous demandons à une informateur la raison de telle costume ou de telle institution. Elle n'a pas d'autre justification que son existence. Sa légitimité tient à sa durée,[15]

Malinovsky claimed that primitive man was not "prelogical but alogical." He implied that primitive societies do not automatically possess the potential for developing into modern ones; that children do not automatically become skeptical at the age of seven and learn to accept chance. As Claude Lévi-Strauss points out, primitive societies protect rather than expose their members to change, contradiction, dichotomy. They provide connections with the real world, the world of nature, that intimately surrounds and governs the lives of primitive man.

> …la grande difference d'ensemble est que les sociétés primitives s'efforçent, de façon consciente, ou l'inconsciente, d'éviter que ne se produise ce clivage entre leurs membres, que a permis ou favorisé l'essor de la civilisation occidentale.[16]

Malinovsky wrote that "Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is, in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived." As Claude Lévi-Strauss describes it, primitive man has certain "standards of authenticity" that civilized man lacks.

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[14] Jean Piaget: *The Language and Thought of the Child*

[15] "Each of these societies considers its essential goal, its ultimate end, is to persevere in its being, to continue that which the ancestors have instituted and moreover for the sole reason that the ancestors did it that way; there is no need for any other justification: 'We have always done it in this fashion,' is the response that we receive without fail, when we demand of an informer the reason for such a custom or for such an institution. It has no other justification but its existence. Its legitimacy is attached to its duration." (Charles Charbonnier: *Entretiens avec Claude Lévi-Strauss*)

[16] "…the great difference on the whole is that primitive societies strive, in a conscious or unconscious fashion, to avoid that which produces this cleavage among its members, that has permitted or favored the scope of western civilization." *Ibid*

Erik Erikson has attempted to show the terrible impact of the outside world upon the vulnerable and unprotected child who is driven as much by fear as the "pleasure-principle." Studies of primitive man, like those of children, reveal not the "happy savage" but a being profoundly aware of the gulf separating the human from the "natural." It is this awareness that seems to drive man to create order. Primitive man confirms his separation from the jungle by enclosing himself within a framework, within an encampment. At the same time, like the child, he invents rituals and myths that bridge the cleavage; that provide symbolic relationships between him and nature to substitute for a sense of loss. These are the talismans that restore to him a necessary sense of belonging to the world. It seems that man cannot exist from moment to moment subject to the unexamined, uncontrolled interplay of stimulus and response. He cannot accept his life as process. His consciousness always renders him to some degree unprotected, vulnerable, sensitive to the chasms that exist between himself and the outside world. It is this awareness that demands bridges to restore man to the world about him, that leads to the attempt to make one out of many. It is this awareness that demands a framework of belief. This has always been the primary claim upon the community, not the satisfaction of pleasure.

Scientific logic has tended to substitute abstract connections for what Lévi-Strauss calls authentic ones. We have been provided with a world of statistics, with numbers. Law has been substituted for the family. Science itself has directly stemmed from the need to make connections, but ultimately it has served to defeat this need. Nature, the most profound reality in the life of primitive man, has been transformed and modified to the point where man now must adapt himself, not to the "real world," but to a world of change that he himself has invented.

Marcuse speaks of our "intensified unfreedom." We are freed from the superstitious propitiation of gods and nature, but according to Jacques Ellul we have substituted for this a propitiation of the machine to the point where we ourselves have already become machines. Our desires are mechanically created and mechanically satisfied. Our alienation from nature is almost complete…and just at that point of total freedom paradoxically we will become totally enslaved, totally dehumanized.

VII

THE RATIONAL COSMOS

Looking back at the history of civilizations can we discover if at any time there has been an attempt to create a rational cosmos based on man's "instinct for unity"? In the past there were two significant attempts to formulate the relationship of the one to the many--in Freud's words, to "make one out of many"--in terms of reason rather than myth, religion, superstition. One attempt transformed the primitive cosmos into a relatively rational one, establishing a self-enclosed system that successfully operated for centuries. The other destroyed the traditional cosmos and initiated a revolution of change that has resulted in the modern world. It freed man from the cosmic principles, the inter-related laws of heaven and earth, stability and change, that had previously governed his life. It substituted the tenets that the Greeks had primarily associated with Ouranos and the boundary.

Henry Adams wrote of the Middle Ages as a "study in Unity," but he struggled with the paradoxes of contradiction and multiplicity inherent in the Christian religion. In the West reason had never broken free of those paradoxes. When Adams wrote of "God and Unity," what he actually meant was the Western concept of totality; that is, a principle that in order to be logically developed requires some kind of antithesis that ultimately negates it. The Western concept of God represented an attempt at a definitive absolute, a primary principle, but the logic of the Deity as a "unity" could not be consummated since it required an inverse image--that of "Satan and multiplicity." In attempting to formulate a total good that excluded evil, a oneness that excluded duality, complexity, change, Western man was unable to reconcile God and unity with the universe. Adams states the paradox thus:

> …mankind could not admit an anarchical—a dual or multiple universe…Either God was harmony, or He was discord. With practical unanimity, mankind rejected the dual and multiple scheme; it insisted on unity.[17]

Henry Adams was troubled by the fact that man could not reconcile his "passion for unity" with his demand for multiplicity. Christianity represented a strong attempt at harmony, but history revealed a "continuous negation" of this. Man had insisted

> …that the universe was a unity, but that he was a universe; that energy was one, but that he was another energy; that God was omnipotent, but that man was free. The contradiction had always existed, exists still, and always must exist, unless man either

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[17] Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*

admits that he is a machine, or agrees that anarchy and chaos are the habit of nature, and law and order its accident.[18]

Henry Adams could not transcend the paradox, although he might have done so by shifting to another cultural spectrum. The Middle Ages as subject of his counter-volume did not represent a true antithesis to multiplicity. Adams recognized that there had been other societies consummate within themselves, drawing energy from their basic credenda, but he did not define the actual differences between Cosmos and Ouranos, although, as we shall see, in his concept of the Virgin as opposed to the dynamo, he was reaching towards that mysterious and primitive concept upon which the cosmos is based.[19]

The fundamental problems of the relationship of self to society, of the one to the many, of unity to multiplicity have never been solved in the West. They have been intensified by the failure of a concept of harmony. As Claude Lévi-Strauss points out, this concept of harmony is a strong characteristic of primitive societies. The Chinese, like the Greeks, interpreted the cosmos as composed of an harmonious relationship between heaven and earth. But whereas in Greece this basic harmony was exposed to reason and consequently destroyed by it, in China harmony was reinforced by reason to create a civilization based on the fundamental principles of Cosmos rather than Ouranos.

In the primitive and oriental concept of cosmos change was not considered as a "Fall," (as in Christianity); rather the transition from unity to multiplicity was considered as naturally a part of the cosmic cycle as the transition from multiplicity to unity. The great achievement of Chinese civilization lay in the fact that it provided a framework within which the needs for change, for experimentation, could be accommodated without destroying the basic need for form. It allowed a high development of diversity within unity. It also allowed the development of the individual as well as society without emphasizing the contradiction of one to the other. There was no emphasis upon the idea of man himself "as a universe." There was no emphasis upon the idea of individual freedom as antithetical to society.

Confucius (and his disciple Mencius) called himself a scholar and teacher rather than a religious leader, a transmitter rather than an innovator. Therefore, instead of revolutionizing man's primitive relationship with the cosmos, he sought to transform it into a rational one. His concern was not religion or mysticism but everyday morality—"right action" as governed by reason.

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[18] *Ibid*

[19] "The Chartres volume was the second in the series and intended to fix the starting point, since I could not get enough material to illustrate primitive society, or the society of the seventh C.B.C (Pythagorean) as I would have liked." (Letter to Albert Stanburrough Cook, 1910). Henry Adams visited the Polynesian societies of the South Seas, but considered these as pre-historical, pre-logical societies…that is, societies whose main differences to the West lay in the fact of their underdevelopment.

Confucius clarified the traditional human relationships and provided a framework for action. Confucian ritual was dedicated to the continuity and stability of family life, and this was coordinated to the social hierarchy and to nature. The Chinese habitually revolted against tendencies to become too contemplative about life—instead the demand was always for a return to experience, to one's immediate surroundings.[20]

The Chinese belief in the basic goodness of man, their belief in the family as the integral unity of responsibility, their sense of the harmony of all things, their conception of polarities as complementary functions within the whole, protected them, even in times of social disruption, from over-emphasizing either the One or the Many.[21] The Buddhist idea of multiplicity as a delusion, as a dream belonging to the world of appearances; the conception of Nirvana, the One as a void, did not really appeal to the practical mind of the Chinese.[22] Even Chinese "mysticism" (Taoism) unlike that of the West attempted to formulate a closer relationship of the individual with the natural world.

Owen Lattimore writes of the influence of the Great Wall of China which was built by the Emperor Ch'in Shih-huang-ti to keep out the barbarians. From the Chinese perspective it bounded the cosmos, defining civilization from barbarism and serving the function of the boundary—to protect and to contain. Within its walls Chinese civilization developed without the threat of the frontier: the threat of chance and change, contradiction and paradox.

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[20] "Sung and Ming scholars ignored the distress and want of the world, and talked about subtlety, essence and unity. I am at a loss to understand." (Wen-chi: *Collected Works*, Letter to a friend about learning)

[21] "It is impossible to overstress the fundamental oneness and harmony of the Chinese 'Weltenschauung.' The Chinese mind sees no real distinction between the world of the supernatural, the world of nature, and the world of man. They are bound up in an all-embracing unity. 'All things are complete within me,' proclaims the Confucian Mencius…thus echoing the sentiment of the Taoist, Chuang Tzu…who says 'heaven and Earth come into being with me together, and with me, all things are one.'" (Derk Bodde: "Dominant Ideas:" *China*, ed. Harley F. Macnair)

[22] "The Chinese have been less concerned with the world of the supernatural than with the worlds of nature and of man. They are not a people for whom religious ideas and activities constitute an all-important and absorbing part of life—this despite the fact that there are nominally more Buddhists in China than in any other country in the world. Buddhism entered China from the outside…" (and was consequently adapted to the Chinese way of life). *Ibid*

VIII

THE CONVERSION TO OURANOS

In the West the need to rationally define the relationship between unity and diversity, between the One and the Many, actually emerged from an increasing crisis, one that could be paralleled with that crisis that Piaget observed in the child, when at about seven years he learns to be skeptical of the adult world. Heraclitus expressed the changing attitude of the Greeks—from faith in the unity of the world to one of skepticism of all connections. He wrote that the Greeks no longer needed gods and myths due to their increased understanding and experience of the world.

> (For this is characteristic of the present age, when, in so much as all lands and seas may be crossed by man, it would no longer be fitting to depend on the witness of poets and mythographers as our ancestors generally did), "bringing forth untrustworthy witnesses to confirm disputed points," in the words of Herakleitos.[23]

The Greeks lived on the margins of the sea confronted by an eternal vista of escape. Following the pattern of Odysseus, the hero of the Homeric Age, they explored the seas and encountered the novel and strange that transcended their customary laws of understanding and prediction. They came in contact with other societies, with other gods, with other laws. They traversed the limits set by Hercules and even "experienced the unpeopled world behind the sun." Because of this they were forced into a condition of freedom and power. At the same time they experienced chaos, a sense of the alienated self—of the individual in isolation and in transit. They were deprived of the security of the traditional cosmos and of an intimate relationship with the land. The balance between the center and the boundary was destroyed. Ouranos usurped Gaia.

The Greeks were forced to question rather than to accept, but they no longer directed their questions to the oracles, the voice of the communal unconscious. Instead they turned to the emergent self, to the individual mind separated from its customary closures. Like the troubled heroes of Aeschylus they began to wonder about the consequences of good and evil, and about the irrational meting out of rewards and punishments by the gods. They developed a logic of self-interest opposed to the traditional claims of family and community. They could no longer accept the whimsical deeds of their elusive, illogical and unpredictable gods, but like Prometheus began to defy and eventually to ignore and forget them. They began to attempt to order the hypothetical and to accept chance in the world of the actual.

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[23] Heraclitus: *Fragments*

Nor could the Greeks continue to accept the omnipotence and authority of human heroes. The awakening ego spoke through the satirical poets to destroy whatever transcended the self. They struggled to formulate a concept of the common man. Themistocles democratized Athens and helped transform a small city into a "great and powerful" one. With that transformation he also transformed the relationship of the individual with nature and society. He forced man from the land and transferred political power to the sailors…to those who crossed the boundaries and created new frontiers. Ironically, he was exiled from Athens for attempting to rise above the democratic standards that he himself had imposed.

The impetus for Greek philosophy came from the demand for new definitions, for a new unifying principle that recognized the Greek transcendence of the mythical world of the past. In the metamorphosed world of the Greeks the self was breaking away from its oneness with the family, society and nature to form what could be paralleled with Freud's concept of the growth and maturity of the individual ego; its gradual separation from its "oceanic" relationship with its environment to define a line of consciousness between the internal and external world. This new intensified role of the self required profound new concepts of unity—a concept not only of social but self unity.

Plato in the *Theaetetus* denounced the "ancients who concealed their wisdom from the many in poetical figures." His *Republic* is a splendid monument to the emergent need of the Greeks for an organizing principle based on reason rather than on myth and poetry. But Plato himself, in a following work, *The Statesman* cited the myth of Krones to suggest that perhaps he had made an error—and then he condemned his own ideal of a new social form as untenable. Like Henry Adams centuries later, he decided that "the world changed as worlds must," and that unity could not exist within a world of continuous transformation. He therefore proposed, in place of a unifying principle based on the reason of the philosopher-king, a revolutionary new concept of control and adjustment—of human control over men in terms of multiplicity. He suggested that the individual and society be adjusted to an inconstant universe, a relative world of time and history…to a world governed by Ouranos.

Plato's attempt to define justice in terms of harmony was one of the great ideas of classical Greece. However, it was in essence a *social* idea. Plato was primarily concerned with translating harmony into political provisions. By emphasizing the polis he removed it from its natural context. However, he retreated from his initial idea of an harmonious society defined by reason rather than religion. Unlike Confucius he concluded that the transition could not really be made from the traditional irrational cosmos to a rational one and therefore formulated society in terms of Ouranos. He accepted man's condition on the boundary—in the domain of chance and change. He relinquished his concept of harmony for one of compromise. His notion of the Statesman's control over men

was extended by Aristotle to include a control over the natural world, rather than a harmony with it. Thus he ironically affirmed man's acquiescence to change by providing the logic, impetus and conditions for generating change. He laid the foundations for the scientific attitude.

THE WAY TO THE SELF

> …every man seems to know all things in a dreamy sort of way,
> and then again to wake up and to know nothing

Plato wrote those words in *The Statesman*. Classical Greece represented a kind of awakening from dream. Man's former standards of authenticity were no longer seen as applicable to the changing world. What was previously expressed in form, ritual, symbol, the Greeks demolished with world-shattering implications. They held a mirror to the self, freeing man from the molds that unconsciously had shaped him, defining him separately from the mind and body of the community. Man began to grasp reality by changing it, by forcing the shape of his imagination upon the external world. Therefore he needed a constantly expanding framework accommodating the thrust of new concepts, a framework freed from the restrictive influence of the feminine—of Gaia. The traditional order of the universe was reversed. The Cosmos was converted to Ouranos. The helm was wrested from Zeus and given to man.

The increasing latitude for manipulation and metamorphosis has been the distinguishing feature of Western civilization. It is essentially in terms of this that we have consistently judged our civilization as superior to others. Alfred North Whitehead expresses this attitude in his *Adventures of Ideas*:

> It must be remembered that China and Baghdad at the height of
> their prosperity, exhibited forms of human life in many ways
> more gracious than our own. They were great civilizations. But
> they became arrested, and the arrest is the point of our inquiry.
> We have to understand the reasons for the greatness and the final
> barriers to advancement.

Western civilization has "resisted arrest" primarily because it has resisted or denied the conditions that permit the creation and maintenance of a cosmos. Wherever belief could not accommodate new ideas, new developments, it gave way to a new belief. As Plato foresaw when he renounced his ideal of the Republic, no form, no limits could be effective once change was accepted in the total fashion that Western man has accepted it.

By reversing the Cosmos to Ouranos the Greeks destroyed the initial "barriers to advancement" and changed the world to one of Becoming rather than Being. The inversion of the part to the whole, one of the primary characteristics of Ouranos, was facilitated by Christianity.

For centuries Christianity imposed a kind of unity upon the West. Western man's need for new organizing principles in an environment of

multiplicity and change—given profound new expression, but then betrayed by Plato—was re-expressed through religion. Freud suggested that religion has attempted to substitute for the lost "oceanic" relationship of the infant with his environment. The communal psyche in the traditional cosmos provided the connections that the developing consciousness demanded. It protected the individual from the threat of overwhelming contradictions. However, Western religion affirmed the alienation of self from society and nature. It formulated revolutionary connections for the self.

Man, feeling himself *in transitu* in this life, has understood his condition in terms of searching for a Way. The Greek Way was the Golden Mean, the *juste milieu*. The Chinese Tao also taught a harmonious middle way emphasizing man's relationship with nature. Both of these ways were ends in themselves and man realized himself in following them. The Old Testament reveals the search of the Israelites for an actual route into a real kingdom. In the New Testament this route becomes figurative and leads to a Kingdom that exists beyond the boundaries of this world. It was a radical new Way that no longer united the one with the many, but separated them.

Jesus shattered the restrictive limits of Hebraic society by undermining the claims of the family, of the mother. He imposed stronger claims upon the individual.[24] He urged man to pass beyond the traditional boundaries of the community; to seek a private rather than a public way to salvation, to seek an eternal kingdom that existed beyond the dimensions of time and space.

Christianity under Paul became a proselytizing religion, a religion of individual choice, conversion, transformation. Paul undermined the social tribunal by postulating the authority of the individual conscience and investing man with the responsibility for his own actions. The self became its own judge and caretaker.

While Christianity acquired membership, developed institutions, created a community, at the same time it placed man on the boundary by teaching that he was "not of this world," but of another. It defined a new kind of unity and provided a route to escape society through the self. Imitating the flight of Jesus into the wilderness a general Christian exodus occurred in the fourth century B.C. Paul the Hermit, Hilarion of Tabitha, Friar Amandus, and especially Saint Anthony sought to confront God with the self. Saint Anthony fled the multiplicity of civilization to seek unity in the uncompromising *paysage* of the desert. It was there that he struggled with the multiplicity arising from his own unconscious: woman (who cried, "Ah! bel ermite! bel ermite!"), satyr, beast,

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[24] "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew: 19:29)

devil…the images of the chaotic world that he discovered reflected within himself.[25]

Although the "Fathers of the Desert" tried to escape the crowd, the crowd came to them. The dispossessed and alienated sought out the hermits in order to be cured of their own inner chaos. The solitude became institutionalized. Disciples were organized into orders. Every man potentially could become a saint and achieve God and unity. The Egyptian monastic colonies of the fourth century became communities of "isolates." The true hermits refused to reconcile themselves even to these "communities" of solitude and their paradoxical institutionalization of self-retreat. They tried to escape even deeper into the wilderness, but were pursued to the very limits of their seclusion.

These saints denied the traditional community as a way to unity. The hagiology of the Catholic Church contains a roster of those who have had a "hunger and thirst" to be united to God.[26] Christianity developed a tradition of escape both from society and nature. E. Assison Peers describes the Spanish mystics as renouncing the community and concentrating on searching out God in His utmost lair "as a hunter would leave his village and follow the tracks of an animal wherever it would take him, ignoring all distracting phenomena." San Juan de la Cruz traveled restlessly throughout Spain avoiding whatever architecture man had constructed. Nature was a necessary detour which he regarded as an experience of God's creation—"la hermosura de las Cosas." But he always chose a perspective that somehow emphasized his alienation. He said of his way of life: "We friars do not travel to see, but in order not to see." His gaze was directed beyond the limits of the world. His perspective was Ouranic.

> St. John of the Corss's map of the road to the Mount of Perfection, it will be remembered, depicts a narrow and only gradually widening path, marked "Nothing--nothing--nothing—nothing—nothing," with tracts of land on either side marked "Glory," "Pleasure," "Security," "Freedom," etc., the hills in the foreground bearing the legend "And on the mount nothing," and the distant goal defined by the words:
>
> > On this mount solely dwells
> > The glory and honour of God.[27]

The Old Testament defined a Way for the whole community to follow, a way into a promised land. It told of men's averting their eyes from the sight of

[25] "L'humanité don't on se détourne alors est celle qu'on découverte au fond de soi." (Henri Bergeon: *Les deux Source de la Religion et de la Moralité*)

[26] "Nous travaillons selon les obligations de notre profession, mais nous ressentons toujours cette faim, cette soif, ce désir, cette inclination qui nous porte à Dieu, qui nous unit à Dieu." (Etienne de S. François Xavier: *Le Tiers Ordre Expliqueé*)

[27] E. Allison Peers: *Saint John of the Cross*

God. Man was not to search out God, but to follow His laws as interpreted by the prophets. The Christian Way became a direct search to confront God with the individual self.

The revolution in the concept of the self was continued by St. Augustine who, as an early pilgrim of the psyche, forced the ego to emerge from its traditional subordination to the larger framework of family and society. Augustine, as the heir of Jesus and Plato, was intensely aware of man's complexity and alienation, but his passion for unity was more starkly to define the alienation of the self from society and nature. He required that society as well as self turn away from the natural world to confront what he considered a transcendent truth.

> And I sought "whence is evil!" and I sought in an evil way: and saw not the evil in my very search…Where is evil then, and whence, and crept it in hither? What is its root, and what its seed?..Had He no might to turn and change the whole, so that no evil should remain in it, seeing He is All-mighty?...These thoughts I revolved in my miserable heart, overcharged with the most gnawing cares, lest I should die ere I had found the truth…[28]

Augustine asked which was truth, unity or complexity? Looking outward to the external world revealed complexity. Augustine could not discover God and unity in nature. He could only discover man's separation from and superiority to the natural world; therefore he sought another perspective…one that would reveal not complexity but unity.

The Manichaeans had defined the personality as essentially divided. Augustine's acute and compelling concern with internal dichotomy, his need for an organizing principle for self and society, his "passion for unity," led him— like Plato—to seek a unifying principle beyond the world of time, change and appearance. He located this within the individual soul.

> And being thence admonished to return to myself, I entered even into my inward self.[29]

Augustine inverted the traditional perspective. It was here that he discovered an intimate reality that transcended the limits of the cosmos. He believed that within this private area, this inverse realm, lay man's ultimate salvation.

Augustine was concerned essentially with Freudian problems: the human personality in its relationship with itself and with society. He was concerned that man should know himself, his own dreams and feelings. He had an awareness of

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[28] St. Augustine: *The Confessions*
[29] *Ibid*

the mysterious and profound inner universe of man as opposed to the external world.

> These things do I within, in that vast court of my memory. For there are present within me, heaven, earth, sea, and whatever I could think on therein, besides what I have forgotten. There also meet I with myself, and recall myself, and when, where, and what I have done, and under what feelings.[30]

He realized the value of punishment and confession and his own confessions, expressed within the broadest context of human suffering and the search for unity, served as a kind of psychoanalytical purging.

In desperation Augustine called upon God to make him one person. He implored Him to accept his passionate nature in all its complexity and to free him from evil. He needed to come to terms with his inner contradictions without rejecting any of them. He wanted to live out his life within the entire range of his feelings. He felt that by denying any of these he was denying life itself.

A mind free from emotions "is worse than all vices." A life free from struggle is one open to the temptation of evil. But unity must be imposed upon the passionate disorder of the self. Augustine rejected the Platonic concept of reason as a means of achieving unity. Reason did not adequately express the soul. It was the emotions that provided lost connections, that linked man with man, man with God. Therefore he found it crucial that these not be repressed, but be given full play as an organizing principle for both man and society. Long before Freud, Augustine discovered Eros as the tendency to "make one out of many."

Augustine attempted to transform Plato's concept of justice and harmony to make these meaningful within the Old Testament framework of the community and in terms of Old Testament rewards and punishments. What emerged was a new perspective for society—but away from nature in its wider sense. Augustine suggested that society must pivot towards the Heavenly City, necessarily ordering itself in imperfect terms upon the ideal pattern of the eternal. However, Augustine suggested that man could accept the inequalities and injustices—the complexity, contradiction, multiplicity of the temporal world—and still find unity within himself. In fact, the individual must accept society as given, since it was through society that God punished the individual for his acts. If there was disorder, it existed as a *res judicate* of God. What was ultimately important lay in the individual's struggle to maintain an inner perspective. What emerged was a self that dared to look upon God.

It was this acceptance of an external order and designation of an internal escape that makes Augustine relevant today. That inward journey to the self was

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[30] *Ibid*

inevitably away from nature and the community rather than through it. Its final goal was a different kind of unity, a unity that ultimately undermined the Church it attempted to establish.

X

GOD AND UNITY

The Catholic Church was in the paradoxical position of building a community upon the principles of an anti-community, a cosmos upon the principles of ouranos—a paradox that is destroying it today. Once Christianity judged that the individual had claims beyond those of society, beyond the boundaries of the world itself, then its reconciliation of self with society was necessarily one of compromise. In the Middle Ages this reconciliation was eminently successful, as Henry Adams saw when he characterized it as an age of unity.

For a time the Catholic Church was able to thrust itself between this dangerous and revolutionary relationship of the individual with God. It became the caretaker of the soul, the guardian of conscience, the exorcisor of doubt. It provided the child with connections rather than casting him adrift in a world of chance.

In an important sense the Catholic Church realized Augustine's dream of a Civitas Dei, but only by subordinating and limiting the self as defined by Augustine. It wielded secular and temporal power in the name of unity, and it set its vigilant saints on the boundaries of the community as sentinels both against alien penetration and against the escape of its members. However, it accommodated the needs to flee the limitations of the self and the proscriptions of society by sending its potential heretics abroad to destroy heresy and to expand the dominion of the Church. Those fugitives from unity, its prodigal sons, sought their fortune under its standards…and solved the dilemma of belief.

More important, the Church attempted a reconciliation of man with the family, of Ouranos with Gaia. In attempting to discover the secret of medieval unity Henry Adams struggled with the dilemma of man's "many-sided nature." How was it accommodated? How was it constrained? He found the answer in the architecture of the Cathedral at Chartres. Everywhere he found the rose, the symbol of the feminine, and he decided that the Cathedral was not an expression of God but of the Mother and the Son. While God had satisfied man's "primeval instinct for unity," the Virgin of the thirteenth century had accommodated his restless and rebellious spirit.[31] Man needed not only "law or equity," but also

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[31] "Whatever the heretic or mystic might try to persuade himself, God could not be Love. God was Justice, Order, Unity, Perfection; He could not be human and imperfect, nor could the son or the Holy Ghost be other than the Father. The Mother alone was human, imperfect, and could love; she alone was Favour, Duality, Diversity. Under any conceivable form of religion, this duality must find embodiment somewhere, and the Middle Ages logically insisted that, as it could not be in the Trinity, either separately or together, it must be in the Mother. If the Trinity was in its essence Unity, the Mother alone could represent whatever was not Unity; whatever was irregular, exceptional, outlawed; and this was the whole human race." (Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*).

love and forgiveness. The Holy Trinity was not enough. God—as totality, as Western man had come to define Him—excluded duality, diversity. But God in relationship with Mary created the closest parallel to the archaic cosmos and to the Chinese Yang and Yin of which Western man has been capable. When Adams opposed the Virgin to the modern world, he discovered the significant clue to the relationship of unity to multiplicity.

Thus the medieval community resembled the primitive cosmos in these certain respects: in its emphasis on the feminine as well as the masculine; in its closure of the mind; in its protection against disruption and change; in the creation of a relatively stable framework within which patterns of thought and action could elaborate; in its rituals, commentaries and precedents for action. Johan Huizinga observed that towards the close of the Middle Ages the tendency "was to invent a style for everything."[32]

Yet the cornerstone of doubt and duality had been laid. Unlike the primitive cosmos, the Christian edifice rested upon the Western paradoxes of unity and multiplicity, of self and society, of man and nature, that were eventually to destroy its balance. Society was ordered not within a true cosmos, but in terms of Ouranos.

> The Middle Ages never forgot that all things would be absurd, if their meaning were exhausted in their function and their place in the phenomenal world, if by their essence they did not reach into a world beyond this.[33]

Scholastic philosophy sought a *principium unitatis* not in this world but in the concept of a total Being. Society as translated into the *Civitas Dei* acquired mythical dimensions beyond that of the primitive Cosmos, but the Church taught renunciation of this world and the separation of society from nature.

It was Thomas Aquinas who actually worked out an equation for the Christian community and established its place in the universe. God was not a *passionate* necessity for St. Thomas as he was for Augustine. He was an *intellectual* necessity, and St. Thomas endowed Him with omnipotence, energy and will and called Him the "Prime Mover." He defined God in enlarged and sophisticated terms, giving that image a new dimension in power at the same time that he attempted to translate it into process.

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[32] "Every event, every action, was still embodied in expressive and solemn forms, which raised them to the dignity of a ritual. For it was not merely the great facts of birth, marriage and death which, by the sacredness of the sacrament, were raised to the rank of mysteries incidents of less importance, like a journey, a task, a visit, were equally attended by a thousand formalities: benedictions, ceremonies, formulae," (Johan Huizinga: *The Waning of the Middle Ages*).
[33] *Ibid*

Aquinas considered the community an immediate and practical necessity since man was naturally a social and political being completed by his relationship with others. Thus he was concerned with structuring a rational, orderly, God-fearing and yet relatively free society for men wherein everyone would have a sufficiency of material goods. He feared multiplicity and valued security. His Prince was to create unity from diversity—but within the boundaries of the Church and limited by the concept of the common good. His role was to make it possible for men to live a virtuous and complete life within the community—a practical life that would lead to an eternal reward.

St. Thomas chose "God who was unity," and yet he separated the public from the private, the rule of the good from the rule of social necessity, the temporal from the eternal. His community was devised neither for the "splendidly wicked" nor the "totally good," but for "those who chose certain middle ways."

In the Augustinian tradition Anselm, Bernard and Aquinas defined the individual and society within a spiritual rather than a natural context. They attempted to fix the cornerstone of their architecture not in the earth, but beyond the horizon—searching for a Total Good where the Greeks had found whim, amorality and metamorphosis. The tendency was to establish the illusion that truth lay not in unity as it was intuitively perceived by primitive societies or understood by the Chinese…but in the absolute. The original concept of Ouranos was reversed. When the illusion was shattered, the cosmic relationship of Ouranos to Gaia was not restored. Rather, the idea of totality was taken from God into the self. Society yielded to the original principles of Ouranos: of progressive time without eternity, of change without teleology, of chance and multiplicity without unity.

During the Middle Ages the Church was engaged in synthesizing images of man's relationship to another world rather than this, but one of its rebel priests thought in terms of simpler images and simpler connections. In Saint Francis the Church contained a more profound heretic than it realized. He assailed not only the "science and syllogisms," the *opionobus tenebrosis* that separated medieval man from "*nostra mater terra;*" he denounced not only the logic and false pride of the clergy (Satan was logic)—but he redefined man's role as Adam, the caretaker…a role metamorphosed by Christianity. St. Francis accentuated this role to the point of caricature, but then he had to fight against all the tendencies of his times: the use of science as a tool to imitate God's power, the use of reason to imitate God's omniscience, the use of the self to imitate God's essence. He had to fight against the growing alienation of man from nature. Reversing the flight of the 4th Century Hermits to the desert, St. Francis taught a return to the family of all creatures. He did not deny society but taught man's community with all of nature.

Henry Adams believed that the *Cantice del Sole* of St. Thomas did not belong to the Middle Ages, but rather to the "cave-dwellers and the age of stone." That intuitive perception of the "pauper and the idiot" was something that only "children and saints could accept." In a sense he was correct, for Saint Francis' perspective was poetical and mythical, but it provided man with the clues to the meaning of Genesis. It referred man back to the primitive cosmos and to his role as Adam; back to an oceanic oneness with its lost connections. St. Francis lived a constant joyousness and affirmation of life which is the only true denial of self. He became the authentic Idiot Saint. His simplicity embraced all complexity. He praised all creatures, all nature and finally death itself, seeing its place in the cycle of things. "Laudate si, misignore, per sera nostre morte corporale."[34] His way was the *Via Veritas*, the way through life to life itself.[35]

But it was too late. The need for unity had become a more complex one than the aesthetic and logical forms of the Medieval Church could satisfy. It was these synthesized forms that Henry Adams regarded as true unity. Saint Francis was against history and the Church itself was threatened, not because it failed to accommodate the wider sphere of nature, but the wider sphere of the individual.

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[34] *Cantice del Sole*

[35] "My brothers, my brother, God has called me by the way of simplicity and humility, and has shown me in verity this path for me and those who want to believe and follow me; so I want you to talk of no Rule to me, neither Saint Benedict nor Saint Augustine nor Saint Bernard, nor any way or form of Life whatever except that which God has mercifully pointed out and granted to me. And God said that he wanted me to be a pauper (*poverello*) and an idiot—a great fool—in this world, and would not lead us by any other path of science than this. But by your science and syllogisms God will confound you, and you will yet come back to your proper station with shame, whether you will or no."

XI

SATAN AND SECURITY

Johan Huizinga wrote that "the picture displayed by the Renaissance is one of transformation and hesitation." Man had crossed the boundaries of the medieval community and stood at the threshold of the modern world. Jacob Burckhardt describes this period as a kind of awakening:

> In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues.[36]

Christianity, the belief that had temporarily arrested Western society from change and progress, had lost its unifying and restrictive force. Its hierarchies, powers and institutions gave way before the ferment of a new era. Man was no longer enveloped within a cosmos that defined him as a part rather than a whole, nor were his energies directed towards preserving that cosmos. He could now develop a range of interests focused upon himself as a center, rather than upon society. His potentialities were released to transform the world about him into the shape of his own immediate and individual desires. The complex corpus of human wants, passions, needs, was no longer effectively governed and disciplined by a spiritual hegemony. With his new freedom man traversed the spatial and temporal boundaries of Christendom to investigate the world beyond and to rediscover his classical past. And he crossed the boundaries of the self, as dimensioned by Christian orthodoxy, to discover and exploit the variant needs and desires of his own being. On every level there were new worlds to explore.

The city of man no longer served as an interim and a preparation for the Augustinian City of God. It no longer functioned as the expression of a Thomistic equation. It began to diversify and diverge in response to emerging human needs and demands, to develop new rhythms and activities. The Church had lost its total hold upon the human community and the human soul, but then the dichotomy had been there from the beginning and Aquinas could not really bend all lines to a center.

Man reacted to this new freedom in ambiguous ways. For some it meant a splendid liberation, but at the same time there were profound manifestations of insecurity and of the need for a new unity for the self and society. While Leonardo da Vinci manipulated the world about him with the freed imagination and hands of the Renaissance man; while other artists converted art into a means of appropriating rather than reflecting the world, Michelangelo sought to escape

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[36] *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*

the uncertainty, the multiplicity, the change and chance of life, by creating a transcendent unity in art.

> La causa all' effetto inclino e cede,
> Onde dall'arte e vinta la natura,
> Io 'l se, ch'l prevo in la bella sculture;
> Ch'all 'opra il tempo e morte non tien fede.[37]

Michelangelo expressed in his sonnets what was implicit in his sculpture. Although he tried to come to terms with change by reshaping the Christian image of man and restoring his classical and mythical dimensions, his art ultimately turned into reflections of his own condition and he cried, "Mineself am ever mine own counterfeit." He himself was that Jeremiah reaching towards God and unity; these slaves of space and time struggling to be free from the "marble spell" that bound them.

While Galileo repudiated the physical axis of Christendom, Savanarola tried to reclaim the individual and the community for God. While Lorenzo de' Medici exploited the particular power of the newly defined "*uomo unicus*," Dante nostalgically embraced the medieval world and wrote for the reestablishment, strengthening and universal extension of the Christian Body by a compromise division of powers.

Dante begins the *Inferno* telling how he has lost his way:

> Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovai per una selva
> oscura che la diritta via era smarrita. Ah quanto a dir qual era è
> cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier
> rineva la paura!
> Tant' è amara che poco è piu morte…[38]

More than any other man of his time Dante was sensitive to the breakdown of medieval boundaries and the subsequent impact not only upon society but upon the human personality. Man was freed from the *Corpus Christi* to redefine himself not as a part but as a whole. It was this definition of the self as the counterfeit of God that Dante saw as the great threat to the community. He tried to counteract this reversal by stating that the community—not the self— was the true image of the Deity.

The *de Monarchia* was a splendid conception of unity—an attempt to re-connect the individual with the medieval *Civitas Dei*. But Dante's medieval conception of unity could not accommodate the multiplicity and skepticism of a

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[37] Michelangelo: *Sonnets*.

[38] "In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood where the straight way was lost. Ah, how difficult it is to tell of that wood so wild and dense and harsh, that only to think of it renews my fear."

new age. In trying to merge the two perspectives Dante had to introduce duality into his unity: the duality of body and soul. He had to postulate a division of empires: one ruled by reason, the other by faith; one by the Monarch, the other by the Pope.

But an amalgam of reason and faith could not restore the boundaries of the Christian cosmos. Renaissance man, newly aware of the historical process, could not or would not interrupt it. Henry Adams judged that the Original Sin had been repeated. Renaissance man, like the Biblical Adam, had made an irrevocable choice of Satan and multiplicity. Adams believed that Renaissance society had already become so complex that it could not be governed by a single concept. The mind had inversed its vision and lost its focus on the *Civitas Dei*.

The counter position of a new concept of the unity of the self—the *uomo unicus*—to the medieval unity of the Church inevitably evoked a divided self, a divided society. Men rejected once and for all the *Via Veritas* of Saint Francis…the role of the "pauper and the idiot." They rejected Dante's *Monarchia* in order to concentrate upon the definition of a secular self within a secular society. It was not Dante but Machiavelli who anticipated and defined the new world. Whereas Dante had attempted to accommodate the power and diversity of the secular public and the increasing demands of the self for an expanded framework, at bottom he feared these. Machiavelli not only affirmed the new age but called for the transformation of the medieval city-state subservient to the Church into the modern nation-state subservient to the urgent demands of the times. He attempted to define and accommodate the needs of the *uomo unicus*.

Machiavelli adumbrated modern political attitudes by interpreting unity in the narrower sense of security—and by interpreting multiplicity, or diversity, as the free play of individual interests within society. Starting at opposite ends of the spectrum Augustine and Machiavelli represent two major perspectives in the creation of the modern world. They formulated two kinds of "unity:" one for the self, the other for society. One is essentially private and based on an inner totality, a perspective that views the world inwardly through the self. Its original purpose was to define the individual in terms or his relationship with God and his membership in the Civitas Dei. But it has resulted in the "alienated individual" and its major dilemma is the reconciliation of the self with other selves.

The other perspective is essentially political and is based on the state as serving a collection of interests. Its original purpose was to define a new framework for a changing society, to create a relationship between the new secular man and the emergent nation-state. Its major problem is maintaining a framework of common interests and balancing the claims of the individual with the state…of reconciling individual freedom with the security necessary to serve those interests...of maintaining the nation-state in a Hobbesian "state of nature."

We have tried to view the world from these conflicting perspectives: of individual freedom, of self-interest and national interest, of security; of a frontier, of the "Open Society," and of a closed political framework; of Ouranos and the nation-state. The world revealed to us is a strangely confused one! From the external perspective we discover a hyper-cosmos; that is, a world of conformity endowing number rather than individuality; a nation-state no longer adequate to serve security or economic interests. From the internal perspective we discover Giacometti's world without connections…of isolated individuals— of objects become process.

The modern nation-state, the "crowd" and the "alienated individual" were seen as related phenomena by Le Bon who analyzed the process by which society becomes a crowd:

> That which formed a people, a unity, a block, ends by becoming an agglomeration of individuals without cohesion, still held together for a time by its traditions and institutions. This is the phase when men, divided by their interests and aspirations, but no longer knowing how to govern themselves, ask to be directed in their smallest acts; and when the State exercises its absorbing influence. With the definitive loss of the old ideal, the race ends by entirely losing its soul; it becomes nothing more than a dust of isolated individuals, and returns to what it was at the start, a crowd.

Le Bon blamed this situation on an "enfeeblement of the will," on an inability to deal with complexity, on an escape from responsibility and a search for security in the form of authority. Since the growth of the nation-state it has increasingly been seen as a kind of *monstre* with powers, claims and interests in opposition to those of the individual. The more effective its "unity" the more menacing it appears. Paradoxically, the individual in his search for freedom seems to be developing more powerful and limiting political and economic structures.

The nation-state owed its origin to a changing world, a world of crisis in which the traditional community was no longer meaningful. During the Renaissance Europe was breaking up into power groups within which the polis was no longer an effective integer. Responsive to this situation Machiavelli sought for unity in a special sense—unity as political security.

St. Augustine's search for unity was a search for profound organizing principles for man and society and he chose God as a way to that unity. Machiavelli chose Satan. He translated his obsession with political security into the image of an evil Prince, a Satrian *Monstre* who could act in terms of his own power and interests, unrestrained by law and morality.

Machiavelli wrote two books that dealt with the problems of unity and diversity within the narrower context of security and interests. One was a large treatise, the *Discourses*; the other was actually a supplementary manifesto, the *Prince*. Ironically, the manifesto survived divorced from the framework of the *Discourses*—providing a new concept of political action: power unrestrained by morality or convention, an example of a political way to unity by the choice of Satan.

Actually, Western society has more or less followed the direction pointed out by Machiavelli in the *Discourses*, choosing "republics" rather than "principalities" and fearing the totalitarian power of the "Prince." However, wherever they have invested power in an evil Prince, it is because he appeared to serve just that security and those interests defined by Machiavelli in the *Discourses*.

Machiavelli believed that the political unity of Italy could only be achieved by a powerful leader, someone above the crowd…since ordinary men did not know how to be "splendidly wicked…nor wholly good but shrink from such crimes as are stamped with inherent greatness or disclose nobility of nature." Blaise Pascal later said much the same thing in the *Pensées*:

> Evil is easy, and has infinite forms; good is almost unique. But a certain kind of evil is as difficult to find as what we call good; and often on this account such particular evil gets passed off as good. An extraordinary greatness of soul is needed in order to attain to it as well as to good.

Machiavelli, like Plato, sought for that "extraordinary greatness of soul" that could bring unity from complexity. Like Plato he decided that "to restore a state to new political life presupposes a good man, [but] it is hard to find a good man to consent to violent means…" Since politics requires "*les mains sales*" Italy could only be unified by a "*monstre*", someone beyond the boundary of custom, law and morality, a leader with an "imagination of evil."

The *Prince* was dedicated to an actual "*monstre*"--Cesare Borgia—who proved himself capable of evil action. The *Prince* was actually a demand for "splendidly evil action," action in the political realm. It is an argument for force and the seizure of power. It lauds glory and justifies deception and violence. It acclaims the self-made hero who gains power by his own ability and cunning; who acts upon the people for his own ends and in terms of his own nature. Machiavelli attempts to persuade a real prince to act beyond the law, stating that history indicates that men in general do not deserve any moral consideration from their leaders. The people only receive what they deserve since their nature is basically fickle, false and cowardly.

Machiavelli's *Prince* had an impact just because it was concerned with *crisis*—with action and power. In the traditional cosmos these latter were attendant upon the organizing principles: custom defined action and delegated power. But the Prince indicated a means of cutting the Gordian knot, of allowing men to transcend an historical impasse. The traditional framework could not contain the energies, desires and needs of a new era, nor provide protection for men. A new framework had to be created and the traditional hero could not create it. God could no longer serve society…therefore Satan must.

Machiavelli did not want an Ouranic condition, an Open Society, a frontier, a world without connections…nor did he think men were capable of freedom. He was not interested in man as defined by St. Augustine, nor was he interested in the *Civitas Dei*. He was interested in a secularized society…but a politically secure one bound together by the traditional Christian connections. He recognized the practical quotidian value of Christianity as a social cementing factor, but he considered it of no value in a crisis. Within a secure framework religion facilitated action, but with the breakdown of traditional institutions morality actually withheld men from action.

In the *Discourses* one can see that it is unity, the unity of the State, that preoccupies Machiavelli…a unity that can serve a secular diversity of interests. He was concerned that only one man, the Prince, pass beyond the boundaries of morality…and then only in a crisis. He was concerned with the creation of a more secure framework rather than with the destruction of institutions, frameworks, connections. He decided against a principality in favor of a republic, since "it is the well-being not of individuals, but of a community which makes a state great…and this universal well-being is nowhere secured but in a republic…"[39] A republic will act in terms of the interests of all men, whereas the Prince will act only for himself and "what helps him hurts the state…" The law-maker and creator of the state must assume that all men are bad, since force is necessary to make men behave properly and efficiently. But once the state is established and its laws and institutions adequately defined, then it is better to trust ordinary men to maintain it.

> For though the multitude be unfit to set a State in order, since
> they cannot by reason of the divisions which prevail among them,
> agree wherein the true well-being of the State lies, yet when they
> have once been taught the truth, they never will consent to
> abandon it.[40]

Because the *Prince* and the *Discourses* express two different perspectives: that of a principality and that of a republic, some claim that the *Prince* is based upon reality--that men are actually as Machiavelli describes them--while the *Discourses* represent Machiavelli's ideal society. Actually, no

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[39] Machiavelli: *The Discourses*
[40] *Ibid*

one described modern political society with its conflicts of interests and its political and economic aspirations better than Machiavelli. The *Prince* was Machiavelli's choice of Satan to achieve unity. As already claimed, it was an incendiary pamphlet meant to persuade an actual prince to become *The Prince*. Machiavelli meant him to play his role and then be removed by force for the good of the newly-created nation-state.

Ironically, the Western achievement of the nation-state with its emphasis on interests and secular values, has driven men to achieve an individual unity by the choice of Satan…to escape the boundaries of modern political society into an undefined realm beyond convention. These men have not been Princes, but artists, and have brought in their wake a crowd of alienated individuals.

XII

GOD AND TOTALITY

> …it is the creative ambition to be like God that leads to the fall, not simply being overcome by sensual nature. (Paul Tillich: *The Interpretation of History*)

The problem of self-unity and social unity—the relationship of man to society—was intensified by the Protestant revolt and the political revolutions of the eighteenth century, by the impact of scientific thought upon religious belief, by accelerated social and economic change, by the steady conversion of all boundaries into frontiers of exploration and metamorphosis. Increasingly, human experience seemed to require new interpretations, new judgments. More than ever men were faced with a sense of the "growing complexity, and multiplicity and even contradiction in life"—by a disorder that defied the imposition of conventional forms. It began to appear that change itself was the only predictable reality of human existence. Despite the promise of the Utilitarians of political, social and economic freedom and equality, man inevitably felt a crisis of unity. There was no adequate political definition of the individual to supplant the religious one. From the perspective of the nation-state man had become an "artificial self."

Already during the eighteenth century Western man was becoming increasingly aware of his "artificiality. " He attempted to discover "natural laws" on which to base his society. He became increasingly aware of the "natural" man and began to study other societies wherein man seemed to exist in a simpler and nobler state. But Western man had always tended to interpret his emergence from the "oceanic oneness" of infancy into adult separateness—from primeval innocence into self-consciousness and reason—as the original sin, since this destroyed his image of the unity of God and revealed the multiplicity and change of the world.

By comparing himself to the original Adam in the Garden of Eden confronted by the dilemma of God and unity or Satan and multiplicity, Henry Adams used an allegory of moral choice still profoundly important to us—one that has imbued our civilization with a sense of dichotomy, guilt, failure and the troubling need to restore the lost Eden. Genesis has been a kind of moral and political touchstone, a metaphor of man's condition. Despite its having been attacked by logic, it still forms the very categories of logic. It has played a profound role in shaping the thought of Augustine, Dante, Calvin, Luther, etc., and consequently has influenced Western theories of Utopia. Its implications for political conflict still lurk behind modern ideas and institutions. It still plays a role in the formation of the individual psyche.

However, the traditional exegeses of Genesis have never really lent themselves to the formation of a community. We have tended to regard the loss of Eden as inevitable, that in terms of history man had no choice. The world moved irrevocably from unity to multiplicity.

> Theology. What is the Fall?
> If it is unity become duality, it is God who has fallen.
> In other words, would not creation be the fall of God?[41]

Charles Baudelaire proposed that God himself had committed the Original Sin when He created the world. In giving birth to duality, multiplicity, He had fallen from His own perfection. Baudelaire's proposition preceded the final revolt of the part against the whole. It was an inevitable conclusion, once God was submitted to judgment. In the Judeo-Christian tradition change has never meant the harmonious interplay of opposing principles. In order to preserve a logic of antithesis change has been endowed with a moral significance. The "Fall" postulated a movement from unity to multiplicity, irreversible without the Grace of God. The movement to unity was significantly considered as a "rise"—a mystic act beyond the world of time and space. God could not "fall" into multiplicity; hence the metamorphosis from the One to the Many—the Original Sin—was attributed to Adam. That the whole of mankind should suffer for this posed an enigma, but it was needed by man in order to apprehend himself—in order to solve a more important enigma: that of the relationship of unity to multiplicity. As Pascal suggested, man needed this mystification to give meaning to his life.[42] He accepted his guilt in order to maintain a total and perfect image of God. But in affirming his own duality he intensified his "passion for unity."

A few men, like Pelagius, attempted to relieve man of his terrible burden of guilt and to reestablish his innocence, but still did not dare to reverse the judgment that God was Good. As far as God's unity was concerned, men attempted to observe Calvin's injunction "…not to speak or think, or even desire to know, concerning obscure subjects, anything beyond the information given us in the Divine Word…" Guilt could not be exchanged for disorder. Christianity was built upon an architecture of antithesis and guilt. This was the Western means of explaining multiplicity. It was a paradox, but was more supportable than meaninglessness. As Adams said,

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[41] Charles Baudelaire: *My Heart Laid Bare*

[42] "For what is more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than to damn eternally an infant incapable of will, for a sin wherein he seems to have so little a share, that it was committed six thousand years before he was in existence? Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet, without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. The knot of our condition takes its twists and turns in this abyss, so that man is more inconceivable without this mystery than this mystery is inconceivable to man." (Blaise Pascal: *Pensées*)

If man had the singular fancy of making himself absurd—a taste
confined to himself but attested by evidence exceedingly strong—
he could be as absurd as he liked; but God could not be absurd.
Saint Thomas did not allow the Deity the right to contradict
Himself…God was Goodness, and could be nothing else.[43]

God said to Job, "Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayst be righteous?"
There was no choice, for righteousness did not appear to exist without God. Man
had to maintain the connections between cause and effect. He had to escape
chance, contradiction, absurdity. Camus said, "From the moment that man
submits God to moral judgment, he kills Him in his own heart."

However, is it true that man has killed God?...or has he actually
reincarnated "God and Unity" in the Self? In his alienation from the family,
society and nature, Western man has sensed the profound absurdity of reality
and has accepted Adams' alternative that "anarchy and chaos are the habit of
nature, and law and order its accident." The *Ens Entium* has been deprived of
meaning as an organizing principle for society. However. the totalitarian image
of God has given a final illusory definition to the Self. It has proposed the final
"unity," a unity in terms only of itself. Without this fundamental tenet of the self
as a totality, man has sensed his route to salvation permanently barred and
himself doomed to meaningless.

Calvin's God of sovereign will and absolute good, Luther's God of
authority, righteousness and wrath, Aquinas' God of infinity and eternal energy,
Augustine's God of unity and love, have been rejected as organizing principles
for the community—but not for the self. Thus, if the world represented
multiplicity, the self must be an antithetical unity. The Trinity, once a seeming
concession to multiplicity, was a saving device from meaninglessness. It posed
what appeared as a paradox to explain His various aspects as actually composing
a Unity. It divided God into a mysterious and complementary threesome while
insisting upon His Oneness, but it could not prevent His overthrow by
multiplicity.

Kierkegaard, in a splendid attempt to redeem a shattered structure,
constructed the ultimate defense against absurdity by affirming it—by extending
paradox to include the whole of religion. If logic stated that religion were
absurd, then logic must be denied not by claiming that religion was reality but by
affirming its absurdity. Further, Kierkegaard did not oppose the self to God but
said that one must choose God in order to choose oneself.

Nietzsche represented the near-ultimate inversion of the self to the
whole. But at the very point that he accepted the total isolation of the self—the
self deprived of God and driven to the boundary—he then tried to reconstruct
connections of the self with nature. Nietzsche emphasized that the self had to

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[43] *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*

recreate the cosmos, since God was dead, but completely on its own terms rather than through society. He rejected the concept of scientific man (the Aristotelian manager and manipulator of the material world) in favor of the artist-creator. The individual must negate everything that diminished him. He must affirm himself by destroying all traditional connections and cultivate a "feeling of distance."[44] Man must convert God's totality into the self. The self must be expanded to include the whole of existence.

This inversion of the self that was always implicit in Christianity became the principle of the artist. In attempting to combat Western society's conversion of the individual into an artificial self...into number, into conformity, into a crowd…he has converted the individual into God. But this attempt to solve the paradox of unity and multiplicity by affirming the unity of the individual against the multiplicity of reality, of society, of interests, has only emphasized the Ouranic condition.

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[44] Nietzsche stated that the truly aristocratic man is one whose thoughts, words and deeds are inwardly motivated by a "feeling of distance." Such a passion of distance with respect to others is the basis on which to promote "that yet more mysterious passion—that craving for more and more extension of distance within one's own soul" which leads toward that ever greater extension which is the "self-over-coming of man." This is basically the Eastern concept of self-affirmation to the point of the Absolute—nothingness.

XIII

COSMOS AND THE GENERAL WILL

Despite the complex web of response of Renaissance man, alternating between fear, hesitation and affirmation of the loss of the medieval cosmos, we have persisted in regarding the Middle Ages as the "Dark Ages" and in regarding the Renaissance as a liberation from the medieval coercion of the mind. We persist in regarding the transformation of Cosmos into Ouranos as necessary. We accept the inversions of the part into the whole, of form into process. We accelerate the breakdown of boundaries and the inversion of freedom itself into the final boundary. Our tendencies have been towards the alienation of the Self from the community and nature.

However, during the 18th century there was one philosopher who attempted to define new Cosmic boundaries and who struggled against the metamorphosis of the world into Ouranos. Jean-Jacques Rousseau attempted to halt the Western process of the inversion of the part into the whole. He saw that the dilemma of unity and multiplicity, of freedom and security, of form and process, lay in a failure of perspective. The true perspective revealed the relationship of man to society. Man must discover himself not through the eye of the self but through the eye of the whole.

Rousseau recognized, as had Saint Augustine, that reality and truth were two different things; that reality required a perspective before it would yield either good or evil, truth or illusion. Moreover, perspective, in order to reveal truth, must be deliberately chosen—that vision required commitment, an act of will. But Rousseau attempted to reverse Augustine's internal perspective. He felt that man, not God, was responsible for society and that it was important for man to rediscover his connections with the world around him. This could not be done in terms of Ouranos. Man must deliberately will a Cosmic perspective. He must commit himself as part of a whole, contributing to the good of the whole and only by so doing could he discover his own definitions and contribute to his own good.

Rousseau was deeply concerned by the corruptions of Western society, by man's fall from innocence. He attempted to discover in the "state of nature" an organizing principle for society, and in the "noble savage" an organizing principle for the individual. But he decided that these were actually myths—that under no conditions could man exist without connections. The paradox was to define the conditions through which man could define himself. These conditions must necessarily be social.

But the social order is a sacred right which is the basis of all other rights. Nevertheless, this right does not come from nature, and must therefore be founded on conventions.[45]

Rousseau saw that the return to society required its justification in terms of freedom and the self. This, of course, was the concern of other political thinkers. Hobbes denied a physical state of nature wherein men were subject to willful power, contrasting this to his conception of an ideal state wherein man would exchange obedience to a monarch in return for security and freedom from tyranny and fear. Locke wrote of a legal state of nature wherein men were deprived of a judge, contrasting this with his conception of an ideal state in which the state itself, as a "third party," reconciled the conflicts between its individual members.

Rousseau was concerned with the moral state of nature wherein men existed as slaves to arbitrary power, unable to exercise free and moral choice in terms of reason. He conceived of an ideal state wherein men could escape both the tyranny of the Self and the tyranny of the Other. He visualized a community based on the moral choice and dignity of the individual—a community to which man could both yield his freedom and gain his freedom.

Rousseau tried to define the community in political rather than religious terms and to define men as citizens. He attempted to reconcile individualism, freedom, equality with the authority of the State. His solution for the paradox of unity and multiplicity, for the one and the many, rested in his concept of the General Will. This was not to represent a mere plurality of individual wills, but individual wills transformed into a community will by the concern not for the part but for the whole.

Rousseau transformed the Christian paradox into a political paradox. By giving oneself to all one "gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has…Finally, each man in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody." This is the "total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community."[46]

Rousseau considered that reason represented the original sin…that through reason man had lost his freedom, but that freedom was actually only a hypothetical state by which his Fall could be measured. The "state of nature" did not exist except as an essential myth in the measure of man's disunity and corruption. Through reason he might again rise—not to innocence and freedom—but to responsibility and freedom. By creating a rational cosmos man would acquire duties, but also rights. Through his rational involvement with the community he was to be reborn a moral citizen, following laws that he has made in common with others…not the arbitrary laws of his own or another's passion

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[45] Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *The Social Contract*
[46] *Ibid*

and impulse. His self-command was only valid if communicated through the community. His self-unity was to be achieved through social unity.

> Man acquires in the civil state, moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty.[47]

Just as Rousseau transformed Plato's concept of self-rule through obedience to the reason of the philosopher-king to one of self-rule through participation in and obedience to the general will; just as he brought every man's reason into the activity of the government of society…so did he transform Saint Augustine's concept of self-rule through the investment of individual will in the *Civitas Dei* to one of self-rule through the investment of individual will in the community working for its own ends. Whereas Plato's citizen was to recognize and obey the will of the wise man and Saint Augustine's citizen was to recognize and obey the will of God, Rousseau's citizen was to obey his own will through the will of the community.

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[47] *Ibid*

XIV

THE INVERSE SAINT

Rousseau believed that the "State of Nature" was actually a myth. He also believed that whatever man's primitive condition, his ideal society was at opposite poles from this, since it was based on reason and consent. However, Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that of all political ideas Rousseau's concept of consent most closely parallels the actual governing process of primitive societies. Contrary to the psychological interpretation of the organization of primitive society in terms of the family with the power of the chief representative of a symbolical Father, Lévi-Strauss writes that, "At the foundations of power in one of its most primitive forms…we have discerned a decisive phase which introduces, in relation to the phenomena of biology, quite a new element: this phase consists in the 'giving of consent.' Consent is at the origins and at the same time at the furthest limit, of power."[48]

According to Lévi-Strauss, man in his most "natural" condition is not only a member of society, but a voluntary and committed part of a whole.

> …contemporary anthropology supports the theses of the eighteenth-century "philosophes." Doubtless Rousseau's schema differs from the quasi-contractual relations which obtain between the chief and his companions. Rousseau had in mind quite a different phenomenon—the renunciation by the individual of his own autonomy in the interests of the collective will. It is none the less true, however, that Rousseau and his contemporaries displayed profound sociological intuition when they realized that attitudes and elements of culture such as are summed up in the words "contract" and "consent" are not secondary formations, as their adversaries (and Hume in particular) maintained: they are the primary materials of social life, and it is impossible to imagine a form of political organization in which they are not present.[49]

Consent, of course, is at the basis of Western society, but it is not the same consent of the Nambikwars studied by Lévi-Strauss, nor the consent envisaged by Rousseau. Consent operates in the area of "interests." It is not the basis of a community in which individuals define themselves in terms of a whole. Rather, it is the precarious basis of a divided society of artificial selves. Western man has given his consent to Ouranos rather than Cosmos.

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[48] Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Tristes Tropiques*
[49] *Ibid*

The Medieval City had been self-contained and when Rousseau visualized his ideal State, it was in the same sense physically bound and self-limiting.

> As nature has set bounds to the stature of a well-made man, and outside those limits, makes nothing but giants or dwarfs, similarly, for the constitution of a State to be at its best, it is possible to fix limits that will make it neither too large for good government, nor too small for self-maintenance. In every body politic there is a maximum strength which it cannot exceed and which it only loses by increasing in size. Every extension of the social tie means its relaxation; and generally speaking, a small state is stronger in proportion than a great one.[50]

But by the 19th century the Western City had become antipodal to the *Civitas Dei* of Saint Augustine. Rather than realizing the ideal of a community of men bound together by mutual love and obedient to the will of God, the city had become a focal point of change and alienation. It had lost its boundaries and had become a kind of frontier for a new society—a society of machine, of number, of law…of new economic and political forces.

During the 19th century there were important attempts to reconcile the changing world of Ouranos with a new concept of Cosmos. Marx shared the same principles as the Liberals based on the belief in science and technology, on natural laws, on the inevitability of progress. He postulated that order would emerge from economic chaos, that Utopia would emerge from change and conflict. However, he challenged the notion that the pursuit of individual interests would lead to harmony. He identified the individual with an economic class and claimed that a community of interests must supplant individual interests.

> We expose new principles to the world out of the principles of the world itself…We explain to it only the real object for which it struggles.

Marx had discovered Hegel and historical necessity, a necessity that permitted only the role of affirmation. Man must affirm the historical process in order to achieve Utopia. He must determine the direction of history and ride the tidal wave of the present into the future. But he could also choose to accelerate that process by revolution.

Marx sought to correct economic injustice; to extend the concept of equality to economics; to give industrial society a moral dimension. However, in the technological world he projected, choices between right and wrong, good and bad, no longer really existed. The historical process could admit choice only

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[50] Jean Jacques Rousseau: *The Social Contract*

between efficiency and inefficiency, adaptability and non-adaptability. How can one order process when one becomes a part of that process? Marx said that "Man as he is must be made impossible"…and, indeed, man began to discover himself impossible. With the boundaries of society his own boundaries began to disappear.

Marx believed that process led to image, that change led to equilibrium, that Becoming was the path to Being, that Ouranos led to Cosmos. This was the new optimism. Man was to seek a new harmony—not from nature nor from religion—but from History.

But there were those who thought that perhaps history was against man—that affirmation might lead to chaos rather than to Utopia. Kierkegaard saw that reality and truth did not coincide; that the historical process was against both man and religion. He claimed that individuals were being converted into a crowd…and a "crowd is an untruth."

The 19th Century represented a crisis in the polarities that had governed Western civilization. Without these polarities men felt a blurring of definitions, a breaking of connections. They sought to regain the lost tension between right and wrong, good and bad, self and society, unity and complexity, by transposing and inversing the traditional meanings of things. On one level the process began with the artist, that prophet of man's condition, who most sensitively felt the crisis in social sand self-unity.[51] Science was beginning to define man in terms of behavior and ultimately, process; law in terms of equality and freedom. All tendencies negated man's traditional religious sense of uniqueness. The artist felt usurped by an artificial self, a "faceless" self indistinguishable from others. The machine was forfeiting from man what man had taken from God.

At one time, in man's prehistory, the artist had functioned as a wizard, performing rites of transition between the human community and nature. This guardian and creator of form, myth, ceremony, was the incipient consciousness of mankind—the emergent ego, the Freudian self on the boundary between the "oceanic oneness" of the tribe and the "dreaded outer world." As such, he was also the incipient priest, philosopher, artist, whose special position on the boundary enabled him to span the gulfs between the one and the many, between society and nature.

But the Greeks shattered the role of the wizard-artist by holding up a mirror to the individual and separating the individual mind from the collective unconscious. Deprived of his original role, the artist assumed new ones: that of priest, constructing the world of the temple separate from the everyday world; that of the philosopher and logician, constructing unifying systems within the mind; that of the scientist, constructing an external order of the world.

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[51] "I do not want to tell you—of the extraordinary combats of myself with myself, my despair, my dreams." Charles Baudelaire: *Letters to his Mother*

Traditionally, the artist held within himself the chaos of man's conflicting needs and fears. He had a special need to conquer time and to create order from chaos. He forecast man's changing image of himself in his essential relationships to nature, society, ruler and God. In each of these relationships the artist defined and counterpoised his complexity and then attempted to discover his true self in the midst of this complexity. He transcended man's everyday level of intuition and understanding. When he no longer functioned in the social exorcism of chaos, when the community no longer commissioned him to draw a circle around the unknown but opened the limits to that unknown, when he was no longer seized by what Plato called the "divine madness" but instead was left waiting outside the temple—his rites become self-explosive…rites of perpetual self-forming and self-destroying, as if he must become God and then could not bear being God. Instead of acting for society he became its scapegoat, the image of its failure…of individual alienation. The artist was forced to solve the problem of individual salvation without connections.

Strindberg, an obsessed vagrant in London and Paris, saw prophetic symbols of man's delusions everywhere in the streets of the city. Dostoevsky visited London and Paris and in his book, *Winter Notes of Summer Impressions*, described some of his reactions to the faceless crowd of the new industrial society. But even earlier, Charles Baudelaire saw the city as a temple turned inside out—a monument to man's exile from innocence…with all its members become its sacrifices; its priests become its moneychangers; its altar become its market-place; its prophets become its slogan-makers. He foresaw the threat and counter-threat of metropolitan civilization: disorder and super-order…and was both oppressed and fascinated by it. But he protested the leveling that reduced everything he valued to vulgarity and destroyed energy and personal dignity. "What perils have the forest and prairie to compare with the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization?"

Like the "*vrai voyageur*" Baudelaire traveled for the sake of traveling. But wherever he went, he could find only a "*gibet symbolique où pendait mon image*." By the 19th Century Western inversions of image to process, of the self to a whole, had created new boundaries. Those prodigal sons, like Baudelaire— "*le pauvre amoureux des pays chimériques!...inventeur d'Ameriques dont le mirage rend le gouffre plus amer*"—were prisoners of these boundaries. But instead of halting these inversions they tended to accelerate them.

Baudelaire felt most deeply the need to save the self from the crowd. His dream of salvation lay in intensifying the self rather than transcending it. He would have preferred to soar above the world, singing as poets should sing, with the full sense of his spirit, free from guilt and self-disgust. But he felt that there was no escape from the boundaries surrounding him since he saw these boundaries as socially created. Society had captured and crippled the "albatross," exiling him from his true element. Baudelaire considered that the artist belonged

beyond the boundaries of society, in a free realm, in the realm of Ouranos. Baudelaire, then, was a poet of Ouranos—accepting transformation and freedom, turning against nature and expanding the self.

Like Rousseau, Baudelaire dreamed nostalgically of a "noble savage," an uncorrupted spirit. He yearned for a return to the innocent landscape of youth— "*le vert paradis des amours enfantines*," where pleasure could be enjoyed without guilt and where one could go "*en chantant du chemin de la croix...gai comme un oiseau des bois*." But he believed that such a paradise was a mirage, that innocence belonged to an irretrievable past, to man's childhood—not his future.

> Nomad peoples, shepherds, hunters, farmers and even cannibals, may all, by virtue of energy and personal dignity, be the superiors of our races of the West. These will perhaps be destroyed.[52]

Unlike Rousseau, Baudelaire did not attempt to create a concept of a new Utopia—nor did he attempt to preserve the old traditions. He felt defeated by history. "The world is about to end." He wrote, "*Le vieux Paris n'est plus! La forme d'une ville change plus vite, helas! Que la coeur d'une mortel.*" He considered that progress brought only a "Satanic commerce—the basest and vilest form of egoism." He saw the decline of vitality and loss of form. Man was becoming a victim of materialism. 'So far will machinery have Americanized us, so far will Progress have atrophied in us all that is spiritual, that no dream of Utopia, however bloody, sacrilegious or unnatural, will be comparable to the result."

Baudelaire accepted the Ouranic concept of nature as process...and therefore considered that whatever was "natural" was base. Natural meant vulgar, common, belonging to the crowd. Progress, history were natural phenomena and the crowd was a natural evolution. Commerce also was natural. Nature, then, was an enemy that must be overcome. Baudelaire's solution was that man must "invent" order.

Like Henry Adams later, Baudelaire considered that unity was a need of the human spirit, but instead of the cathedral he chose the ship as his metaphor of form

> I believe that the infinite and mysterious charm which lies in the contemplation of a ship, especially of a ship in motion, depends firstly upon its order and symmetry—primal needs of the human spirit as great as those of intricacy and harmony—and, secondly, upon the successive multiplication and generation of all the curves and imaginary figures described in space by the real elements of the object.

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[52] Charles Baudelaire: *Intimate Journals*, "My Heart Laid Bare," LXXXI

The poetic idea which emerges from this operation of line in motion is an hypothesis of an immeasurably vast, complex, yet perfectly harmonized entity, of an animal being possessed of a spirit, suffering all human ambition and sighing all the sighs of men.[53]

However, Baudelaire believed that multiplicity was reality. Politics represented man's effort to impose unity upon his disordered life, but this effort was doomed by human nature. The problem of unity lay not in society, but in man himself. Whatever form of government man created, he eventually corrupted; therefore man's salvation could not be political. "There cannot be any Progress (true progress, that is to say, moral) except within the individual and by the individual himself." However, the very existence of the crowd indicated that most men were incapable of thinking or acting like individuals. Men "want each of them to be two people." Salvation was impossible, then, except for a few. "The world is composed of people who can think only in common, in the herd…they are born for the stable." He believed that the democratic notion that men were capable of independent judgment and intelligence was absurd. "A monarchy or a republic, based upon democracy, are equally absurd and feeble." Mankind actually needed a saintly leader—not to force it to be free, since this was impossible; but to "chastise and massacre" it "for its own good, to keep in constantly in line."

Human imagination can conceive, without undue difficulty, of republics or other communal states worthy of a certain glory, if they are directed by holy men, by certain aristocrats. It is not, however, specifically in political institutions that the universal ruin, or the universal progress—for the name matters little—will be manifested. That will appear in the degradation of the human heart…Need I describe how the last vestiges of statesmanship will struggle painfully in the clutches of universal bestiality, how the governors will be forced—in maintaining themselves and erecting a phantom of order—to resort to measures which would make our men of today shudder, hardened as they are?[54]

Baudelaire concluded that the only possible form of government was an aristocracy, but the difficulty lay in discovering leaders.

Nations—like families—only produce great men in spite of themselves. They make every effort *not* to produce them. And thus the great man has need, if he is to exist, of a power of attack

[53] *Ibid*: "Squibs," XXII
[54] *Ibid*

greater than the power of resistance developed by several millions of individuals.[55]

Baudelaire confessed that as a child he longed to become a "military pope" to force mankind to be good. But he lacked the will and the necessary love of mankind. He knew that he could not heal a sick society. "For myself, who feel within me sometimes the absurdity of a prophet, I know that I shall never achieve the charity of a physician."

Baudelaire renounced the search for social unity and turned to his mirror to search for self-unity. His own image became his idol. It was by "Auto-Idolatry" that he was to attempt "a poetic harmony of character"…a unity of the faculties. Self-invention was to become the new religion—and "nothing upon earth is interesting except for religions."

Whereas Rousseau invented a concept of the Citizen—a political man to take the place of the natural man—Baudelaire attempted to invent the Dandy—an anti-natural man, a man without connections. The Dandy was to be a rebel, an "adversary of life," who would rise from a vacuum of *ennui*…elegant and scornful…the albatross finally escaping and spreading his wings above the "common herd," but at the same time turning back to mock it. He was to represent an image of defiance…"never to speak to the masses except to insult them."

The Dandy was conceived as a salvation both from multiplicity and from anonymity. Baudelaire cried, "The Dandy is a unity!" It was his way to become "*un grand homme et un saint pour soi-même*." Baudelaire thought that this was his own invention, but in reality it was nothing more than the face of the crowd that he put on…a mask turned back and mocking itself.

Baudelaire stated that "There are in every man, always, two simultaneous postulates, one towards God, the other towards Satan." He dared to ask, "To give oneself to Satan. What does this mean?" As Machiavelli had chosen Satan as a means to political unity, Baudelaire chose Satan as a means to individual unity. He chose to become one in contradiction to what he believed was the universal desire of mankind.

> There is an ineradicable desire for prostitution in the heard of
> man, whence is born his horror of solitude. He wants to be *two*.
> The man of genius wants to be *one*.[56]

Baudelaire conceived of a "sacred prostitution" which instead of delivering him to the crowd, was to deliver him to himself. "…the vaporization and the centralization of the Ego. Everything depends on that." Baudelaire

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[55] *Ibid*
[56] *Ibid*

attempted to convert the part into the whole, to invent the One entirely in terms of the Self.

> To fornicate is to aspire to enter into another; the artist never emerges from himself.[57]

However, Baudelaire could invent a "paradise" in his poetry and never achieve it…"*comme vous êtes loin—paradis parfumé*." He could invent himself in the form of a Dandy, but could not really become his invention. He knew, after all, that the Dandy was not the way to true unity; that man could not really define himself separate from society and exist within those definitions.

Nevertheless, for Baudelaire it was too late. "Le damné," for fear of losing himself, had to cling ever more closely to his invention. "L'ange furieux" tortured him, demanding that he learn to love his fellow man, but he could only answer to he end, "Je ne veux pas!" He "took up the cross" of his absurd voyage, still believing that "les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là qui partent pour partir…" He embarked, "trailing his wings," knowing that he could not escape himself. Like Saint Augustine he both longed for and feared peace, but hoped that there was some other state of soul-repose that did not mean a cessation of feeling and hence life.

Baudelaire's guilt, his sense of being a scapegoat, his isolation from the "horrible innocence of the masses," his intense needs and desires, were contradicted by his *ennui* and "acedia"—the weakness of will which was called "the malady of the monks." He was suspended between his feelings and his reactions to his feelings, unable to act. He denounced society, but yet he could not escape it. He needed it as his way to "unity," since this was based on antithesis. He needed the crowd as a foil to the Dandy…the many in order to realize the one.

Baudelaire required a wide range of sensual and visual experience. He inverted each experience as a means of knowing its opposite. He needed the filth, variety and evil of the city—"*la cité de fange*," "*l'immonde cité*," "*la fourmillante cité*," "*cité pleine de rêves*"—in order to feel the innocence and simplicity of nature; the darkness of night in order to experience the light of day; the brown mistress in order to possess the white one; Satan in order to know God. He spoke of the "religious intoxication of great cities" and religion for him, as for Saint Augustine, was a matter of senses. He needed society to look at him and so he "exasperated" it in order to force its regard…and its judgment. Just as he was afraid to escape his own image, he necessarily could not allow himself to escape the eye of the public. His relationship with others was a kind of voyeurism…of regarding and being regarded. So he played his pathetic role of the Dandy, trying by this means to both deepen his sense of guilt and sin and to destroy them at the same time…trying to develop a "*conscience en mal*," in

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[57] *Ibid*

order to regain a kind of innocence…believing that "true civilization was not to be found in gas or steam or table-turning. It consists in the diminution of the traces of original sin."

Baudelaire's mystic vision was that "*Prostitution et création, création et compassion, derivent de la même source*." He saw God as unity who had fallen into multiplicity when He created the world; who had prostituted Himself by loving mankind. "What is love? The need to emerge from oneself—man is an animal which adores. To adore is to sacrifice and prostitute oneself." This led Baudelaire to believe that God was the "most prostitute of all beings," since "for each man he is the friend above all others; since he is the common inexhaustible fount of love."

Since the self represented the final unity to Baudelaire, anything that threatened that unity was dangerous. His concept of order was opposed to whatever was common. Compassion was a threat to order, a self-prostitution.

Baudelaire cried: "Faites votre destin, âmes desordinées." As a kind of Inverse Saint he stood before the mirror and tried to turn the scapegoat into the devil…the Dandy…a role that he thought would deliver the self from anonymity and disgrace. He tried "To achieve a daily madness." The artist is thus a prisoner of Ouranos, on the verge of becoming rather than being. He flees the crowd and stands before the mirror of the self, but by so doing perpetuates the crowd. His self-regard denies the face of the other. The artist, as an inverse saint, becomes a wizard, not for society, but against it—conjuring up all its secret demons, not to exorcise them, but to force them to do battle for the part instead of the whole. Instead of revealing man's mystical connections with nature and the community, he attempts to destroy those connections.

Baudelaire's "sacred prostitution" revived the original Latin meaning of the word *prostituere*, "to stand before." He stood before the self and attempted to raise it before the crowd.

Baudelaire's mystic triumvirate--prostitution, creation, and compassion--served him as an affirmation not of good but of evil. Baudelaire both feared suffering and feared not suffering; feared self-relinquishment and feared the loneliness of the self. In order to define himself he needed to feel evil and tried to establish a mechanism that would allow him to affirm good through its antithesis. It was also to be an escape from the "*gouffre*"of boredom and "spleen." It was to free him for action.

But the affirmation of evil, instead of intensifying feeling, eventually destroyed everything…including itself, ironically leaving only the broken echo of a curse on Baudelaire's lips. This inversion of evil in order to save its polarity, this "*conscience en mal*" was meant only to be a phase which would perhaps lead to redemption. But Baudelaire's "*phase d'égoïsme*" became an imprisoning

cycle from which he could not escape—"*Il a vouloir faire l'ange, it est devenue un bête*." Finally, confronting that sterile image in the mirror he asked pathetically, *"ma phase d'égoïsme est-elle finie*?"

Before his death Baudelaire realized that the Dandy was impotent, that Satan did not lead to God, that the Self did not lead to Unity, that "the examination of hell" did not lead to "an engulfment of heaven." "Without charity I am no more than a resounding cymbal." Baudelaire had lost his connections with the world around him.

XV

THE SERIOUS FACE

Or pretend that I am not myself, but somebody strikingly like me,
and look as though nothing was the matter. Simply not I, not I--
and that's all.[58]

Western civilization has been a continuous process of division and
separation, requiring ever greater unification. But the unifications in turn have
created more divisions. In the polarization of self and society man paradoxically
acquired a proliferation of complex, contradictory selves, each with its own face.
But man's private self, his inner being, has been essentially religious. His
"serious face" was derived from the Christian God who became total and
universal by becoming private rather than communal. It was this tension
between spiritual and worldly that enabled man to define himself. But with the
"death of God" he felt himself in a moral vacuum, invaded by forces he had kept
in check…active within another dimension. He now felt threatened and usurped
by an absurd complexity of counterfeit selves whose domain was the "real
world," whereas his inner realm and the self that occupied it increasingly seemed
an illusion.

This problem of identity was dealt with by Dostoevsky in what he
considered one of his most significant works. *The Double* foreshadows the
divided protagonists of *The Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is
"modern" in the sense that its dimensions are non-heroic…and its hero an anti-
hero. But for Dostoevsky this was not the end but the beginning; not the *reductio
ad absurdum* of the hero to the cynic and opportunist—but the germination of
his great souls—of his saints and demons. One might say that it treats the
fundamental problem of unity and complexity on a primitive level, that of the
struggle between the ego and the id to reunite the self with society. The super-
ego does not emerge. *The Double* is Dostoevsky's initial attempt to discover a
way to unity without God…a way of self-inversion.

The story concerns a titular councilor, Yakov Petrovitch Golyadkin, who
discovers that he has a "Double." This Double enters Golyadkin's life and
eventually displaces him. The action is related by Golyadkin himself in a
shadowy and dreamlike fashion.

It was a little before eight o'clock in the morning when Yakov
Petrovitch Golyadkin, a titular councilor, woke up from a long
sleep. He yawned, stretched, and at last opened his eyes
completely. For two minutes, however, he lay in his bed without
moving, as though he were not yet quite certain whether he were

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[58] Fyodor Dostoevsky: *The Double*

awake or still asleep, whether all that was going on around him were real and actual, or the continuation of his confused dreams.[59]

The tension between dream and reality is maintained throughout the story until a nightmare ending from which only a ghost, a counterfeit self, awakes. A split emerges, the Double appears and then effaces the original Golyadkin.

Golyadkin is an honorable man who cannot adjust to the values of the crowd…who can find no place for his "real self" in society; who feels that he can be accepted only by humiliating himself, by "fawning and licking the dust." Rather than do this he creates out of his subconscious a Double who vicariously enters society while his "real" self watches from the sidelines.

But who is the real and who the false Golyadkin? Is the real self that of the original Golyadkin who self-righteously holds himself apart from a society that he despises? Is the false self the "bootscraper," Golyadkin junior? If the real self is the good self, then can Golyadkin senior be considered good? In his relationship with his inferiors he reveals a petty, overbearing nature. On the other hand, with his superiors he shows timidity and vacillation.

> Bow or not? Call back or not? Recognize him or not?...Or pretend that I am not myself, but somebody strikingly like me…

If one defines the real self as an integrated self with a consistent behavior, then Golyadkin senior does not possess this. Nor does he seem to possess a sense of his own reality. He constantly attempts to define and affirm himself in his conversation with others. At the same time he defines the self that he denies being.

> …You all know me, gentlemen, but hitherto you've known me only on one side. No one is to blame for that and I'm conscious that the fault has been partly my own…There are people, gentlemen, who dislike round-about ways and only mask themselves at masquerades. There are people who do not see man's highest avocation in polishing the floor with their boots. There are people, gentlemen, who refuse to say that they are happy and enjoying a full life, when, for instance, their trousers set properly. There are people, finally, who dislike dashing and whirling about for no object, fawning and licking the dust, and above all, gentlemen, poking their noses where they are not wanted…

But this is an accurate description of Golyadkin's own behavior. He dashes and whirls about "for no object." He pokes his nose where he is not wanted. He makes a decision and then abruptly does the opposite. After failing to gain

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[59] *Ibid*

admission to a house where a party is being held, he starts home in a coach, then suddenly orders the coachman back. But upon arriving, he urges the coachman to leave again…but then finally finds himself somehow at the party. "Shall I go home? Damnation take all this! I'll go and that'll be the end of it."

Within the context of these contradictions one can see the Double, Golyadkin junior, emerging. This indecision, this dualism of thought and action, have already split the original Golyadkin and created an environment of chaos. He moves through society like a shadow without substance. He has failed to establish his reality. ("He slipped almost unnoticed between the card-players.") As his original self fades, his Double emerges from the background and takes on life, *his* life. The id usurps the ego and moves within its social orbit to play the role that the ego was incapable of playing.

The Double begins to do all the things that Golyadkin senior claims that he cannot allow himself to do. While he continues to assert his modesty and humility, Golyadkin junior rudely pushes him aside and inserts himself into society.

Golyadkin senior desperately tries to reveal a "serious face" before society, but no one seems to see that face. He insists that he cannot cover that real face with a mask in order that people recognize him. ("I only put on a mask at a masquerade, and don't wear one before people every day.") He insists that everyone recognize his "virtue." At this point he begins to contrast himself with his Double.

> Granted, he's a scoundrel, well, let him be a scoundrel and I'll be
> honest, and they'll say that this Golyadkin's a rascal, don't take
> any notice of him, and don't mix him up with the other; but the
> other one's honest, virtuous, mild, free from malice, always to be
> relied upon in the service, and worthy of promotion.

Golyadkin has actually conjured up a polar self, a self-negation, in order to establish his own reality. But Golyadkin senior is not really "honest, virtuous, mild, free from malice." That is the mask with which he hides his face. He feels inadequate, disconnected. He is not satisfied with being a simple man, a mere honest clerk. Yet unlike Dostoevsky's later heroes, he has not the imagination for good that could raise him above the crowd. He can only evoke a Double to trespass his position in society, who ingratiates himself with others, who eats all the pies he wants and doesn't have to pay the bill. Golyadkin senior hasn't the audacity to do this…the petty audacity…because he has neither the imagination for good nor for evil. He is neither an Alyosha nor a Stavrogin. His failure of identity results in the invention not of Satan but of Puck…not of evil but of mischief.

Golyadkin senior cannot yield to the position in society in which he finds himself because he feels that he would lose his serious face, the value that he wants to be given by society. He creates a vacuum of indecision until finally his "counterfeit" self emerges to do all the devious, absurd things without consequences that he himself secretly wishes to do. Golyadkin junior becomes a social success and finally eradicates the original Golyadkin, which was the latter's secret wish from the beginning. Society accepts the counterfeit self. There is no recognition for a "serious face."

The Double does not deal with morality. The protagonist is not a hero. The essential theme is that of reality and illusion. It is a myth of the self and its relationship to society. Its "sub-morality" and its conflict between an "artificial" self and a "real" self characterize it as contemporary.

Today the great moral dilemmas no longer seem relevant to human existence. Man no longer transforms his anguish at being separate and undefined into transcendental symbols. He no longer creates tragedy from pathos…but the anguish is as crucial as ever…Today it is only the anguish that remains real. Its context has become absurd.

It is within this context of existential absurdity that Dostoevsky begins to write. He begins with pathos—the petty and pathetic Golyadkin, who in the anguish of his own unreality reinvents himself. But within this context his characters begin to take on the form and substance of heroes.

Dostoevsky could not conceive of the Self without God. Without the antithesis of good to evil he could not "feel" his own existence.

> You can judge how hard it has been for me, and how I've struggled from one thing to another…*God has tormented me all my life*[60]…I know I ought to kill myself, to brush myself off the earth like a nasty insect; but I am afraid of suicide, for I am afraid of showing greatness of soul. I know that it will be another sham again—the last deception in an endless series of deceptions. What good is there in deceiving oneself? Simply to play at greatness of soul? Indignation and shame I can never feel, therefore not despair.[61]

Dostoevsky was preoccupied by a failure of feeling, by a collapse of self-limits that allowed the emergence of depravity. Self-indulgence meant self-loss. He needed a "serious face" to present to himself and to the world.

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[60] Emphasis added
[61] F. Dostoevsky: *Notes from the Underground*

> I've tried my strength everywhere…but to what to apply my
> strength, that is what I've never seen…I'm still capable, as I
> always was, of desiring to do something good, and of feeling
> pleasure from it; at the same time I desire evil and feel pleasure
> from that too. But both feelings are always too petty, and are
> never very strong. My desires are too weak; they are not enough
> to guide me. On a log one may cross a river but not on a chip..[62]

We saw earlier that Machiavelli's concept of political unity depended upon the inversion of the traditional relationship of good to evil. His struggle for salvation from complexity took place within a political context. Dostoevsky and Baudelaire were concerned more with inner complexity, partly due to the fact that by the 19th century the self had acquired a metaphysics of complexity.

Baudelaire and Dostoevsky were unable to choose "certain middle ways." But neither were they able to choose the path of the saint. Martyrdom was only meaningful if there were a God. Instead, they sought themselves even more desperately through the "diabolical principle." As Jaspers says, they "dared to be shipwrecked" for the sake of the self. They substituted one paradox for another: the paradox of salvation through self-loss for the paradox of good through evil. Since they were profoundly aware of the failure of tension between good and evil and, consequently, the loss of self-definition, they attempted to create a new tension by inverting good and evil and by means of this redefining themselves.

Like Judas Baudelaire and Dostoevsky conceived of becoming a counter-saint. Without an antithetic evil Christ could not have become a martyr.

> Jesus does not regard in Judas His enmity, but the order of God,
> which He loves and admits, since He calls him friend.[63]

Judas was not a mere thief. He had an "imagination of evil," the capacity both to betray and to feel the intensity of his crime. He was the dark mirror image of the martyr.

Dostoevsky's Golyadkin, as a kind of Puck, foreshadowed the true inverse saint, Stavrogin, who sought the role of Judas because he could no longer *feel* the distinction between good and evil. He wanted to sacrifice himself as a martyr to crime as a desperate attempt to identify himself as good.

> It was at this time that, for no apparent reason at all, I conceived
> the idea of somehow crippling my life, in the most repulsive
> manner possible.[64]

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[62] *Ibid*
[63] Blaise Pascal: *Pensées*
[64] F. Dostoevsky: *The Demons*

This was to be his *simia salvatorias*, his counterfeit salvation—his achievement of unity through evil. Dostoevsky writes, in *Notes from the Underground*:

> I got to the point of feeling a sort of secret, abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my corner on some disgusting Petersburg night, acutely conscious that that day I had committed a loathsome action again, that what was done could never be undone, and secretly, inwardly gnawing, gnawing at myself for it, tearing and consuming myself till at last the bitterness turned into a sort of shameful accursed sweetness, and at last—into positive real enjoyment! Yes, into enjoyment, into enjoyment! I insist upon that…I will explain: the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation; it was feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible, but that it could not be otherwise; that there was no escape for you; that you never become a different man; something different you would most likely not wish to change or if you did wish to, even then you would do nothing; because perhaps in reality there was nothing for you to change into.[65]

However, the moment that one achieves this definition in evil, it paradoxically slips away…for it depends upon feeling. When the feeling of evil becomes a habit, the tension relaxes. As Baudelaire realized, the image of the self, so desperately sought, vanishes. The moment one passes beyond the "last barrier" and is "free," one no longer exists. Therefore, like Saint Augustine, one embraces one's guilt and suffering in order to feel one's existence.

> I remember that I knew perfectly well, however, at the time, that I was a low and vile coward rejoicing in his deliverance, and that I would never be decent again, either here on earth or after my death or ever. And one more thing: I was reminded of the Jewish proverb: "one's own may be bad, but it does not smell." For although at heart I felt that I was a scoundrel, I was not ashamed of it and in general, I was not much distressed. On that occasion, sitting at tea and chatting with the crew, for the first time in my life, I clearly formulated the following for myself: I have neither the feeling nor the knowledge of good and evil, but good and evil really do not exist (and this pleased me) and are but a prejudice; I can be free of all prejudices, but at the very moment when I achieve that freedom I shall perish.[66]

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[65] *Ibid*
[66] *Ibid*

It is, then, that terrible freedom--that self-immolation--that Dostoevsky both sought and feared. He somehow realized that he must cling to his guilt in order to feel himself separated from "the horrible innocence of the masses."

> As for the crime itself, many people sin like that, but they live in peace and quiet with their conscience, even considering it to be the inevitable delinquency of youth—the world is full of these horrors. But you have felt the whole depth to a degree which is extremely rare.[67]

Without God guilt becomes one's "serious face" that one wears before the mirror and before society. One's confessions become a rite before the world. Judas required a judgment: "Saying I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself." But he was refused that judgment; therefore, "J*udas autem laqueo se suspendit*."

In *The Possessed* Stavrogin says, "I want everyone to look at me. Will it relieve me? I don't know. I come to this as to my last resource." His need both to commit evil and to confess he calls a "terrible, undisguised craving for self-punishment, the need for the cross, for immolation in the eyes of all." For it is this desperate act that finally defines one. Yet this confession is never enough.

> Indeed, in the very fact of such a document (the Confessions) is implied a new unexpected, and unforgivable defiance of society— only, to find some enemy to pick a quarrel with!—And who can say? Perhaps all this, the sheets and their intended publication, are but the same as the Governor's bitten ear, only in a different shape[68].

Dostoevsky realized that unity was not achieved through the inversion of the self to the whole. He knew that salvation could only be achieved by the destruction of pride and by relinquishing the self. However, significantly, he portrayed Alyosha and Myshkin as saintly fools, idiots. Father Zossima and Father Tihon affirmed one's guilt rather than removed it, intensified one's alienation rather than relieved it. Without God self-abnegation meant irreparably losing one's final possession, oneself. Tragically, Dostoevsky could neither relinquish his pride nor his guilt, since this meant losing his self-definition—his "serious face." He did not have that special courage to become an Idiot—to be laughed at. His self was irrevocably opposed to society.

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[67] *Ibid*
[68] Reference missing

XVI

TOO MANY GENERALS

Jean-Paul Sartre's modern parallel to Dostoevsky's "Double" and his problem of the self versus society is the play *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*. Here the action takes place on the level of the "superego" and displays a more profound "imagination of evil." General Goetz, the main character, creates a double of himself. He attempts salvation through the Christian antithesis of saint and *monstre*.

> I don't give a damn for the Devil! He receives our souls, but it isn't
> he who condemns them. I refuse to deal with anyone but God.
> Monsters and saints exist only through God.

It is God who preoccupies Goetz, but a God to be overcome, to be usurped. But Goetz decides that this must not be achieved by imitation. One must be original and invent; therefore he chooses evil as the inverse way to salvation.

> Goetz: I have hated myself for 15 years. So what? Don't you
> understand that Evil is my reason for living…
> Catherine: Why should you want to do wrong?
> Goetz: Because Good has already been done.
> Catherine: By whom?
> Goetz: By God the Father. Me, I invent—

However, like the Dandy and Stavrogin, Goetz fails as an Inverse Saint. His *conscience en mal* becomes impotent. He is defeated by monotony. "The boring part of Evil is that one grows accustomed to it—you need genius to invent." Goetz discovers that neither good nor evil lead to the Absolute, but rather lead eventually to the same impasse.

As a saint Goetz claims that his goal is justice and equality for all men. And yet he fears equality more than anything else. This is because his self-assertion, either for good or for evil, requires him essentially to be in competition with others. Both the saint and the *monstre* must compete with other saints and *monstres*, and their action has no meaning unless it allows them to transcend others. Goetz believes that he becomes a victim…not only when he is inferior to others, but when he is *equal*. The moment one becomes equal one loses one's uniqueness, one's definitions. The conclusion, then, is that equality is the most difficult condition that man must bear. "To be a man among men is the most difficult of all things."

It is the loss of God as judge and the attempt of the self to become total that has created this paradox.

Heinrich: If God doesn't exist, there is no way of escaping man…I would rather be judged by an Infinite Being than judged by my equals.

Kierkegaard said, "Man has become unreal." Existentialism has been an attempt to solve the problem of that unreality…to escape from the judgments of history and of the crowd…to oppose the self to the machine. Like Baudelaire's Dandy the Existentialist stands before the mirror of the self and his regard is nihilistic. In a *coup d'oeil* he denies nature and society, the traditional and modern tribunals of the state—the Lockeian "third party," the "general will," the Benthamian "common interests." He claims that what he sees is the result of a false perspective, one artificially imposed by history and society. "Man is an optical illusion." It is the regard of the Other as judge that alienates one from oneself. Therefore it is not a true image, but only the image of one's Nothingness.

One must deny human nature altogether, otherwise one is not able to escape complexity and discover self-unity. "What men have in common is not a nature but a metaphysical condition…" Man's only salvation is to transcend this condition through emotion—anguish—and self-reinvention. Any deliverance to be valid must be self-deliverance, otherwise man is guilty of "bad faith."

In Catholic theology God is defined as "the being who is what he wants to be," *ens causa sui*. Man is not what he wants to be. "Man fundamentally is the desire to be God—to be man means to reach towards being God."[69] Thus the Existentialist confirms the Western concept of God as totality and attempts to make the self this totality…to invert the self to the whole.

However, God is "impossible." Man can only dream of achieving totality…but he must nevertheless continue to strive for it. The human condition is that man is "a process towards the realization of a goal. As such he never coincides with himself, but is constantly surpassing himself."

Essentially, then, existentialism has been an attempt to achieve a "serious face" by denying the face of the crowd. It accepts man as artificial, as process, with the conclusion that man must invent himself.. However, just as Baudelaire walked the streets of Paris acting out his self-invention ("When I was a child I wanted…sometimes to be an actor"), the Existentialist also must act out his invention before the eyes of the Other. He insists that all men must look upon his serious face—that image which he himself has invented. He cannot communicate with others except through that invented image.

There is no limit to what the Existentialist wants to become. He must deliver himself totally. He needs power to act in order to define himself…but the

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[69] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism And Human Emotion*. Philosophical Library, New York, 1957, p. 63.

problem is that he does not exist in a free realm. He must act within the realm of human beings and be judged by them. It is the existence of the Other that limits one. One cannot act, one cannot control, without at some point reducing the Other to an object…and this leads to guilt.

Paradoxically, in a world composed of a multiplicity of Ones, the original sin is to achieve uniqueness. The Existentialist must become God, but cannot dispose of his rivals. He must continue to judge himself as a man among men. Since he can only achieve self-unity either through acts of control or acts of self-abnegation, he must become either a *monstre* or an "idiot-saint," either sadist or masochist. Sartre, like Dostoevsky, considers the saint as a scapegoat who becomes an object of others the moment he offers up the self for immolation.

Significantly, Sartre casts Goetz as a general. He is a general while he is a *monstre* and he continues to be a general while he tries to become a saint. He cannot relinquish this role of giving orders, of controlling others. It is the only thing he knows, the only thing he feels he can be.

> Goetz: I shall make them hate me, because I know no other way of loving them. I shall give them orders, since I have no other way of obeying. I shall remain alone with the empty sky over my head, since I have no other way of being with men. There is this war to fight and I will fight it.

The way to the self, the way to unity, is conceived as a battle…as an inversion. Just as in the area of the senses Baudelaire sought out the vile, the corrupt, in order to experience the opposite, so Goetz seeks out power in order to experience submission. The inverse saint cannot relinquish himself and become a "scapegoat" for society. The Dandy believed that since there was no innocence, he must invent it in reverse by deliberately corrupting himself. Goetz believed that since there was no God, he must invent him in reverse by deliberately acting as a monster. He must act as a general in a world that constantly negates his existence. He must invent before the eyes of mankind, even though the ideal image that obsesses him is constantly threatened by his involvement with others. He must assert himself…but with *anguish*. And yet this very anguish also checks his action. He cannot accept himself as God. "But the idea of God is contradictory…man is a useless passion."

It was with anguish that Dostoevsky could not wholeheartedly choose the saint. It is with anguish that Sartre cannot wholeheartedly choose the *monstre*— the inverse saint.

> I always knew: I did not have the right to exist. I had arrived by accident, I existed like a stone, a plant, a microbe…Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever

may be my relations with others, these relations will only be variations on the original theme of my guilt.[70]

The existentialist has created a moral state of nature in which everyone is in conflict, each with his own ideals, his own values; each an actor in search of himself. He has limited himself by his own freedom. This is the final consequence of Christianity without God…Christianity with its boundaries destroyed, its bridges broken, its principles inverted.

The striving for "transcendent perfection" was once considered the original sin since it was a usurpation of God. For the Existentialists this striving becomes the original sin since it is a usurpation of man. Since there is no God everyone is allowed everything: that is, to deliver oneself totally, to become God in the place of God. But in a world of justice and equality for everyone this total deliverance is impossible. There are too many Generals, too many Adams.

The Existentialist has inherited the Aristotelian concept of man in opposition to and in control of society and nature (without his concept of hierarchy); the Christian concept of God's totality (without the belief in God); the Rousseauian concept of the moral necessity for political action and equality (without his concept of the general will). This places the former in a Hobbesian state of nature where he must create his own morality—where he cannot live under other laws without becoming a victim—but consequently cannot impose his laws upon others without victimizing them.

The Existentialist dares not bring his vision of Eden into existence. His anguish lies in the fact that he is both self-committed and other-committed but possesses no valid means of connecting himself with others…no means of self-definition through society. He must eternally engage himself in order not to lose himself. He dares not consent to revolutionary changes either of the self or of society. No one can deliver him from himself.

Like Baudelaire the Existentialist turns away from the natural world. "Morality requires not conformity to the natural but creation of the artificial." This creation depends upon the will and the exercise of power. But power acting primarily for the part rather than the whole becomes Tillich's demonic power. The Existentialist has a "moral challenge" to transcend society in order to achieve self-unity.

Sartre conceives only of two alternatives as a way to unity: through the saint or through the monster. But it is only in the free realm of Ouranos that either can act. Neither can create the Cosmos. However, action in this free realm becomes meaningless. The world as seen from the perspective of the self is absurd, and yet the Existentialist has no other perspective. He returns to society

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[70] Footnote missing

reluctantly to "dirty his hands," knowing that he has no real freedom to banish his competitors.

The Existentialist claims that it is the "moral purposes" of each man that set him above the institutional structure. But the separate striving of the self only negates the self. One's rights and obligations stem not from one's values, which by nature are "irrational" and therefore equal to the values of others, but from one's condition, but here again one cannot escape from equality.

Even if the Existentialist affirms *each* individual he is still affirming the crowd…not the community. The individual cannot free himself from the crowd by self-affirmation. If, as the Existentialist claims, man's only community with others is actually a condition that must be transcended, then man remains locked in his condition. His action becomes "gratuitous"…"absurd"…without a broader framework than the self.

XVII

THE PINCE SANS RIRE

The self remains opposed to society, but the tension between good and bad, right and wrong, true and untrue, unity and diversity, that has enabled us to define ourselves as separate from society—to act and to judge action—is collapsing. What are the new patterns for definition and action? We discover ourselves alone on the boundary with no means of measuring and defining ourselves. Are we on the threshold ready to define a new Adam and create a new universe in terms of a radically different conception of existence? We believe that *tout qu'on mésure est inhuman*. And yet we cannot sacrifice objectivity and rationality for a return to myth. At the same time we cannot define a new Adam without sacrificing what we consider his freedom to define himself. But how can we define either man or society without a concept of limits?

Can we explode ourselves and create a world from our emotions? St. Augustine recognized the unifying power of love and Freud, lacking other unifying concepts, fell back upon this. But St. Paul defined our original "crisis state"—that of "fear and trembling"—in which we attempt to work out our destiny. Other crisis states have emerged: those of "anguish," "nausea," "ennui"…in the place of those unifying emotions of faith, love, and charity.

We seem to have affirmed Kierkegaard's perspective of the absurdity of reality and therefore we have made the "leap to paradox." But what truth has emerged? Only absurdity without truth. We believe with Kierkegaard that "the greatest danger is that of losing one's self." Like Nietzsche we have accepted process and determinism but have attempted to take God into ourselves. Like Rilke's Buddha—who has transcended all dichotomies, resolved all paradoxes, simplified all complexity, we reach the point where everything is One—and Nothing. We reach the "dilemma of final privacy," of solipsism, where, like Jaspers, we sense that "the individual cannot become human by himself." Baudelaire said, "one can only cling, like Satan, furiously to oneself and be in hell; or else break, and be annihilated at last in God." Either we seek self-designation by further self-isolation, or we seek to escape our "terrible introversion" and the burden of our total freedom through mysticism or artificial means as a substitute for God-annihilation.

If we attempt to create political and social connections, we do this in terms of groups with "common interests" rather than in terms of any authentic concept of the community. We try to convert the "untruth of the Crowd," as Kierkegaard calls it, into the untruth of a multitude of ones. Without some idea of unity beyond that of the self, we remain like the Sartrian hero asking, "How can I be a General among so many generals?"

Existentialism has been the ultimate attempt of man to redeem the self on Christian terms. Man was to be saved from complexity, from meaninglessness, from the historical process, by assuming the role of God. But in attempting to create the self anew, the Existentialist discovered that he no longer existed, as God, in a chaos of unlimited possibilities and potentialities. Chaos had been exchanged for Ouranos…complexity for a multiplicity of ones, each seeking self-definition and preventing the Being of each other by their very search. Unity seen only from the perspective of the self was unattainable.

Is Ouranos the final issue of the West's basic conflict between the self and society, between unity and multiplicity? Henry Adams saw the relationship of the latter in terms of an historical tension that was finally to defeat both.

Henry Adams, like St. Michael, loved heights—that is, a perspective from which he could observe the *immensi tremor* of history. He was intensely aware of its thrusts and drives, its ebbs and shifts of tide. But beneath it all he sensed, not an inexorable current to the shores of some future utopia, but a progressive calming of the vast tidal seas of civilization.

Adams believed that unity was irrevocably lost to both the self and to society. Man could not recreate that "ideal" society of thirteenth century Europe, one organically arranged so that the aristocracy, the priests of the intellect, the caretakers of the soul, rose to the top and the money-makers and tradesmen, the opportunists and riff-raff, sank to their proper strata. "The world grew cheap as worlds must."

Adams felt that man was losing control of his world. The great American dream had only realized a social wilderness.

> From top to bottom the whole system is a fraud—all of us know it, laborers and capitalists alike—and all of us are consenting parties to it.[71]

With the removal of responsible limits men had developed a lust for power and a dedication to money-making. Idealism was a hypocrisy. Adams quoted LeBon, denouncing bureaucracies as "protective systems," substitutes for individual energy, intellect, morality and volition. American society in its search for equality was tending towards equilibrium. It had become a "sort of flat fresh-water pond which absorbs silently, without reaction, anything which is thrown into it…" It had absorbed the landed gentry, the secular and religious hierarchies—destroying basic sources of social tension.

Henry Adams felt himself an anachronism in the modern world since he could not really believe in democracy. But although he saw the aristocratic classes as the logical wielders of power, he could not bring himself openly to

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[71] Henry Adams: *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*

denounce equality…even though he saw its results in a social conformity; even though the common man had usurped political power and had become the arbiter of social and aesthetic mores; even though democracy seemed to evoke not the best but the worst in man and society. Adams, as a member of his famous family, had invested faith in America. He was committed to the ideal of a future society of an aristocracy based on ability…a leadership of gifted men, no matter what their origins, who would eventually transform the rest of society.

However, Adams formulated an equation for history, an ironic metaphor that he derived from Auguste Comte's "rule of phase." This was his thesis, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*…what he called his *pince sans rire*, his serious joke. Viewing history in terms of social energy, the medieval "fetish force" of faith in God created and maintained the cosmos until it was replaced by the Enlightenment's "mechanical force," that of faith in science. This had also run its inevitable course and there remained only the energy of the mind acting in terms of itself and freed from the despotism of a unifying idea. Adams called this "free" condition that of the dynamo. Modern society now derived its energy not from unity, but from multiplicity—the "electrical energy" of the mind. There was no longer any limitation to its multiplying, form-subverting and form-shattering activity. All lines were free to diverge.

Adams realized that this new freedom was essentially different from that of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment in that it had reversed itself and become centrifugal. It had itself become a kind of framework for modern man. Adams also guessed that this reversal paradoxically implied the ultimate destruction of freedom. The dynamo would eventually run down.

Man had chosen a point of departure from which there is no return. Adams claimed that the "democratic dogma," as an historical process, must play itself out until society reached a condition either of communism or anarchy. These latter he considered not as unifying principles for the self and society, but as evidence of the end of belief.

Adams believed in "historical necessity." However, he suggested that by affirming his condition—that of self-conscious thought acting freely in terms of itself, man might release a new potential for action, a new source of energy. In its "last phases" human thought might so change the environment that the "consequences may be as surprising as the change of water to vapor, of the worm to the butterfly, of radium to electrons. At a given volume and velocity, the forces that are concentrated on his (man's) head must act."

Adams suggested that man "follow the new light no matter where it might lead…" By renouncing his traditional illusions he might achieve a final revolutionary transformation of his environment.

However, despite this vision of a world run by the dynamo—the centrifugal, free energy of the mind—a world of Ouranic principles, Adams considered that this could mean only a respite from the "flat fresh-water pond." Therefore he could not yield to history in good faith. Like modern man he felt himself a prisoner of his condition. He had struggled with a profound dilemma with the illusion that he had a choice, but actually there never was a choice. As Albert Camus said, "We no longer choose our problems, they choose us."

Adams expressed a final desperate plea for a kind of classical education for the wielders of power.[72] However, he believed that the interplay between the mind and the universe, once the mind had escaped its boundaries, was due to end. As a dynamo it could not draw upon itself indefinitely.

Here we discover Adams' great insight. He arrived at the point from which he had set out…and yet, like Poincaré, he could not decide upon the final terms of the interplay between simplicity and complexity. He realized that energy depended upon something basic. The dynamo had limited energy from which to draw for it operated primarily upon *freedom*. In other words, we might say that it operated primarily upon inversion: the inversion of the part to the whole, of image to process, of freedom to a framework. Throughout Western civilization the mind had constructed a rich architecture of images. *But now it had begun to turn these images into process*, no longer drawing energy from them except through their destruction. The mind had thus moved from Chaos (what the Greeks conceived of as a primeval fecundity, or what could be considered in Freudian terms an "oceanic oneness")—to Cosmos (what the Greeks conceived of as order or the harmonic relationship between Gaia and Ouranos)--to Ouranos (the free realm, on the boundary between Being and Becoming from which the mind now destroys both order and potentiality).

Adams saw that the major difference between the medieval and the modern world was that the former possessed an "image of the universe" from which to draw energy. Significantly, he saw that image as the Virgin Mary rather than God. It was this mysterious face of Mary that had begun to haunt his final days. Was this then the ghost of Gaia in another form that had returned to demand her rightful place in the world? Adams wrote a mysterious poem in which he opposed the Virgin to the Dynamo…and he kept this poem with him

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[72] "The best we can any of us do is just to keep our tempers, and try to make the machine run without total collapse in catastrophe, so that it may rot out quietly by its natural degradation. The only question is whether it will break down suddenly or subside slowly, after a long lapse of time, into motionless decay. It can't be put back where it was a hundred years ago. The conviction of having reached this point where we have no choice but to go on in our own rot, drove me out of all share in public affairs twenty years ago. Every one who has assumed such a share in public affairs since then has only muddled and made the matter worse…Infallibly all the future muddlers will make it worse, for it is a world-question of *mechanical truths or axioms* which never can be solved even by a race of angels. All we can hope to do is to teach men manners in wielding power, and I'll bet you ten to one on the Day of Judgment that we will fail."
Ibid

until he died. Yet he never drew the final conclusions from this opposition…nor did he solve the paradox of the relationship of unity to multiplicity, complexity, and contradiction.

XVIII

GOD AND COMPLEXITY

Henry Adams stood on the threshold of an era unique in history: an era of metamorphosis and transition resulting in a revolutionary new condition for man. Whereas until recently in Western history each period of transition represented a *stage* in the denial of the principles governing the traditional Cosmos and their gradual replacement by the principles governing Ouranos, the modern age represents the critical point—the total *reversal* of the past. Henry Adams saw this condition as a conflict between unity and multiplicity. His interpretation of their relationship inevitably leads to their irreconcilability and the ultimate destruction of the former by the latter. Unity cannot contain multiplicity.

> If a Unity exists, in which and toward which all energies centre, it must explain and include Duality, Diversity, Infinity—Sex![73]

However, Konstantin Leontiev, a Russian writer of the last century who--like Henry Adams--was also concerned by the failure of the traditional unifying beliefs of self and society, presented a different equation for reconciling unity with multiplicity. Under his interpretation their relationship is necessarily one of competition and tension, and it is this relationship—leading to the consequent destruction of both—that is being negated by the modern world. Both attitudes were derived from the Western architecture of logic that led us to Ouranos; neither Adams nor Leontiev could altogether escape that logic. But it is Leontiev's equation that enables us to transcend Adams' paradox, and ultimately to discover that Adams himself had transcended it, though he stopped short of bringing it to explicit formulation.

In claiming that Renaissance Christianity had fulfilled itself as an organizing principle for man and society by releasing the potential forces within both and allowing a dynamic expression to the entire range of man's passions and needs, Leontiev implied that Renaissance man had chosen both unity and complexity; consequently the Renaissance was the climax of Western man's great religious experiment in individual and social organization. Like Jacob Burckhardt, he believed that Renaissance man had consummated the principles of the Middle Ages rather than betrayed them, as Henry Adams believed.[74] Leontiev contrasted a period of unity *and* complexity with the modern period of *conformity*, rather than a period of unity with a period of multiplicity.

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[73] Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*

[74] "Echoes of medieval mysticism here flow into one current with Platonic doctrines, and with a characteristically modern spirit. One of the most precious fruits of the knowledge of the world and of man here comes to maturity, on whose account alone the Italian Renaissance must be called the leader of the modern ages." (Jacob Burckhardt: *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.)

A popular tendency during the nineteenth century was to draw analogies between the process of development in organisms with that of human society. Spencer translated natural laws into social laws and formulated the theory that society as well as nature illustrated an advance from the simple to the complex, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. This, for him, justified the notion of progress. Progress was "not an accident, but a necessity."

Leontiev, in denying the notion of progress, went a step beyond Spencer and extended the analogy of nature with society. Trained as a physician he believed that man's attempt to reverse the traditional conditions of his environment and to encourage uncontrolled growth was opposed to nature. He claimed that a certain tension existed in the development of organisms. Growth and development followed a governed orbit. Freedom in the modern sense of the removal of restraints did not exist in nature except in a diseased or dying state. He described this process of development as:

> *A gradual ascent from the simple to the complex*, an individualization, *an isolation from the environ-world on the one hand, and from analogous and related organisms, from all analogous and related phenomena, on the other*. A gradual movement from *colourless simplicity* towards original complexity in the component parts, *an enrichment of the inner content* and, at the same time, *a gradual strengthening of the unity*. Thus it appears that the maximum point of development, not only in organic bodies but also in organic phenomena, is the maximum stage of complexity, *consolidated by a certain inner despotic unity*.[75]

Leontiev interpreted the history leading to the Renaissance as a "gradual ascent from the simple to the complex." The fourteenth century represented the literal bursting into flower of human potentialities. Society had achieved a "maximum stage of complexity, consolidated by a certain inner despotic unity."

Whereas Henry Adams had considered multiplicity as antithetical to unity and that social and individual energy to create an harmonious cosmos was effectively derived from unity, Leontiev believed that multiplicity actually was necessary for social energy. "Being is inequality and inequality is being…God himself desired inequality, contrast and variety…"[76]

Leontiev attempted to explain the decline of the Florentine complex of art, religion and creative self-realization within the city-state by extending his analogy of organic development. Just as organisms complete a cycle of birth, growth and decay, so do societies, if allowed to drift in a natural progression.

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[75] Nikolai Berdayaev: *Konstantin Leontiev*
[76] *Ibid*

If we consider any development, whether that of a disease (a complex and uniform organic process) or that of a living healthy body (a complex and single organism), we shall realize that certain phenomena precede the disintegration and *death of the latter* (the organism) and the *annihilation of the first* (the process). These phenomena are: a simplification of the component parts, *a diminution in the number of distinct parts, a weakening of the central unity and strength* and at the same time a growing *confusion*. There is a process of gradual *lowering*, *mixture and blending*, preceding the disruption and death, and the transformation into something of a more general character lacking any inner necessity and life of its own. Before it perishes completely there is a slackening in the tension of the parts as well as of the whole. The dying organism becomes more uniform inwardly, and outwardly, more like the exterior world, more analogous to its related phenomena [i.e., *more free*]…At first there is simplicity, then complexity, and finally a process of secondary simplification…three stages are clearly manifest: first, *a primary simplicity*; second, a flowering complexity; third, *a secondary and confused simplification*.[77]

Leontiev stated that human history was in this third stage, not of multiplicity, but of "confused simplification." He drew a distinct difference between these. The characteristic of the modern world was not that of diversity but of a growing uniformity. The forces of the modern world were defeating not only unity, as Henry Adams had claimed, but also multiplicity. Leontiev claimed that the political concepts of liberty, equality, progress, were contributing to a breakdown of tension and to a consequent confusion and general uniformity that was leading to equilibrium and the death of culture.

Leontiev denounced modern nationalism and the ideals of the French Revolution as illusions. Liberal egalitarian Europe represented the "triumph of the petit Bourgeois spirit." The "top hat and patent-leather shoes," denounced by Marx as a class symbol of exploitation, had now become a universal costume…rather than the overalls. Leontiev believed that the distinctions between cultures and classes that were being destroyed by the modern world were important for the development of the personality.

The revolutions of the eighteenth century culminating in the modern nationalist states were motivated principally by man's need to escape from traditional oppressions and to liberate himself from social injustice. Science had become the means to challenge the universe, to extend control, to reverse the odds of nature against man. Man had concomitantly formulated a political credo to reverse the social odds against him. The success of science and politics in

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[77] *Ibid*

transforming the environment resulted in a belief in progress. This innovated secular world promised more tangible rewards than the medieval *Civitas Dei*. It could be appropriated not by self-discipline, self-limitation, suffering—but by self-demand, self-release, self-expansion.

However, Leontiev considered that the basic error of modern man lay in his belief that he could change his basic condition—that through freedom and equality he could gain happiness. He insisted that "evil is the real destiny of mankind," and that happiness was a condition of evil…that is, obtainable only by contrast. It could not exist without suffering. If happiness were attainable by all "it would itself prove to be the supreme evil."

Leontiev foresaw a breakdown in the concept of the self. Freud had described the ego as emerging from an "oceanic oneness" to form boundaries between itself and the outside world. Leontiev considered that the process of self-formation was aided rather than hindered by religion. The significance of Christianity lay in its "despotic idea," in its discipline of the personality and its maintenance of an antithetical tension between self and society, unity and multiplicity. In losing its restrictions, disciplines, limitations, the personality was actually becoming "smaller, tamer, dimmer for the world." The principles of modern law and politics based on the common dignity of all men actually denied man his individuality. Modern society by translating the self from religious to legal terms defined an artificial individual.

Leontiev saw the emergence of a new kind of tyranny that he considered more threatening than the traditional tyrannies. This is why he remained untouched by man's struggle to gain political, economic and social dignity. Instead he warned of the paradoxical and self-defeating nature of freedom, equality and happiness.

Pascal, struggling with the paradoxes inherent in the political aspirations of Western man, concluded that:

> It is true that there must be inequality among men; but if this be conceded, the door is opened not only to the highest power, but to the highest tyranny.[78]

In other words, Pascal accepted the fact of the inequality of nature, but in order to provide social justice for man, it was necessary to affirm equality as a legal and moral principle. But Leontiev claimed that equality was leading to the third stage…the death of the social organism.

Leontiev considered this process of development—from growth to decay and death—as inevitable only if men continued to affirm it by their beliefs in the slogans of the French Revolution. Unlike Marx and Hegel, Leontiev said "No!"

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[78] Reference missing

to history. He believed that the situation could be controlled and that, significantly, the means of control was a political one. Men could deliberately revert their social condition and control their destiny by actively reversing their politics from liberalism to conservatism. It was this policy of reaction that Leontiev termed his concept of compensation. In its earlier stages history required men to be "progressive," but after the Renaissance it was only the reactionaries who could save man and society. Before the Renaissance

> …all the progressivists were right, and all the conservatives wrong…Following that flowering and complex age [the Renaissance], with the beginning of the process of simplification, of the confusion of outlines, that is, with the beginning of the process of growing uniformity in the various spheres, of confused conditions, of shifting and uncertain authority, of more uniform education, with the decline of the despotism of the morphological process, it happens that, from the standpoint of the good of the state, all progressivists turn out to be theoretically wrong although they are triumphant in practice. They are theoretically wrong because they allow themselves to drift down with the current. They triumph and achieve a popular success. On the other hand, all conservatives and friends of reaction are theoretically right as soon as the process of secondary simplification and confusion has begun, for it is their desire to cure and strengthen the organism. It is not their fault that the nation has thrown off the discipline of the abstract idea of government latent in its depths.

Leontiev saw that Western civilization had derived its energy from the tension it had set up between unity and multiplicity, self and society, form and content, good and evil. He claimed that its success had been due to the creation of a maximum complexity in terms of a religious idea that had endowed man with the highest idea of himself as an individual. But "the vision perishes when it throws off the constraint of this authentic despotism." Once freed from the framework of Christianity, "individualism" defeated itself. "Individual freedom has only made the human personality more irresponsible and insignificant…Individualism destroys the individuality of men, provinces and nations."

Leontiev predicted the future "hypercosmos" with its destruction of both unity and multiplicity. Like Plato in *The Statesman* he did not believe that reason could recreate the conditions of the traditional cosmos. Since, like Herbert Spencer, Leontiev believed that the relationships between man, society and nature were essentially those of strife, stress and antithesis rather than harmony—that beauty was a harmony of opposites—he rejected as incompletely developed the society of the Middle Ages. Whereas Spencer had looked forward to individualism's triumph over a central discipline and a resultant voluntary cooperation with increased freedom and diversity in an industrial society,

Leontiev claimed that man could not transcend the boundaries of the Christian world without destroying the multiplicity of forms that had developed within it. Alfred North Whitehead wrote that "the collapse of the Middle Ages was, in one of its aspects, a revolt against coordination. The new keynote is expressed in the word 'competition'" Leontiev affirmed this competition and the alienating values of Christianity (the concept of God's totality, the antitheses of self and society, the separation of man from nature, etc.)—those Ouranic values that are basically in contradiction with those of a true Cosmos.

XIX

CONVERGING LINES

Konstantin Leontiev insisted that man could and must choose *both* unity and complexity. His responsibility was to maintain the necessary tension between the two. Without this tension both unity and complexity would be destroyed, resulting in confusion and conformity leading to the disintegration of culture.

Leontiev claimed that history must be denied. Instead of affirming his condition, man must negate it. In order to "cure and strengthen the organism" one must become a "reactionary" since the cause of the illness was liberalism, progressivism. Leontiev observed the emergence of totalitarianism and considered this as prime evidence, not of a new unity, but of a loss of unity since it discouraged an antithetical multiplicity.

Did Henry Adams struggle with the paradoxes implicit in the Western antitheses of self to society, form to freedom, simplicity to complexity, unity to multiplicity, without actually challenging the Western architecture of logic which created them…or without considering that perhaps his dilemma—between unity and complexity—was a false one? He characterized the Middle Ages as "a study in thirteenth century unity;" but he had to reconcile this "unity" with the eternal paradox of "man's many-sided soul," He characterized the modern age as one of multiplicity; but he also had to reconcile this with the striking tendencies towards conformity, monotony, superorder, equilibrium. Adams also observed the emergence of totalitarianism and recognized that it did not represent unity since it denied the unity of the individual. Did he realize that his antithesis of unity to complexity supplied a logic for totalitarianism—either political or individual—if man attempted to choose either unity or complexity…instead of both?

Henry Adams laid the blame for the modern condition—the "broken arch"—upon the "universe itself" rather than upon any human structure. Like Plato in *The Statesman* he recognized the "need for unity" but yielded to the principles of uncontrolled change and becoming. As we have seen, he actually bid for a radical new type of thinking to deal with the modern world—the world of Ouranos—believing that the Cosmos, in the medieval sense of a society bound together by a connective idea, could no longer be achieved

> It is quite impossible for our society, young or old, to get its
> intellectual processes back to the state of mind in which society
> naturally expressed itself in the *Iliad* or the *Chanson* or the temple,
> or the Church, and sang, or built, or fought, or loved as a habit,
> without necessary reference to practical use. I've seen such

societies in the South Seas, but they would be as impossible to our students as the habits of butterflies or beetles.[79].

Nevertheless, one can discover ample evidence in Adams' writings that the Middle Ages cannot be adequately understood only in terms of unity; nor can the modern world be interpreted only in terms of complexity. Just as in Plato's *Republic*, we find in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* that the architecture of a philosophy, of a cathedral, or of a cosmos requires a different equation for the relationship of unity to multiplicity and complexity than that of irreconcilable antithesis. Rather, we discover that form, belief, unity, are not in opposition to freedom or diversity...but actually create these!

Adams' *pince sans rire*, the metaphor that he applied to history, bears certain significant resemblances to Leontiev's organic "idea of development." Like Leontiev he rejected the notion of progress, finding it deficient as an explanation of history and contrary to the scientific concepts of evolution and "degradation" in nature. Leontiev stated his theory of history in organic terms. Adams stated his in mechanical ones…but the conclusions were essentially the same: an increasing state of disorder leading to confusion; a loss of energy leading to equilibrium. The organism would die; the dynamo would run down.

> …the degradation of energy may create, or convey, an impression of progress and gain…this impression of gain is derived from an impression of Order due to the leveling of energies; but that impression of Order is an illusion consequent on the dissolution of the higher Order which had supplied, by lowering its inequalities, all the useful energies that caused progress. The reality behind the illusion is, therefore, absence of the power to do useful work--or what man knows in his finite sensibilities as death! "Thus Order in the material universe would be the mark of utility and the measure of value; and this Order, far from being spontaneous, would tend constantly to destroy itself. Yet the Disorder towards which a collection of molecules moves, is in no respect the initial chaos rich in differences and inequalities that generate useful energies; on the contrary, it is the average mean of equality and homogeneity in absolute want of coordination."[80]

Adams realized, then, that multiplicity actually masked a "confused simplicity," and that this state of disorder essentially differed from the initial state of disorder. In other words, not only the Greek concept of Cosmos, but that of Chaos—as the undifferentiated but richly potential material of Cosmos—no longer applied to the modern world. Man, in destroying Cosmos was also to destroy Chaos. In destroying unity he was also to destroy multiplicity. In destroying form he was also to destroy content. In destroying limitations and

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[79] Henry Adams: Letter to Frederick Bliss Luquiens, 1910.
[80] Henry Adams: *Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (paraphrase of Brunheis' concept)

boundaries and substituting the idea of total freedom he was also to destroy freedom. And as Leontiev saw, in destroying authority for the sake of the individual and substituting a concept of equality, he was eventually to destroy the individual and the unique. In destroying the whole for the part he was to destroy the part. In destroying image for process, he was to destroy process.

Is the modern condition, then, one of complexity? Or is it one of failing energy; super-organization yet confusion? Does man exist in a "monoculture" as Claude Lévi-Strauss calls it…a frontier with its illusion of change, of conformity in the guise of freedom, of absurdity in the masque of logic?

Leontiev stated that man needed a "vision" of the universe from which to draw energy for the creation and maintenance of society. When he discussed form (or unity) he used the Heraclitan formula of the tension of opposites—of unity in diversity. Although Adams explicitly maintained the antithetical and irreconcilable relationship of unity to complexity and equated unity with simplicity, when he discussed medieval aesthetic form, significantly enough he stressed not only its unity but its complexity. Les us see again what he says about the medieval cathedral.

> …every inch of material, up and down, from crypt to vault, from man to God, from the universe to the atom, had its task, giving support where support was needed, or weight where concentration was felt, but always with the condition of showing conspicuously to the eye the great lines which led to unity and the curves which controlled divergence; so that from the cross on the *flèche* and the keystone of the vault, down through the ribbed *nervures*, the columns, the windows, to the foundation of the flying buttresses far beyond the walls, one idea controlled every line.[81]

Thus, we see that Adams' concept of form could in no way be identified with conformity. True unity or form does not suppress or destroy differentiation, variety, complexity, multiplicity. When he describes the intricate geometry of the Gothic Cathedral, the intellectual convolutions of scholastic philosophy, as the expressions of the "many-sides soul" of man, he negates his own belief of unity as opposed to multiplicity. He states that unity "must explain and include Duality, Diversity, Infinity—Sex!" But by the same token these latter must also explain unity.

Does the same perspective, then, reveal both unity and complexity? We see the outline of the cathedral on the horizon. Can we guess its rich complexity from this vantage point? We stand at a certain juncture within the cathedral. We begin to be aware of its complexity but can we see its final unity? Superficially these seem to be two different perspectives: that from without and that from

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[81] Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*

within. Are they, then, both necessary? Perhaps Poincaré's statement about simplicity and complexity is relevant here.

> Doubtless if our means of investigation should become more and more penetrating we would discover the simple under the complex; and then the complex under the simple; then again the simple under the complex; and so on without ever being able to foresee the last terms[82]

Our "means of investigation" would not reveal "the last terms" because simplicity and complexity, unity and multiplicity, are inextricably related. However, we have discovered a way of foreseeing the final terms…our civilization has led us to these. Significantly, as Leontiev and Adams realized, these have nothing to do with either unity or multiplicity. This is because our "means of investigation" have negated the necessary relationship between these. By denying unity we have also denied complexity.

We realize, when we look at the architecture of the cathedral, that the intricacy of the rose window, the *flèche*, the flying buttress, could not have existed without a unifying frame. Form has not only disciplined but created beauty from stone. The medieval cathedral as well as medieval scholasticism created complexity from chaos and bent it to a common purpose.

But do we, as modern tourists, see the cathedral from the same perspectives as medieval man? We see it as an isolated phenomenon—a ghostly image from the past. If we had an historical imagination, we could draw certain connections between it and time and event, but its major connections would be broken. Henry Adams spoke of entering the church door, the *pons seclorum*, the "bridge of ages, between us and our ancestors." But we cannot really cross the bridge that our ancestors crossed because it is broken.

The significant difference between us and our ancestors lies in the pilgrimage. They saw the cathedral from the perspective of the pilgrim…from the perspective of belief. They sought the center of their universe, not an isolated, disconnected image. And the cathedral was the center…and the point of transition.

> Perched on the extreme point of this abrupt rock, the Church Militant with its aspirant Archangel stands high above the world, and seems to threaten heaven itself. The idea is the stronger and more restless because the Church of Saint Michael is surrounded and protected by the world and the society over which it rises…[83]

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[83] Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*

Crossing the bridge from the outside world one changed one's perspective. The center suddenly reversed and revealed the boundaries of the cosmos. This was the mystery and the reason for the pilgrimage. One sensed one's connections to that outside world. One saw it from the perspective of unity. It was belief that yielded that perspective both of unity and multiplicity.

It is that dimension that our modern vision lacks. We are striving for perspective without belief. We are trying to see the many without the one and the one without the many. Henry Adams, in explicitly limiting the role of unity to that of reducing multiplicity to order, denied the true role of unity: the creation of multiplicity, complexity, diversity, as well as order. This is the cosmic notion of harmony: the evocation of multiplicity from chaos, the connection of the diverse and accidental, the creation of form and order.

Because Adams tended to interpret unity in the same sense that Western man has traditionally interpreted it—that of totality…antithetical to multiplicity—it represented a threat instead of a fulfillment. Medieval man's "instinct for unity" had resulted in the Gothic Cathedral. But Adams, troubled by the potentially insurgent lines of complexity, saw within its circumscription "the peril of the heavy tower, of the restless vault, of the vagrant buttress."

Medieval scholasticism represented a unique concentration to bend all lines of thought to a center, but despite his statement to the contrary[84], Adams was aware of the "uncertainty of logic, the inequalities of the mental mirror." He concluded that every unifying structure contained an equilibrium "visibly delicate beyond the line of safety." This was true of the Western architecture of cathedrals and logic and societies. This was the architecture of Ouranos…structures in terms of historical time, surrounded not by boundaries but by frontiers.

But, as Henry Adams realized when he called himself "the Virgin's pilgrim," the medieval church possessed a mysterious relationship, an image that protected it for awhile from destruction—by an omnipotent Lutheran God, by prodigal sons and Homeric heroes escaping from boundaries, by pioneers seeking frontiers, by logicians seeking "reality" rather than truth. That image was Gaia reincarnated as the Virgin Mary who maintained the connections, the structural equilibrium, until she was defeated by the dynamo that turned the image into process, freedom into a boundary, the part into the whole.

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[84] "The famous junction, then, is made!—that celebrated fusion of the universal with the individual, of unity with multiplicity, of God and nature, which had broken the neck of every philosophy ever invented; which had ruined William of Champeaux and was to ruin Descartes; this evolution of the finite from the infinite was accomplished…The hive of Saint Thomas sheltered God and man, mind and matter, the universe and the atom, the one and the multiple, within the walls of an harmonious home." *Ibid*

XX

CONCLUSION

"No," said the priest, "it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary."

"A melancholy conclusion," said K. "It turns lying into a universal principle." [85]

Despite our growing disillusion with the ability of science to answer the basic questions of life; despite the impasses to which our inversions have led us; despite the recurrent explosion of our "need for unity" into totalitarianism; despite a general vacuum of belief in which, as Camus pointed out, crime and injustice are given logic; despite the paradoxical tendencies of our "free society" towards a super-order with greater and greater threats to individualism—we still consider unlimited change, manipulation and control of nature, freedom, progress, equality, as the essentially valuable features of our civilization. We persist in regarding unity or form as antithetical to multiplicity or freedom.

What now passes for unity in the modern world is really the imposition of a common meaningless pattern upon all men and all societies; the metamorphosis of traditionally diverse cultures into a "monoculture;" the transformation of the world into a frontier that leads nowhere—that denies both Cosmos and Chaos. What passes for multiplicity, complexity, diversity, is really confusion.

We speak of "pluralism" in politics, but what passes for "pluralism" is really the facets of conformity parading as diversity. We speak of the rights and privileges of the individual in politics and law. But pressure groups control politics, and, paradoxically, in law we extend the definition of the "individual" to apply to these groups while at the same time we turn the individual into process…making it more and more difficult to judge action.

What are the present patterns for action? Plato sought to establish a new society on reason, to force man to emerge from those obscure regions of opinion, illusion and dream—the cave of myth, allegory and ritual. However, it is significant that Western man has returned again to the depths of the cave in search of truths that he cannot discover in his "rational" world—in the world of "reality." Plato said in *The Statesman* that "every man seems to know all things in a dreamy sort of way, and then again to wake up and to know nothing." We have awakened to feel that we "know nothing."

Freud has told us that "Dreams are a way to truth." Just as St. Augustine's turning inwards to the uncharted regions of the passions adumbrated

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[85] Franz Kafka: *The Trial*

Freud's exploration of the psyche, so Henry Adams; turning to the structures of the medieval mind foreshadowed our quest for some truth about ourselves behind the framework of traditional belief. However, the examination of history, myth, behavior, is in part the modern disposition to retreat from choice and its consequences—a symptom not of a new faith but of a loss of faith. We descend the threshold of our consciousness and, as Norman Brown has said, "promenade in the forbidden ground." We travel back through history to our prehistory in order to discover some clue to our condition. As scientists we investigate the mechanisms of physiology; we examine the lower forms of life in order to find some clue to our action…for we must define ourselves, we must choose, we must act—even though we believe in determination, in the self as process; even though we are led to inversion, negation and destruction.

We attempt to transcend the stalemates of conventional knowledge, logic and morality that no longer appear to yield any meaning for action. Confronted with what Albert Camus called the "spectacle of irrationality," we seek a way of dealing with this by exploring and attempting to order our own irrationality. We try to decipher the structures of the pre-conscious, pre-logical mind in search of more "appropriate" categories of interpreting and ordering experience. Thereby reason ironically seeks a means of circumventing or denying or transcending itself at just that point of its greatest power.

The past, present and future become a stage whereon we watch ourselves act out patterned allegories of our instincts, passions and needs. This is the consequence of our three inversions of image, part and freedom. We destroyed the spontaneous structures of the primitive cosmos when we began emerging from our "oceanic oneness." It took us centuries to define and to separate, to create concepts of the self and of society. At the beginning reason was dominated by belief, but eventually reason dominated and destroyed belief…and now it is occupied with destroying both itself and the architecture that it built.

We still uneasily and reluctantly inhabit this crumbling architecture. Here and there certain connections remain, but the major arches are broken. We feel liberated from tradition, from religion, from the family…but our only "liberty" is that of Ouranos—of the boundary—where divorced from ourselves, each other and the world around us, we observe our own slavery. Certainly we have not been freed for choice since we have exchanged image for process, truth for necessity, belief for determination. Where we have not accepted the principles of our transformed world as desirable, like Henry Adams we consider them necessary.

Ironically, we exist on the boundary but we can no longer "invent Americas." Instead we seek a free domain in another dimension. For our personal salvation we turn to the traditional scapegoat of Western society whose flight from internal confusion and social oppression has been an individual rather than a communal one. This scapegoat is the artist who has sought to solve

the problem of form without connections, of the part without the whole; who has sought to carve out and create within a "free domain." Like Nietzsche, "instead of the judge and the oppressor" we seek "the creator." Like the early Christian Fathers who sought out the desert we seek to struggle with our emotions in a realm "beyond the reach of science of law," a realm free from mechanization and number…free from problems of good and evil.

The fact that this transcendent "failure" with his special need for unity now represents a kind of savior for us indicates that we have reached a parallel condition. We feel with Kierkegaard that "man has become unreal," therefore we find that we must create ourselves parenthetic to the world while accepting our automatic and "involuntary" metamorphoses of society. We persist in formulating an internal totality to its final logic: that is, until it becomes absurd—until the internal becomes external, until the self by expansion converts all experience into itself and finally negates the possibility of defining itself.

Because we cannot really believe in a savior, in politics we seek the anti-hero. Camus, in his attempt to give a new definition to the political actor, paralleled the "rebel" with the artist in that he must create within a vacuum, with a "constant awareness of himself." Thus, the rebel really repudiates the notion of heroism for he commits himself without losing himself…commits himself for the sake of action and does so outside of the community. He recognizes not the Cosmos but Ouranos. At the same time "the deliberate limitation of action" within the "open society" allows only the tentative acceptance of any results of that action.

Paul Tillich recognized that "human art reveals to us the actuality of that which is positively contrary to form, the demonic…" As we have seen, the artist no longer serves the group but the individual. As Claude Lévi-Strauss indicates, he attempts to "beautify our artificial world" where "everything is ugly." Abstract art, however, is an attempt to return to a primeval chaos and to create a universe from the self. It is this universe that can be considered "demonic"—it is the individual energies released from the whole that, in imitation of the artist, we are using today. This gives us what Tillich called "power" as opposed to "vitality," energies that serve the part rather than the whole.

It is one of the ironic denouements of history that we now attempt to appropriate the "free domain" of the alien, the stranger, the outcast—that we affirm Ouranos as reality. We deny the Cosmos as part of an irrevocable past. We deny belief. We fear unity because we equate this with tyranny or conformity. But unity has nothing to do with conformity, just as the community has nothing to do with the crowd. Unity requires complexity, diversity, multiplicity, and the latter can only be realized within a framework. It is the exclusion of both unity and complexity that leads us to totalitarianism, either of the one or the many. Pascal wrote, "Plurality which is not reduced to unity is confusion; unity which does not depend on plurality is tyranny."

The problem for us today is to recognize the impasse of process, of part, of freedom, in which we find ourselves—to break out of Ouranos and solve the problem of Cosmos. Whether or not we can do so depends upon whether we can formulate and accept a startlingly different "impossible" idea that will initiate its own possibilities just as the great but originally impossible ideas of history evoked their possibilities once they were accepted.

We have accepted a radical inversion of our traditional Cosmos. We have separated ourselves from the world about us. This has all been done in the name of truth…and now we destroy truth in the name of reality.

What is this "reality" to which we are committed? Truth enabled us to create a universe; reality is leading us to destroy it. It is a reality not of connections, but of "broken arches"…with no manifest potential for the future since it is a denial of form, a denial of harmony.

Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that the key to primitive societies is harmony. He compares them to a clock which is self-perpetuating—all its rotations participating "harmoniously in the same activity." He contrasts this to modern societies which he compares to a thermodynamic or vapor machine—manufacturing order of a more complicated nature, but at the same time manufacturing a great deal of disorder and depending for its function on a "difference of potential." In order to operate it must create contradiction and tension among its parts. The ultimate tendency of this inequality is a tendency towards equality and immobility. As Henry Adams said, the machine runs down. The cosmic clock of primitive society can continue indefinitely; the vapor machine of modern society consumes its energy and is dedicated to destroying itself. In Tillich's terms it has power rather than vitality. As we have seen, Tillich suggested that only harmonious activities, the activity of the parts working for the whole, are vital activities.

Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that primitive societies maintained themselves by a rejection of alien forms and a protection against internal disunity. They are based on a primitive democracy…as we have seen…on a kind of Rousseauian consent. Our society, however, accepts a constant changing of form without the full inner development and exploitation of form. It is based on a system of inequalities that once equalized will result in immobility.

As we know, the Chinese had a concept of reality as harmony and the role of man and society was to adjust itself to this basic harmony of nature. At one time the Greeks also had a concept of harmony as the basic relationship between Ouranos and Gaia. Western society has been moving farther and farther away from the concept of harmony, from the concept of unity, from the concept of community. We have divorced man from nature by destroying the idea of cycles and substituting history, by giving him a divine nature, by renouncing the

feminine. We have created political systems that have further alienated man from nature. We have constructed artificial cities that men inhabit without connections.

> In every age man has been apt to dream uneasily, rolling from side to side, beating against imaginary bars, unless, tired out, he has sunk into indifference or skepticism.[86]

Freud compared the mentally ill to the infant who cannot differentiate self-limits. He claimed that maturity is the definition of boundaries. It is also the organization of internal and external disorder. It is the recognition of the many in the one and the one in the many.

We can no longer differentiate self-limits. Like Freud's mentally ill we have "sunk into skepticism." We have rejected belief, truth, unity. Our perspectives have become narrower and narrower and we are willing to commit errors of particularity rather than universality. At the same time narrow perspectives are conquering the world: the perspectives of an industrial society, the perspectives of the "common man," the perspectives of youth, etc. We have renounced everything that could substitute for Gaia in favor of Ouranos.

It is not God who is dead. He still survives as an ideal for the self. It is actually Mary, the maternal principle, nature, that is dead. Albert Camus' *L'Etranger* illustrates this alienation of modern man who no longer feels his relationship with and his responsibility for the Mother.

If we decide that we no longer want to live in Ouranos, can we choose to create a new Cosmos or must we accept the world as necessary? Karl Jaspers says: "How man achieves unity is a problem, infinite in time and insoluble; it is nevertheless the path to his search. Man is less certain of himself than ever." Imagine the tremendous vital energies we could release for the transformation of our world if we again believed in harmony, in unity, in an "impossible idea!" We could reverse the order of the world. We could destroy the immense industrial monster we have created. We could build new arches, new connections. We could develop a new feeling for "the style of the universe." We could again have a perspective from which to view ourselves and others. We need no longer "conceal our own emptiness." We need no longer inhabit Ouranos.

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[86] Henry Adams: *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*