Goodness and Nature

A Defence of Ethical Naturalism and a Critique of its Opponents

Supplement on Historical Origins

by

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To My Parents
Sine Quibus Non

Contents

Citations and Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the chapters of the *Supplement* for referring to the works of the philosophers being discussed or referred to. Sometimes I have not given the name of the work but only the page or relevant section number. I have done this, however, only where one particular book by the author in question was the immediate object of attention and so only where the context will make clear which book this is. Elsewhere fuller details are given.

Aquinas

CDT	*Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*
ST	*Summa Theologica*

Avicenna

Meta	*Metaphysics*, trans. Morewedge, Columbia University Press, New York, 1973

Bacon

AL	*Advancement of Learning*
AS	*De Augmentis Scientiarum*
MI	*Magna Instauratio (Great Instauration)*
NA	*New Atlantis*
NO	*Novum Organum*
SV	*Sapientia Veterum (Wisdom of the Ancients)*
Works	*The Works of Francis Bacon*, in several volumes, ed. J. Spelling, R.L. Ellis and D.D. Heath, Longman, London, 1857-1874.

Descartes

AT	*Oeuvres Complètes de Descartes*, eds. C. Adam and P. Tannery, J.Vrin, Paris, 1971-1975
DM	*Discours de la Méthode*, ed. E. Gilson, J. Vrin, Paris, 1967
HR	*The Philosphical Works of Descartes*, in 2 volumes, edited by E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, Cambridge University Press, 1967

Med	*Meditationes*
Reg	*Regulae*
RO	*Reply to Objections* (to the *Meditations*)
Pass	*Passions of the Soul*
Prin	*Principles of Philosophy*

Hobbes

EM	Everyman edition of *Leviathan*, Dent, London, 1914.
Lev	*Leviathan*

Hume

Tr	*A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1888.
Enq	*Enquiries*, ed.Selby-Bigge. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1902

Kant

2C	*The Second Critique: the Critique of Practical Reason*
3C	*The Third Critique: the Critique of Judgement*
A	*The First Critique: the Critique of Pure Reason*, First Edition
AA	The Prussian Academy Edition of the Complete Works (Akademieausgabe), *Gesammelten Schriften*, in several volumes, Berlin, 1910ff.
Abb	Abbott, T.K. Edition of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason and other works on the Theory of Ethics*, Longmans, London, 6th ed., 1909.
B	*The First Critique*, Second Edition
Bern	Bernard, J.H. Edition of the *Third Critique.* Hafner Pulishing Co., NewYork and London, 1966
CF	*The Contest of the Faculties*
GW	*Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*
Luc	Lucas, P.G. Edition of the *Prolegomena* Manchester University Press, England, 1966
MM	*Metaphysic of Morals*

Pat	Paton, H.J. edition of the *Groundwork. The Moral Law* Hutchinson University Library, London, 1948
PP	*Perpetual Peace*
Prol	*Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*
Reiss	Reiss, Hans. *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, 1970
Rel	*Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*
Sem	Semple, J.W. Edition of *Metaphysics of Ethics*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1869
TP	*On the Old Saw: that may be Right in Theory but it won't Work in Practice*
UH	*Universal History*
WE	*What is Enlightenment?*

Locke

1T	First of the *Two Treatises of Government*
2T	Second of the *Two Treatises of Government*
Ess	*Essay on Human Understanding*
Las	Laslett, P. Edition of the *Two Treatises.* Cambridge University Press, 1963

Machiavelli

Pr	*The Prince*
Dis	*Discourses on the first Decade of Titus Livius*. *Il Principe e Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio,* ed. Bertelli, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979
RF	*On Reforming Florence* in *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy,* ed. F. Gilbert, Harper, New York, 1960

Rousseau

1D	First Discourse, *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* Garnier Flammarion, Paris, 1971
2D	Second Discourse, *Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes*. Garnier Flammarion, Paris, 1971
Conf	*Confessions*

Em	*Émile, ou de l'éducation* Garnier Flammarion, Paris, 1966
Rev	*Rêveries d'un Promeneur Solitaire* Collection Internationale, Doubleday, New York, 1961
SC	The Social Contract, *Du Contrat Social*. Garnier Flammarion, Paris, 1966

Preface

AIM OF THE SUPPLEMENT

This *Supplement* to *Goodness and Nature*, which was not included in that book when it was initially published, is meant to provide more of the background and evidence for the argument presented in chapter 5, 'Historical Origins'. This chapter can, to be sure, stand by itself in its place in *Goodness and Nature* independently of the *Supplement*. But since it makes claims, and presents a progression of thought, that are relatively novel as well as controversial (at least within the context of the Debate about the Naturalistic Fallacy on which *Goodness and Nature* focused), it may naturally excite an interest and a skepticism that some readers may desire to have more fully satisfied or answered. The *Supplement*, presented here in print for the first time, is meant to supply that desire. The chapters and their contents cover the same ground as was covered in chapter 5 of *Goodness and Nature* but in greater detail, ranging over a fuller review of the important thinkers, and spelling out more of the relevant elements and implications. The *Supplement* can, therefore, stand by itself too, and need not just be read as an addition to *Goodness and Nature* (even though it contains several references to that book). In any event, I trust that interested readers will find, on the Contents page above, enough information about what the *Supplement* contains both to spark and to guide interest.

There are, however, two particular points about the *Supplement* that the reader should note here first. Both points are taken over (in part *verbatim*) from the 'Introduction' of *Goodness and Nature*. The first point concerns the ancient tradition that I follow and which I refer to, in the *Supplement*, by the names of 'the ancients' or 'the classics' or 'the tradition' or something of the sort. This tradition that I have in mind is the one which leads from Plato and Aristotle to Aquinas and even beyond. One might object that Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and the rest do not constitute a single tradition. The differences between them, especially between Plato and Aristotle

on the one hand and Aquinas on the other, are profound and considerable. That there are differences, and that some of them are profound, is true enough. But there are also similarities, and some of these too are profound. It is these similarities that have been the object of my attention when I refer to this tradition as forming a unity. They are indeed the similarities that make this tradition, when set in contrast to the writers whom I discuss in this *Supplement*, so markedly different and so markedly unanimous.

The second point is that, as will be obvious, I have not discussed all the modern authors whom I might have discussed in this context, nor examined all their works. In particular, I have seldom mentioned any scholarly commentaries or entered into any scholarly debates. The reason is that my aim has not been to give an exhaustive account of opinions, let alone of existing scholarship, but to understand a problem, namely that of the emergence of the Naturalistic Fallacy Debate within contemporary moral philosophy. Filling the chapters of the *Supplement* with references to and discussions of the existing scholarship might, to be sure, have sharpened as well as qualified my contentions. But I do not think it would have altered in them anything of substance. On the other hand, I am fairly sure that such filling, had I done it, would have loaded down the chapters with much extraneous matter that, all things considered, would have obscured my point as well as distracted the reader. At all events, I have given full enough references to the original writings of the thinkers I discuss that readers may, if they wish, pursue these easily for themselves and test my interpretations both against those writings and against any scholarship that they may also care to pursue. And that, I think, should be enough—for my purposes as well as for theirs.

CHAPTER S1

Machiavelli: The ‘Realist’ Revolt against the Classics

Est itaque quod gratias agamus Machiavello et huiusmodi scriptoribus qui aperte et indissumulanter proferunt quid homines facere soleant, non quid debeant. (Therefore we give thanks to Machiavelli and such-like writers who set forth in an open and undisguised manner what men are accustomed to do, not what they ought to do. Bacon, *AS*, 7.2; *Works*, VIII, p.411.)

THE NOVELTY OF MACHIAVELLI

Among the originators of modern ideas it has already become clear that Kant and Hobbes must be given a prominent place. They are not, however, two independent sources; rather they belong to one and the same line of descent. Kant was profoundly influenced by Hobbes, not only directly, but above all indirectly through Rousseau. Kant’s debt to Rousseau is openly attested to by Kant himself, and Rousseau’s own debt to Hobbes is as great. In the order of development Hobbes is clearly first, but he is not the first simply. Behind him lies Machiavelli. That this is the case becomes clear from an examination of their writings. In his views of man and politics Hobbes adopts the stance of what might be called *Machiavellian realism*. By ‘realism’ here I mean, not some view about the objective reality of things, but what Bacon had in mind in the quotation given above and what we typically have in mind when we use words like *Realpolitik*. Realism in this sense signifies the actual realities of customary human practice, or a concern therewith, and not the moral principles that such practice ought ideally, but fails in fact, to measure up to. So if an understanding of Hobbes is necessary to understand Rousseau

and Kant, an understanding of Machiavelli is necessary to understand Hobbes.

No thinker writes wholly in a vacuum, of course, and it is arguable that, if the line is traced back to Machiavelli, it should be traced further; and of course Machiavelli himself was influenced by earlier writers, including the Italian humanists, some of the late scholastics, and the classics. But this process cannot be continued indefinitely; one only need pursue it as far as one’s present purpose requires. My present purpose requires me, as will appear, to pursue it back to Machiavelli and not further. There is something in both the tone and content of Machiavelli’s teaching that is peculiarly new (as many have noted, both in Machiavelli’s day and since), and which, on analysis, will serve to justify treating him as the first, as a founder of something new, in an especially significant sense. Machiavelli himself claimed an originality that went beyond mere frankness of speech. He said he was entering on a path untrodden by anyone else and departing from the “orders” of others (*Dis* 1 Preface, *Pr* ch.15). What then was this newness?

According to Bacon, what we owe to Machiavelli is that he taught us what men are *accustomed* to do and not what they *ought* to do. In one sense Bacon is just referring to the fact that Machiavelli reported the realities of men’s actual practice and not the practices which others had counseled men to do. Yet this by itself is misleading. Machiavelli, no less than others, is concerned to teach what men, or at any rate rulers, ought to do, and, no less than others, holds that this is not what men and rulers are accustomed in fact to do (*Dis* 1.26, 27; *Pr* ch.26).

What Bacon’s remark further directs us to is the awareness that Machiavelli’s own ‘ought’ is a radically different ‘ought’. It is understood by reference to men’s actual and customary doings, not their imagined or ideal doings. Machiavelli’s ‘ought’ is also itself a ‘realistic’ one: men ought to behave the way the facts require them to behave. The ‘ought’ of his opponents, however, is not realistic; it is an ‘ought’ that, according to Machiavelli, is set up in ignorance of, not to say in opposition to, the facts. Those who behave as his opponents

say men ought to behave are sure only of being ruined. As he himself says:

> There is such distance between how men live and how they ought to live that he who leaves what is done for what ought to be done will sooner learn his ruin than his preservation: because one who wishes in all respects to make profession of good, must come to ruin among so many who are not good (*Pr* ch.15).

Machiavelli, by contrast, opposing those who "have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to be in reality," intends to write something "useful" and thus, as he puts it, to go to the "effectual truth of the matter." In these words (all taken from chapter 15 of *The Prince*) Machiavelli expresses the nature and originality of his teaching. So what does this turn to "reality" or to the "effectual truth" actually amount to?

Chapters 15-19 of *The Prince* contain what is, in effect, Machiavelli's treatise on the virtues. His "useful" teaching, which fits in with the facts of human life as these are revealed by actual examples (ch.18), is basically, and indeed quite simply, that some of those things praised as virtues will ruin a prince if he practices them, while others blamed as vices will bring him "security and well-being" (ch.15). The right way to behave is to use vice and virtue as and when necessary, for a good prince will be half-beast and half-man (ch.18). He will especially need to be clever at deceit, for if not actually virtuous he will need to appear virtuous. A reputation for virtue is necessary, for though without it one can gain dominion, one cannot thus gain glory, and glory—or to be "celebrated among the most excellent men"—is certainly something princes desire (chs.8, 18, 26). A successful prince will know how and when to use badness as well as goodness while appearing always to be good.

But why does Machiavelli think the traditional virtues are ruinous and contrary to the facts? An illustration can be taken from the virtue of liberality. This virtue leads to trouble because it requires one to spend lavishly, but lavish spending

dissipates one’s wealth, and so one is forced to become rapacious and to impose heavy taxes in order to get more money to be lavish with all over again. Not to do this is, in the end, to become poor and contemptible, to lose one’s reputation and to endanger one’s rule (ch.16). Similar things are said about the virtues of clemency and good faith.

Now at first sight Machiavelli appears to win his case by sheer distortion of the ancient teaching. In Aristotle’s classic account, a virtue is a disposition to perform acts as, when, about what and to whom one ought, or in other words no act is an act of virtue if it is not in the mean determined by right reason (e.g. *Ethics* 1106b21-23). The examples Machiavelli gives to show that liberality, for instance, is bad would not, for Aristotle, be examples of giving money according to right reason and so would not be acts of liberality. Closer examination, however, shows that Machiavelli is not so much talking about the virtues and vices in the way that the philosophers meant them as in the way that most people mean them. He speaks of acts one must perform to be *held* liberal, or of acts that most people would call liberal. Aristotle, no doubt, would not regard such ‘vulgar opinions’ about liberality as a fair reflection of what liberality really is. The virtues are a mean between two extremes, but some means are nearer to one extreme than to the other and so resemble that extreme, as prodigality and liberality resemble each other (*ibid*. 1108b14-32). The vulgar, therefore, are inclined to think that someone who is not prodigal is not liberal but mean or stingy. Hence, it might well be true that, if one wants to have a reputation for liberality, if one wants to be *held* liberal by common opinion, there may be occasions when one will have to be prodigal.

Machiavelli’s analysis of the virtues proceeds at the level of vulgar opinions, and he thus refuses to draw Aristotle’s distinction between genuine and seeming acts of virtue. He does, however, draw a distinction between *uses* of liberality, between a use that preserves rule and in the end reputation, and a use that does not. The latter use consists in giving away money to excess followed by the need to acquire to excess; it is a combination of the extremes of extravagance and meanness. The former use also turns out to be a combination

of the two extremes, but a different combination. The difference seems simply to be that the first is such as to be successful, that is such as to preserve rule, and the second is not. The first, then, is a clever use; the second a foolish one (clever and foolish, of course, with respect to the end of worldly success, not the Aristotelian end of the beautiful and the noble). The virtue, or rather *virtú* (to use the Italian word) that Machiavelli praises is the cleverness of the successful prince. This *virtú* is not a matter of keeping to any Aristotelian mean; it is a matter of passing from one extreme to the other (chs.17-18). That is why Machiavelli lists the virtues and vices as pairs of extremes: one virtue opposed to one vice. Aristotle, on the contrary, had groups of threes, with one virtue in the mean and two opposed vices at the extremes. But however well Aristotle’s idea may have fit his and others’ “imagination,” it does not fit the “reality” of actual opinion and actual ruling.

MOVING THE GOALS

Machiavelli’s criticism of the ancient advice to be virtuous is only valid on the assumption of a Machiavellian and not a classical or Aristotelian analysis of virtue. It is not an attack on the ancient teaching so much as a begging of the question against it. Machiavelli does not refute that teaching; rather, in his own words, he “leaves it behind” (ch.15). He leaves it behind in favour of the commonly held opinions about virtue; it is these, rather than the opinions of the philosophers, that contain “the effectual truth.” For “in the world there is only the crowd” and the few are of no account (ch.18).

The opinions of philosophers are certainly opinions of the few, and of no “use” to someone whose aim is to succeed in the world where words mean what they mean to the many and not what they mean to the few. Accordingly Machiavelli insists on calling those acts liberal, mean, clement or cruel that the crowd commonly calls liberal, mean, clement or cruel. It is of no concern to him that Aristotle would say that most were nothing of the kind. What use is it to be virtuous as the philosophers speak of virtue, if in the world where the many

speak one is not accounted virtuous and is ruined to boot? And what loss is it to be vicious as the philosophers speak of vice, if in the world one is accounted virtuous and enjoys security and success to boot?

To try and correct men’s ordinary views and perceptions is useless; what matters is to deal with them as they are and for one’s own advantage. To do this one needs the right combination of virtue and vice. The combination is secured by the cleverness of the Machiavellian prince. Traditionally, the virtue called for when it comes actually to carrying out the practice of the several virtues is prudence. Machiavelli does not mention this chief among the classical virtues in his list in ch.15. The reason may well be that the prudence Machiavelli is thinking of is virtue simply, or rather *virtú* simply. Provided the prince has and practices such *virtú*, everything else will fall easily into place. *Virtú* is not, however, prudence in the traditional sense; it is, as already indicated, a sort of semi-bestial cleverness. This difference between Machiavelli and the classics is itself due to the difference of end or goal that they each propose to themselves.

What Machiavelli’s cleverness or the classics’ prudence demands is understood by both with respect to the end of action. The end for Aristotle is the happiness of noble or beautiful activity of soul, and is ultimately identical with the life of contemplation. He recognizes that the practical life is noble in its degree, but this life is manifested best in the business of politics and war, which is lower than the life of contemplation and belongs to occupation, while contemplation belongs to leisure (*Ethics* 10.7). The practical life is both lower than the contemplative life and ultimately for its sake. For Machiavelli, by contrast, the reverse is the case. Machiavelli does not speak of contemplatives except adversely, and throughout his writings the practical side is paramount together with its goals of freedom, glory, empire and power. He does not hesitate to call happy anyone who secures these, even the tyrant. In accordance with his ‘realism’ he persists in adopting the perspective of the vulgar who, as the classics noted, think that the tyrant is happy and wish to be like him. He pays as little attention to the ancient view that the tyrant is miserable as he does

to the Christian teaching about heaven and hell. He confines himself to the horizons of this world, or, to use a Platonic image, he remains within the cave. The “effectually true” and the “real” are the cave, and what matters is not to ascend out of it but rather to secure success within it.

Whether this means Machiavelli does not want to ascend from the cave or rather thinks there is nothing to ascend to, can perhaps be understood by considering why it is he “leaves behind” the ancient teaching on virtue instead of attacking it. One is reminded here of the practice, commended by Machiavelli, which good armies and their leaders follow when they invade a country and “leave behind” the armed fortresses, knowing that these are useless and that one does not need to capture them to effect one’s conquest (*Dis* 2.24 end; the Italian phrase for “leave behind” is the same as in *Pr* ch.15: *lasciare indiretto*). Machiavelli treats the ancient teaching on virtue as if it were such a fortress. It is not the object of his main attack; something else in the territory of the ancients is more fundamental. What this is can be gathered from another remark that “to hold to the way of the mean exactly cannot be done, because our nature does not agree to it” (*Dis* 3.21) Nature is certainly fundamental in the ancient teaching, for virtues are understood as those qualities that accord with nature and vices those that do not. Machiavelli goes to the heart of the matter when he asserts that the ancient teaching about virtue does not accord with nature. If Machiavelli can overthrow the ancient teaching about nature, the teaching about virtue will collapse of itself. The opposition between Machiavelli and the ancients somehow centres on this question of nature.

Machiavelli’s opposition to ancient teaching is countered by his approval of ancient practice. In this respect he contrasts the modern with the ancient very unfavourably. In the past there was great vigour, courage and love of liberty, but now the world is weak, slavish and effeminate. The difference between ancient order and modern disorder is due to a difference between ancient and modern education, itself due to a difference between ancient and modern religion. The ancient nations greatly esteemed the honour of the world and

made it their highest good; they were fierce in their actions as their religion too was fierce; and the men they “beatified” were men of worldly glory, captains of armies and leaders of nations. Modern religion, however, teaches men to make little of worldly glory and sets the highest good in humility, abjectness and contempt for human things. Hence modern men are weak and a prey to the wicked, for most people, in order to get into paradise, think rather how to bear than to revenge injuries (2.2).

Machiavelli is obviously attacking Christianity here, but he himself actually attributes these ill effects to the “baseness of the interpreters of our religion” (2.2). He seems to be suggesting, therefore, that it is not so much Christianity itself that is to blame as the base leaders who are currently in charge of teaching it (the notoriously corrupt prelates, one assumes, of Machiavelli’s own day). This suggestion, though it comes naturally enough to mind from the wording of the text, has to be taken with considerable skepticism. For would “interpreters of our religion” who were not “base” have produced a Christianity in any way like the pagan religion that Machiavelli praises? Would this Christianity have made men fierce and lovers of worldly glory, or would it have counseled what Machiavelli counsels as necessary for the defence of the fatherland? The thought is ridiculous; the need to put the heavenly before the earthly is one of the chief teachings of the founder of Christianity, and he could hardly have been a “base” interpreter.

Or could he? Machiavelli later says (3.1) what he thinks original Christianity, as opposed to some supposedly corrupted version, is like: it is the Christianity of St. Dominic and St. Francis. These saints saved the church from ruin by restoring it to its beginning, and they did this by teaching the people that it is “evil to speak evil of the evil” or, in other words, by teaching the people that it was wrong for them to criticise and resist their religious rulers however badly they were behaving but instead to leave their punishment to God. That Dominic and Francis so instructed the people could hardly, however, be something Machiavelli would admire. According to him, the effect of such instruction is just to encourage rulers to live as

badly as they can “because they do not fear that punishment which they do not see nor believe.” In other words, Dominic and Francis made the people weak and effeminate again so that they would not, like the vigorous and fierce pagans, defend themselves and their country from slavery to wicked rulers. Moreover, it was precisely this making the people weak that saved the Roman religion. What Machiavelli means, though he does not say so openly (but cf. 1.10), is that the prelates and heads of the church no more care about God or heaven than professedly worldly-minded princes. On the contrary, they live lives of wickedness and irreligion (*Dis* 1.12, *Pr* ch.11), and would long ago have lost their rule had the people had enough of the ancient valour to resist. But, thanks to Dominic and Francis, they have not.

The “base interpreters of our religion,” in other words, are not the debauched prelates but the saints, and the Christianity they preach is Christianity as it was in its origin. There is no distinction in Machiavelli’s mind between an ancient and pure Christianity and a modern and corrupt one. Christianity is pernicious in its very essence. The fact that there are debauched priests and prelates around, and more so in Machiavelli’s day than previously, is not (as it was for the Protestant Reformers) a sign that Christianity had decayed from its original purity. Rather it is a sign that the corruption present in it from the beginning might finally be reaching a crisis point. It is a sign that this inherent corruption might finally be about to destroy Christianity altogether (*Dis* 1.12), and thus to lay open the way for a revival of pagan fierceness and resistance to tyranny.

This conclusion is confirmed by the following. The Christianity that manifestly goes back to the founder of Christianity and his immediate followers taught the value of private acts of charity, the strictness of marriage and the value of celibacy. According to Machiavelli, the first must be discouraged or banned because it is used as a cloak for subversion, and the two last conflict with the need for a multitude of citizens which was what the flourishing of the ancient cities was based on (for then marriage was “freer and more desirable;” 2.2, 3.28).

REVISIONING NATURE

The fact that Machiavelli opposed Christianity is not in itself enough to show that he opposed the ancients as a whole, for there is certainly a difference between the best life pursued by the pagan philosophers and that pursued by the Christian saints. The best life for the philosophers is envisaged as something attainable here and now, not in a world yet to come. Even if the philosophers did not deny the possibility of an after life, the pursuit of philosophic contemplation is held to make the philosopher happy and blessed now. This difference, though important for an understanding of the relations between Christianity and pre-Christian philosophy, is of no importance for understanding Machiavelli. His most serious attack on Christianity is that it praises the contemplative life of peace and leisure rather than the practical life of vigorous and valorous deeds. Machiavelli attacks it therefore in that respect in which it was at one with the pagan philosophers. In his view the gentlemen of leisure are pernicious in every republic (1.55), and leisure and peace are the cause of disunion (1.1, 1.6, 2.25). It is this idleness, associated equally with ancient philosophy and Christianity, that has caused the degeneracy of the modern world.

The reason that the ancients, pagan and Christian, were wrong to prefer leisure is that they seriously underestimated just how wicked men are. “It can be said of men generally that they are ungrateful, fickle, pretentious, dissemblers, fleers from danger, eager for gain” (*Pr* ch.17), and “it is necessary [for founders and legislators of republics] to suppose that all men are bad, and will use the malignity of their spirits whenever they have free occasion” (*Dis* 1.3).

It would be a mistake to say there was not a lot of evidence for this thesis, but it would equally be a mistake to suppose that in Machiavelli it rests just at an empirical level; behind it there lies a substantial belief about nature.

> Nature has created men in a way that they can desire everything but cannot obtain everything; so that, their desire being always greater than their power of acquir-

> ing, from this results the discontent with what they possess, and their little satisfaction (1.37).
>
> Human appetites are insatiable, because having from nature the power and wish to desire everything, and from fortune the power to obtain few of them, there results continually an ill content in human minds, and a disgust with the things that are possessed (2 Preface).

This view of Machiavelli’s occurs in different forms in several different places (1.29, 2.27, 3.21). It is not, however, a particularly novel thesis; the recognition of an element of universality in human appetites was present among the ancients, both pagan and Christian (e.g. Thucydides, St. Augustine), and was used to indicate a directedness of man beyond the confines of the body and the empire of the earth to the empire of the mind which possesses all thing by knowing them. The universality of man’s desire was taken as a sign of something divine in him that could only be satisfied by the divine. What is novel and indeed revolutionary in Machiavelli, and what drives his revision of nature, is that this dimension of the divine is wholly lacking. Man’s insatiability is not a blessing but a curse and is precisely what makes him incorrigibly wicked, because it makes him constantly unsatisfied and constantly lusting for more. It is this lust that drives men to pass all the bounds of morality and good sense.

> But men commit this error, that they do not know how to put limits to their hopes; and founding themselves on these, without otherwise measuring themselves, they are ruined (2.27).

The same urge for more, the same restless ambition, is the cause of their ingratitude, fickleness, suspicion, murders and, in short, all that evil in them which makes the ancient counsel always to behave virtuously a piece of ignorant folly.

Machiavelli denies to man the dimension of the divine and treats him instead as wholly of the earth. This attempt by Machiavelli, in opposition to both the church and the pagan

philosophers, to make the earth man’s only home involves an implicit atheism and an implicit materialism. But it also has the paradoxical result, as Machiavelli’s description of the misery of man’s lot shows, of making men radically homeless on the earth. The world, because it cannot satisfy men’s yearning for the infinite, necessarily comes to be understood as hostile to man. The world or nature is such that man must forever remain frustrated.

It is within this context of an eternally frustrated human nature that Machiavelli’s teaching about the role of force in politics finds its place.

> Men always turn out bad if they are not made good by some necessity (*Pr* ch.23).
>
> Men never perform any good if not by necessity; but where choice abounds, and licence can be used, everything is suddenly filled with confusion and disorder (*Dis* 1.3).

What Machiavelli means by this contrast between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is just the contrast between the public good and the private good. Men’s badness is their selfishness, their pursuit of their own private good at the expense of that of the community. To make men good is to make them act for the public good and, since by nature they pursue only their private good, the only means for doing this is force. It is one of Machiavelli’s more emphatic teachings that what preserves republics and states and makes them last long is terror and fear. These are the causes of the beginnings of states, and if states are not restored continually to these beginnings (at least every ten years) they will perish (3.1). Indeed, so salutary is this return to the beginnings that a continually refounded republic will last for ever (3.22).

Men are by nature non-social, indeed anti-social, yet they cannot survive on their own; they are forced to live in society (1.2). Nevertheless they do not cease to be selfish and so do not cease to want to behave anti-socially; thus, if society is to continue, force must be applied to make them behave so-

cially. Once this force is relaxed, men cease to act for the benefit of the community, and the state begins to collapse from within as well as to be an easy prey to enemies from without. Ease and leisure relax that force, and that is why the ancient preference for leisure is so unrealistic and so dangerous, and why the modern world, dominated by a religion that teaches gentleness and ease, is so degenerate.

The ancient and especially the Christian teaching are also pernicious in another way, for if force works with most men, love of worldly glory works with the few and the great (1.37, 2.33). These men can be made socially useful if their private good and the common good are made to coincide, or above all if, by performing great deeds for the safety and preservation of the republic, they win for themselves honour and renown. Christianity prevents this because it teaches contempt for worldly glory, and so deprives the community of its greatest benefactors.

Machiavelli’s revolt from the classics towards the ‘realism’ that asserts that men are by nature wholly of this world, and that they are incorrigibly selfish, introduces a new conception of the nature of politics and of the purpose of government (at least it was new at the time, though it has become rather more familiar since). To get men to behave non-selfishly, as social living requires, it is useless to turn to moral education, either of the few or the many, for education presupposes that it is possible to alter human selfishness. But human nature being what it is, this is impossible. One must instead act on the view that men will always be selfish, and accordingly one must try to devise systems, institutions and so forth that will use or channel men’s selfishness in socially useful ways. Such is the teaching of the *Prince* and *Discourses* (*Pr* ch.23; *Dis* 1.4, 1.7, 1.30, 2.2, 2.23), and it sets their emphasis on methods and techniques in sharp contrast to the emphasis on education of Plato, Aristotle, the ancients generally and Christianity. Machiavelli introduces into political thought the notion of checks and balances, or of devices to play off conflicting parts against each other so that the total result is publicly beneficial. He also introduces the notion of

‘private vices, public benefits’. His thinking is very much up to date.

Nevertheless if the task of the political art is not, as the ancients said, to train men in virtue, it is still a task that is achieved by skill and knowledge. The only way to establish the right system is to know all the facts about men’s behaviour and their selfishness, and to know in addition all the devices and remedies that may be used to deal with them, the time and occasions to introduce them, with what people, in what way and so on. Knowledge of this kind, in Machiavelli’s opinion, is possible and attainable for “all the things of the world in every time have their proper counterpart in ancient times. This comes to be because, as these things are done by men who always have the same passions, it happens of necessity that they are allotted the same effect” (*Dis* 3.43, 1.39). Human affairs may be in ceaseless motion (1.6), but the engines of this motion, the passions, are always the same, and Machiavelli suggests that it is as possible to reduce the motions of men to a science as the motions of the heavens (1 Preface).

Machiavelli himself did much to prove the existence of such a science by actually attempting to bring it to perfection in his writings. The wealth and penetration of his knowledge of past and present events, the subtlety of his analyses, the fertility of his counsels, many of which retain their relevance even to the present day, are truly impressive. If the changes he wants in political practice are to take place, what is required is men endowed with the knowledge of Machiavelli. One may say, indeed, that what Machiavelli most wants is to promote the spread of this knowledge, and that helps explain why he gives advice indifferently to republics, princes and tyrants. It matters less who rules than by what principles he rules. Machiavelli indeed looked forward to a time when men who had followed and furthered his intention would also have the opportunity to put it into practice (1 Preface, 2 Preface). To achieve this goal Machiavelli imitates the captain who manages to be everywhere in a battle because “he has first ordered things in every part so as to have men who have his spirit and the modes and orders of his procedure” (3.31, 3.13-15). Cer-

tainly Machiavelli put considerable effort into creating in the minds of his young readers, and through them in the minds of many others, the same spirit and modes and orders as himself. He consciously aimed to bring about a revolution in men’s mentality.

THE REALITY BEHIND THE REVOLT

Machiavelli’s science, for all its modernity, cannot help reminding one of the passage in Plato’s *Republic* (493a6-c8) where Socrates compares the science of the sophists to learning how to handle a large and powerful animal by a study and manipulation of its passions and wants. The parallel is so close that one can learn much from it about Machiavelli’s science.

Nevertheless Machiavelli’s elaboration of his science is so complete and excellent that one can hardly imagine a sophist equaling it; or rather only a sophist with some of the qualities and devotion of a philosopher could equal it. Machiavelli appears to be such a philosophic sophist; indeed, one may say he is a sort of Plato stood on his head. He is not a philosopher who wants to raise kings up to philosophy, but a philosopher who wants to bring philosophy down to kings or rather tyrants. Philosophy’s job is not to reform men but to serve them, not to teach them philosophic loves but enable them to satisfy their unphilosophic ones. Philosophy is not only confined to Plato’s cave, it also exists for the service of the cave; it is to be ‘realistic’ and ‘useful’. No vision of the best regime is to illumine and guide political statesmanship, but rather a thorough acquaintance with the facts of men’s actual behaviour. Not what men ‘ought’ to do but what they typically do is to be the dominating factor. The knowledge that is required, and which the philosopher like Machiavelli is to provide, is not Platonic wisdom but Machiavellian technique; and it issues not in semi-divine contemplation but in semi-bestial practice. Knowledge is not wisdom but competence, supreme competence. It is a total understanding of men and their passions, a

total command over means to deal with them, and a total readiness to follow through with these means to the end.

Machiavelli rejected the ancient vision of philosophic contemplation as the best life, but a likeness of it nevertheless remains in his own writings. In order to succeed princes need Machiavellian knowledge, since here will rest their superiority. But to acquire it they will need a teacher, and the teacher, qua teacher, will be superior to the prince he teaches. Moreover the founder, qua founder of the knowledge in question, will be superior to the mere teacher of it. The highest sort of individual in Machiavelli’s world is Machiavelli himself, the prince of genuine knowledge. This height will be the height of glory, for men “have never sought anything except glory” (*RF* p.91), and so Machiavelli is presumably as much in search of glory as anyone else. He wins glory for himself by carrying out the most publicly beneficial act he is capable of. This act is also the most publicly beneficial act that, for Machiavelli, anyone is capable of: the discovery and imparting of the true art of politics.

But Machiavelli also achieves another sort of height of which he does not speak. He sees and understands all things equally and impartially; being part of the people and of the princes so as to consider the nature of both (*Pr* Epistle Dedicatory), he cannot be said truly to belong to either. He does not take sides; he offers advice to all. In effect, he achieves a certain transcendence beyond the world he describes, implicitly looking down on it from a position outside and above it. He stands over and against the world and can know it and control it because he is in some sense not part of it. His position is implicitly ‘idealist’, where this means the construction of the world or nature through the ideas of the freely creating mind. Idealism takes the place in him of the Platonic ascent from the cave, and has as object not the gazing at the world outside but the manipulating of the cave left behind. Some such idealism is indeed inevitable as soon as one views the world as matter to be managed and formed by means of the right know-how. For where knowledge is viewed as competence, as for the sake of the conquest of what is known, the knowing mind becomes to the world what the potter is to the

clay. The two poles, therefore, of such a project, or its implicit dualism, are the world or nature as a matter to be formed and the knowing mind as a free power to form.

Machiavelli considers this project only with respect to one of these poles. His attention is fixed wholly on the object he knows; he does not reflect on the nature or origin of the mind he must possess in order to know it. He does not, at least within his writings, explain or account for his own knowing. Indeed, within the limits of the horizon he adopts in those writings, he cannot do this. His all-conquering mind is present everywhere and at the same time absent everywhere. To make his position consistent one must modify it. Later writers debated whether the way to do this was to view the mind as somehow a product of the matter or the matter as somehow a product of the mind; and they gave both answers without being able to settle definitively on either. Machiavelli appears not yet to have seen the problem.

There are other ways in which Machiavelli’s preoccupation with the useful creates gaps in his thought. He holds that men are by nature selfish and that the only good by nature is the private good, or in general the pleasant. There are a number of points to note here. First, while this amounts to a sort of naturalism, it is one that does not point to an ordered pattern of values, or to a structure of the good life. By nature men are directed to the objects of their self-regarding passions, to all of them indifferently, and to none more than another. By nature all the passions are equal. Contrary to what the ancients thought, man’s soul has no natural order; there is no hierarchy of wants in it. Hence it is impossible to discover from nature a pattern of the good life; nature is in an important sense neutral or, as we say nowadays, value-free.

Second, there is no recognition in Machiavelli’s thought of the noble and the generous; of those goods that one acknowledges and loves as goods in themselves independ-ently of any benefit that might accrue from them to oneself; of goods that are importantly selfless, that require a certain self-forgetting. Their absence in Machiavelli means that there is no tragedy in his world of ‘effectual truths’. Men and cities may rise and fall but there is nothing tragic about these falls, for

there is not in them (as there is, say, in the falls recorded by Thucydides) any sense of something noble that is destroyed.

Third, the judgement that the only good is the selfish good, being an effectual truth, is on the one hand merely conventional—it expresses just the opinions of the crowd about the good, or what Socrates calls “the beliefs of the many which they believe when they gather together” (*Republic* 493a8-9)—and on the other hand just a statement of what men in fact and ordinarily pursue and does not constitute an assessment of the worth of what they pursue. Such an assessment is lacking in Machiavelli because, of course, it would be ‘useless’; there can be no point in assessing a good that men are already pursuing and could not cease to pursue. Machiavelli refuses, therefore, to pass judgement on the effectual truths he discovers. As was seen in his discussion of virtue, he just calls good and bad what the many themselves call good and bad. Any other sort of good, or bad, is relegated to human “imagination.” The result is that he loses appreciation of the fact that, whether useless and imaginary or not, judgement of effectual truths is certainly possible. There is a sense of good in which good is not conventional, in which it does express one’s view, not about what is pursued, but about the worth of what is pursued. There is therefore a sense in which one can judge the goodness of the pursued good. The recognition of this is part of what is involved in the insistence of modern non-naturalists on the ‘evaluative’ or ‘prescriptive’ nature of good. Even if one may quarrel with their analysis, there is certainly something here needing to be analysed.

There is no room for this in Machiavelli’s world of ‘effectual truths’. If, in contrast to Plato, one identifies the effectually true with the simply true and with the simply factual or knowable, the good as the noble and as the transcendent or evaluative can only be restored by first separating them from the factual and the true. ‘Values’ and ‘facts’, the ‘ought’ and the ‘is’, must be divided off from each other. How this takes place and all that it involves is, in large part, the history of modern thought.

As for Machiavelli himself, he holds that the truth of what he says is attested to by the facts. One learns the truth

about human nature by studying the facts of human behaviour in the present and in history. These facts show that all men are selfish, that they pursue only their private good, and that they only pursue the common good when, by arrangement or force, there is no other way to the private good. But does Machiavelli mean that all the facts of all men’s behaviour show this? He is not so cavalier with the evidence as to say that there are not even appearances to the contrary; he just denies that they are more than appearances. Time, “the father of all truth,” eventually reveals the truth that lies behind them, the truth that acts that appear unselfish are really selfish (1.3). The example Machiavelli gives in the context is of a group and not of individuals: the later selfish acts of the group prove that the earlier acts of the group were selfish too. It is hardly necessary to say that this is inadequate. If groups acting as a whole are selfish it does not follow that all the individuals in it are; and if later they act selfishly it does not follow that they were doing so earlier.

All these criticisms leveled here against Machiavelli’s thought are, to be sure, made from the stance of disinterested theory and so from a stance quite different from Machiavelli’s. His stance is that of the founder or the legislator, for whom, as he said, it is a practical necessity to proceed on the assumption of universal human badness. Machiavelli adopts a practical not a theoretical perspective because he wants to speak ‘usefully’. The practical perspective is the ‘true’ perspective (it is the ‘effectually true’ perspective) and replaces every other. No exceptions to this (practical) thesis are allowed; even saints are selfish at heart. Machiavelli’s thesis proves thus to be less a deduction from the facts than a construction imposed on them in the name of the ‘useful’; those facts alone are genuine which accord with that construction, and the rest are denied or reinterpreted. Machiavelli narrows down his vision in order to get results, in order to be useful. The consequence is that the ancient teaching (or any alternative teaching) is not just left behind, but is ruled out of court from the start. Nevertheless, Machiavelli presented his vision with such energy and force, and so impressed it on the minds of many who came after him, that even from within the theo-

retical perspective his practical perspective on the facts became identified with the facts. Contrary to the ancient tradition, practice came to determine theory, and not theory practice.

Still, Machiavelli’s vision, for all his claims to the contrary, is itself ‘imaginary’. The Machiavellian prince and the Machiavellian republic do not exist in Machiavelli’s day, at least not in their perfection, for it is part of his intention to bring them about. One may well wonder, indeed, whether either is really feasible. Is it in fact psychologically possible for a man to be as ruthlessly calculating as Machiavelli would require? Can one really silence that voice of conscience, that sense that there just are some limits one may not cross? And if one can silence it in some respects can one silence it altogether and not drive oneself mad? One will certainly need to if Machiavellian projects are to succeed.

But whatever the truth about this may be, it is clear that even for Machiavelli the Machiavellian prince is an ideal and not, or not yet, a reality. Machiavelli may have been able to change the content of *the good* in the name of the ‘real’ and the ‘useful’, but he could not change the nature of *good*. Men and societies are always governed by visions and ideals, for the good or the object of their pursuit is first an object of aspiration before it is a realised fact. The good, whether ‘real’ or not, is always first an ideal. One may raise the question, therefore, about the validity of Machiavelli’s ideal. And this is a most serious question, for his practical perspective, by which he determines the true and the false and the genuine and the apparent, is the perspective of this ideal. What can be appealed to, then, to justify it (for it is hardly self-justifying)? Not to the ‘truth’, for, as far as he is concerned, this ideal determines the truth and not vice versa, so any such appeal would be circular. Nor to ‘results’, because how is one to judge that the results of his ideal are better than those of the ideal of the ancients or of Christianity? If ‘better’ is understood, as Machiavelli always understands it, by reference to his ideal, the justification will beg the question. What we need to find is a sense of ‘better’ and a sense of ‘true’ that can be determined independently of Machiavelli’s ideal and of actual

practice. In other words, we must put the search for knowledge before practice. Theory must, after all, determine practice.

One is reminded here of Socrates, who begins by not knowing what the true and the good are and so sets out, by questioning, to find them. The ideal is something he discovers by searching. Machiavelli begins with the intention to write something useful; he begins therefore by knowing, or at least by assuming, what the useful is. But if he knows the useful, he must know the good too, for the useful is that which is a means to or for the sake of the good. In short, Machiavelli begins by taking his ideal for granted. He does not discover it; he presupposes it. One may well wonder, therefore, whose account is more ‘realistic’, Machiavelli’s or Socrates’. Or rather one has to ask how ‘reality’ comes to be—by discovery or by construction? If the predominant modern answer is the latter, it is clear how Machiavelli can be regarded as the first or founding modern.

But be that as it may, one may note that Socrates should certainly be judged the more philosophic, as well as the more serious. Machiavelli does not care enough about the good to make sure he knows what it really is. He wants to be ‘useful’ straightaway. He is like a doctor who prescribes his cure by assuming, without ever checking to make sure, that he knows what disease his patient is suffering from and what health is. It can hardly be surprising if the patient gets worse. The development of modern thought, insofar as it is in debt to Machiavelli, is, one may say, the history of Machiavelli’s ‘cure’. How sick or healthy the patient has become over the intervening years is a question much to be pondered.

CHAPTER S2

Bacon and Descartes: Science as Machiavellian ‘Useful’ Knowledge

A: BACON
ORPHIC CHRISTIANITY

The importance of modern science as a factor guiding the thought of modern non-naturalists has already been noted. The appeal to a scientific notion of fact is crucial to the claim that naturalism is a fallacy, and without it that claim loses much of its plausibility. A lot turns, therefore, on noting that the two thinkers who perhaps did most to establish the dominance of the modern scientific mentality, Bacon and Descartes, were themselves both dominated by a Machiavellian ‘realist’ or ‘useful’ perspective.

Bacon criticises ancient thought, very much as Machiavelli had done, for its uselessness and its unrealistic or imaginary character (*MI* Preface, *Works* I.200; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.389). He too wants instead a knowledge that will be useful and applicable to men as they are. But there is a difference as regards the sort of knowledge Bacon thinks this is and the sort of results it will have. Machiavelli thought of a science of man useful for rulers in their aim of successful ruling, but Bacon of a science of nature useful to all men generally for the ease and comfort of life. He wants, that is, not so much political philosophy as natural philosophy, “such natural philosophy as shall not vanish in the fume of subtile, sublime or delectable speculation, but such as shall be operative to the endowment and benefit of man’s life” (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.187). By implication he criticises Machiavelli for being too much like Socrates, for leaving natural philosophy aside and applying knowledge only to “manners and policy” (*AL* bk.1, *Works* VI.135). Bacon, however, wants both kinds of knowledge,

and wants to make both contribute to the use and benefit of man. His political thought is accordingly rather different. Where Machiavelli is ruthless and brutal, Bacon is compassionate and mild; the former's teaching that princes must be half-beasts is regarded as a corrupt (though ingenious) interpretation of the ancient myth; his "evil arts," those "dispensations from the laws of charity and integrity," may bring man to fortune by the shortest way, but the shortest way is the foulest, and "surely the fairer way is not much about" (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.205, 385).

Machiavelli, of course, justified his evil arts on the ground of simple necessity, but Bacon is not convinced. It is indeed true, as Machiavelli thought, that men are "full of savage and unreclaimed desires of profit, of lust, of revenge," it is also true that the philosophers' heaven is a pretence and too high for man (*AL* bk.1, *Works* VI.127; bk.2, *Works* VI.311-312). But there is no need to have recourse to terror and force, for men can be charmed into sociability as Orpheus charmed the wild beasts with his music. This is done, according to Bacon, when men "give ear to precepts, to laws, to religion, sweetly touched with eloquence and persuasion of books, of sermons, of harangues" (*AL* bk.1, *Works* VI.146), which Machiavelli would doubtless have considered unrealistic. But Bacon's thought is not quite as it seems.

First, it is clear that Bacon does not think men's selfishness is hereby changed; rather it is rendered harmless. Politics and morals are, in his view, very much a matter of manipulating the passions, of mastering the affections by setting them off against each other (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.337-338). Second, and more importantly, the religion he has in mind is somewhat new. It has less to do with the "curious speculations" and "fury of controversy" of traditional theology (of which he sharply disapproves; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.398), and more with useful natural philosophy. Just before the mention of Orpheus, Bacon has pointed out the superiority of "inventors and authors of new arts, endowments and commodities towards man's life" to "founders and uniters of states and cities" (*AL* bk.1, *Works* VI.145; cf. *NO* bk.1, aph.129, *Works* I.335-338). The benefits of the latter are confined "within the

circle of an age or a nation," but those of the former are "like the benefits of heaven, which are permanent and universal." Further, founders only achieve their goal with "strife and perturbation," but inventors have the true character of divine presence, coming "without noise or agitation." That is why the Greeks and Romans preferred inventors of arts useful to man, making them gods, while they made founders only heroes. Bacon's religion too proves to have a lot to do with such inventors. Certainly neither it nor laws, precepts and harangues will be effective if they cannot be heard over the tumult, as is likely to be the case where Machiavellian founders are in operation. But they will be able to work during the peaceful coming of Baconian inventors. Orpheus, in fact, emerges as an apt symbol for Bacon's thought, for in his person Orpheus combines natural philosophy and political philosophy together: his methods work to control both nature and man (*SV* no.xi, Orpheus, *Works* XIII.11-14).

In preferring inventors to founders, Bacon expressly overturns Machiavelli's hierarchy. This leads to a milder view of politics and a more tolerant attitude towards Christianity. Bacon calls for God's blessing on his attempt to introduce useful science, and holds it to be a work of charity, which is the "corrective spice" that makes knowledge "so sovereign" (*MI*, *Distributio Operis*, *Works* I.227-228; *AL* bk.1, *Works* VI.94). This view of charity and Christianity is different from the view that prevailed up to his time. In fact he reinterprets both so that they involve a compassion or pity for man that is less concerned to lead him to heaven than to set him at ease on the earth; it is the beginning of secular Christianity, familiar today but novel at the time. This is evident from the fact that in some 1,500 years of Christianity up to Bacon, there had been no, or little, impulse towards Baconian useful science, but there had been towards the useless and speculative science of the ancients and the scholastics. Bacon, however, wants the limits of reason in spiritual things to be far more narrowly drawn. This includes a rejection of the traditional discourses on felicity or the highest good, because they are "by the Christian faith discharged." Christianity teaches us what is best by authority from God, and it is our duty "to ac-

knowledge our minority and embrace the felicity which is by hope of the future world” (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.311). Man is therefore released from the speculations of ancient philosophy and theology, and freed to concentrate instead on studies that are more useful.

The bearing of Bacon’s thought here, like the more explicit statement of Descartes later (*DM* p.8), is that the matters of faith are better believed than inquired into, and that if we leave heaven to a future hope we can safely embrace the earth (*MI* Preface, *Works* I.208-209). Bacon’s Christianity is a practical and not a contemplative Christianity, and so not exactly the sort of Christianity Machiavelli was opposed to. So much is evident in the claim that it is practical Christianity that is in accord with charity, because, says Bacon, charity sets the common good of mankind above the private good of individuals. On this basis he rejects Aristotle’s preference for the contemplative life, since contemplation is a private, not a public, good, and is anyway not appropriate for man, for “in this theatre of men’s life, it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers on” (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.314). According to Bacon, therefore, Christianity advocates a useful knowledge, one devoted to improving man’s lot here below, that will repair the effects of the fall by restoring to man his lordship over creation just as religion and faith restore to him his innocence (*NO* bk.2, aph.52, *Works* I.538; *MI*, *Distributio Operis*, *Works* I. 27-228).

Bacon speaks as if it were clear his view of Christianity is correct, but it is opposed to the view taken by thinkers before him. In the case of Aquinas, for instance, we may note the following. First of all charity has two objects, God as primary and one’s fellow man as secondary; and therefore, the life of contemplation, which directly and immediately pertains to the love of God, is better and more meritorious than the practical life, which more directly pertains to the love of one’s neighbour. Secondly, as regards the superiority of the common good (a point Bacon appeals to in justification of his own view), Aquinas notes that the good of the whole is lower than the extrinsic good to which the whole is ordered, so here again devotion directly ordered to God, who is the good to which

the universe and mankind is ordered, would be better than devotion directly ordered to mankind. Thirdly, where benefit to mankind is concerned, care for their spiritual good, that is the salvation of their souls, is better than care for their physical good, that is the ease and comfort of life, for the good of the soul is higher than the good of the body (*ST* IIa IIae, q182 a2, q39 a2 ad2, q73 a3).

Bacon’s claim that Christianity is on his side not only ignores these points; it ignores the story of Martha and Mary (expressly referred to by Aquinas to justify the supremacy of the contemplative life; *ST* IIa IIae q182 a1). Bacon’s is evidently a non-traditional Christianity that reflects the extent to which the good of the earth overshadows the good of heaven in his mind; it owes far more to Machiavelli than it does to either scripture or the Church. One does not, however, have to doubt the sincerity of Bacon’s concern with heaven; sufficient to note how accidental it is to his principal thought. Heaven could disappear and little of that thought would suffer. Bacon’s compassionate Christianity, devoted to the relief of man’s estate, is already ceasing to be a Christianity that has much need of heaven. It is becoming, in many respects, the secular Christianity of today where heaven and God are, to say the least, problematic, but where compassion and concern for one’s fellow man, above all in temporal matters, are beyond question, and, one may say, exhaust almost all the substance it still has. It is a Machiavellian sort of Christianity, massively sure about the earth, but dubious, not to say embarrassed, about heaven.

As for Bacon himself, while he adopts Machiavelli’s perspective, he also corrects his knowledge. Machiavelli may have rightly perceived man’s selfishness but he underestimated his power. Machiavelli holds that what causes problems in dealing with men is that their desires stretch to everything but fortune prevents them getting everything; fortune can indeed be overcome, but only by accommodating oneself to the times (*Pr* ch.25). Bacon, however, rejects the error of those who think that men’s power and faculties cannot pass beyond the point they have already reached, or that the sciences “have their Hercules’ Pillars, which bound the

desires and hopes of mankind,” for there is a kind of knowledge that “offers such broad paths to human power, as (in the present state of things) human thought can scarcely comprehend or imagine” (*MI* Preface, *Works* I.200; *NO* bk.2, aph.5, *Works* I.347).

Man’s power over nature or fortune (Machiavelli used both terms) is not limited in the way Machiavelli thought; fortune can be overcome by frontal assault, not just by adjustment to the times. The force and fear Machiavelli thought were necessary to keep men in check are not necessary, at least not in so extreme a form, for one can force nature to yield to art those goods men desire but which nature keeps back. The knowledge that is required is one that will conquer nature, which is “at once a sounder and grander ambition,” so that at length “we may hand over to men their fortunes, now that their understanding has been emancipated and, as it were, come of age” (*NO* bk.1 aph.129, *Works* I.337; bk.2 aph.52, *Works* I.538). Thus by combining political with natural philosophy, it will be possible, like Orpheus, to use sweet and gentle methods to make men sociable. Machiavelli’s teaching is both unnecessarily corrupt and unnecessarily cruel; there is a fairer way to the same goal that is indeed “not much about,” a way that is both charitable and Christian, provided these are suitably and carefully reinterpreted (note, by the way, that the fairer way does not differ from the fouler in its goal but in its route). A picture of the state that will thus be produced is given by Bacon in his *New Atlantis*, but before examining that it is desirable to get clearer about the nature of the science that will lead to it.

EXPERIMENTING WITH NATURE

According to Bacon, the first thing to get right is the end of knowledge. “It is impossible to proceed rightly in the course when the goal itself is not rightly placed and fixed. Now, the true and legitimate goal of the sciences is none other than this, to endow human life with new discoveries and resources” (*NO* bk.1, aph.81, *Works* I.287). It is here, thinks Bacon, that

a fundamental error has been committed, for most men pursue other goals, as gain or reputation, and fall continually into disputes and wrangling (*NO* bk.1, aph.122, *Works* I.328; aph.91, *Works* I.302). The uselessness of existing knowledge and the fact it is full of controversies are both signs that things have gone badly wrong (*NO* bk.1, aph.73, *Works* I.279; aph.76, *Works* I.282), and that a thorough renewal, in the light of the true goal, is required.

The renewal must be radical, because as things stand men’s minds are full of confused and fallacious notions. On the one hand, the unaided senses, which the mind is too ready to follow, are not adequate guides to what nature is really like, and on the other hand, the daily habit of life has filled the mind, through depraved teaching, with the “emptiest idola” (*NO* bk.1, aph.50, *Works* I.258ff.; *Preface* to *NO*, *Works* I.234; MI, *Works* I.219). To correct this, it is no use having recourse to the existing logic, for that just uses the false notions already in the mind and does nothing to remove them (*NO* bk.1, aph.14, *Works*: I 243). “And so, the art of logic, taking its precautions, when, as we said, it was too late, failed entirely in restoring the matter to order, and rather served to render error permanent than to open out the truth” (*NO* bk.1, *Preface*, *Works* I.234). A new method, a new logic is required. The whole work of the mind must be commenced anew, and the mind must not be left to itself to follow the senses but must be forced instead to rely on aids, instruments and experiments, so that the matter takes place as it were “by machinery.” In this way the road from the senses to the intellect will be well constructed and the sciences made to rest on a firm and solid basis (*NO* bk.1, aph.76, *Works* I.282; *MI*, *Works* I.195).

The key to success here is that while the senses are too gross to judge nature directly, they can judge it with artificial aids; for they can report the truth about experiments which themselves report the truth about nature. “We, therefore, lay no great stress upon the immediate and natural perceptions of the senses, but desire the senses to judge only of experiments and experiments to judge of things” (*MI*, *Works* I.218; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.267). Bacon’s new method is meant to restore

a "legitimate familiarity" (*MI*, *Works* I.195) between the mind and things, but it is clear that he only thinks such a method is necessary in the first place because he believes that the mind and things are by nature radically divorced. We have as such no direct access to the nature of things, and though instruments help us to overcome this, we only ever get indirect access. The original divorce is never abolished. The mind and the senses are not by nature fitted to know nature. True knowledge only comes from experiments and experiments only reveal nature's truths if they put her to the torture (*MI*, *Distributio Operis*, *Works* I.222-223; *NO* bk.1, aph.98, *Works* I.308-309; AL bk.2, *Works* VI.188).

This new method of knowing is meant to replace the "hasty" abstractions of the ancients (*NO* bk.1, aph.14, 125, *Works* I.243, 331-332), which certainly did rest on a belief in the reliability of the unaided senses. The truths of nature were supposed, by the ancients, to be revealed by our immediate and natural perceptions, though not in such a way as to be immediately obvious. The intelligible being of perceived things needed to be abstracted by the mind's own reflective activity, and this required training. The logic and formal disputations of the schools were designed to assist this process. The intelligible realities the mind thus came to know were actually present in objects as they are perceived, and were only opaque because particularised in individual material things. What is needed, therefore, is not experiments but meditative observation; not violence but quiet contemplation. This ancient view of knowledge as an ascent from the sensible to the intelligible level within the sphere of nature immediately accessible to perception is replaced by Bacon with a view of knowledge as a shift away from what is perceived to something that is, as such, never perceived. The object of knowledge is displaced beyond the world of ordinary life. The truth lies behind the familiar world, not within it. As a result the whole context and content of ancient thinking is swept aside, and the harmony between man and nature, mind and things, which characterised that thinking, is simply lost. Knowledge is marked by violence to nature, not reverence; by work, not contemplation. Bacon's project, just as much as Machia-

velli’s, while aimed at making man more at home on the earth, seems only to succeed in achieving the opposite.

The divorce between mind and things, and the consequent need for artificial aids to effect any kind of contact between them, is absolutely fundamental to the whole of Bacon’s scientific method. His induction, whatever else it is, is above all experimental; it has far more to do with crucial test cases than with enumeration of particulars. That is why it is so firmly committed to producing results, for if knowledge comes by experiments, it comes by the results that one can force nature to produce. And the value of those results is that they are visible effects that thereby reveal the invisible powers, the subtle secrets, of nature. For Bacon, knowledge becomes inseparable from power.

To know is to know the realities of nature, but these are only revealed with the aid of human art, and art only works because it uses nature to force nature. “For the accomplishment of results man can do nothing more than apply natural bodies and withdraw them; the rest nature transacts within” (*NO* bk.1, aph.4, *Works* I.242). Thus one uses the operative power of one natural body so to effect another that it displays its operative power in other effects. What one comes to know is a principle of operation, of producing results, and what one uses to know is a principle of operation, of producing results. Indeed, once experiments are the only access to the realities of nature, it is inevitable that all one should know of nature, and all that one should suppose a nature to be, is a power to produce or act in certain determinate ways, as defined within the terms of the experiment. To know what a nature is, therefore, is to know a principle of action, and so to know how to make something come to be. The principle of knowledge is also and necessarily a principle of operation.

Man’s knowledge of nature is at the same time man’s power to manipulate and exploit nature; that is, to apply different things that have different effects in such a way that other effects are produced, effects that one can use for the benefit of human life. Bacon states the matter as follows:

> Upon a given body to generate and superinduce a new nature or natures, is the work and aim of human power. And to discover the form of a nature, or its true difference, or the nature originating nature, or the source of emanation (for these are available terms which approach nearest to a description of the thing), is the work and aim of human knowledge (*NO* bk.2, aph.1, *Works* I.341-342).

What is meant by a form is stated thus:

> Though in nature nothing really exists except individual bodies, exhibiting pure individual acts according to law, yet in the matter of learning, that same law, with its investigation, discovery and explication, is the foundation both of knowledge and practice. This law and its paragraphs are what we understand by the name of forms (*NO* bk.2, aph.2, *Works* I.343).

Since a law just states an order or rule of action, it is inevitable, given Bacon's orientation, that his study of nature should be a study of the *laws* of nature. That this is what science is about is familiar today, but it was Bacon who first stated it so clearly and realised so well its implications.

There is, not surprisingly, an immediate connection between science, as Bacon conceives of it, and technology, for it is these forms or laws that will emancipate man's power, and exalt it to "new efficients and methods of operating" (*NO* bk.2, aph.17, *Works* I.386). Only, indeed, with respect to such "utility" will science, in Bacon's opinion, "descend to the grasp of the vulgar" (*NO*, Preface, *Works* I.237). In this he was right. Science is so much a part of modern civilization, so universally recognised to be a good and actively supported as such, by peoples and governments, because of its use for "relieving our estate." The subtleties of scientific experiments and theories pass most of us by, but the justification of science, in political and rhetorical terms, is technology; this is what, for governments and the "vulgar," science is all about. Because of this, science is for us a fundamentally political

fact, and its role in the government of contemporary man is profound. Modern civilization is very much a marriage of natural and political philosophy; the political task of government has become inextricably bound up with the conquest or exploitation of nature by science. Bacon was not the only one to work to bring this about, but he was arguably the first.

In view of this political dimension of Bacon’s science, it is of some moment to notice just what view of nature it is tied to and promotes. Ancient thought distinguished four elements, or causes, in the being of nature: final, formal, efficient and material. Bacon removes the first and keeps the last three, but only in name. The changes in meaning of these last three are good examples of Bacon’s declared practice to keep to ancient terms but to alter the sense (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.217). To take forms first, these are, as already said, laws of action, but they are especially associated with “simple natures,” like heat and cold, for “when we speak of forms we mean nothing more than those laws and determinations of pure action which ordain and constitute any simple nature” (*NO* bk.2, aph.17, *Works* I.385). These forms of simple natures can be made known by investigation, but it is a “vain pursuit” to inquire into the forms of lion, oak, gold or water (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.220).

In speaking of the forms of these latter substances it may appear that Bacon thinks they have forms that constitute them as what they are, that are, in Aristotle’s sense, the “what it was to be” of such things (though not forms that one can usefully investigate). But it is clear he thinks of these forms, not as something single and one, but as a combination of simple forms, or, as he calls them, “copulative forms” (*NO* bk.2, aph.17, *Works* I.385). It also emerges that it is possible to know these forms if one knows the forms that go to make them up. So, one may suppose, it is vain to investigate these combined forms as if they were single essences, but not vain to investigate them as compounds of simpler things to which they can be reduced (it is certainly the case that, the nearer one gets to simple natures, the more plain and perspicuous will the compound thing appear; *NO* bk.2, aph.8, *Works* I.352). The form of gold, for instance, turns out to be the

combination of such forms as yellow, heavy, ductile, malleable (*NO* bk.2, aph.5, *Works* I.346).

Such an account of gold cannot but remind one of Locke who defines gold in virtually the same terms (*Ess* II.23, §37). But while there is a connection, there is also an important difference, for Bacon means by these terms some law of pure action not as such accessible to the senses, but Locke means by them the very sensible impression or idea itself that one has. This change is due to a change in the conception of knowledge effected by Descartes. Here, to get clearer what Bacon means by form, it is desirable to consider his definition of a particular instance, heat. Heat, he declares, is “motion” (the genus) that is “expansive, restrained, and struggling through the lesser parts of a body” (the differences) (*NO* bk.2, aph.20, *Works* I.397). Bacon is careful to point out that this is a definition of motion “relative to the universe,” and not relative to the senses of man (for heat in this latter sense is manifestly something different). The definition is evidently a law of pure action in that it just expresses that determinate pattern of operation that constitutes this particular nature. It differs from a modern scientific law only in that it is not expressed mathematically (that was a change that came with Descartes), for though we say heat is molecular motion we state the properties (“differences”) of this motion in terms of ratios of energy, molecular oscillation and so forth.

Bacon distinguishes his forms from material and efficient causes, but these latter are identified by him with particular and limited sorts of thing, as fire and boiling water are such causes for heat. They are, as he says, the vehicles or bearers of the form. What one knows about heat in knowing that fire and boiling water are bearers of it is not very much. All one knows is particular classes of hot things. But to know the form of heat as such is to know it without this limitation, and so to know something that is applicable to many different matters, and that is a principle of operation of far wider scope. So also our own modern law of gravity, for instance (gravity is, like heat, a simple nature for Bacon; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.220), is applicable everywhere and to everything, and knowledge of it is far wider and more potent than knowledge

that apples and pears and even planets are bearers of it. For we can use the knowledge of the law, but not of the bearers of the law, to put satellites round the earth or men round the moon. That is why the efficient and material causes are "trifling and superficial, and of very little use to true and active science" (*NO* bk.2, aph.2, *Works* I.342-43), while forms, on the contrary, are so important.

Bacon has thus reduced the causes relevant to science from the traditional four to one only, the formal cause. But contrary to the words he uses (though doubtless in accord with his intention) forms themselves turn out to be a particular sort of efficient and material cause. For forms are reduced to laws of action, and these laws of action turn out to be the efficient causality of small particles. The motion, for instance, that constitutes heat is motion in the "lesser particles" of a body (*NO* bk.2, aph.20, *Works* I.394). Bacon is not unequivocal in his references to the theory of atomism, though it is evident he held it in some sense (*NO* bk.1, aph.50, *Works* I.259; *SV* no.8, *Works* XIII.432). His reservations are due to his disbelief in a vacuum and in the unchangeableness of matter, and so are reservations not so much about the theory as about a certain form of it. He certainly thinks inquiry will be referred to "true particles, as they are found to exist" (*NO* bk.2, aph.8, *Works* I.306). His definition of heat certainly comes close to 'molecular motion', and therefore to a definition that states only heat's material cause (the motion is in the lesser particles), together with the manner of its operation (the motion is expansive and so forth), or the specification of its efficient causality.

Strictly speaking, then, it is not the efficient and material cause that Bacon has got rid of (though he does confine such causes to the lesser particles), but the formal cause. For Bacon's forms are not what was anciently meant by forms. This term originally referred to the intelligible being of a thing, or what makes it the sort of thing it is. Each natural substance, whether visible to sense or not, has its own proper form which cannot be reduced to the combination of its "simple natures," but is rather one and distinct, and unique to itself. Such a form, moreover, is not a law of action, but the determination of an essence, or a '*whatness'*. With respect to

'gross' objects, it is accessible to experience without the aid of experiments (in fact experiments would divert attention from it), and, in order to understand it, what is required is the abstracting thought of the intellect. Bacon calls these forms "figments of the human mind" and "empty compendia of contemplation," and attributes their presence in Plato to a misplaced love of theology, and in Aristotle to an inordinate love of logic (*NO* bk.1, aphs.51, 63, 66, *Works* I.259, 263-65; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.162). Bacon's science gets rid of such forms, as it gets rid in general of what is knowable from immediate perceptions, and is reductive in spirit. The true causes of things lie in "subordinate and lower truths," not in the "highest universals," and it is the mark of a "shallow" philosopher to look for them there (*NO* bk.1, aph.48, *Works* I.259).

If the real and physical causes in nature are Baconian forms in the sense just explained, it is clear that there is no place for final causes and no need to look for them. The only effect of introducing such causes is to impede and corrupt natural philosophy. Final causes are, indeed, just constructions of man: "they clearly have their origin rather in the nature of man than that of the universe" and manifest a sort of "anthropomorphism" (*ibid*.; *AL* bk.2, VI.188). Bacon does also say, however, that physical and final causes are both "true and compatible" provided they are kept to their proper spheres, for final causes declare an intention but physical causes a consequence only. The intention in the case of the former is regarded as an imposition from without and not something inherent in nature. For God's providence is enhanced by the fact that he manages to get out of nature consequences that he intends but that nature does not. Note also in this same context that Bacon declares his preference for the natural philosophy of Democritus, "who did not suppose a mind or reason in the frame of things, but attributed the form thereof, able to maintain itself, to infinite essays or proofs of nature, which they term fortune" (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.164-65). In other words, it is an accident as far as nature is concerned that things have the results they do have, that eyelashes, for instance, safeguard the sight or that hides protect animals from heat and cold.

There is, as such, no reason in nature, and no ends; what ends there may be are externally imposed by God, or man.

One should, however, note that the examples Bacon uses to reject ends, and which are the sort usually referred to when they are rejected (as that eyelashes safeguard the sight), could, for ancient thought, only be understood to be part of nature by reference to the form of the whole creature whose parts one was considering, not by reference to the parts on their own, or to the matter or the law of action of small particles. Bacon has removed such forms, except possibly in the case of man (where he adduces a scriptural reason for making a difference—a reason that, of course, will not be regarded once scripture is rejected as a guide to the study of nature; *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.162). So he has removed the only possible basis of understanding.

Such a basis has, to be sure, been in part restored by modern genetics, where the whole creature that is generated is a result of a programme laid down at the beginning of the process and followed throughout (it was a consideration of the fact that things are born from the “seeds” of their parents that was one of the factors leading Aristotle to a belief in ends, as well as forms, and not logic as Bacon said; *Physics* 190b1ff., 199b7-9). But even genetics is not at the same philosophical level as Aristotle’s *Physics*. The Aristotelian doctrine on ends is broader and more subtle than the eyelash example allows. For according to this doctrine, in any change or motion or development whatever all four causes will be present and, moreover, the final cause does not operate save in so far as it is present in the efficient cause. The point is this. The efficient cause causes the effect that it does because it is as such ordered towards producing that effect. No implication of consciousness is intended here; just a statement of the nature of the causality of the efficient cause, namely that it is efficient of this rather than that (as fire is efficient of heat and not, say, of musical harmony). To this extent Bacon’s laws of action implicitly include ends, as do scientific laws in general, for they state the orderedness to action of a particular form in nature. Bacon ignores this more subtle point and rejects ends altogether because he rejects them at the macroscopic level. In

any case, once one has the law, there is no need, as far as modern science is concerned, to say anything explicitly about ends; to do so would anyway be a purely speculative point, however true, and would be of no use to practice. For such reasons Bacon’s science, which is after all the emergence of our modern natural science (our ‘physics’), eschews final causes. Modern science and the objects of it are ‘neutral’: there are no ends in nature, and that is true also of man, in so far as he is considered ‘scientifically’.

THE SCIENTIFIC CITY

Bacon presents us, in his *New Atlantis*, with a vision of the utopian future that the emancipation of man’s power through experimental science will make possible. This work is understood as in part a reply to Plato’s *Critias* (where the Atlantis story first appears in written form). Bacon’s vision of the best city is quite different from Plato’s, for it is subject, not to Platonic philosophers, the lovers of Plato’s forms, but to Baconian scientists, the lovers of Bacon’s forms. These Baconian scientists are the so-called fathers of Salomon’s House. Salomon’s House abounds with the blessings of science as Bacon understood them. Strangers who land there are always reluctant to leave, and the strangers of Bacon’s story regard it as a picture of their salvation in heaven, a land of angels who give them nothing but consolations and comforts (*NA*, *Works* V.369). Yet this desire to stay and this judgement are not the result of understanding the science of Salomon’s House, but of feeling and enjoying its useful effects (as Bacon indicated would be the case).

The community of scientists is quite clearly the highest group in the land. They are beings who inspire reverence and awe; they are clad in noble garments like kings; they give their blessings like bishops (they are evidently much higher than the Christian priest who is mentioned); they are most benevolent and kind; the father in the story “had an aspect as if he pitied man.” The centre of their scientific research is “the noblest foundation that ever was on earth,” and its purpose is

"the knowledge of causes and secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible;" to be told about it is the "greatest jewel" the father has to give (*NA*, *Works* V.382, 395, 397-98).

Bacon gives a long description of Salomon's House and its experiments, which is clearly meant to be the highlight of the narration. It comes now as a bit of an anti-climax. Fertile though Bacon's imagination was, reality has far outstripped it. His New Atlantis is scientifically pretty primitive. But Bacon anticipated this; he clearly felt his science would progress beyond the limits of imagination, and not just in discoveries but also in the art of discovery itself (*NO* bk..1, aph.130, *Works* I.301). Still, if his vision of science is primitive, his vision of scientists is incredible. Here it is not a question of reality outstripping imagination, but of imagination outstripping reality. The scientists' learning and accordingly their authority extend not just over science but over morals, religion and government too. It is a father of Salomon's House who recognizes the presence of God in the wondrous event that brought the Bible to the land; it is scientists who decide what is really useful and what may be published and what revealed to the state. The importance of religion, of sound laws (especially as regards the family), of exhortations, reproofs, and censures, and in general of pious and dignified means of control and self-control, as all subject to censorship by scientists, is particularly obvious (*NA*, *Works* V.371-73, 381-95, 411-13).

These are clearly the sweet and gentle methods of Orpheus that replace the violence of Machiavelli. But it is significant that they are needed; science may satisfy men's wants but one must still exercise traditional control over those wants lest they get out of hand. The conquest of nature and fortune is not total. Many things we have to overcome just by putting up with them (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.211-212). Bacon was well aware that human power and human knowledge are double-edged; "more power and more knowledge enlarge human nature but do not bless it" (*NO* bk.2, aph.49, *Works* I.388). It is necessary to learn what is really useful to man, and more than science is needed to make science beneficial. "Let none be moved by the objection that the arts and sciences will be de-

graded to the ends of malice, luxury and the like… Let the human race recover the rights over nature which by God’s endowment belong to it; and let power be given it, right reason and sound religion will direct its application” (*NO* bk.2, aph.129, *Works* I.301).

There is evidently a study and a practice that are higher and more important than science, the study and practice that direct science, and that do need above all to busy themselves about ends. For Bacon did after all say that final causes do not corrupt knowledge “when brought to bear on the actions of man” (*NO* bk.2, aph.2, *Works* I.302). Bacon thought his scientists would possess this knowledge, doubtless in part because he thought advances in moral and political philosophy were dependent on advances in natural philosophy (*NO* bk.1, aph.80, *Works* I.274). He was deceived. For whatever may be said about the dependence of moral and political philosophy on natural philosophy in the case of ancient thought, such dependence, we have sadly learnt, does not obtain in the case of modern thought. The union of the two philosophies has not brought the results Bacon expected. Our contemporary Atlantis has proved to be as much a nightmare as a dream. Bacon’s Orpheus sings with a halting note.

B: DESCARTES
UNDOUBTED CERTAINTIES

There is considerable similarity between the thought of Bacon and Descartes; both think knowledge should be useful and that such knowledge will make us masters of nature; both think it is necessary to remove the errors of the mind before this knowledge or science can begin; both hold that this science must more or less completely replace the existing sciences of their day; and in their attempt to state their thought they both use ancient terms with new meanings (Descartes, *Reg* no.III, *HR* I.7). There are, however, also a number of important differences.

In his *Discourse on Method* Descartes has left us an account of the history of his opinions, and especially of how he

came to believe that "there was no learning in the world which was such as he had been made previously to hope" (*DM* p.5, *HR* I.84) This disillusionment is hardly surprising. He had, he says, been "nourished in letters since infancy," and because he had been persuaded that thereby one could acquire "a clear and assured knowledge of all that is useful to life," he had "an extreme desire to learn them" (p.4, *HR* I.83). By his own confession, then, Descartes' orientation was from the start towards the useful; his disillusionment sprang directly from the fact he did not find the usefulness he was after.

The useful is very much tied in Descartes' mind to the certain, and it is because he found his studies left him "embarrassed by so many doubts and errors" that he gave them up. Doubtful or false knowledge will not be much use—if one does not understand nature one will not be able to get fruits out of her—and ancient science is useless because it is uncertain (as the ceaseless disputes and controversies abundantly show). Ancient science is also useless because it makes no effort to be useful. Of all existing sciences, the one Descartes was above all pleased with was mathematics because of the "certitude and evidence" of its reasons. But he was astonished that, its foundations being "so firm and so solid," nothing "more exalted" had been built on them; he had not yet been taught, certainly he had not yet noticed, their "true usage" (p.7, *HR* I.85). He has himself, however, found a method (because of the good fortune he had to be set on the way to it "from his youth"), which he thinks can take his knowledge to its "highest point" (p.3, *HR* I.82) and make it moreover "very useful to life." This knowledge will be a practical knowledge to replace the speculative philosophy of the schools, that will make us "masters and possessors of nature" in the enjoyment "without any pain, of the fruits of the earth and all the commodities that are found there" (pp.61-62, *HR* I.119-120).

Descartes has very definite views why ancient science is uncertain. It relies too much and too immediately on the senses, and does nothing to rid the mind of the many prejudices and false opinions that one has imbibed since one's youth prior to reaching the age when one could reason and judge for onseself. So before one can hope to have genuine

knowledge one needs to rid the mind of these "idola," as Bacon termed them (*Med*., Synopsis, *AT* VII.12; *HR*, I.140). Descartes differs from Bacon, though, in that he claims to be the only one to have a method for doing this (*RSO*, *AT* VII.131; *HR*, II.32). It is indeed the case that Bacon had not given such a method; he thought it enough to forewarn men of the "idola" to be avoided and to exhort them to resolution in doing so (*NO* bk.1, aphs.38, 68, *Works* I.256, 267). Nevertheless he did hope that one day someone would arise with "sufficient constancy and fixedness of character to determine and take upon himself the utter abolition of theories and common notions" and so achieve the necessary purification of mind (*NO* bk.1, aph.97, *Works* I.285).

The method Descartes claims to have found is, of course, the method of the doubt and of the subsequent *cogito* in which the mind is radically separated from the body and the senses. The doubt is in one sense not new; the ancient skeptics had long repeated the arguments that one could be sure of nothing, and Descartes admits that his doubt is to this extent a "stale dish" (*RO, AT*, VII.130; *HR*, II.31). But it is radically new in the use Descartes put it to, namely not to leave the mind forever in doubt, but to prepare it for certainty. Bacon had already noticed both this similarity and difference; that he himself and the ancient skeptics agreed "in a certain measure at starting" but differed widely in their "results" (*NO* bk.1, aph.37, *Works* I.256). He had failed however to see the significance of this—that was left to someone of the "constancy and fixedness of character" of Descartes.

One needs to note, however, just how dependent Descartes' method of doubt is on his existing belief that the goal of knowledge is usefulness. This can be seen from the intention of *Meditation One*. This intention is not to demonstrate that the existing foundations of knowledge are inadequate, for this is assumed to begin with and is laid down as the justification for the doubt. Rather, says Descartes, having long realised that the foundations are bad and so need to be got rid of, he is at last setting about the business of getting rid of them, or, as he says, of devoting himself to the "general overthrow of all my opinions" (*Med I*, *AT*, VII.18; *HR*, I.144). The scep-

tical arguments are means or devices for this purpose; they have a therapeutic or curative purpose, rather than an instructional one. They are not so much something to be understood as an exercise to be practiced; that is not only why the *Meditations* are called meditations, but also why both *Meditation I* and *Meditation II* are not just to be read but to be meditated on for several months, and “long trodden over and repeated” (*RO*, *AT*, VII.130-1; *HR*, II.31-2). The *Meditations* have thus have far more in common with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola, “long trodden over and repeated” by Descartes’ Jesuit teachers, than with the philosophical treatises of the ancient skeptics. This may explain, in part, why he professes always to have especially honoured and respected the Jesuits (Letter to Fr. Dinet, *AT*, VII.603; *HR*, II.376), for certainly he never did this as far as their attachment to scholastic philosophy was concerned.

At all events, the doubt presupposes the need for a doubt, but all that Descartes says in this regard in *Meditation I* is that he had noticed some years previously how many false beliefs he had accepted since youth. This is a relatively flimsy excuse for something as radical as the doubt, and one is inclined to say that if it is true, it can only be because Descartes has been rashly credulous. But flimsy or not Descartes says it and presumably, therefore, he has some reason to believe it. So what is his reason? We are not told in the *Meditations*; they proceed on the basis of something presupposed but not argued. The *Meditations* cannot therefore stand on their own; they must point to something beyond themselves. That something is found back in the *Discourse*, where Descartes, as already noted, records the reasoning that led him to the conviction that existing knowledge was erroneous and that a doubt was needed to cure the mind. That reasoning begins with the desire for the Machiavellian ‘useful’.

In reflecting on Bacon’s and Descartes’ common concern to purify the mind, one is led to the conclusion that their conviction that knowledge should be useful was so overriding that they felt that the only way to explain why ancient science was neither useful nor aimed at usefulness was to suppose that there was some radical proneness to error in the human mind

such that, left to itself without the assistance of some artificial corrective, it could not fail to go wrong. Since the ancients did not recognise this and consequently did nothing about it, their science was bound to be fundamentally erroneous, especially about the end of knowledge. It then became easy to interpret such things as the disputes and controversies of the schools as signs of this radical deficiency. For these controversies by themselves, of course, prove nothing; they may be due to other causes besides error, as the abstruseness of the subject-matter, or the perversity of the disputants, or the demands of logic. Anyway if controversy is a sign of error it will prove as much against Bacon and Descartes, where there is, particularly in the case of Descartes, as much controversy as ever there was in the schools.

The important point to notice in all this, however, is that the conquest of nature for human advantage proves first to require a conquest of the natural mind. In the case of Descartes, just as much as in the case of Bacon, this latter conquest creates a divorce between mind and things; one’s ordinary perceptions and one’s ordinary thoughts are dismissed as wholly unreliable; there is no direct access to the realities of nature. The divorce effected by the doubt prepares the way for the *cogito*, the Archimedean point from which Descartes’ conquest of nature begins (*Med II*, *AT*, VII.24; *HR*, I.149). The recognition of one’s own existence, or better of the existence of one’s own mind, is the foundation of all Descartes’ philosophy: “the beginning of philosophising has been made by me from the knowledge of one’s own existence” (*RO*, *AT*, VII.480; *HR*, II.281). This is indeed Descartes’ foundation in a most thoroughgoing sense, for he maintains that all one ever knows is ideas in one’s own mind; one has no direct awareness of independently existing things; the immediate object of thought is always an inner mental idea.

Descartes holds that this is established by the doubt in the sense that what has been rendered doubtful is not whether I am having sensations or thoughts but whether there is anything external to me that corresponds to them (*Med III*, *AT*, VII.35; *HR*, I.158). But this is falsely inferred. If the doubt shows anything, it shows that we cannot tell whether what we

directly perceive is a real object or a mental image, that is, it shows that we do not know which is the case. Descartes holds that it definitely shows the latter is the case, and that therefore the question about real things is about whether there are external objects corresponding to the inner images or not. This shift is achieved by a piece of logical sleight of hand. It constitutes a breach of the rule Descartes lays down not to accept as certain anything that is doubtful, for in taking as decided a question that is in fact undecided this is just what he is doing. The claim, however, that we only know the contents of our own mind is something that Descartes desires to establish and needs to establish; for if it is the case, as he maintains, that the real world is not like the perceived world but contains just extended things with only mathematical and not sensible properties, then the perceived world must be an invention within the mind; it cannot be externally real. His argument does not establish this, though he speaks as if it has; his desire outstrips his reasoning.

Bacon came to a similar conclusion but with nowhere near enough clarity; it is uncertain what he holds the status of the objects of our immediate perceptions to be. Are they in some sense out there or in the mind only? To say they are in some sense out there would be to give ground to the ancients, for it would thus far render legitimate ancient science, namely the study of such realities and of the being they have at the level at which the unaided senses can and do properly grasp them. Within the perspective of the Baconian project, it is clear one cannot stop with Bacon; one must press on as far as Descartes. Since Descartes, indeed, nearly all philosophers have pressed on that far; certainly the most influential groups did, from the rationalists to the empiricists, to the German idealists. Descartes’ doubt does not just prepare the way for modern science; it virtually creates what is now called modern philosophy. It certainly set it its abiding problems and questions, and above all its dominant theme: the concern with consciousness is for it what the concern with being was for the ancients.

MATHEMATICISED REALITY

The real things that Descartes held to exist beyond consciousness are somewhat different from those of Bacon, and this difference is due also to the doubt. Bacon had seen that mathematics could be of considerable value in the study of nature; he even went so far as to say that "inquiry into nature is most successful when physics is defined by mathematics" (*NO* bk.2, aph.8, *Works* I.306; cf. *AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.165-6). But here again he failed to follow up his own suggestion. Mathematics hardly figures at all in the elaboration and description of his scientific method. Mathematics, however, does not escape the notice of Descartes, who is altogether more "constant and fixed" in this respect than Bacon. Descartes saw (and early on in his career too; *Reg* no.2, *HR*, I.3-5) that the peculiar certainty enjoyed by mathematics was something that the new science needed to be firmly wedded to; this would be necessary not just for the attainment of knowledge, but also in order to carry that conviction with the popular, and even learned, mind which was necessary for success.

Ancient science, in large part because it was not mathematical, was particularly liable to long and involved disputes with rival schools competing on either side. But mathematics has always managed, to a considerable extent, to avoid such disputes. The ancients were well aware of this: "…the science of mathematics, about which there are very few uncertainties and disagreements, because it is removed from motion and change" (Avicenna, *Meta*, ch.2, p.13). In Avicenna and medieval thought in general (cf. Aquinas, *CDT*), a precise reason is given for this fact. The subject matter of mathematics is quantity taken independently of the particular changeable things that have quantity, for triangle is considered as such, not as it is the shape of this or that variable matter. Hence study of it can escape all those complications that have to be taken account of in natural philosophy, or the study of changeable material things in their changeability. Moreover mathematical figures and numbers can be readily represented and held for study by imagination, whereas the

more intellectual subject matter of metaphysics (the third of the great divisions of ancient science, along with mathematics and natural philosophy), such as being, act, potency, one, many and so forth, cannot be. For this reason mathematics has both a greater fixity and is more easily accessible to the human mind. When mathematics is applied, therefore, to physical things, although it is no longer purely abstract, it still draws physical things into the orbit of mathematical certainty, and enables one to come to physical conclusions by means of mathematical calculations.

Descartes, of course, enters into none of these complexities; the ancient division of the sciences with its rationale is dismissed along with all the other unintelligibilities in which, in his opinion, scholasticism abounds (*Prin* IV, no.201; *HR*, I.298). Instead, he declares that one should accept only what is clear and distinct, and that in physical things all that is clear and distinct is the mathematical properties. Descartes, however, never fully explained what he meant by clear and distinct, other than that it is whatever has the same intuitive evidence as the cogito, and he did not fully explain that either. Nor does he give any reason that sensible qualities, or prime matter or substantial form, may not be clear and distinct. The first are surely in some sense clear and distinct, and so also, at any rate to some people, are the last two (and even now they are intelligible enough once explained). Besides why should Descartes' determination of what is to count as clear and distinct carry more weight than the different determination of someone else?

But be that as it may. Descartes' vision of nature is of pure mathematical extensions, divisible and divided into very small parts (his objections to Democritus are, like Bacon's, rather to a certain form of atomism than to atomism as such; *Prin* IV, nos.201-2; *HR*, I.297-9). There are no substantial forms in the ancient sense (though there is the novelty of the pure thinking ego, the Cartesian version of 'soul'), and no ends. His reason for rejecting final causes is that it is not given to us to be privy to God's counsels so as to know what ends he proposed to himself in creating things (*Prin* I, no.28; *HR*, I.230). This misses the point. The ancient claim to know

ends was not based on any claim to know the secret intentions of God, but on observation of the activity of nature. Ends are in nature itself, not imposed from without. Descartes' argument, like Bacon's, proceeds on the assumption that as far as physics is concerned there is no mind or reason in things; things are just "machines" operating according to the laws of mechanics "which are the same as those of nature" (*DM* V, p.54; *HR*, I.115). His world is, accordingly, as neutral as Bacon's, and therefore fitted to be conquered and turned to the use and wishes of man.

MEDICAL ETHICS

Bacon had stressed the value of science in the production of arts and inventions; Descartes stresses its value for medicine, for health is "without doubt the first good and the foundation of all the other goods of this life" (*DM*, p.62; *HR* I.120). This is particularly true in view of the fact that "the mind depends so much on the temperament and disposition of the organs of the body that, if it is possible to find any means to render men generally wiser and cleverer than they have been up to now, I believe that it is in medicine that one must look for it" (*ibid*.). Some idea of what Descartes means can be gathered from his last published work, the *Passions of the Soul*.

Central to Descartes' teaching here is the radical division of body and soul established by the doubt and the *cogito*. Nothing so much shows the defectiveness of ancient science than what it said on the passions, for it did not make this distinction (*Pass* §§1, 5, *AT* XI.326, 330; *HR* I.331, 333). The passions, according to Descartes, are various feelings or perceptions in the soul caused in it by some movement in the animal spirits, and are distinguished from emotions which are desires caused in the soul by the soul itself (§§27, 29, *AT* XI.349, 350; *HR* I.344). The strife within the soul of which the ancients spoke, and which they attributed to the opposition of two parts of the soul, the inferior sensitive part and the superior rational part, is plain confusion. The soul is one and rational, and the conflicts come from this, that the animal

spirits, which are purely physical, are agitated in the body and excite some passion in the soul, while the soul of itself desires or moves itself to something contrary. If there were no agitation of the animal spirits there would be no passion and no conflict in the soul, but while there is such conflict, one can do little or nothing about it, because it has a physical cause outside the will and the soul. The most one can do is not to yield to the passion or to the movements to which it disposes the body. Souls are weak or strong in proportion as, by "their firm and determined judgements touching the knowledge of good and evil," they are able to do this. But however weak a soul may be, it can be made, if well directed, to acquire a "very absolute empire" over all its passions (§§46-48, 50, *AT* XI.363-7, 370; *HR* I.352-4, 356). The reason is that there is no necessary connection between a particular motion in the animal spirits and a particular thought in the soul, or between the motions that excite a certain thought and those that excite a passion. One can consequently, by 'Pavlovian' training, alter the reactions of the soul, and the "movements of the brain" (*ibid*.).

Descartes does not spell everything out, but it is evident that, using these premises, one could exercise almost total control over men. For one could remove conflicts by removing the passion (either by custom or medical intervention in the body), thus leaving men to follow their judgements (which would be the only motives left operative), or get those who typically cannot resist the passions to perform good acts by setting the passions in the same direction. The only thing lacking is control over the judgements, but Descartes has elsewhere indicated that this can easily be done by the right method, which will lead even the unintelligent to see the truth clearly, including the truth about the soul and God (*Reg* no.8, *HR*, I.28; *Med* Dedication, *AT* VII.3; *HR* I.134). Consequently by the science of the passions, by medicine in other words, as well as by the right method, one could so order men that they always behaved rationally and always did what was right (cf. *Pass* §144 *AT* XI.436; *HR* I.395).

Resolutely acting according to one's judgements of what is best, and being conscious of this fact, constitutes, for

Descartes, perfectly following virtue, or what he calls generosity. Generosity is essentially other-regarding, holding that nothing is greater than doing good to other men (§§148, 153, 156, *AT* XI.441-2, 445-6, 447-8; *HR* I.398-9, 401-3; cf. *DM* p.65; *HR* I.122). Generosity is thus very much like Bacon’s charity. The generous man possesses in his generosity a most powerful cause of happiness, which is untouched by the most violent efforts of the passions; indeed through his knowledge and his virtue he is master of his passions and can enjoy them too. He is, one may say, the man who is most satisfied and happy, and all men are in principle capable of generosity, and so of this happiness (*Pass* §§146, 154, 156, 212, *AT* XI.439-40, 446-8, 488; *HR* I.397, 402-3, 427). It is clear that Descartes is himself a generous man, for he has not only found the true science and true method that will bring men joy in the goods of the earth and in themselves, he has resolutely acted in accordance with his judgement to benefit man by bestowing these goods on them. He even held it a sin to conceal his teaching—though, significantly, he did not hold it a sin to go against the decree of a curial office of the Church that had condemned parts of that teaching (*DM* pp.60-61; *HR* I.118-9). Opposition, however, to this benevolent project comes from those in whom pride dominates, for pride leads to the exact opposite of generosity and is associated with despair and vicious humility, or the belief that things that are in our power are not in our power (§§145, 157-9, AT XI.437-38, 448-50; HR I.396, 403-408).

Pride and despair are what the virtues of the ancients amounted to (*DM* p.8, *HR*, I.85). The schools, indeed, where “generosity is not much known” (*Pass* §161, *AT* XI.453; *HR* I.406) may be said, in Descartes’ opinion, to be guilty of everything he holds to be bad: useless and unintelligible science, despair, pride, contempt. They represent the greatest impediment to all those goods which Descartes, that most generous of souls, has, with such devotion to the good of others, laboured to realise. It is not surprising that his opposition is total, that it becomes almost a crusade; for if ancient learning does deprive men of knowledge and happiness, it is indeed an

evil to be utterly rooted out. Descartes, even more than Bacon, is engaged in a fight to the death with the ancients.

CONCLUSION: THE SCIENTIFIC DOGMA

Modern natural science is deeply in debt to Bacon and Descartes. They did much to propound and promote its distinctive characteristics: its dependence on experiments and mathematics, its usefulness in producing “fruits” for the benefit and comfort of life, its ‘neutral’ perspective on the facts or its unconcern with formal and final causality. But percipient though they were, there is one aspect of modern natural science which they failed to grasp: its dependence on theories that are fundamentally hypothetical and the question of whose truth is highly problematic. They were not entirely ignorant of this fact, but they certainly did not emphasise it; indeed Descartes in particular does what he can to play it down (Bacon, *NO* bk.1, aph.116, *Works* I.292-93; Descartes, *Prin* IV, §§204-206, *HR* I.300-302). Both claim, in the end, that nature is in some sense literally like the picture science paints of it, or that, as Bacon says, science builds in the human intellect a copy of the universe as the Creator actually made it, unlike the “fancies” woven by the philosophers (*NO* bk.1, aph.124, *Works* I.297).

Modern philosophers of science, by contrast, spend their time almost wholly in discussing the role, status and origin of theories, and say relatively little about the role of experimentation and mathematics. There is a general recognition that to say that such theories are true, in the sense of describing how nature really is, is at least imprecise. The only hard and fast contact, if any, between theories and nature is in results—an acceptable theory is one that accounts for the things observed or ‘saves the phenomena’ and is able to predict others. But a theory could, in principle, do this even if nature produced the results in a quite different way from that in which the theory produces them.

> The object of mathematical theories of physical phenomena is not to reveal to us the true nature of things; that would be an unreasonable claim. Their sole aim is to coordinate the physical laws that are made known to us by experiments. (Poincaré)
>
> The physical world consists, so to speak, of groups of measures resting on an obscure foundation that is outside the realm of physics…the whole object of the exact sciences consists of pointer-readings and similar indications. (Eddington) (Both quoted in Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p.61nn).

All the force and passion of Bacon's and Descartes' thought is very much tied up with the idea that to say science does reveal 'the true nature of things', and that the 'foundations' of reality do fall within the realm of physics, is not only reasonable but emphatically correct. Their implacable opposition to ancient thinking, as well as their own ethical and political thought, rest firmly on this belief, and that is enough to cast serious doubts on their teaching. For, if they have not properly understood modern science, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they have not properly understood its relation to ancient science either.

This supposition gains some confirmation from the fact that the role theories and mathematics can play in the study of physical things was well known to ancient thinkers through their acquaintance with it in astronomy (as well as music). Moreover, they found no difficulty in finding a place for such sciences within the division of existing sciences (Aquinas, *CDT*). The opposition Descartes and Bacon see between modern science and ancient science stems less from a correct understanding of the respective characters of each science than from a desire for usefulness, that is, from their views about what ends the sciences are meant to serve. For if ancient science does not exclude modern natural science, it certainly did very little to promote it in the way Descartes and Bacon wanted. The differences, then, spring, not from an incompatibility between ancient and modern science, but from a differ-

ence in visions of the best life. And while nowadays we have corrected Bacon and Descartes with respect to the role of theories in science, we have not corrected them with respect to the role of science in politics.

Bacon’s and Descartes’ promotion of science from the point of view of usefulness leads them to absolutise science so as to make it cover the whole reality of things as such, or so as to make it the authority for what is knowable and true simply. The dimension of ancient thought, in metaphysic and ethics and politics as much as in physics, is, as has been said, cast aside. What justification Bacon and Descartes give for this is confined to the accusation that ancient knowledge is useless and unintelligible. Of course ancient science never intended to be useful, or even intelligible, in the way they meant, but this, in their eyes, just makes it worse. In the absence of other and better arguments, they just resort to abusing ancient thinkers and impugning their motives. It would be improper to follow them in these low speculations or to approve of such insults. What may be said is that the question of the usefulness and intelligibility of ancient science depends on the sense given to those terms. If it is not useful and intelligible in Descartes’ and Bacon’s sense, that does not mean it cannot be useful or intelligible in another.

They, however, are little concerned to undertake such useless inquiries; it is their earnest desire to realise a new form of society, founded on a new science, and to overthrow the old one. Their wholesale attack on the ancients is thus governed by the requirements of this practical aim. As a consequence they more or less vandalise ancient learning (they certainly misrepresent it), thereby adopting, one is tempted to suggest, the sort of ‘barbaric’ methods Bacon says Aristotle used to destroy the learning of his predecessors (*AL* bk.2, *Works* VI.160, 169; *NO* bk.1, aph.67, *Works* I.267). The effect on subsequent thought of this reduction of the scope of knowledge has been profound. It is what lies behind the epistemology of Locke, so completely imbibed by Moore. For Locke, holding with Descartes that what we immediately know is just inner mental ideas, but holding also, in opposition to Descartes, that all such ideas are derived from experi-

ence, is led to argue that what makes a thing what it is, or what defines it, is not its ‘substantial form’ but the collection of such ideas as go, in our experience of it, to make it up.

This loss or narrowing of knowledge is tied to the divorce of mind and things already mentioned, for mind and things may only be by nature in harmony if the familiar world presented to the senses is real as it stands and does not need to be reduced to something else that is not, or never, perceived. But if one asserts such harmony, one has so far justified the orientation of ancient thought with its concentration on beings and being. For ancient thought involved a sustained effort to understand the ordinary world at its own level, and a determination not to deny its evident reality. It acted on the basis of an “empiricist refusal (in the full sense of the word ‘empiricist’) to allow the abrogation of the pre-theoretical general picture of how things are by any theory, philosophical or otherwise… This demanded a technical vocabulary such that this pre-theoretical picture does not forfeit its basic sense by relativisation to a supposedly more fundamental picture” (Henry, *Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, p.12).

Included in this technical vocabulary were prime matter and substantial form, or in general all those terms that Descartes and Bacon rejected as unintelligible. The rejection of ancient learning and the divorce of mind and things are necessarily bound together; and for Bacon and Descartes, science requires this divorce from the very start. They believe this because they hold that nature is not really as it appears, and so knowledge of it must be attained in some other way (*NO* bk.1, aph.50, *Works* I.259; *RO*, *AT* VII.436ff.; *HR* II.251ff.). However if they know this alleged fact about nature, they must have some knowledge of what nature is really like *before* they have devised and used the new science by which they say that the only true knowledge of it is to be attained. But where can they have got such knowledge from? If from unaided perceptions, how can they, in consistency, rely on these perceptions to conclude that such perceptions cannot be relied on? So if they concede that in some sense one may begin with such unaided perceptions, then they have conceded that one must in some sense begin with ancient science, which precisely was

concerned to give a correct account of what is so perceived. They cannot, accordingly, content themselves with dismissing ancient science on the ground of its unintelligibility, but must enter into debate with it at its own level. If, however, they say that their science is confirmed by its results (as Bacon does say; *NO* bk.1, aph.124, *Works* I.297), this is, first, not enough, for results cannot show that a theory is true, but only that it does or does not save the phenomena; and, second, not relevant, because the determination of what it is correct to say about nature at the level of ordinary perception is not done by reference to scientific results, but rather by reflection on ordinary perceptions themselves. Descartes and Bacon seem unaware of this puzzle, and in the end one is driven to the conclusion that the only reason that drove them to their view that the scientific view is the true view is because it is the useful view.

For Bacon and Descartes, just as much as for Machiavelli, what is prior, and what lies at the root of their thought, is the concern with the useful, and hence the concern with the good to which their useful is relative. All their writing has the useful as motive and goal; and both foresaw, and in some measure helped to bring about, a science and a society dedicated to the useful. But, for all their devotion to this Machiavellian practical perspective, they could not, in the end, avoid admitting the need for an authority, and an authority quite prior to any such perspective, that determined and taught what the really useful and the really good were. Yet having reached this point, they stop. Nowhere do they give a reasoned explanation or justification of their own self-assumed authority, of what they judge to be genuinely good, of their vision of the good life. The useful, the Machiavellian useful, dominates so massively in their thought that it is never brought into question.

But this question is the most important and most urgent question of all. It is crying out for investigation. If ever there was an ‘idola’ in Bacon’s mind or a prejudice in Descartes’ that needed to be removed or doubted, it is this. Descartes, we know, has gone down in history as the philosopher of doubt; compared with Socrates, however, he is a philosopher of as-

tonishing certainty. Descartes never pressed the question of the good with the untiring urgency that Socrates did, and yet “from his youth up” he had a settled answer to it. Descartes in the end failed even to take his own teaching seriously. His error was not to doubt too much; it was to fail to doubt at all.

CHAPTER S3

Hobbes and Locke: Machiavellian ‘Realism’ in Morality and Politics

A: HOBBES
MORALISING MACHIAVELLI

Machiavellian realism, because of its effect on Bacon and Descartes, came to exercise a profound influence on modern science, especially with respect to the understanding of its competence and its political function. But though politics was as much a part of the thought of Bacon and Descartes as was modern science, it is not to them we must look to trace the effect that realism had on the development of moral and political thought. We must look instead to two others, who, as political thinkers, were historically far more important and influential, namely Hobbes and Locke.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Hobbes and Machiavelli is the former’s concern with morality. He recoils from the violent practices preached by Machiavelli and distances himself from any approval of the “lupine policies” of ancient Rome. It is precisely such practices that make man’s life so miserable (*De Cive*, *Epistle Dedicatory*). He holds, on the contrary, that it is possible and necessary to behave morally, and rejects Machiavelli’s contention that vice cannot sensibly be avoided. But though to this extent Hobbes returns to more ancient ideas, the morality he wishes to teach is not at all like that of the ancients. He opposes them even more than Machiavelli does; he is certainly more frank about it. The natural philosophy of the ancients was “rather a dream than science,” their moral philosophy “but a description of their own passions,” their logic “captions of words.” In his opinion “scarce anything can be more absurdly said in natural

philosophy than that which is now called Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; nor more repugnant to government than much of what he hath said in his *Politics*; nor more ignorantly than a great part of his *Ethics*" (*Lev* ch.46, *EM* p.366). This philosophy is moreover pernicious, inducing men to civil disobedience and causing evils in human government, wars and civil wars (chs.46, ch.29, pp.369, 373-74, 174). It has given men "a habit of favouring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of their sovereigns" to the "effusion of so much blood" that, Hobbes declares, "there was never anything so dearly bought as these Western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues" (ch.21, pp.113-114).

True political and moral philosophy was lacking among the ancients. It was even lacking with Machiavelli, for it was first taught by Hobbes himself (ch.30, p.179). Men did, it is true, indulge in political activity and try to found commonwealths before Hobbes' time, but these commonwealths were always "crazy buildings" which "hardly lasting out their own time" fell and must fall on the heads of posterity (ch.29, p.171). The reason is that "the skill of making and maintaining commonwealths consisteth in certain rules, as doth arithmetic and geometry" and hitherto men did not know these rules because they lacked the "curiosity" and "method" to find them out (ch.20, p.110). If, however, the right principles are known and applied, commonwealths will, except for external violence, be everlasting (ch.30, p.179). For the cause of dissolution is not "in men as they are the matter, but as they are the makers and orderers" of commonwealths (ch.29, p.170).

Hobbes shares Machiavelli's belief that it is possible, with the right know-how, to make any state last for ever (as opposed to the ancient belief that changes from one political form to another were inevitable, except possibly in the event of the realization of the simply best regime). He shares also, with Bacon, pity for men, and a desire to free them from the great ills attendant upon political upheaval. He is moved by a love of mankind. If Bacon's love gave man useful science, Hobbes will give him useful politics, a politics that will succeed where all others have failed. It will bring lasting peace.

THE MACHINERY OF THE BODY

The key to genuine science, according to Hobbes, is geometry, which is the mother of all natural science. For nature works by motion and the study of motion requires "knowledge of the proportions and properties of lines and figures" (ch.46, pp.365, 367). But geometry is also the key to political science, both as regards method and subject matter.

Politics needs a method no less than geometry (and more so, in fact, for it is a harder study; ch.30, p.187); indeed it needs the same method. Truth cannot be attained if one does not know what the names one uses stand for, and hence the first thing to settle is the significations of words, or the giving of correct definitions (ch.4, p.15). Such is the procedure followed in geometry, which is "the only science it hath pleased God hitherto to bestow on mankind" (*ibid*.) and which, because of this procedure, has had its conclusions made "indisputable" (ch.5, p.20). Since the success of Hobbes' politics depends, as will be seen, on its being publicly taught, it needs its conclusions to be indisputable—or such as everyone will be able to understand and accept. The rigour with which Hobbes strives to carry out his own recommendation is remarkable; his reasoning is a tour de force of argument *geometrico modo*.

Geometry is also the guide for politics in subject matter, for it is, as already remarked, the foundation of natural philosophy, and natural philosophy, or physics, as applied to man, is the foundation of politics (ch.9). Hobbes' physics is thoroughly materialist: the real world, including the human beings in it, is nothing but body and its motions (ch.46, pp.369-70), and from this materialist physics Hobbes deduces, with all the geometrical rigour can, his conclusions about man and politics.

External bodies, by their motions on man's sense organs, cause motions there, which motions appear to us as "fancy," that is, as sensations of colour, sound, smell and so on. Strictly speaking, of course, there is in reality only motion without and within, but its "seeming" is what we are aware of. We are mistaken in supposing that this "seeming," colours and the like, is any part of objects. Hobbes declares sense to

be "but original fancy, caused by the pressure, that is, by the motion, of external things upon our eyes, ears and other organs thereunto ordained" (ch.1, pp.3-4). Likewise imagination is just the same fancy continued after the external cause has ceased, and is "nothing but decaying sense" (ch.2, p.5). Imagination is also identified with understanding, for thought and mental discourse are just the "train of imaginations" (chs.3, 4, pp.8-9, 17). They thus have their origin in external motions also, for "knowledge and understanding…in us is nothing else but a tumult of the mind, raised by external things that press the organical parts of man's body" (ch.31, p.194). Speech is the registering of thoughts, making our mental discourse verbal, which aids us in retaining and communicating what we have conceived (ch.4, p.13). Only in speech is there universality, for the things themselves that are named and spoken of are all singular and individual (*ibid*.). But this universality of words is what makes science, the knowledge of universally true conclusions, possible. If one went through the proof that a triangle has angles equal to two right angles without speech one would know this conclusion only of the particular triangle one imagined or thought. Speech makes one know it of all triangles whatever (ch.4, p.14).

Along with this espousal of nominalism, Hobbes is an empiricist with respect to objects of knowledge: "a man can have no thought representing anything not subject to sense. No man therefore can conceive anything but he must conceive it in some place, and indued with some determinate magnitude." Everything else is "absurd speech," having no signification, and just taken upon credit from "deceived philosophers, and deceived or deceiving schoolmen" (ch.3, pp.11-12). Thus with respect to his faculties, man is not by nature different from the other creatures; he is only distinguished from them because, with the help of speech and method, he can raise these faculties to a higher level (chs.3, 4, pp.11, 17).

This same perspective is carried over into Hobbes' analysis of man's desiring and willing. As sense is motion in the organs, and as imagination or thought are the "reliquies" of the same motion, and as, further, voluntary motions (like going and speaking) depend upon "precedent thoughts about

whither, which way, and what," then "it is evident that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion" (ch.6, p.23). Hobbes means the term 'motion' literally here, for he regards metaphorical motion, i.e. motion not of bodies, as absurd speech (ch.6, p.24). Small beginnings of voluntary motions, before they appear in outward behaviour, are called endeavour, and endeavour is appetite when it is toward what causes it, and aversion when it is away from it (*ibid*.). The same happens here as happens in the case of perception, for as the motions in the senses appear as colour and the like, so the same motions, continued to the heart, create that motion there that is called endeavour, but which appears as "delight" or "trouble of mind" (ch.6, p.25). Hence arise all the passions, for these are just the same "appearances" of motions but as taken under different aspects (*ibid*.). The sum of the succession of our alternating passions, consequent upon the several considerations of the good and evil effects of some one and the same thing, is identified, when taken to its cessation in action, with deliberation (ch.6, p.28). Deliberation sets an end to liberty in the sense that it takes away the liberty of acting differently. The last appetite or aversion that is at the end of a deliberation, and which adheres immediately to the action, is what is meant by will, or the act of willing (*ibid*.). There is for Hobbes no will in the sense of 'rational appetite' as spoken of in the schools; and no free will either. Freedom simply means absence of opposition, so that a man is free when he is not restrained from what he has a will to do. There is no liberty of the will, only liberty of the man (ch.21, p.110). The will or inclination itself is subject to necessity. "Every desire and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continual chain," and hence men's free, i.e. unhindered, actions, proceeding from the will, proceed "from necessity" (ch.21 p.111).

Hobbes further maintains that there is no absolute good or bad. "These words of good, evil and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves" (ch.6, p.24). For men just call good what is the object of their actual appetite, and evil what is the object of their ac-

tual aversion. But "because the constitution of a man's body is in continual mutation, it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites and aversions: much less can all men consent in the desire of almost any one and the same object" (*ibid*.). Men are just a collection of appetites and aversions that succeed each other, and hence what is meant by felicity is just "continual success in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth." As Hobbes further says, "there is no such thing as perpetual tranquility of mind while we live here; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more than without sense" (ch.6, p.30). Hence it is pointless talking about any highest good or *summum bonum* "such as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers," for there is no such good. Man is limited to that "continual progress of the desire from one object to another" where "the attaining of the former [is] but the way to the later" (ch.11, p.49).

Although these conclusions about man and his passions, which Hobbes uses as the basis of his politics, are deduced from his materialist natural philosophy, he also indicates that they can be arrived at independently, by a direct consideration of the moral and political phenomena as these are accessible to everyone in ordinary experience (*Introduction*, chs.2, 13, *Conclusion*, pp.2, 65, 199, 390). This way of knowing (the way Machiavelli followed) is emphasized by Hobbes even above the way of natural philosophy. His emphasis here is due in part, it seems, to the fact that the natural science of man is itself dependent on ordinary experience, or at any rate on that ordinary experience each one has of his own internal operations. Hobbes even declares that the proof of his doctrine rests on "reading oneself" or on seeing how far one finds it in oneself to be true. "For this kind of doctrine admitteth no other demonstration" (*Introduction*, p.2). The emphasis seems also due in part to Hobbes' desire to make his doctrine solidly based, that is, founded on principles "of which no man, that pretends but reason enough to govern his private family, ought to be ignorant" (*Conclusion*, p.390). But whether experience or science is the way, the conclusion is the same, and that is what matters, even though Hobbes himself thinks that the way of science is better or more proper to man (ch.3, pp.9-

10). There may, nevertheless, be some doubt as to whether this materialism that Hobbes espouses is meant to be taken as true or just as a methodological device, an assumption that enables one to proceed "orderly and perspicuously" (ch.1, p.2). But, methodological or not, materialism is the only theory that Hobbes takes at all seriously.

THE MACHINERY OF THE PASSIONS

One finds in Hobbes, expressed with more force and frankness than others dared to use, a complete rejection of those aspects of the analysis of man and politics elaborated in ancient thought, namely a rejection of an intellect distinct from the faculty of imagination, of a rational appetite or will that is distinct from the passions and is free, and, most importantly of all, of a supreme goal or end, a *summum bonum*. Hobbes, no less than Bacon and Machiavelli, rejects the idea of perfect felicity or the philosopher's heaven, and insists instead on viewing man and politics in the light of the ever-changing passions. Man is but a creature of passion, subject to unceasing alterations in thoughts and desires. So even if Hobbes felt that Machiavelli had failed to grasp the true science of politics, he certainly agreed that Machiavelli had succeeded in getting the orientation or perspective right. The true politics will be Machiavellian realism, the realism that takes its measure by what most men do most of the time. Morality and politics will no longer be tied to the idea of man's highest perfection, as was the case with the ancients, but will be based instead on the low and solid ground of the passions.

The significance of this can perhaps best be seen in Hobbes' reply to the argument that injustice pays better than justice. The reply of Socrates in Plato's *Republic* to this argument consisted in purifying or raising the desires of his interlocutors, notably Glaucon and Adeimantus, to see the goodness of things higher than the worldly comforts and pleasures, the 'pay-offs' if you will, sought after by the many and enjoyed by unjust tyrants. Hobbes does not follow this 'unrealistic' procedure of Socrates. Like Foot in her essay 'Moral Beliefs' (*Theories of Ethics*, pp.83-100), he leaves the

desires as they are and just argues that injustice will not satisfy them because one will not be able to get away with it, or it is not reasonable to suppose that one will (ch.15, pp.75-76). This argument proceeds, like Foot's, on the assumption that the normal conditions obtain and cannot be nullified by the device of a ring of invisibility or the supposition of supreme cleverness. It would therefore not satisfy Glaucon or Adeimantus, or rather it concedes the point they challenged Socrates to refute, namely that justice is not desirable in itself but only, if at all, because one cannot dispense with it if one wants to 'get on' in life (*Republic*, 358-359). This concession would not embarrass Hobbes, for he holds that 'getting on' or "continual prospering" is all any man ever bothers about anyway. Besides he is concerned, rather like Foot, with speaking about realities, not the extravagant hypotheses of philosophers. For him, as for Machiavelli, there is only the 'cave' of the many with their opinions and passions.

Because men are dominated by the passions, and because these have no one object but are forever changing, it follows that what is most necessary is not to attain some supreme good (there is none), but to secure for oneself the means always to satisfy one's desires whatever they happen to be. Hence "the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only and for one instant of time, but to assure for ever the way of his future desire." Consequently, Hobbes continues, "In the first place I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death;" for a man "cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more" (ch.11, pp.49-50). In other words, what the ancients thought was the condition of the unphilosophic many, the passion for the power of a tyrant (the tyrant has always been praised as happy because he is thought not only to be prospering but to have the means and power continually to go on prospering), is, for Hobbes, the unavoidable condition of all men, including philosophers (not to mention priests and popes; ch.46, p.373).

In accordance with this Machiavellian vision of human nature, Hobbes proceeds to construct what he considers to be the natural condition of man, or "the state of nature." In this

state men are, for all relevant purposes, equal, and so, having equal abilities, all men have equal hope of getting what they want. Where two men want the same thing they become enemies in competition for it. Hence arises the passion of diffidence, since there is no one who might not become an enemy in this way. Hence, further, arises man's dislike of company, for everyone wants his companion to have the same high estimation of him as he has of himself, and when this yielding of glory to him does not happen (as will be rather often since competition is so prevalent) men are driven to revenge the contempt, even to the extent of destroying each other. These three (competition, diffidence, glory) lead to the consequence that man's natural state is war, "and such a war as is of every man against every man." All the fruits of peace—industry, the arts and sciences, and their products—are therefore lacking. But "worst of all" there is "continual fear and danger of violent death." By nature man's life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

Nature, in fact, "dissociates" men and renders them "apt to invade and destroy one another." Nature is hostile to man, even malicious. Inevitably, therefore, nature comes to be viewed by Hobbes as something to be opposed and overcome (ch.13, pp.63-65). Such an understanding of nature, or of the life according to nature, is the reverse of the ancients' understanding (though it has some reflection in the thought of the great Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin). Life according to nature, for the ancients, is the best and most perfect life, not the poorest and most miserable. It is the end to be aimed at and striven for, not the beginning to be overcome or escaped from.

This revolutionary (but thoroughly Machiavellian) vision of nature forms the basis of Hobbes' political doctrine and in particular of his stress on the idea of rights. In the state of nature men have a right, a natural right, to everything. For "because the condition of man…is a condition of war of everyone against everyone; in which case everyone is governed by his own reason, and there is nothing that he can make use of that may not be a help unto him, in preserving his life against his enemies; it followeth that in such a condition every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body"

(ch.13, p.67). This right, founded on man's desire and need for self-preservation, also proves, interestingly enough, to be the key to the way out of the state of nature. For one of its implications is that not all passions are of equal status. There are some passions that incline to war and others that incline to peace (ch.11, p.50), and it is on the latter that the way out is based. This way consists in the victory of the peaceful passions over the warlike ones, or the victory of the passions of "fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living, and a hope by…industry to obtain them" over the passions of glory and pride (chs.13, 17, 28, pp.66, 87, 170). The peaceful passions can and will dominate since, without peace, one can never be sure of getting what one wants and one is, moreover, in continual fear of losing one's very life, the condition of anything one wants. So as the wants necessarily move a man, the want for peace must be the most powerful want, the want that will necessarily overcome all others (chs.15, 27, pp.82-83, 160).

But this raises a problem, for if this want must necessarily dominate, why has it not in fact dominated? Why is history, including the history of Hobbes' own day, so full of war? Hobbes' answer is simple: men fail to see what is necessary. They do not perceive that war is the necessary result of the scramble for private goods, and hence that peace is the necessary thing. Nor do they perceive what is the way to secure peace (chs.11, 16, pp.52, 82). Men may of necessity follow their passions, but they are not of necessity endowed with knowledge about how to do so successfully. For this the application of reason is required. That is why the passions are not the only key to the way out of the state of nature; there is also need of reason (ch.13, p.66). Men's passions and self-love have this defect that they distort men's judgements, like "multiplying glasses" that enlarge what lies near at hand; judgements need to be corrected by the "prospective glasses" of moral and civil science, that enable men "to see afar off" (ch.18, p.96). Hobbes' moral science, like Machiavelli's immoral science, exists for the service of the passions; it exists to correct their short-sightedness and show them the sure way to their ends.

The subordination of Hobbes' moral science to the service of the passions is particularly evident from its subject matter, which is the laws of nature, or those eternal and immutable laws determining the just and the unjust, the good and evil, that Hobbes was the first to find out (ch.15, pp.82-83). These laws of nature turn out to be nothing other than "articles of peace" suggested by reason as means of getting out of the war of nature (ch.13, p.66). They are "dictates of reason" or "conclusions or theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence" of men, i.e. to the satisfaction of their passions (ch.15 p.83). These conclusions are derived from the fundamental fact of natural right, that right one has to everything necessary to defence. As long as this right endures "there can be no security to any man (how strong or wise soever he be)" of living out his time (ch.14, p.67). Hence it is the first rule of reason, or the first law of nature, that one seek peace and follow it; and the second rule that one be willing to lay down one's right to all things, as far as peace and defence require, and be content with as much liberty (i.e. as much of one's original right) against other men as one allows them against oneself (ch.16, p.67). This peace, or the condition of civil society, begins, therefore, with a social contract, or an agreement between men to give up some of their right so that they can live together without always fighting each other.

One of the most important facts about this contract is that it necessarily involves equality in the contracting parties. Since all have the same natural right and all give up the same amount of it, whatever other differences there may be (in health, strength, wealth, virtue or wisdom) are irrelevant; in the politically decisive respect all men are equal. The inequality that now exists "has been introduced by the laws civil," not by nature (ch.15, p.79). Indeed, according to Hobbes, one of the laws of nature (the ninth to be precise) is that "every man acknowledge other for his equal by nature," and this whether men are really equal or not. For though Hobbes thinks men are indeed equal in the state of nature (since no inequality in strength or wisdom is enough to guarantee victory in battle with others), he argues that, regardless of whether this is true or not, men will not enter into conditions of peace except on

equal terms and so reason dictates that one acknowledge equality in order to achieve peace (ch.15, p.80). To break this ninth law of nature is pride, and, as Hobbes makes clear in the context, he holds that Aristotle's whole political thought is based on the breach of this law, that is, on pride. The thought of Aristotle, and hence in general of scholasticism (which is just "Aristotelity;" ch.46, p.367), is thus based on pride, that most warlike of passions, and the one most in need of suppressing. When Hobbes said that ancient moral philosophy was a description of the philosophers' own passions, it was pride that he must have had most in mind (ch.46, p.366).

Ancient political thought was indeed inegalitarian in character, for it located the basis of rule in some excellence or superiority. Even democracy is only justified in Aristotle's eyes by the fact that the collective virtue of the people might, at least sometimes, excel that of the few (*Politics*, 1281a40-1284a3). This view of Aristotle's can be traced to the fact that he and other ancient thinkers looked at political matters in the light of the supreme end of human perfection (which is one and the same for all men everywhere). They therefore judged who was fit, and had the right, to rule or exercise political responsibilities, with reference to who was best qualified to lead any particular city to this end. Such a way of judging necessarily led to different conclusions according to differences of time and place, and so Aristotle allowed a variety of legitimate regimes, none of which is particularly egalitarian in spirit. Still, for all that, there is a certain equality at work in his thought. For men are equal in their end (they have the same one); they are just not equal in their beginning (they are differently endowed with respect to attaining it and some must rely on the guidance and rule of others to get there).

Hobbes' equality is, one may say, the reverse. Men are not equal in their end (for the passions of each are always different); but they are equal in their beginning (for no man knows his passions better than he himself and no man, at least in the state of nature, is more able to satisfy his passions than anyone else). One cannot, therefore, appeal to a common end when judging how best to rule men; one can only appeal to a common means. What all men need and strive for is to secure their way to their diverse ends. Were these ends merely di-

verse and not also conflicting (a possibility that much impresses Locke and Rousseau later), there would be no place and no need for a common government. But the ends do conflict and do bring about that state of war which prevents anyone from getting anything they want. Not the end, therefore, but the universal way to any end, i.e. peace, is the criterion of judgement for setting up legitimate rule (ch.15, p.83).

In thus rejecting the ancient vision of a single end, Hobbes also and necessarily rejected the ancient criterion for judging the relative worth of the particular ends that men actually pursue and of the particular men who pursue them. All men are equal because all ends are equal. Hobbes is nevertheless left with a way of judging men, or some men, because if all ends are equal and to be equally tolerated for the sake of a peace that is equal for all, then those men are not to be tolerated whose ends, or whose actions, are inimical to such tolerance and such peace. These will be the men dominated by what Hobbes calls pride but by which he means any sort of excellence or any setting of oneself above another. His fifth law of nature, indeed, is that "every man strive to accommodate himself to the rest" (ch.15, pp.78-80). Accordingly Hobbes is only able to tolerate a diversity of ends on the basis of a more fundamental conformity of means. What extreme of intolerance this drives him to in the case of ancient learning and the "Roman Church" will be examined shortly.

Hobbes' view of equality entails that at the root of all (legitimate) government lies democracy, in the sense of the equal consent of all the subjects of it. This, however, does not prevent him from holding that every ruler or sovereign (whether made up of one person or many) must be absolute; that is because of the way he thinks consent must be secured. The so called laws of nature are, he says, not properly laws, for "a law is properly the word of him that by right hath command over others" (ch.15, p.83). The laws of nature only become laws when some authority commands them. By themselves, however, they are "contrary to our natural passions that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like," and will not have the binding force of law "without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed." Moreover cove-

nants, which lie at the basis of government, "without the sword are but words" (ch.17, p.87).

Hobbes, like Machiavelli, does not think men are moved to obey laws or to keep promises by what are called nowadays 'moral' considerations; such considerations could only be foolish where one cannot be sure that others will obey the laws, or keep promises, even if one does so oneself. Men will refuse, and will refuse "lawfully," to obey unless they can do so "safely," and they can do so safely only when they can be sure others will obey, that is, only when there is some power set over them to terrify everyone into obedience. Thus Hobbes holds that all government arises in and rests on fear, which is the only thing that can make most men keep laws (ch.27, p.158); the few "generous natures" who are the exception, and who will obey law regardless of the presence or absence of fear, are so few that it is unrealistic to rely on their passion of "generosity." The passion to be "reckoned on" is fear (ch.14, p.73). So whether a government comes into being by conquest or by explicit agreement, what it rests on is fear, fear of the sovereign (ch.20, p.104).

The power of the sovereign, which makes him feared, is what guarantees the social contract. This contract, moreover, is not between him and his subjects, but between the subjects themselves; for what they agree to (whether freely or by coercion does not matter) is to set up such and such a person or persons as the authority over them (ch.17, pp.89-90). The sovereign's power must, therefore, be absolute, or "as great as possibly men can be imagined to make it" (ch.20, p.109). Otherwise it will not instill the necessary fear (ch.18). The sovereign has control over all doctrines (including religion), over the determination of all that is right and wrong, over life and death, and over all that is necessary for securing peace. Moreover, he cannot be guilty of breach of covenant (for he has made none), can never do injustice to a subject whatever he does, and can never justly be punished or put to death by the subjects (chs.20, 21, pp.104, 112).

A sovereign only loses his sovereignty and a subject is only released from his covenant when the sovereign is incapable of defending him, for then men return to the state of nature and recover their right to do whatever they think

necessary to defend themselves (chs.29, 22, pp.178, 116). If it be objected that submission to such a total sovereign must be "very miserable," Hobbes has a ready reply: the alternative, the state of nature, is worse (chs.20, 18, pp.107, 96). Herein, at any rate, he finds both the cause and the remedy of the civil wars that raged in his time: men have failed (through the corruption, no doubt, of the pernicious teaching of the ancients, chs.21, 46, pp.113-114, 373) to see the need totally to submit to their sovereign, whoever he happens to be, if they wish to live and be at peace.

The purpose of government and commonwealth, as stated in accord with the above analysis, is the safety of the people understood to mean not "bare preservation" but also "all other contentments of life, which every man by lawful industry, without danger or hurt to the commonwealth, shall acquire to himself" (chs.30, 17, 26, pp.178, 87, 142). Aristotle was, therefore, wrong to reject these as the ends of civil or political life, and to put instead the end of virtue, or rather he was wrong to put as end his account of virtue. For true virtue, which government promotes, is not supreme human perfection but obedience to those natural laws that are the means to "peaceable, sociable and comfortable living" (ch.15, p.83). The point of these laws is to enable men safely to pursue their passions, that is, "to direct and keep them in such a motion, as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness or indiscretion; as hedges are set, not to stop travelers, but to keep them in the way" (ch.30, p.185). The sum of natural laws, which are the same as the moral laws, is, in the end, just those rules one must observe if there is to be peace (chs.26, 15, pp. 151, 153, 82). They are also just those rules that men will necessarily be driven by their passions to obey once they have been enlightened by Hobbes' political teaching.

THE IDEAL OF THE ENLIGHTENED COMMONWEALTH

Hobbes' morality and his moral 'ought' are thoroughly 'prudential' or 'hypothetical'; they are relative to, and necessarily

presuppose, the idea that the good is peace. In this respect Hobbes remains, despite all his other disagreements, true to the classical tradition, which also viewed morality as prudential, that is, as relative to a certain end. All the differences, which are indeed enormous enough, come from the difference of the end adopted. Hobbes' end is Machiavellian; the classics' is not.

Hobbes wrote his doctrine with a definite practical aim in view: to set up for men the true and lasting commonwealth, and thereby save them from the miseries of war. These miseries were unavoidable before because men did not have Hobbesian political and moral science. This practical aim requires two things, closely connected with each other: the public promulgation of the doctrine, and the suppression of all that may hinder its effect. As regards the first, Hobbes believes this can easily be done, for the natural law is easy to know. It can be stated in "one easy sum, intelligible to the meanest capacity," namely "do not that to another which thou wouldest not have done to thyself" (ch.15, p.82). Moreover with the right method, such as is used in geometry, this can be effectively taught, for "all men by nature reason alike, and well, when they have good principles" (ch.5, p.21). The only difficulty, and the reason that the natural law is not better known, is that it is obscured in men's minds by passion and self-love; indeed "it is now become of all laws the most obscure" so that it has "the greatest need of able interpreters" (ch.26, p.146). Hobbes evidently regards himself as such an interpreter, and so he holds that his doctrine must be taught in the universities. This is all the more necessary because it is from the universities that the preachers and the gentry, who function as teachers of the people, draw their knowledge (ch.30, p.183; conclusion, p.391). Once Hobbes' doctrine is taught to them, and then "sprinkled" on the people, men will at last reach that release from wretchedness which they have always wanted and never yet attained.

At this point, however, the most crucial from the point of view of the success of the project, Hobbes is forced to give up reliance on the necessary operations of the passions and have recourse instead to "hope." His doctrine will only become public doctrine, and thus enlighten the people, if it is au-

thorized and imposed by some sovereign, and Hobbes is left to hope that "one time or other" his book "may fall into the hands" of an imperial sovereign, who "will consider it himself" and by the exercise of his sovereignty "convert this truth of speculation into the utility of practice" (ch.31, p.197). Only thus is Hobbes able to believe that his labour will not prove as "useless" as Plato's *Republic*. There is more than comical irony here. In order to escape the uselessness of Plato, Hobbes' realism culminates in a sort of 'unrealistic' hope for a 'philosopher king'. Still this view of Hobbes that philosophy can and must become public teaching is a departure from the classics, who thought that this was not in general desirable or possible (Plato, *Republic*, 473-476; cf. Hume, *Enq* §§1-5). The philosopher king rules, to be sure, but not by teaching his philosophy to all and sundry. Hobbes' contrary idea is what has come to be known as 'enlightenment' and, despite the abandonment of many other aspects of Hobbes' thinking, it has continued to attract proponents. One finds it in Hare, for example, who also thinks his moral philosophy, in which lies "our chief hope of a lasting peace" (*Freedom and Reason*, p.158), needs to be taught to the people by the "enlightened" if it is to have its effect (*ibid*., pp.224, 147).

In Hobbes' case enlightenment goes much further than it does in Hare's, for it requires him to teach theology as well as philosophy. Not every sort of theology, it is clear, is going to be compatible with Hobbes' political aim, and he is ingenious, to say the least, in the way he manages to squeeze his politics into the Bible and the Bible into his politics. Notable in this respect is what he does to the idea of hell. Hell is a particularly difficult problem for someone like Hobbes. Since his politics rests so much on the dominance in man of the fear of death in this world, it cannot tolerate the idea that there might be a stronger fear, the fear of eternal death in the next world. If people were moved instead by this fear they might not submit to the sovereign in the total way that Hobbes requires. He needs, therefore, to abolish this fear, and he does so, in effect, by saying that no one is tormented forever in hell. Hell is only eternal in the sense that the place of torments lasts forever, not that the sinners in it do (ch.38, p.247). In this light the fear of hell reduces simply to the fear of death, for hell is

just a way of saying that death is annihilation. The two fears are thus not two fears but one. They cannot, therefore, come into competition nor can one outweigh the other. Hobbes’ philosophy, it is clear, requires a drastically reinterpreted Christianity (even perhaps no Christianity at all). It certainly cannot tolerate traditional Christianity, and least of all the “Roman” religion, that “kingdom of darkness,” dominated by the heathen philosophers, the schools and the usurping ecclesiastics (ch.46, p.376). Their canting, wholly unintel-ligible jargon (ch.46, p.367), which is the madness of absurd speech (ch.8, pp.39-40), their fostering of pride and vainglory, their love of contention and the competition of praise (ch.11, p.50, *Conclusion* p.391), their teaching of the existence of fairies and ghosts, or the superstitious fear of spirits (ch.2, p.8), just serve to render men unfitted for civil obedience and so incapable of that lasting peace which is the precondition of any felicity man’s lot permits him to enjoy. All such nonsense must be utterly eradicated. Hobbes’ desire to promote the happiness of man requires, and is matched by, his hatred of the Roman church and the school.

B: LOCKE
MORALISING HOBBES

Locke presents his political thought in the form of an attack on, and response to, the absolutist doctrine of one Sir Robert Filmer. According to Locke, Filmer’s system is only this: “that all government is absolute monarchy,” and the ground he builds on is “that no man is born free” (*1T*, §1). Locke rejects both propositions and his own system may be said to be just the opposite of them. Now, though he explicitly directs himself against Filmer, and even says that Filmer is the one supposed to have carried the doctrine of absolute rule to its perfection (*1T*, §5), he could not be ignorant that Hobbes, whose ideas were very much in the air at the time, could arguably be said to have done it as well, if not better. It is surprising, therefore, that Locke is so reserved in his references to Hobbes. He does not mention him at all in *Two Treatises*, nor in the *Essay*. The only reference in the *Essay* is to a

"Hobbist," and then it is derogatory, though "Leviathan" is also mentioned in the same passage (*Ess* 1.3, §5). "Leviathan" is mentioned again in the second of the *Two Treatises* (*2T*, §98), but the context is not particularly Hobbesian. One may well wonder why this is so. Hobbes and Filmer may have reached a similar conclusion, but their reasoning is quite different. It will in fact emerge that, as far as reasoning or premises go, Locke shares a great deal in common with Hobbes. A direct attack on Hobbes, had Locke cared to write one, could not have failed to reveal this, and as Hobbes had become a suspect, even a condemned, writer, it doubtless would not have been wise to be seen to be too closely connected with that "justly decried" name (*Las*, p.87).

But whatever the truth of this may be, many of Locke's remarks do constitute attacks on Hobbes, as well as on Filmer. Absolute government, for instance, is not government at all, for to think that "all government in the world is the product only of force and violence" is to "lay a foundation for perpetual disorder and mischief, tumult, sedition and rebellion (things that the followers of that hypothesis so loudly cry out against)" (*2T*, §1). Locke, in fact, says that subjection to an absolute sovereign is not the state of civil society but of war, nay of slavery (§24), for the absolute sovereign is in a state of war with his subjects (§91). Now it is not easy to tell whether Hobbes would agree or disagree with this last remark. On the one hand he thinks subjection to an absolute sovereign ends the war of nature, and yet on the other hand he thinks the sovereign is no part of the compact that creates that subjection. Hence, in some sense, the sovereign must still be in the state of nature. How Hobbes would solve this puzzle is unclear, but he would certainly agree with Locke that an absolute monarch only looks after his subjects for the sake of his own "power, profit and greatness" (*2T* §93, cf. *Lev* chs.18, 19, 30, pp.96, 98, 185). Locke, however, goes on to say that to suppose men leave the state of nature to subject themselves to an absolute sovereign is to suppose that "men are so foolish that they care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by pole-cats or foxes, but are content, nay think it safety, to be devoured by lions" (*2T* §93). Such a state is not better than the state of nature (contrary to what Hobbes had claimed) but worse, and

"no rational creature can be supposed to change his condition with an intention to be worse" (§§131, 137). Moreover, in such a state people would not be at peace but in open rebellion, for whatever "flatterers" may say to mislead the people, "it hinders not men from feeling," and when they feel themselves "exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power" they will certainly rebel (§§94, 209, 210, 224).

Hobbes' politics (not to mention Filmer's) is simply not rational. Nor is it consistent. Hobbes had thought that only in civil society, i.e. only in subjection to absolute power, would men have prosperity and enjoy the goods of the earth; he also thought and argued that the sovereign should pass laws to encourage "all manner of arts, as navigation, agriculture, fishing…" for the good and preservation of men or the "contentment of life" (*Lev* ch.30, pp.178-185). Locke thinks exactly the reverse will happen; if one actually looks at historical examples of absolute rule, one will see "to what degree of happiness and security it carries civil society" (*2T* §92, *1T* §41). What is needed, thinks Locke, is to find "another rise of government and another original of political power" (*2T* §1).

Hobbes, for all his desire to escape from the immorality of Machiavelli and the lupine policies of ancient Rome, did not succeed; his government is as much based on fear, terror and force than ever Machiavelli's was. Hobbes my have gone further than Bacon in thinking that peaceful government could be secured by the operations of the passions alone without the need for religion and the sweet harangues of Orpheus' music, but in doing so he abandoned Bacon's mild politics for Machiavelli's violent ones. Locke reverses this and again effects a return to mildness; his relationship to Hobbes is very like that of Bacon to Machiavelli. Indeed, the analogy is very close, for as Bacon comes to an un-Machiavellian result using Machiavelli's premises, so does Locke come to an un-Hobbesian result using Hobbes' premises.

THE LAW OF PRESERVATION

According to Locke, if absolute sovereignty did come to be, it would be by consent of the subjects, not, as Filmer thought,

by divine right (*1T* §43). For him, just as much as for Hobbes, government is founded on the rights of all men, and on their consent, not on divine right or even some superiority of virtue or wisdom. Moreover the rights of man are reduced, as for Hobbes, to the fundamental one of self-preservation (cf. *Lev* ch.14, p.67). Locke's acceptance of Hobbes' premise and the denial of his conclusion is neatly indicated in the following: "this freedom from absolute arbitrary power is so necessary to, and closely joined with, a man's preservation, that he cannot part with it but by what forfeits his preservation and life together" (*2T* §23). The difference is signaled above all by the word 'freedom', which, in many respects, occupies for Locke the place that peace does for Hobbes (freedom is, in a verbal echo of Hobbes, the "fence" to self-preservation; §17). When Locke speaks of finding a different "original of political power," he is speaking, it is true, in the context of his discussion of absolute rule, but the absolute rule is that of Filmer, not of Hobbes. Filmer differs from Hobbes not in the absoluteness of rule but in its "original" (which for Filmer is divine right as handed down from Adam). The true original for Locke turns out to be the same as it was for Hobbes—the right to self-preservation. How then does Locke come to such a widely different result?

Locke is emphatic in insisting on the dominance and priority of the desire for self-preservation. It is the general rule which nature teaches all things (*1T* §56); it is the strong desire God has "planted" in man and all other animals (§86); it is the first and strongest desire he has so planted and "wrought into the very principles of their nature" (§88); it is for Locke, as for Hobbes, irresistible; it is the way man is by nature; to try to change it is pointless. Note here, in particular, the way Locke argues that the sheer physical necessity for a body to move the way "the greater force carries it" means that, by the "law" of nature and reason, the majority decision must be what governs in a community (*2T* §96). Politics and morality must therefore be based, as they were for Hobbes, on the fundamental natural necessity of the dominant passion, or, in other words, on the orientation towards Machiavellian realism, not on the classical orientation towards perfection or the fine and the noble.

Men, therefore, are to be viewed as necessarily directed to the selfish, non-social, goal of their own self-preservation, which desire, again as with Hobbes, gives man certain rights, the right to order their own actions, to acquire property, and to dispose of it as they see fit, "without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man" (*2T* §4, *1T* §§86, 88). But whereas Hobbes sees this right as total and extending to everything, Locke thinks it is limited or that it is bounded by a natural law (*2T* §§4, 6). This law is identical with the right, or rather it is the right with its object, self-preservation, understood as a limit. The right is to self-preservation and hence it extends only to what is necessary for self-preservation, and not to anything else. Hobbes would doubtless reply that in the state of nature this limit would be no limit, for there is nothing in such a state that might not prove necessary for survival (*Lev* ch.14, p.67). Locke does not agree and it is important to see why.

Reason, which is the law of nature, "teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that…no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions," for while a man is bound to preserve himself, he is also bound to preserve others, or not to harm them, "when his own preservation comes not into competition" (*2T* §6). One has a right to take of the goods of the earth, but only as much as one can use "to any advantage of life before it spoils;" anything more is beyond one's share and belongs to others (§31). The limit set by reason to what one can take is, therefore, use. Now in addition to picking up goods and fruits that nature spontaneously produces, one may also appropriate land to oneself, and cultivate it; it thus becomes one's property because one has invested one's labour in it. If anyone tried, when there was as good land left to be cultivated, to take this property away, then he was taking what was not his, namely not what nature spontaneously offered in common to all but the fruits of someone else's pains (§§34, 37). There is likewise a limit set by the law of nature to how much land one may appropriate, in fact the same limit, "the extent of men's labour and the conveniency of life" (§36).

This law Locke believes is plain and intelligible (§12), but not in such a way that it cannot be misapplied or miscited

through passion and interest (§136); hence "though the law of nature is plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of study of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases" (§124). Therefore it is that men take more than is required for use, and also invade the possessions of others, thereby abandoning the rule of reason and sinking to the level of beasts (§§8, 11). But this decline did not come about all at once, for there was a stage in human history, a "poor but virtuous age" (§110), when there was innocence and trust (§§94, 107), and where there was little if any contention about property and goods (§31). At this time there were so few people, and so much room, that men were rather in danger of getting lost than of coming into conflict with each other (§36). But when the number of people increased, and money was invented (§§37, 108), then competition began and it ceased to be the case that "right and conveniency went together" (§51). Men were tempted to take more than they needed, quarrels and strife began, and the natural law became obscured.

The implication seems to be, though Locke does not say this explicitly (but cf. *Ess* 2.21 §58), that, in the "poor but virtuous age" of man's primitive beginnings, the natural law had operated automatically and unconsciously, but as corruption, ambition, luxury and flattery increased it ceased to do so, and men were forced to start looking for, and reasoning out, the true original of things (§§110-111). In other words, there is only need for knowledge and finding out of the natural law when the situation is such that men's passions bring them into conflict with it. Not in the primitive ages but only in the later corrupt ages is political science, and even government, necessary.

At any event, by the law of nature all men constitute one community or society distinct from all other creatures, and this would still be the case were it not that "the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men" makes it necessary for men to "separate from the original great and natural community and by positive agreements combine into smaller and divided associations" (§128). The greater part of men are in fact "no strict observers of equity and justice" (§123, among

whom must be included above all absolute sovereigns, §§172, 181, 228). Furthermore, the law of nature, like any other law, cannot be without a power to execute it (§7, cf. *Ess* 2.28 §6), and in the state of nature the only power can be men themselves. Thus it is that in the state of nature men not only have the right of self-preservation, but also the right to punish anyone who breaks the law of nature (§§8, 11, 16), and to punish as far as is necessary to make it "an ill bargain to the offender, give him cause to repent and terrify others from doing the like" (§12).

Unfortunately men's passions tend to make them abuse this right as much as the other, and anyway the unjust can often escape punishment through superior power (§§124-24). Consequently the law of nature "serves not, as it ought, to determine the rights and fence the properties of those that live under it" (§136), and the state of nature becomes very inconvenient, "full of fears and continual dangers" (§123), where men's only appeal is to "heaven," that is, to armed force (§21). In short, it degenerates into a state of war, and men become desirous to "quit" it and form societies.

Locke has drawn a distinction, as Hobbes did not, between the state of nature and the state of war, but he does it in such a way that the state of nature tends to become a state of war, and therefore a state that one needs to quit in order to join society. Nevertheless, the state of nature becomes a state of war not, as Hobbes thought, because of the exercise of natural right, but because of the abuse of it (§§19, 181). Locke, in effect, accuses Hobbes of not properly analyzing the state of nature. Men's desire for self-preservation serves as a law as well as a right, and even if the abuse of the right eventually becomes more or less inevitable, it is still abuse. So if one is to understand the truth about man, right, society and government, one must carefully distinguish the abuse from the right, and the state of war from the state of nature.

However, even this does not get to the bottom of the matter. Hobbes had come to his conclusion from the belief that what is first in man is the insatiable lust for power; lust creates war and only as a result does it create the dominance of the need for self-preservation (*Lev* ch.11, p.49). Self-preservation is thus not prior simply for Hobbes. Locke re-

verses this order, puts self-preservation first, and the passions that lead to war second, or dependent for their emergence on a change in the primitive conditions (not nature or individuals, but society, is the cause of injustice). Locke begins with a different analysis of man from Hobbes and though, like him, he puts the desire for self-preservation at the centre of his politics, he comes to this by a different route. This route begins, as it appears, not with Hobbes, nor with any other philosopher, but with Locke’s own reflections on the primary data of experience. It begins with the empiricism of the *Essay*. In the light of this one can take Locke’s lack of concern with Hobbes’ political thought at its face value: when doing philosophy he was just not terribly interested in the books of others, only in his own experience and thoughts. In any case, one must turn to the *Essay* to find the theory of man that lies behind the politics of *Two Treatises*.

THE NATURAL GOOD

Good and bad, says Locke (relying, à la Moore, on his empiricist analysis of the ideas that men have in their minds; *Ess* 2.21 §32), are just pleasure and pain; and moral good and bad are just the conformity or disagreement of men’s voluntary actions to some law (2.20 §2, 21 §42, 28 §5). There are three kinds law: the divine (whether promulgated by revelation or by the light of nature, in which latter case it is the natural law, *1T* §§86, 88, *2T* §135); the civil; and the law of reputation (*Ess* 2.28 §§7ff.). Now men are moved to action not by pleasure but by pain, not by the desire for some good but by the aversion from some evil. “The chief, if not only, spur to human industry and action is uneasiness;” and if the absence of a good causes no displeasure or pain “there is no desire of it nor endeavour after it” (*Ess* 2.20 §§6, 16; 21 §§29, 36). Pleasure, in fact, makes us indolent rather than active, for while a pleasure lasts and all uneasiness is away, we think ourselves happy and content, and do not desire to change (2.21 §§34, 59). One should say, therefore, that for Locke it is the push from behind, as it were, not the pull from in front that moves us, and if we were not uneasy we would never move. In fact,

we would normally be satisfied with moderate goods and pleasures. For "all uneasiness being removed, a moderate portion of good serves at present to content men" (2.21 §43). Hence we do not naturally have an incessant lust for more, as Hobbes thought, but this lust, if it arises, arises elsewhere. Incessant lust comes from incessant unease, and this is a result of advanced stages of human history, not primitive ones.

The sorts of uneasiness that Locke says we are subject to are first "the ordinary necessities of our lives" as hunger, thirst, weariness, and so forth, and second the "fantastical" ones, as the itch after honour, power, riches etc., which "acquired habits, by fashion, example and education, have settled in us" (2.21 §§45-46). This distinction may be explained on the ground that what we call good and evil "lies much in comparison;" in other words, from seeing what others have we find that our own desires expand (2.21 §42, *2T* §108; this idea plays a large role in Rousseau's thought later). While the ordinary necessities fill a great part of our lives, it is principally because of the fantastical ones that we are ceaselessly uneasy and ceaselessly desire something more. Now one may gloss the former sort as natural uneasinesses or desires, and the latter as artificial ones, and in the light of this it is plain why Locke would think Hobbes was wrong. Hobbes failed to appreciate the significance of the difference between the natural and artificial passions (though he was not unaware of it, *Lev* ch.6, p.24). The insatiable lust for power, if men have it, results rather from the artificial than from the natural passions; but it is the natural passions that must be taken as the standard of right and justice, i.e. the standard must be given by self-preservation (to which all the natural passions may be taken to reduce).

Locke, however, agrees in part with Hobbes about freedom. Man is free not in his will but in his actions, that is, if he is not hindered from acting as he wills to act then he counts as free (*Ess* 2.21 §§8, 21, 27ff.). The will itself is determined by some present uneasiness, or rather by the most pressing one at the time (2.21 §§40-46). Now though this determination is natural, it is not inevitable, for men have the power to suspend the satisfaction of any particular desire in order to weigh and compare it with others. In this fact lies man's liberty, "and

from not using of it right comes all that vanity or mistakes, errors and faults which we run into in the conduct of our lives and our endeavours after happiness, whilst we precipitate the determination of our wills and engage too soon, before due examination" (2.21 §47). The further a man departs from this liberty the nearer he is to misery and slavery (2.21 §48), so that happiness may be said to depend on it. We cannot indeed forbear to pursue happiness, but we can forbear to pursue any particular desire, and so the more we care about being really happy, the more we are free to suspend and deliberate. Hence "the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness" (2.21 §51), and the freedom this involves is that wherein "lies the great privilege of finite intellectual beings" (2.21 §52). The victory of reason over passions is the victory over that hastiness and blindness of theirs which, left unchecked, leads not to satisfaction but the loss of it (2.21 §53). Reason's job, and freedom's too, is, therefore, to serve the passions by ensuring that they are contented and not frustrated.

Most men fail to exercise their freedom and reason in this way, because of "the weak and narrow constitution of our minds" (2.21 §§54, 64). The result is that men not only lose what they desire but they generate in themselves depraved desires. What is good to each man is what suits his "relish" or his "palate," but wrong choices lead to a "vitiated palate," i.e. one that is out of line with "the eternal law and nature of things." But the palate can be corrected, just as it could be corrupted in the first place (2.21 §§54-56, 69). Locke is of the opinion, however, that in his day this corruption has gone very far, and that custom has now made sacred what folly or craft first began. Indeed so bad is the corruption that if one "impartially" surveys the nations of the world, one will have "but little reverence for the practices which are in use and credit amongst men, and will have reason to think that the woods and forests, where the irrational untaught inhabitants keep right by following nature, are fitter to give us rules than cities and palaces, where those that call themselves civil and rational go out of their way by the authority of example" (*1T* §58). The eternal law and nature of things is the natural law of self-preservation, and one is only rational in so far as one

keeps to it. Most of those who now call themselves rational are not so. Locke has another vision of the rational man in mind to replace the prevailing one. Locke's rational man, because he keeps his voluntary actions in conformity with the law of nature, is also the morally good man. He is therefore good by reference to "the only true touchstone of moral rectitude," as opposed to being good by reference to the generally perverted touchstone of what is held in reputation or discredit in the different countries of the world, and by which men are usually styled virtuous or vicious (2.28 §§8ff.).

RATIONAL EXPLOITATION OF THE EARTH

In the state of nature, men pursue self-preservation and only leave that state for civil society in order to pursue self-preservation better. Society exists, therefore, for self-preservation, but for self-preservation as determined by the law of nature and not by men's corrupt passions. Society's job is to protect those who keep that law and punish those who do not. Self-preservation is understood to mean not mere existence but, as also in the case of Hobbes, comfortable existence in the enjoyment of the goods of the earth. For the earth was given to men "to enjoy," that is "for their benefit and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it" (*2T* §§31, 34). Comfortable self-preservation is what God and nature intend (*1T* §42), and is for this reason the only legitimate purpose of civil society (*2T* §§95, 26). The function of society and government thus turns out to be the protection of property.

The dominance of property in Locke's political thought is very marked, but it follows necessarily from his view of what man's basic drive is. Comfortable self-preservation requires that one appropriate and use the goods of the earth. Now while nature produces these spontaneously, she does so in a very niggardly way, so niggardly in fact that the value of untouched nature for the comfort of man's life is "little more than nothing" (*2T* §42). Virtually everything of value comes from man's labour in cultivating nature, for "it is labour that

puts the difference of value on everything" (§40). Human labour, not nature, is what makes man's lot pleasant.

Locke is the first explicitly to locate the source of value in human labour, but it is implicit from the beginning in the project to master nature, for this project necessarily means that one should view nature only as valuable or serviceable to man when conquered, i.e. when changed from its original uselessness into usefulness by human art and industry. Labour, however, is not only the source of value; it is also the origin of property. Each man by nature has property in his own person, and if he invests his own labour in something he thereby "mixes" it with his natural property and makes it his acquired property (§27). This labour not only benefits the labourer, it benefits all mankind, for he who has "a greater plenty of conveniences of life from ten acres, than he could have from a hundred acres left to nature, may truly be said to give ninety acres to mankind" (§37), though this is even so to rate the proportion of labour very low (for it is nearer 100 to 1 then 10 to 1). To take what is originally common in nature and make it one's property "does not lessen but increase the common stock of mankind" (§37). The exploitation of nature and acquiring of property is thus the way to comfortable self-preservation. That is why Locke says that the earth was given (by God and nature) "to the use of the industrious and rational (and labour was to be the title to it), not to the fancy or covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious" (§34; compare Locke's preference, on the grounds of usefulness, for illiterate mechanics over subtle scholastics, *Ess* 3.10 §§8-9). They are rational, and by right possess the earth, *because* they are industrious, for labour is both the only way to man's goal and is what gives any man his "title" to property.

Property, however, like everything in the state of nature, is governed by the law of nature, and by this law property can only be acquired to the extent one can use it; to acquire more and let it go to waste is to "rob" mankind. But all this means is that the "exceeding" of the limit does not lie in the "largeness" of a man's possession, but "the perishing of anything uselessly in it" (*2T* §46). In other words, there is by nature no limit to the amount one may acquire; as soon, therefore, as men invented money (which is something that can be

exchanged for perishable goods but does not itself perish), it became possible to acquire endlessly and not break the law of nature (§47). All these developments take place in the state of nature, for property and money exist outside civil society, just as law does as well as truth and keeping of faith (contrary to the ideas of Hobbes) (§§50, 14). But at the same time they become the cause for leaving the state of nature, for the accumulation of property and the invention of money breed the contest and strife that make the state of nature so unsafe and insecure (§§108, 123).

In fact, money is what really seems to be to blame, for were it not that money allows men to accumulate without limit, even now, when the world is far fuller of people, there would be no conflict. Each could take property sufficient for his needs without straitening or prejudicing anyone, because it is labour, not extent of ground, that counts; even a small patch of ground, we may suppose, would be adequate if it was laboured on. Money has, however, changed this and made the measure set by nature into no measure; it has released man’s “natural ambition” and so paved the way for contention and disorder (§§36, 106).

Locke is somewhat ambivalent in his attitude towards money. While it creates war and the need to leave nature for society, it is also necessary to secure the exploitation of the earth on which comfortable self-preservation rests (§§45, 48). Acquisitiveness, we may say, is the quality that leads to the exploitation of the earth, and the more this passion is ‘emancipated’, the more exploitation there will be. Money is what makes this emancipation possible. Moreover, money would seem to be necessary to convert the increase of goods caused by the labour of one man into an increase of the goods common to all mankind, for such conversion could hardly take place without exchange; and barter in goods, as opposed to money, hampers exchange. This point is not made in so many words by Locke, but it seems to be suggested by what he says (§48); certainly the question of how the private stock can become common stock is nowhere answered openly.

In this light, one may well conclude that it is better to have money and its consequent corruptions than not to have it. For in primitive societies, where there is no money and little

exploitation, the standard of comfortable self-preservation (what is now called simply the standard of living) is also very low. People who occupy a rich land but do not work it will be "poor in all the comforts of life," and a king there "feeds, lodges and is clad worse than a day labourer in England" (§41). Hence it would seem easy, on Locke's principles, to justify the taking of land from the American Indians by the Europeans. The land did not belong to the Indians because they left it waste and only wandered about it hunting. But land belongs to the labourer, and it was the Europeans who laboured in this waste. Therefore the land belongs by nature and by right, not to the lazy Indians, but to the "industrious" Europeans, who, by their appropriations, were just fulfilling the law of nature and of God.

Still, whatever the truth of this may be, it is clear that the morally good men, being the "rational and industrious," must be the up and coming men of Locke's day, the merchants, the industrialists, the energetic landowners. The best sort of men are, one might say, the acquisitive capitalists. In proportion as any man, rich or poor, owner or worker, contributes by his labour to the exploitation of the earth, he thereby improves not only his own lot but everyone else's too, and so becomes a benefactor of mankind; and that prince is "godlike" who encourages such capitalist exploitation (§42).

Locke's realist politics and morality culminate in a sort of glorification of capitalism. This glorification rests on and initiates a changed notion of property. Not only is the unlimited accumulation of it viewed as in accordance with nature, and indeed of the greatest benefit, but property is viewed as by right the exclusive possession of the owner, who is the "absolute lord of his own person and possessions" (§123). One's person is exclusively one's own and so is one's labour, and as the only value of property comes from the labour invested in it, property can only rightfully be regarded as exclusive to the one who by his labour made it his property. Accordingly he can by right do what he likes with it (§§26-27, 44), for it is "for the benefit and sole advantage of the proprietor" (§92). These points would not have been conceded by previous or classical thought, for neither point would lead to well-governed communities or to the perfection of human life.

Property, though the rightful possession of the individual owner, has a common destination and is to be used for common as well as for personal benefit, not private whim or indulgence (Aristotle, *Politics* 1.8-10, 2.5; Aquinas, *ST* IIa IIae q66 a7).

Locke, however, associates his thought not only with man's natural drive but with the revealed injunction of God to "increase and multiply" (§41). Capitalist exploitation, we may almost say, is what God commanded; it is certainly perfectly compatible with Christianity, at least as Locke, if not the tradition, understood Christianity. The role of government too is radically marked by the same capitalism. Legitimate government is egalitarian and limited. It is egalitarian in the sense of being founded on the equal right of all to self-preservation. But this equality does not include equality of goods; it is confined to equality of political representation. Government is limited in the sense of having as its function the preservation of property. If it goes beyond this, it has transgressed the natural law and put itself into a state of war with the people. It may therefore justly be resisted (§§199, 202, 209). Government exists for the freedom, the free enterprise, of the industrious and rational. It exists not to limit or hinder their work, but to aid it and thereby to aid and benefit all mankind.

CONCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF RIGHTS

With Hobbes and Locke politics and morality become fundamentally associated with rights—understood as that freedom or power men have by nature to pursue their own comfortable self-preservation. The ancient concern with virtue disappears. This lowering of the proper end of human pursuit goes along with a rejection of some of the central elements of ancient thought, not only with respect to the being of things (which, for Locke as for Hobbes, are reduced to matter and motion), but also with respect to the intellect and will. Intellect is reduced to the faculty that entertains ideas or the mere appearances of things (and which is not ultimately different from sensation or imagination), and will is reduced to the desire or passion, or the faculty thereof, that moves one in any particu-

lar case. Reason is the slave of the passions, or at least of the most dominant passion, namely the passion to survive, and has as its role the finding of safe and secure means to this end.

The natural or moral law is identified with this passion or the rules reason discovers as means to satisfy it. Morality becomes not only prudential but thoroughly of this world, for the prudence in question is the prudence of the 'worldly' man. There is no other measure of the morally good and bad. Modern moral philosophers have learnt to distinguish the moral 'ought' from the prudential 'ought', and in this sense one would have to say that neither Hobbes nor Locke has such a moral 'ought'. They therefore have no morality in the modern sense. In their eyes, such an 'ought', removing itself from the relation to the desire of comfortable self-preservation, i.e. from that passion that dominates all men, and claiming to stand above it and judge it, could only be ignorant and unrealistic. They recognize no sense of good that could accommodate it. The question, discussed by modern philosophers, whether these thinkers, as natural rights theorists, try to deduce moral 'oughts' from the 'is' of men's factual desires, misses the point. For they do not recognize the legitimacy of the moral 'ought' in question (they certainly never try to deduce moral as opposed to prudential 'oughts').

In them one also finds the first emergence of modern liberalism. There is no one supreme good for all men; each man's good is individual and private, i.e. what he personally finds good for himself. In Locke's opinion, for instance, it is as reasonable to dispute about what man's *summum bonum* consists in as to dispute "whether the best relish is to be found in apples, plums or nuts" (*Ess* 2.21 §55). The only supreme good one can speak of is those conditions, and the securing of them, which allow men to pursue their individual goods without harming others or creating anarchy in the process. Happiness is variable and different for each man, and each man is to be allowed, as far as possible, to pursue his own version of it. Locke states this view with particular clarity. He says that if one leaves out of account the prospect of a life beyond the grave (as many were quick to do), it is not unreasonable that men should seek their happiness by avoiding what diseases them and pursuing what delights them, "wherein it will be no

wonder to find variety and difference." Men may all pursue happiness, but they are not moved by the same object, and thus "men may choose different things, and yet all choose right: supposing them only like a company of poor insects, whereof some are bees, delighted with flowers and their sweetness, others beetles, delighted with other kinds of viands, which, having enjoyed for a season, they should cease to be and exist no more for ever" (*ibid*.). Even Locke's vision of heaven falls into the same 'liberal' perspective: the happiness of heaven will be suitable to everyone there, however different their 'relishes', for the "manna in heaven will suit everyone's palate" (*Ess*, 2.21 §65).

This change in the understanding of man and society comes in along with, or is indeed based on, a Machiavellian view of nature. Nature is hostile or indifferent to human needs, and the condition she puts man in is something to get out of by means of human art and industry. Here Baconian and Cartesian useful science not only perfectly fits, but is expressly required, for it is the great engine for the exploitation and conquest of nature. Accordingly nature is demoted and human work and production exalted. This change involves at the same time a loss of that sense of harmony and oneness with nature (or the environment as we say today) which was always a part of classical thought and comes over so strikingly in so much classical literature. It was not long before men began to regret this loss, and to look back with a certain longing to classical paganism. Romanticism is the obvious and inevitable reaction to the project to conquer nature.

Still, in partial defence of this project, it may be pointed out how much it is associated, in the minds of its chief propagandists, with an evident benevolence or humanism. Looking around at the state of things in their own day, they were all deeply impressed (as the frequent references in their writings show) by the disorder and wretchedness, the war and the contentious disputing, that they found. Ancient science, it seemed obvious, had failed. It could not be true or well-founded; its very lack of success clinched the argument against it. A radically new beginning was required, for the great end of the benefit and good of man demanded it. 'Usefulness' accordingly became the goal and the theme.

Yet this benevolent usefulness led also to various kinds of loss, above all with respect to the object or end of human pursuit. Man lost the dignity and eminence he had had in classical thought and declined to a level more or less equal with ‘the beasts that perish’. The modern project and the modern humanism involved the contracting of man’s horizon, so that his nature and his end were understood with respect to those goods which the modern project could provide. For such a project could not be benevolent if it gave men an abundance of lower goods but deprived him, or at least made him oblivious, of those that were higher and better. Not only is the earth to be transformed so that it exists wholly for man; man is to be transformed so that he exists wholly for the earth.

CHAPTER S4

Hume and Rousseau: the Reinvention of Classical Virtue

A: HUME
THE CLASSICAL MORALIST

The perspective of Machiavelli had a profound effect on the thinkers so far examined, but considering the sorts of results it led to (the cynicism of a Machiavellian prince, the alienation from nature of a Baconian or Cartesian scientist, the arbitrary despotism of a Hobbesian sovereign, the exploitation of a Lockean capitalist), it would have been surprising if it had not, sooner or later, provoked protests. Two of the more important thinkers who did so protest were Hume and Rousseau, and what is remarkable in them is that both appeal to the classics to do so. They initiate a return to the classical tradition that Machiavelli rejected, and what now requires to be examined is the nature of this return and how it is understood.

Hume takes particular exception to what he calls the "selfish systems" of morality (*Enq* §248, p.296), i.e. the system that tries to reduce by a "philosophical chemistry" all men's actions and desires to 'selfishness' or a self-interested regard for one's own private "gratifications and enjoyments" (§249, p.297). Among adherents of this system he includes the old Epicureans and the modern Hobbes and Locke, and he points out that their lives do not bear out their own theory. Epicurus was no stranger to probity and honour, Horace and Atticus seem to have had "from nature," as well as to have cultivated "by reflection," "generous and friendly dispositions," and Hobbes and Locke lived "irreproachable lives," though Hobbes "lay not under any restraint of religion which

might supply the defects of his philosophy" (§248, p.296). All that is required to see that their system is false is a little reflection on this and the like evidence: "the voice of nature and experience seems plainly to oppose the selfish theory" (§§174, 250, pp.215, 298). Hume's own acute observations of men and affairs, together with his familiarity with the writings of the "ancient moralists," like Cicero, who are the "best models" (§266, p.318), enable him to list numerous phenomena in support of his claim that men have a natural love and approbation for others quite regardless of their selfish interests. We frequently bestow praise and blame on men where there can be no possible connection with our self-interest, or even where there is opposition to it, as when we admire a noble deed of an enemy. Attempts to explain such things away as really self-interest are "weak subterfuges" (§176, p.217).

Hume is both fertile and compelling in the way he calls upon evident facts of our ordinary experience to establish the fact of the noble in human nature (*Tr* pp.420, 472, 487; *Enq* §250, p.298). Hume is more empirical, we may say, more true to the facts, than those he opposes; he has learnt well from the classics. The Machiavellian 'realists' are, in his opinion, quite unreal. Their representations of the quality of selfishness have been carried "much too far" by these philosophers, and their descriptions are "as wide of nature as any accounts of monsters, which we meet with in fables and romances" (*Tr* pp.486-87). Indeed the people described in Hobbes' *Leviathan* are as hard to credit as those described in Plato's *Republic* (*Tr* p.402). Hobbes' state of nature is a "mere philosophical fiction, which never had and never could have any reality" (*Tr* p.493; *Enq* §§189-90). It is on a par with the "poetical fiction" of a golden age; both are abstractions, having a certain speculative use as a sort of thought-experiments, but no more (*Tr* pp.493ff.).

Hobbes is also wrong to suppose that man is by nature non-social or even anti-social, for if one impartially considers the matter by observation and the facts, not by a passion for "hypotheses" or "systems" (*Enq* §138, pp.174-75), one will see that society is natural and desirable for itself, not just as a means for survival (*Enq* §§171, 173, 207, 258, pp.210, 214,

257, 307; *Tr* pp.489-90, 520). Men are not made by nature for solitude but for society, as reflection on the nature and facts of families clearly testifies (*Enq* §§153, 166, pp.192, 206-07; *Tr* p.486). Hume's argument here that society is natural, and the role played in this argument by the appeal to the family, are nicely reminiscent of the similar argument in Aristotle's *Politics* (1.2).

Despite the compelling way Machiavelli and his followers presented their 'realism', it is founded on a few facts to the exclusion of all others. This just needed to be pointed out to be obvious, and Hume performs for us that valuable service. Moreover, because he does so by appealing at the same time to the classics, he draws our attention to the merits of that tradition, which Machiavelli had rejected. The sense of the noble and the fine receives its due in Hume, and for that reason he is a better moral philosopher than those so far discussed. One cannot read him, after reading them (or even after reading most modern moral philosophers), without a palpable sense of relief and pleasure. His greater percipience and his greater fidelity to the evidence enable him, as he says, to give "a natural unforced interpretation of the phenomena of human life" (*Enq* §199, p.244). In his opinion the selfish interpretation is "more like a satire than a true delineation or description of human nature, and may be a good foundation for paradoxical wit and raillery, but is a very bad one for any serious argument or reasoning" (§254, p.302).

Hume suggests, in fact, that this interpretation was put forward in a spirit of satire rather than corruption (§220, p.271). But here, I think, he errs. It was put forward because of the concern with the 'useful'. Hume is not dominated by this concern and is not cramped within the narrow confines of the low and the selfish. His is an expansive, generous and unmercenary spirit, which is able to see and admire the "splendour" and "greatness" of the 'useless' over the 'useful' (§§208-09, pp.258-60), and to see indeed that, in the end, the useless things are more useful, more salutary, more felicific, indeed more real and effective (§§228, 233, pp. 278-80, 283-84). He would evidently agree with Quintillian: *dedit enim hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis iuvarent*

("providence has given this gift to men, that the noble things should be more beneficial," *Inst. Orat.* 1.XII §9). Hume indeed goes so far as to reject Machiavelli's claim that the elevation and aspirations of the "heroes in philosophy" are imaginary. Their pretensions may, when "stretched to the utmost," be "by far too magnificent for human nature," but they carry a "grandeur" with them that "seizes the spectator, and strikes him with admiration." This "grandeur and force of sentiment" of the ancient heroes in war and patriotism, as well as in philosophy, may astonish our "narrow souls" but it is "rashly rejected as extravagant and supernatural" (§206, p.256).

Like his ancient models, Hume elevates both in thought and style when he speaks of the greatness and nobility of virtue; the subject almost carries him out of himself, something which, he confesses, it is difficult to avoid (*Enq* §§139-140, pp.176-78; *Tr* pp.619-21). But as it was not Hume's task to give a panegyric of virtue, so it is not mine to give a panegyric of Hume. What requires attention instead is the nature of his moral theory, or how he understands or explains this sense of the fine and the virtuous.

MORAL PLEASURE

Hume wishes to find the ground of the "moral distinction" or what it is that makes us praise some things and blame others (for he regards morals as a "general system of blame or praise;" *Enq* §§220, 222, pp.271, 273). He finds this to lie in some sentiment common to all mankind, a sentiment which makes us pleased when we contemplate some things and pained when we contemplate others. "Virtue is distinguished by the pleasure and vice by the pain that any action, sentiment or character gives us by the mere view and contemplation" (*Tr* p.475). And again, "the approbation of moral qualities…proceeds entirely from a moral taste, and from certain sentiments of pleasure and disgust, which arise upon the contemplations and view of particular qualities or characters" (*Tr*

p.581). The same thought is expressed countless times elsewhere (*Tr* pp.295-97, 574-75, 577, 586, 591; *Enq* §§?289, 290, 293-94, to mention but a few).

This point needs stressing because it means that for Hume moral approbation and disapprobation arise from the pleasure and pain one feels on *contemplating* men and actions. It is for this reason that he sees a close connection between the appreciation of virtue and the appreciation of beauty. Virtue is moral beauty (*Enq* §§173, 242, pp.214, 242; *Tr* pp.300, 484, 581, 586, 590, 618); and the noble is, very much as it was for the classics, the same as the beautiful, the *kalon* in Greek or the *honestum* in Latin. In this sense Hume's morality is a sort of aesthetics of character (which, incidentally, would distinguish him sharply from Hare who separates morals and aesthetics and thinks the confusion of the two leads to fanaticism; *Freedom and Reason*, pp.166ff.). Hume would take a rather dim view, I think, of Hare's morality as Hare would equally of Hume's, which just shows that however much Hare may be claiming to follow Hume in certain respects, the substance of his ethics has a quite different origin.

The extent to which it is the pleasure of contemplation (and not the pleasure, say, of self-preservation) that establishes virtue may be seen from what Hume says of justice. In a recent debate (Hudson, *The Is/Ought Question*, part I), it was claimed that, for Hume, the morality of justice comes from the fact that it is in man's long term interest to be just, or that social virtue is a matter of public utility: what one ought to do is what it is publicly useful to do (*ibid*., pp.40-42). This claim that Hume derives the morality of justice from utility is, I think, clearly false, as a reading of what he says should confirm. For in the passage following the one that the debate turned on (*Tr* pp.497), Hume points out that up to this point, that is up to the particular passage in question, he has been dealing only with the "natural obligation" to justice, which he does say is "interest;" but from there on he is going to deal with its "moral obligation" or the "sentiment of right and wrong" that also belongs to justice (*Tr* pp. 498, 484). We do not, he says, annex the idea of virtue to justice because it is in our interest. On the contrary "self-interest is the original mo-

tive to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation that attends that virtue" (*TR* pp.499-500; cf. *Enq* §145, p.183).

The morality of justice cannot be derived from a utilitarian self-interest, for this would return us to the paradoxes of the "selfish systems" (*Enq* §§173ff., pp.214ff.). It can only come from a sort of benevolence or humanity which engages us in favour of the happiness and advantage of others and makes us feel pleasure when we view what is publicly useful. It is this pleasure, not the utility, that constitutes justice as a virtue (*Tr* pp.471, 576-80, 614, 619-20; *Enq* §211n., p.261). Hume does after all devote a whole chapter to the question why utility pleases, that is, why utility is attended with the pleasure of moral approbation (*Enq* section V). There are also, in Hume's opinion, other virtues or moral qualities that do not have "this tendency to the public advantage and loss" and yet are still virtues (*Tr* pp.578-79). The morality of justice is constituted in the same way as it is for these other virtues; the pleasure is the same but the cause different (*Tr* pp.299, 617; *Enq* §210, p.260). Hume is therefore not properly labeled a utilitarian. Utility is only relevant to morality because it is one of those things which, when contemplated, gives rise to a certain pleasure, and morality for Hume is identified with this pleasure, not with the utility (*Enq* §239, p.289; *Tr* pp. 475, 574-75, 591). The same point about the morality of justice is repeated in the case of the morality of keeping promises (*Tr* p.523).

The sentiment that lies at the root of morality, that gives us that pleasure which is what moral approbation is, is sympathy or natural fellow-feeling. The usefulness of justice, for instance (or of anything else), would not engage us if we did not care about what it was useful for, if we did not care, that is, about the ends in question (*Tr* pp.579, 619; *Enq* §253, p.301). We must therefore find the end of justice agreeable in itself, and since this end is the good of our fellow men in general we must find that good in itself pleasing, that is, we must have a natural fellow-feeling that engages us in the happiness of others. And this is what is meant by sympathy (*Tr* pp.577, 588-89).

Sympathy is a sort of device whereby the ideas of passions in others are converted into the actual passion in oneself (*Tr* p.576), that is to say, using Hume's terminology, sympathy converts "ideas" into "impressions." It is quite literally, therefore, a 'feeling along with' others (*Tr* pp.317, 427), and is what founds morals and enables us to distinguish vices and virtues (*Tr* p.578). Such is of necessity the case with "artificial" virtues like justice, which are artificial because found out by men as means for living well (*Tr* p.577). These differ from the "natural" virtues because the artificial are a matter of rules that are good in general but not necessarily in every particular case, while the natural are good in every act (*Tr* pp.497, 579), such as are meekness, beneficence and charity (*Tr* p.578). The fact that only sympathy can engage us on the side of the artificial virtues is enough by itself to prove that sympathy is a powerful factor in the production of our sense of morals, but since the natural virtues are publicly beneficial as well, they too must attract moral approbation for the same reason.

Sympathy, however, does not just engage us with respect to what is useful for others but also with respect to what is agreeable to them (*Tr* p.590). That sympathy is what does the work here too is shown by the fact that we would not be pleased by viewing qualities in another that were just useful to himself or agreeable to himself, unless we *cared* about his good and happiness and felt for him as we would feel for ourselves. Hume's system, therefore, as he himself says, reduces to this: "Every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous, which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality, which produces pain, is called vicious. This pleasure and this pain arise from four different sources. For we reap a pleasure from the view of a character, which is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or to the person himself, or which is agreeable to others, or to the person himself" (*Tr* p.591, *Enq* section IX).

There is thus a distinction between the pleasure that constitutes a quality as virtuous and the several sources of that pleasure; and because these sources are broad, the virtues themselves on Hume's analysis prove to be broad. Hobbes had effected a considerable narrowing in the scope of virtue,

for he equated virtues with social virtues, that is with what leads to peaceful and sociable living with others (*Lev* ch.15, p.83). Locke did the same thing, at least insofar as one speaks of genuine virtues and not of 'reputed' virtues. For genuine virtue is what accords with the law of nature, that is pursuing self-preservation without invading the property of others (*Ess* 2.28 §§6-13). In full agreement with the classics, Hume refuses to reduce virtue to social virtue (*Enq* §262, p.313). He expands its scope so as to embrace qualities that are just kinds of individual excellence, such as greatness of mind, dignity of character, elevation of sentiment, noble pride and spirit (§204, p.252-53). What Hobbes and indeed Descartes condemned as pride, Hume restores as virtue, and, in total contrast with Hobbes, some of these virtues, far from being useful and peaceable, may be useless or warlike (§§206, 208; pp.256, 258). Insofar, then, as utilitarianism confines the morally good to the socially beneficial, as in most, if not all, cases it does, Hume simply rejects it.

The useful qualities may, to be sure, "determine all the great lines of our duty" (*Tr* p.590), but they do not exhaust them. Besides grandeur of soul, there is also to be classed as a virtue (because it is an immediately agreeable quality) "wit and a certain easy and disengaged behaviour" (*Tr* p.590). It may sound strange to modern ears that wittiness should be considered a moral virtue, but Aristotle would have readily understood, as would also Aquinas (*Ethics*, 4.8 and Aquinas' *Commentary ad loc*.). But even this is not the end of the matter for Hume. One has to include intellectual endowments, or "parts and understanding," among the virtues (*Enq* §264, p.316), as well as other qualities that are not "voluntary." Hume holds that there is a certain amount of sheer accident involved in the attainment of virtue, that "birth, power and eminent abilities" are also required, especially in the case of those who seem to rise "above the rank of human nature" and approach "in some measure to the divine" (§139, p.176).

He holds that this enlargement of virtue is not only sanctioned by "almost every language" (§262, p.313) and confirmed by the operations of sentiment (§263, p.314), but also supported by the "ancients." They little regarded in their

moral reasonings the distinction of voluntary and involuntary, "justly considered" that certain qualities might appear "ridiculous and deformed, contemptible and odious, though independent of the will," and did not suppose that "at all times" it was "in every man's power to attain every kind of mental more than of exterior beauty" (§267, p.321-22).

How far the ancients in general, or in particular, denied that virtue was necessarily connected with voluntariness may well be disputed. Hume himself says that the claim that it is so connected is due in modern times to the introduction of theology into ethics (§268, p.322). But Aristotle had tied virtue to the voluntary (*Ethics* 3.5), and there is more than one sort of theology. Part of the problem here is that there is a distinction between natural or imperfect virtue and virtue properly so called, and that one needs natural virtue, or an innate disposition to virtue, in order by one's own voluntary acts to achieve perfect virtue and become properly virtuous. For it is not the case that this disposition exists the same in all men, and the extent to which it does exist is a matter of chance or fortune, so that the extent or measure of virtue proper that any man can attain by his own efforts is limited by what is not in his control (*Magna Moralia* chs.8-9). Hume is therefore right in his conclusion that the ancients held it was not possible for everyone to be equally virtuous, but not accurate enough as to the reason. And as far as theology is concerned, the theologian Aquinas agrees with Aristotle (*ST*, Ia IIae, q51 a1, q95 a1). If some theologians did not, these may well be the ones who wrote books like "The Whole Duty of Man," and it is true that one cannot accommodate in these "narrow systems" all that the ancients included in virtue (*Enq* §266n, p.319; *Tr* III.III §§4-5).

At all events, just as Hume, in agreement with the classics, is no egalitarian in morality, so he is no egalitarian in politics either. The "levelers," for instance, those "political fanatics" who aimed at equality of property, wanted something both "impractical" and "pernicious." Men's different degrees of "art, care, and industry" will soon make properties unequal, and if one checks these things, one is first of all checking virtues, that is parts of human excellence, and sec-

ond "instead of preventing want and beggary in a few" one renders it "unavoidable to the whole community." Moreover, the great power of authority required for this leveling "must soon degenerate into tyranny, and be exerted with great partialities," and besides could not endure where property was in fact equal, for that would destroy "all subordination" and weaken "extremely the authority of magistracy" (*Enq* §§154-55, 262, pp.193-94, 313). Socialism and communism (or even the extremer forms of modern welfarism) could only exist, in Hume's opinion, where there was really inequality of property (however much it might be denied in speech), where the authority that upheld it was tyrannical, and where the people were miserable and base. Moreover, the inequality Hume himself both expects and favors is not limited to property. It extends to occupations, sentiments, actions and manners as well, so that there are "different ranks of men" in the world, and these different ranks arise necessarily from the principles of human nature (*Tr* p.402). Hume would have no more sympathy for modern liberalism than for modern socialism. His classicism is too profound for that.

THE MODERN EPISTEMOLOGIST

Hume's agreement with the classics is clearly far reaching, but it is not complete. To see in what respects it is not complete, one must take a review of his theory as a whole.

> The hypothesis we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary. We then proceed to examine a plain matter of fact, to wit, what actions have this influence. We consider all the circumstances in which these actions agree, and thence endeavour to extract some general observations with regard to these sentiments (*Enq* §239, p.289).

There are four main parts in this passage: 1. what morality is determined by; 2. the definition of virtue and vice; 3. the discovery of what things are virtues; 4. general observations extracted from the respects in which these things agree.

It is evident that the first of these points is the most important, and Hume in fact begins both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiries* with it. However, only in the *Treatise* does he there decide it. In the *Enquiries* he postpones it in favour of an analysis of "that complication of mental qualities" called "personal merit," and "the true origin of morals" is supposed to come to light as a result of this analysis. The answer to the first point will thus "easily appear," and in fact it is given in the first appendix (*Enq* §138, p.173). In the light of what Hume does, one can see that what he means is that in the body of the *Enquiries* he treats of points 3 and 4, and only in the appendix of points 1 and 2. This difference from the *Treatise* is more apparent than real for, despite what Hume says, the decisive reasons that settle 1 and hence also 2 in the *Enquiries* are not drawn from the treatment of 3 and 4 (as the opening sentence of §236 indicates). In fact, whenever point 1 becomes relevant in the *Enquiries* an answer to it is just assumed (as the discussion of the sentiment of sympathy above will have in part revealed).

Before examining this claim in detail, however, it will be useful first to sum up Hume's theory according to these four elements, which in fact reduce to two basic parts, for points 1 and 2 go together as do points 3 and 4. So we have (a) the claim that morality is determined by sentiment (not reason), with the consequent definition of virtue; and (b) the enumeration and analysis of those qualities that are objects of the sentiment (the particular virtues) along with some general observations about them. These observations have, in fact, already been mentioned, namely that the virtues derive from four sources (the useful and the agreeable to oneself and to others) and that they have sympathy at their root (*Enq* §217-218, pp.268-70).

Now the wealth of psychological and sociological data on morals and politics that are given and examined by Hume, and the appeal to the writings of the classics that is included in

this, concern part (b) only. Part (a) is not dealt with by an appeal to the classics but by a rejection of them. If they were the "best models" there, they are certainly not so here. Who the other models are will emerge shortly, but it is necessary to note first that the determination of part (a) is going to affect part (b) profoundly, or that these other models are going, in the end, to be more decisive.

Since enough has already been said about part (b) and how Hume justifies it by appeal to experience, it is now necessary to consider part (a), or more precisely the claim that morality is determined by sentiment. This turns out, in fact, to be a conclusion that Hume draws from an argument in which sentiment appears as one member of a disjunction and reason as the other. Morality is, he supposes, determined either by reason or sentiment. Knowledge of it, in other words, is, as the *Enquiries* puts it (§134, p.170), attained by "a chain of argument and induction" or by an "immediate feeling and finer internal sense;" or, as the *Treatise* puts it (p.456), it is determined by "ideas" or by "impressions." Despite the variation of expression the point is the same: either reason or appetite discovers moral good and bad (that the term 'sentiment' may be glossed as appetite is plain from what Hume says; certainly the relevant impression is one of pleasure or pain; *Tr* pp. 414-415, 470ff.).

Now this initial disjunction deserves some consideration in its own right. For it skips over certain distinctions that the ancients would have held it important to make. First, reason, according to them, has several acts, the three of intuition, judgement, and reasoning; and the intuition and judgement of reason are quite distinct from the intuition and judgement of the senses. Second, appetite may be of an intellectual kind, when it is identical with the will, or of a sensible kind, when it is identical with the passions (Aristotle, *De Anima*, bk.3; Aquinas' *Commentary ad loc*, *ST* Ia qq.78-85). Hume does not so much ignore these points as reject them. The above mentioned distinctions and definitions of the acts of reason are "faulty in very considerable articles" and, in fact, when taken "in a proper light," these acts "all resolve themselves into the first, and are nothing but particular ways of conceiv-

ing our objects" (*Tr* p.96n). The intuitions (conceptions) of reason, or "ideas" as Hume calls them, are the same as the immediate impressions of sensation or feeling (ideas are copies of impressions, entirely resembling and correspondent to them; *Tr* p.4). Hence there are, for Hume, not two distinct intuitive acts, but only one; the judgement of the senses, as the ancients understood this, he simply does not recognize. Further, he has no distinct rational appetite, or he considers all desires to be "passions" (the nearest Hume gets to the ancient distinction is in his own distinction between the "calm" and the "violent" passions, the former of which are "vulgarly" called reason; *Tr* pp.339, 417-419).

A proper explanation of the ancient doctrine must be given elsewhere (*Goodness and Nature*, chs.6, 8). Here one must stress that the greater simplicity of Hume's position is going to make it difficult, or rather impossible, for him to make sense of what the ancients said about the determination of morals. He confesses as much himself. "The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment;" and he thinks great "confusion" exists in both ancient and modern treatment of this subject, "yet nobody till very lately was ever sensible of it" (*Enq* §134, p.170). Hume is clearly very sensible of this confusion and his own answer to it, or how he concludes that reason is not the foundation of morals, needs now to be examined.

His arguments fall under two general heads: (1) morals move us to action but reason does not; (2) nothing reason discovers can be identified with moral good or bad. To take point (2) first (and combining the discussions in the *Enquiries* and the *Treatise*), we can state Hume's fundamental argument as follows: reason judges either of matter of fact or of relations of ideas; neither of these can be identified with vice or virtue; therefore reason is not their source (*Enq* §§237-39, pp.287-89; *Tr* pp.463-69).

By 'relation' here Hume means 'resemblance', 'contrariety', 'degrees in quality', and 'proportions in quantity and number' (*Tr*. P.464). The other three relations that he recog-

nises—'identity', 'relations of space and time', and 'cause and effect'—are not subjects of abstract reasoning, for they do not depend on ideas alone but can only be discovered from experience (*Tr* pp.13-15, 69-70). Since Hume is attacking those who say morality is a matter of demonstration, he confines himself to the first four (though it is anyway evident that none of the seven is a plausible candidate for the foundation of morals). By 'fact' Hume means anything that reason can discover in the object (*Tr* pp.469; *Enq* §241, p.291). So since an object is an impression or collection of impressions, and since an impression is an immediate sensation, a fact is just some such impression, whether a sensation, a passion or a thought (there are internal impressions as well as external ones; *Tr* pp.7-8). Armed with these several theses, Hume proves the premises of his fundamental argument for point (2) as follows:

i. What makes a crime a crime cannot be any particular individual fact, for no such fact is in itself a crime but only in the context of the whole "complication of circumstances" (*Enq* §237, p.287); indeed, whatever fact in the object one takes by itself, it is impossible to find the vice (*Tr* p.468, *Enq* §242, p.292).
ii. Judgements about the morality of something can only be pronounced when all the facts and relations are given (for the omission of one could alter the morality of the whole; *Enq* §§240-41, pp.289-91); but reason's job is either, by demonstration, to reach unknown relations from known ones or, by experience, to discover the facts; so the moral judgement must be given *after* reason has completed its work and cannot be part of its work (in other words, it must be given by appetite, the only other faculty available; *Enq* §§240-42, pp.289-93).
iii. Any relation between the facts in a crime may also be found in non-human things, so that if the crime was in the relation then a tree, for instance,

could be guilty of parricide (*Enq* §243, p.293; *Tr* pp.463-64, 466-68).

iv. If one says there is some other relation (besides those enumerated above), it must be specified, which no one has done, and besides must meet two conditions which cannot in fact be met:
   a) it must be a relation that is found between inner actions and external objects only (else if it could be in the former alone we could be guilty of crimes in ourselves "independent of our situation with respect to the universe;" and if in the latter alone, then non-human things could have moral merit and demerit, as in the case of the tree); but there is no relation between the two that may not be found in either singly.
   b) the connection between this relation and its effect on willing and acting must be explained (for morality moves), but reason does not move (as proved in the arguments for point (1) below); and besides no relation of cause and effect can be discovered by reason alone (*Tr* pp.464-66).

v. If one says that this relation is a relation to a rule, the rule must be determined, but it is always determined (by those who determine it) by reference to prior moral relations, so the argument is circular (*Enq* §239, p.288-89).

Next, as regards point (1), Hume's proof, which relies on the same theses already used for proving point (2), may be reduced to the following:

i. Reason cannot be a motive to any action of the will, for reason (as already noted in ii. above) only acts when it judges either from demonstration (i.e. when it regards any of the first four relations), or from probability (i.e. when it regards any of the second three, or especially causality);

but the first is confined to the province of ideas, while "will places us in that of realities;" and though the second may tell us what results from what, this can be of no practical concern to us if we do not already care about these results, i.e. if our will is not already engaged with respect to them (*Tr* pp.413-414).

ii. Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood, which is an agreement or disagreement with the real relations of ideas or real matter of fact (i.e. when the representations of our thoughts agree with the way things are); but passions or motives to action are all "original realities" and so cannot have this relation to anything they are supposed to represent (for they represent nothing); hence they and reason cannot accord or disagree with each other, and reason cannot, through contradiction or approval, prevent or produce any action (*Tr* pp.458, 415).

What is striking about all these arguments is that every single one of them is irrelevant or begs the question as far as ancient thought is concerned. They all assume what the ancients would reject, namely Humean epistemology. So, to begin with, ancient thought would deny that reason is confined to knowledge of 'facts' and 'relations' as Hume defines these terms; hence points i., ii., and iii. as regards the argument for (2) would be conceded without demur. For these points are certainly accurate about the irrelevance of 'facts' and 'relations' to morality—indeed it was pointless making these arguments once the terms in question were so defined, for the irrelevance was then obvious. Argument v. is not directed at ancient thought (but probably at people like Wollaston; *Tr* p.461n), and neither is argument iv., though the impossibility of "crimes in ourselves" needs more specification. As regards (1), both the points made again assume Humean epistemology, and as regards ii. in particular, the response would be that desire and will are directed to, and moved by, their object, and since reason determines the truth about the object, it moves

the will in that way. But all this perhaps deserves further elaboration.

The object of understanding is not copies of sensations, whether internal or external (for that would not raise understanding above imagination). Its object is being and it knows sensible objects as kinds of being, while the senses know them only as sensible. Hence the understanding knows more about sensible objects than the senses; above all it knows the primary articulations of being, among which 'good' is included. To know the good is not to know a Humean 'fact' (nor, incidentally, is it to know a Harean descriptive property). The goodness of an act is known primarily by reference to the end. Hume says reason is incapable of accounting for ultimate ends, but what he means is that reason only gives an account of ends by saying how one end is chosen for the sake of some other and further end. Hence reason must necessarily cease at ends that are not for the sake of something further, and so at ends of which it cannot, by definition, give any account (*Enq* §244, p.293).

The ancients, by contrast, account for ultimate ends as that completion of a thing where it is in a state according to its nature, and which is understood from its form. When, therefore, human virtue is said to be conformity to reason, what is meant is conformity to the nature or *form* of a rational creature as reason determines this, not conformity to an *act* of reasoning as Hume seems to suppose (Hume's epistemology, of course, has no place for forms). Reason moves the will by presenting it with its object, which it knows by knowing the conformity mentioned (for will, being an appetite in reason, is moved by the known object). But will and its orderedness to good must always be presupposed (will has to be engaged beforehand in the sense that it is by nature ordered to being moved by the good, not that it is *actually* being so moved).

Fuller explanations of all this are given in the main text of *Goodness and Nature* (chs. 6, 8). Here one should note in particular that Hume is the first expressly to say that thinking does not move willing, because he is the first to state expressly that the willing that has to be presupposed is actual willing (not the nature of willing). And he is the first to do

that because his epistemology compels him to deny the distinction between a power and its exercise (*Tr* pp.171-72). Hume is also the first to use a narrow sense of 'fact' in order to argue that good is not known by reason. He anticipates the arguments of modern non-naturalists (particularly of Stevenson and Hare) to a remarkable extent. But he has this great advantage over them, that he shows precisely where the break with the ancients begins, namely not in ethics but in epistemology or metaphysics. This is something that emerges only gradually in the case of Stevenson and Hare, and only after a lot of digging about. For Hume's arguments, unlike theirs, make it very clear that, if the ancients are wrong about morals, it is because they are first wrong about human knowing and being.

Hume also has this further advantage that he presents us with a full and vigorous account of his epistemology. That epistemology is marked by three main theses (which if implicit rather than explicit are yet present everywhere). These theses are particularly crucial in Hume's treatments of space, time and causality.

i. The immediate objects of knowledge are always in the mind and are never externally self-subsistent things (*Tr* pp.84, 189, 192-93).
ii. These objects are either sensible impressions or copies of them (pp.1-8, 190).
iii. The knowable content of these objects is exhausted at once in the having of them (pp.24-25, 36, 79, 86).

All three of these theses would be rejected by ancient thinkers (certainly by Aristotle and Aquinas), and in fact come from Locke, though i. and iii. have roots also in Descartes. It is these two figures who are Hume's 'other models'.

Descartes' separation of mind and being (thesis i.) has already been mentioned, together with its origin in his concern for the 'useful'. But that concern also led him to the attempt to simplify the objects of knowledge (thesis iii.), or to find objects that are at once clear and intelligible to the mere view.

For he wanted to escape the ‘useless’ subtleties of the schools (*Reg* nos.III, VI, *Prin* XLV). This attempt of his was directed by the belief that the only genuine science is mathematics, which the ancients would admit was in some way simpler and more readily accessible to the human mind (*Reg* no.II, *Prin* XXX). As a consequence a great deal of the existing philosophy is rejected because it cannot be reduced to such simplicity (*Prin* X). One of the effects of this is that Descartes identifies the essence and even substance of a thing with its principal attribute, as soul with thought and body with extension (which leads directly to his insoluble mind/body problem; *Prin* LIII, LXIV).

Locke took over both these elements from Descartes (whether from reading him or because they were in the ‘air’ at the time), but added his own about all knowledge being reducible to sensible knowledge (which Descartes, because he retained more elements of scholasticism, rejected). By this Locke meant that knowledge was actually made up of materials or ‘ideas’ that were sensible (the ideas of reflection come from “internal sense;” *Ess* 2.1. §4), and which the mind could combine but could not add to. Locke has thus ruled out the possibility of any penetration by the mind to an intelligible content within an idea (*Ess* 2.2 §2). Hume, be it noted, is just as contemptuous of the schools (*Tr* p.417, *Enq* §17, p.22n), and finds the metaphysical and physical thought of the Peripatetics, i.e. of Aristotle, childish (*Tr* pp.224-25).

Descartes, as well as Bacon, rejected ancient thought in the name of the useful and in the hope of an untold advance in human power. Ancient thought was despairing of such power, but it was also overconfident and dogmatic in its claims to knowledge. The opposition of Descartes and Bacon to ancient thought, therefore, was an opposition to a mixture of despair and confidence, and the result was, in its turn, a mixture of the contrary confidence and the contrary despair. The increased confidence in man’s power to make or exploit things came in at the same time with an increased despair of man’s power to know. The thought of the schools was not only useless; it was unintelligible and testified only to the proneness of the human mind to fall into nonsense. To rectify this proneness, one

needed to delimit and define the powers of the mind so that it applied itself only to what was in fact within its power to know (Descartes, *Reg* no.II). As Locke later put it, the human mind is too limited to be "let loose" into the "vast ocean of being," and if it is, it will end up only with absurdity and endless disputing. It becomes a task, the first task, of philosophy to trace the boundaries, to undertake (as Kant later put it) a 'critique' of the understanding (*Ess* 1.1 §7). Hume is self-consciously part of this task (*Tr* xix-xxiii, *Enq* §6-10, pp.11-16). The task is just one of the more remarkable effects of Descartes' diversion of philosophy from being to consciousness; and the associated despair is really skepticism, that skepticism with which Descartes' project began and which is never wholly overcome (the loss of being is its most profound and most ineradicable result). In Hume's epistemology skepticism reaches a kind of apogee. It extends, moreover, to his moral thought as well, since, as has been seen, he uses that epistemology to establish that morality is determined by sentiment, not reason. The foundation of Hume's morality is thus a sort of epistemological despair generated by the concern with the Machiavellian 'useful'.

'IS' AND 'OUGHT'

It is important, however, to make clear precisely what Hume means when he says that sentiment determines morals. This does not mean that morality is not a matter of fact, for on the contrary it is; but the fact in question is a "fact of sentiment" and lies in the mind, not the object, as does beauty also (*Tr* pp.299, 469, *Enq* §242, pp.291-93). Vice and virtue are original impressions of pain and pleasure, and like all impressions have first to appear in the soul before the mind can know them (*Tr* pp.1, 470-71). Their first appearance is the actual feeling of them (the actual moving of appetite; *Tr* p.414, *Enq* §246, p.294), so that the moral good and bad are "felt" not "judged of" and are the "work" of the "heart" (*Tr* p.470, *Enq* §240, p.290). Indeed, sentiment or taste actually creates the facts in question, for it has "a productive faculty, and gilding or stain-

ing all natural objects with the colours borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation" (*Enq* §246, p.294). This sentiment operates, however, according to the fixed constitution of our nature and is not a matter of free choice, so that it makes all men recognize the same things as vices and virtues (apparent differences hide a real agreement beneath, as is explained at large in the *Dialogue* at the end of the *Enquiries*; *Enq* §§237, 242, pp.288, 293; *Tr* p.517). These facts or impressions constituted by sentiment then become the object of thought in their corresponding ideas, and by investigating, using the "experimental method," those respects in which the qualities they attach to agree, one can discover the principles of the virtues (namely that they are the useful and agreeable to oneself and others; *Enq* §138, pp.173-75).

Hence moral judgements may be of two sorts. Either they will be expressions of immediate impressions, as presumably most praisings and blamings will be; in which case, since the impression is one of appetite, it will be expressive of an emotion or desire, not of a cognition (rather like the 'ventings' of emotion spoken of by emotivists like A.J. Ayer). Or they will be the expressions of what reason has discovered about the sources of those impressions, as will be, one presumes, most statements in the "moral sciences" (*Enq* §239, p.289); in which case they will express a cognition, something known and judged. This difference is will expressed by Hume himself:

> Morals and criticism are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment. Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt more properly than perceived. Or if we reason concerning it, we regard a new fact, to wit, the general tastes of mankind, or some such fact which may be the object of reasoning and enquiry (*Enq* §132, p.165).

Accordingly one may now give the following interpretation of the famous paragraph where Hume distinguishes 'is' from 'ought' or says that 'ought' propositions express some new relation different from 'is' propositions (sometimes re-

ferred to as 'Hume's law'; *Tr* pp.469-70). In the context the 'is' propositions he is thinking of are those of reason alone, not also those that express the facts established by sentiment; and while 'ought', or the sense of obligation, is not dependent on the first sort of 'is' proposition, it is dependent on the second. Duty or obligation, for Hume, presupposes some interest, natural or moral (i.e. some actual feeling of pain or pleasure); it cannot just be willed or arise on its own (*Tr* pp.498, 518-19, 523, 517n, 532). Or as Hume himself put it: "our sense of duty always follows the common and natural course of our passions" (*Tr* p.484). Hume has no sense of disinterested duty or categorical 'oughts'. It was left to Kant to invent those.

Hume's divergence from the ancients over knowledge also means that in the end he diverges from them over virtue as well. He lacks the sense of the excellence of speculative wisdom and of the tension between it and the life of moral virtue. For wisdom among the ancients is associated with peace and leisure and few external accessories, but moral virtue with war and politics and many such accessories. So the wise man is not necessarily going to possess, or at any rate to exercise, the greatest moral virtues (Aristotle, *Ethics*, bk.10, 1177b6-1178a8, 1178b1-5). For Hume, speculation does not lead to a happiness that is like the divine; on the contrary when understanding acts on its own it "entirely subverts itself" (*Tr* p.267), and the wretched condition of the faculties, together with the impossibility of amending them, reduces one "almost to despair" (*Tr* p.264). Reason, as it is the "slave of the passions" in morals (*Tr* p.415), so it is the slave of imagination in speculation (*Tr* pp.183, 265-68).

If one compares Hume's treatment of understanding with that of morals, and especially the despair that ends the first with the panegyric that ends the second (in the *Treatise*), it is evident he much prefers the latter. But since he traces virtue to the operations of sentiment, he is forced to be dependent for his standards on the ordinary opinions of most men. It is the normal level of this sentiment, unaltered by religious or philosophical enthusiasm, that is authoritative; what goes beyond is vicious (*Tr* pp.483, 546-67; *Dialogue*, end, *Enq* §137, p.172). In ancient thought, however, while these ordinary

opinions must be respected and weighed, they yet express the perceptions of ordinary citizens, and will not be informed by the philosophers' reflections on the superiority of speculative wisdom. They will not therefore give the "final sentence" (*Enq* §137, p.172). The standard of judgement is not sentiment but rather the excellence of the human soul, and such excellence could be found, in the end, to justify the lives of religious and philosophical "enthusiasts." Hume's return to the classics gets him as far as the gentleman, but not as far as the almost divine philosopher or the saint.

B: ROUSSEAU
DISGUST WITH THE WORLD OF MACHIAVELLIAN REALISM

Rousseau's first important writing was the *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*, and in it one finds, as in Hume, an appeal to virtue and the classics against the prevailing ideas of the day. The *Discourse* is divided into two parts: the first is an induction from history to the effect that the dissolution of manners and the progress of the sciences and arts have always gone together; and the second is an explanation of why this should be so (*1D* pp.47, 64). Rousseau saw, as he looked around him, apparent virtue and real vice; men were more cultured and refined but underneath were full of the worst crimes. Genuine virtue, however, is what really matters (pp.40, 45-46). So Sparta, this "republic of demigods," which banished the arts and sciences, is far preferable to Athens which welcomed them. The latter may have left us "curious marbles" but the former left us the memory of virtuous men and heroic deeds (pp.43-44).

Rousseau's appeal to virtue is at the same time an appeal to the idea of the ancient city—that small 'closed' society of patriotic citizens where each knew, and was known by, the others. It is in marked contrast with the cosmopolitanism of the enlightenment; it is also in marked contrast with enlightenment pride in the restoration of the sciences. According to Rousseau, the sciences and arts have the vices for their origin

and their object, especially the vice of pride (pp.47-48). They are also born in leisure or laziness (Rousseau does not distinguish the two), which itself gives birth to luxury, the dissolution of moral and military virtue, and the loss of good taste. There may be in the present day an abundance of commodities, and a flourishing in all the arts, but there are no longer any citizens (pp.50-55).

Rousseau rejects the contention of "our philosophy" that "luxury makes the splendour of states." Good manners are essential to the duration of empires, but what will become of virtue when it is necessary "to make oneself rich at any price?" "Ancient politicians spoke ceaselessly of manners and virtue; ours only speak of trade and money" (p.49; cf. Hume, *Enq* §143, p.181). The rising world of the bourgeois and the capitalist is Rousseau's target; he revolts against the political 'realism' of Hobbes and Locke and the emancipation that, in the name of peace and comfortable survival, they effected of the passions, especially of greed or the passion to accumulate. It is not in these passions, however hedged or channeled in 'useful' ways, that one will find true virtue and citizenship. The latter, however, are what Rousseau prefers. "I adore virtue," he says, "my heart bears me this witness" (p.79)

If the word "virtue" here signals Rousseau's agreement with the classics, the word "heart" signals his deeper disagreement (as the word "sentiment" signaled the same in the case of Hume). His disgust with the civilization and ideals of the day leads him to look with longing, not to the philosopher or the saint, but to the simple rustic. With the eyes of Fabricius and the elder Cato in ancient Rome, he gazes back on the virtuous citizen-farmers, trained in military discipline and devoted to the fatherland. At that time the Romans were content "to practice virtue; all was lost when they began to study it" (pp.45-46). Not in learning, not in the perfection or cultivation of reason, not in the most developed man, but in the simple, unsophisticated man, does one find true virtue.

> O virtue! Sublime science of simple souls… Are not your principles graven in every heart, and to learn your laws is it not sufficient to return into oneself and listen

> to the voice of one's conscience in the silence of the passions? This is the true philosophy; let us know how to be content with it (p.59).

What this means is that one must "take the part of instinct against reason" (pp.81, 118; also *Em* pp.372, 376-79).

However, Rousseau's attitude to the science of his day is not one of simple opposition, for in itself science is "very good." It only generates vice because "fine and sublime though it is" it is not made for man, who has a mind "too confined to make great progress in it, and too many passions in his heart not to make an ill use of it." It is enough for man "to study well his duties" and for this each one has received "all the lights he has need of" (*1D* pp.76-77). But this is only true in the case of most men; science is all right for the few "privileged souls" who can combine "great talents" and "great virtues" (pp.79, 81). Rousseau opposes the practice of throwing open the doors of the sciences to all and sundry (pp.58, 131-32). "It is one of the great disadvantages of the cultivation of letters that, for the few men they enlighten, they corrupt in pure waste a whole nation" (p.62). Nevertheless science can be made to benefit everyone, if that is it is confined to the few and the few are cultivated and honoured by the rulers. Then one will see "what virtue, science and authority, animated by noble emulation and working together for the happiness of the human race, can do" (pp.55-56, 59).

THE HISTORY OF MAN'S FALL

Rousseau's thought is more complex than appears. He himself said that he did not expose his ideas all at once; and the question of the *First Discourse* is only a "corollary" of a larger system (*1D* pp.135-36). To understand that system it is necessary to turn to the *Second Discourse*, a work of the "greatest importance" where Rousseau developed his principles "completely" and with the "greatest boldness, not to say audacity" (*Conf bk*.II, pp.136, 157).

The *Second Discourse* is concerned with the origin of inequality among men, which state of affairs cannot be understood without first understanding man as he is by nature. For one cannot judge man's present state without "just notions" of his original state. Only in their light can one reach knowledge of the "real foundations" of society and the "true definition" of natural right and natural law (*2D* p.151). Rousseau takes it for granted that man's natural state is the original or primitive state, the pre-social state that preceded in time the social state. But this faces him with a curious problem. We only have experience of social man and, if the social man is not the natural man, then we cannot find the natural man simply by looking at man as we now experience him to be. Instead to find the natural man (if he can be found at all), we must look for him lying hidden somewhere beneath all the artificial additions that the succession of time between the first or natural state and the present or social state has produced (pp.149-51). The difficulty of getting back to the first state is profound. It will require involved historical and anthropological researches that have not yet been undertaken. We can, however, already at this stage see "very clearly" that if the natural law is to be natural it must speak "immediately with the voice of nature" (p.153), and this rules out all definitions of natural law that presuppose in man the presence of reason. For a thing cannot serve for the establishment of society if it depends on society, as Rousseau assumes reason must, in order first to develop (pp.151-52, 199).

It was Hobbes who first appreciated this general truth, but his appreciation of it in the case of man was doubly defective (pp.195-96). First, while he founded natural right on the passions, that is on something prior to reason, he founded natural law itself on reason (the laws of nature are, for Hobbes, laws of reason; *Lev* p.66). So he committed precisely the mistake just noted. Second, he failed to see that if man is by nature non-social, one cannot say what he is by nature from looking at him as he is now. Man as he is now is socialized, not natural, and has been so for centuries.

> The philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the need to return to the state of nature, but none of them has reached it…All of them, speaking ceaselessly of need, greediness, oppression, desires and pride, have transported to the state of nature ideas they had taken from society. They spoke of primitive man and painted civil man (*2D* pp.158).

Locke is the target of Rousseau's criticism here as well as Hobbes (pp.189n, 211, 223), and this criticism seems much to the point (though more so in the case of Hobbes than of Locke who had already in some way anticipated Rousseau's turn to history and to pre-rational primitiveness). In the case, at any rate, of Hobbes, his three causes of war (competition, diffidence, and pride) presuppose that man is living along with others and has a social awareness, or that he is not a self-sufficient solitary.

Hobbes, in other words, failed to see the implications of his own view that man is by nature a non-social or even an anti-social animal. Rousseau presents himself, by contrast, as a consistent Hobbesian, a Hobbes radicalized. One would expect Rousseau, therefore, to conclude that it is necessary to do paleontology or anthropology before doing politics. He does not so conclude. Instead he looks to find the natural man in another way, by "meditating on the first and most simple operations of the human soul." He replaces paleontology and anthropology, therefore, with introspection. One might even say he lays down introspection, or the results of it, as the necessary guide to the paleontology and anthropology that his reasoning requires. When the scientists eventually get round to doing paleontology and anthropology, they will know how far they have got back to the beginning by how pre- or non-rational the men, or rather the anthropoids, that they find can be interpreted to have been.

At any rate, when, in place of research, Rousseau turns to introspection, he claims to find in man two principles "anterior to reason:" the desire for self preservation and pity for one's fellow creatures. It is from these two principles taken together, without the need to introduce any "sociability," that

"all the rules of natural right" seem to him to follow (p.153). Just as Rousseau's agreement with Hobbes forces him to look for the 'natural' beneath the 'artificial' and 'social', so it forces him to interpret the 'natural' in a way that is itself determined by that agreement. In other words, he finds, rather as his paleontologists and anthropologists also will, what he began by assuming: the natural, being the pre-social, is also and necessarily the pre- or sub-rational. Rousseau's discovery is really the Machiavellian 'realism' he has inherited from Hobbes and Locke. His two specific principles make this clear. For although there is no pity in the scramble for self preservation that Hobbes depicted (or in the lust for power of Machiavellian princes), there is in Locke. Or there is in Locke a limitation on that scramble; pity is, as it were (and as Locke had implied), the counterpart within instinct of that limitation.

Armed with these premises Rousseau turns to describe the "history" of man, that is, to reconstruct "hypothetically" what man's natural state would have been had man been left to himself, and how that state could have developed into the present and social state (pp.153-59). The original state is a purely animal state, devoid of anything distinctively human (Rousseau goes so far as to suggest that orangutans are primitive men; p.180n). This animal-man is totally solitary (sexual liaisons are as casual as they possibly could be; 186-89n), and totally devoid of foresight, even for the next day (p.183). Rousseau's description is truer to his hypothesis than to even elementary natural history, for the animal kingdom displays not only foresight (squirrels hoard nuts for the winter), but also sociality (bees, and ants and even orangutans are social).

Still, man's natural state is, for Rousseau, a happy, peaceful and contented state; there could be no reason to leave it. But there is the *possibility* of leaving it. Man differs from the other animals not in reason (what difference there is here is solely a matter of degree), but in freedom. Or at least that is Rousseau's contention, though in the context he does not insist on it. For the reality of freedom may be disputed. It was certainly so disputed in the new physics or natural science of Rousseau's day, which he otherwise fully supports. He agrees, for example, with Descartes that the body is a "machine" and

calls him and Bacon and Newton the "teachers of the human race," whereas medieval thought is "scientific jargon" that is "more contemptible than ignorance" (*2D* pp.170-71; *1D* pp.38, 58, 83, 131). So Rousseau decides to insist instead on "perfectibility" as what is distinctive of man. For, unlike other animals and regardless of whether he is a machine or not, man can "perfect himself" far beyond what he is at birth. Man is distinguished not by his being something but by his being able to become anything; it is only because of this malleability that he could lose his original happy state and decline into his present misery (*2D* p.172n).

The original man, perfectible but not perfected, lacks speech and abstract thought (which is "painful" and "unnatural;" *2D* pp.191-92), and above all he lacks vice. The root of virtue is natural pity, for the virtues are just applied pity (Rousseau follows Hobbes in making all virtues social virtues; *2D* p.197, *1D* p.109). The root of vice, by contrast, is pride which stifles pity. Pride is a "factitious" and "relative" passion found only in awareness of oneself and in comparison with others, neither of which (as Locke had indicated) could exist in the primitive, solitary state (*2D* pp.196n, 233). The passage from this state to the present state is the story of how original love of self (the desire to survive, *amour de soi*) becomes self-love (pride or vanity, *amour propre*), and of how self-love stifles pity. This development could not happen by man's natural activities on their own; it must have been the result of a chance series of historical accidents (p.204).

It is unnecessary to trace in detail the accidents which Rousseau describes. The overall message is that as contact between man and man increases, so does the awareness of self and the comparison of self with others, and consequently the sense of superiority and of pride. Embryonic societies begin in families and groups of families, and this gives rise, not only to primitive speech, but also to leisure, and hence to the procuring of commodities not known or necessary before. These commodities, being at first luxuries, in time become necessities, which to lack is cruel and to possess no longer pleasant (p.204). Here is man's first yoke of slavery. Thereafter inequality becomes more evident, and with it vanity, competition

and revenge (p.210). That is why inequality is the "first source of evil" (*1D* pp.55, 89, 107), for it is what gives scope to pride. That is also why the sciences and arts are so bad, because men are not equal in intellectual talents and hence cultivation of these talents necessarily renders the inequality evident. Even if physical as well as mental inequality is natural (*2D* p.157), that is not to the point; such inequality would have meant nothing in the primitive ages when it could not then have been noticed or had any significant effect.

The desire or need for consideration and respect, resulting from the noticing of inequality, meant that one either had to have the admired qualities or affect them; "being and appearing become two completely different things" (*2D* p.216; *1D* pp.39-41). Increasing needs also led to the appropriation and exploitation of land, the division of labour, and the subjection of one man to another (*2D* pp.213, 215). Inequality of strength and talent meant that some acquired more than others, so there was abundance on the one hand and need on the other (pp.215-216). As the available land was enclosed and exploited by the rich, the needy were driven to robbery to survive, and they felt they had a right to do so, just as the rich felt on their part that they had a right to their property. The two 'rights' were equal and opposed; labour is as much, or as little, a right as need. Indeed the rich, because of their appropriation of the common land, deprived those who by weakness or indolence did not join the drive to accumulate, and these latter found themselves poor without having lost anything (pp.215-217).

In other words, Lockean capitalist exploitation is really a cruel sort of theft. By making the common into private property, not only does it deprive others of their share in it, but it also makes the capitalist violent and malicious; he conceives a love of domination and desires to subjugate and "devour" men (Rousseau seems always to have found the crimes of the greedy rich particularly appalling; *2D* pp.217-219, 220n, 235; *1D* p.107). The result of the conflict between usurping rich and ravaging poor is the "most horrible state of war" (*2D* p.218). To this the only solution is a social contract between the two parties for their mutual protection, so as to "preserve

the weak from oppression, to contain the ambitious, and assure to each the possession of what belongs to him" (p.219). But this Hobbesian or Lockean contract (arising out of a state of war that is very far from natural) is really a trick practiced by the guilty rich on the unfortunate or idle poor in order to preserve their ill-gotten gains. Illegitimate though it is, this contract is nevertheless the only way forward in the circumstances. One cannot turn the clock back; man has decayed too far; he now needs society as old men need crutches (pp.220, 241, 245).

POLITICAL REDEMPTION

Such is the picture of man as Rousseau's history paints it, and, more importantly, his picture of the present state of things too: "an assemblage of artificial men and made-up passions which are the work of all these new relations and have no true foundation in nature" (p.233). Nature made an animal; history and society made a man (cf. *SC* 1.8 p.55).

Despite appearances, however, one is not reduced to total impotence or despair here, for if society is now unavoidable, fraudulent society is not. Previous attempts at removing the fraud were defective because, with actual society being bad in its very origin, mere reform was never enough. One had to begin again from scratch, or to have a *total* revolution as Lycurgus did in Sparta (*2D* p.222). Such a total revolution has to be the task of reason, not instinct or passion, and the aim is to "re-establish on other foundations" the rules of natural right that originally flowed, without reason, from the primitive instincts of love of self and pity (pp.153, 196n, 197). It must be the task therefore of someone who knows the true principles of right, that is, of someone who is learned in the sciences so that he can see back to the beginnings. The task is also a benevolent one which will benefit all mankind. So it especially befits one of those "grand cosmopolitan souls" who cross national barriers, who retain their natural pity, and who, like the supreme being, embrace the whole human race in their kindness (p.220). In such a man the sciences will cause

no corruption, but will, if he is honoured by the existing rulers, redound rather to the happiness of all (*1D* pp.58-59). Rousseau is, of course, just such a benevolent and learned man (*1D* p.122); perhaps, indeed, he is the only existing such man. At all events, the true foundations of a just society are to be found in his *Social Contract*, and it is to this other work of Rousseau's that the *Second Discourse* finally directs us (*2D* pp.234-35).

The *Social Contract* is concerned with how to make man's social state legitimate (*SC* 1.1 p.41), and as such it presupposes that man has got to that state, or it assumes, as already indicated, the teaching of the *Second Discourse* (*SC* 1.6 p.50). It begins with man's natural liberty, which is understood (in the manner of Hobbes and Locke) as man's desire for self-preservation, or his "first law;" and each man is "sole judge" of the proper means to this, or each man is, as Hobbes and Locke had also asserted, "his own master" (1.2 p.42). The political problem, then, is how to justify authority or the submission of one man to another. The answer, unsurprisingly (since Hobbes and Locke are Rousseau's guides here), can only be consent in a social contract (1.4 p.45). The problem of consent becomes, in turn, that of finding "a form of association which may defend and protect, with all the common force, the person and the goods of each associate, and by which each, uniting himself to all, may however obey only himself and remain as free as before." The answer is: "the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community." This creates a new being, "a moral and collective body composed of as many members as the assembly has voices," that receives from the act of agreement which founds it "its unity, its common 'I', its life and its will."

In other words, the natural individual is to be totally subordinated to, or even sunk into, the collective unit (1.6, pp.51-52). Such collectivization secures, first, equality, for the condition is the same for all, and, second, liberty, for in giving oneself to all one has given oneself to no one and is subject only to the general will of the whole of which one is a necessary part. The laws of this collective whole are therefore one's own laws, and "obedience to the law one prescribes for one-

self," or autonomy, is freedom (1.8, p.56; 2.4, 2.6, pp.69, 75-76). Collectivization secures, thirdly, the mutual aid and protection of all, for the part cannot be harmed without harming the whole (1.7, p.54), and finally it secures justice in possessions, for since it deprives each of their unjust appropriation and returns it to each only as to "depositaries of the public goods," it changes "usurpation into a true right" (1.9, p.58). Locke's doctrine that property is the exclusive right of the possessor who has 'mixed his labour with it' is thus abolished. But Rousseau's thinking does not return him, as it might have done, to the Aristotelian ideal of private possession with common use (*Politics* 1263a10-40). Rather it leads him to the ideal of public use with public possession. It leads him to the idea of socialism.

Rousseau's version of the social contract (with its autonomy and its socialism) does, nevertheless, succeed in restoring conventionally, or by reason, what it was required to restore: the effects of original love of self and of pity. It brings about a "remarkable change" and substitutes in man "justice for instinct," giving to his actions "the morality which before was lacking to them" (1.8, p.55). Rousseau is thus the first to declare explicitly that morality is not founded in nature. Nature is too low for morality; it does not rise so high (*Rev* 6, p.131). Rather man creates morality—not, to be sure, by a naturally and independently operating sentiment in the manner of Hume, but by reason and choice. For Rousseau the natural and the moral become two distinct and independent spheres. But although nature is thus not the basis of morality, it decisively governs and directs man's creation of morality. For morality has to reconstruct at the social and human level what first existed at the pre-social and sub-human level. The primitive state thus functions for Rousseau both as point of departure and goal, both as natural beginning and as moral end. How the primitive state guides the rational reconstruction of itself at the advanced or human state is the burden of the doctrine of the general will. It is this that governs society and on it everything else turns; it is by far the most important teaching of the *Social Contract*.

The general will is the resultant of all the particular wills, the sum that remains after the more or less of the particular wills have cancelled each other out (2.3 p.66); it is not necessary, therefore, that there be unanimity, but only that "all the voices be counted" (2.2 p.64n). Further, since the general will also regards the common interest while particular wills regard the private interest, the common interest (which is the "end" of the state; 2.1. p.63) must be the resultant of the private interests. It is in the light of this that one can understand (what otherwise appears puzzling) why Rousseau says that the general will cannot err but always tends to the public good. For it could only err by not regarding the common good, but the common good emerges, or rather is constituted, at exactly the same time and in exactly the same way as the general will. The two necessarily go together; if one exists so does the other, and if one ceases to exist so does the other.

The general will can, nevertheless, be in error in another way, namely if the people are deceived as to what the general will is, which is what happens when something that is not the general will is presented as if it were. The general will is reached by taking the votes of all (4.1, 4.2; pp.147, 149), but it is possible to deflect the vote to favor one particular side if there is a large enough cabal to effect this. The will of a cabal, however, is really the general will of that cabal, that is, a foreign general will and not the general will of the whole, and its object is not the common good of the whole but only of the cabal. To ensure, therefore, that the general will is not hijacked like this, it is necessary that there be no "partial society in the state, and that each citizen only express his own mind." Such was the case in the "unique and sublime constitution of the great Lycurgus." Such Lycurgan precautions are the "only good ones" to ensure "that the general will may be always enlightened, and that the people may not be deceived" (2.3. p.67). One may state the principle of voting, then, quite fairly in the terms of the golden rule: "each to count for one and none to count for more than one."

The peculiar result of this way of finding the general will is that there is no need to bother about securing the right end. That is necessarily given as soon as one has secured the

proper operation of the general will (2.6. pp. 75-76; at least this would seem to be the implication of what Rousseau says about the general will within the *Social Contract*). The rectitude of the general will is not determined by an end independent of, or prior to, its willing. What counts is not *what* it wills but *how*, or even just *that*, it wills. "The sovereign (which is the general will), by the fact alone that it is, is always everything that it ought to be" (1.6 p.54).

This is a startling reversal of the ancient doctrine that rectitude is determined by the end, that wisdom is required to discern the end, and that it is, therefore, the decisions of the few wise rather than of the people that are right (unless the people are collectively wiser than the few wise). It is a reversal, however, that was implicit in Machiavellian 'realism' from the start, for that realism is above all the rejection of the idea that there is a supreme end for man to be discerned. As this came to be expressed by Hobbes and Locke, man's end is his passions along with whatever is necessary to secure the conditions for the safe pursuit of passions. The passions, however, are individual for each; they are each man's peculiar 'relish', and it is up to each man himself to say what his 'relish' is. Rousseau takes up this idea into his general will, for this will may be said to be the 'relish' that results from collecting the particular 'relishes'. Choosing this collective 'relish', or not being subject to any 'relish' one has not taken part in choosing, is freedom, and to renounce such freedom is to renounce "one's quality as man, the rights of humanity, even one's duties" (1.4 p.46). Freedom in this sense becomes not only man's essence but also the very idea of morality; it is what 'morality' means.

All this is just confirmed by what Rousseau says in the rest of the *Social Contract*, for his concern is not with the proper end of man or society (as, say, Aristotle's is in his *Politics*), but with how to make sure that the general will does actually emerge and operate as it should. This is by no means easy and the people are not wise enough to do it; there is need of a legislator, the "mechanic who invents the machine" of the state, and who really ought to be a "god." Rousseau clearly thinks that some men are good enough (or perhaps that some

men are gods), for not only did he himself write a manual for legislators, namely the *Social Contract* itself, but he also undertook to legislate for Poland and Corsica (2.6, 2.7, pp.75-77). The legislator's object is the "greatest good of all" or "liberty" and "equality," in other words free and equal choosing by each in the operation of the general will (2.11, p.88).

Now the general will can only exist where the particular interests have a common point, otherwise it will dissolve (2.1, 4.2, pp.63, 147). One needs therefore a united people, a small people, who have been somehow formed to feel and act together, who "consider themselves as a single body" and have "only one will" (2.9, 3.15, 4.1, pp.83, 136, 145). The people must, moreover, not be easy to deceive, and such will be a "simple" people precisely because of their simplicity. Consequently, the general will, freedom, duty, morality, or in short virtue will exist above all, if not exclusively, in the small, enclosed, patriotic society of simple citizens, like ancient Sparta. Large states, and representative democracies, as existed in Rousseau's day (and in ours too) are not free but enslaved, and so not virtuous either (the general will requires direct democracy; it cannot be represented; 3.15). For this reason the legislator works to secure this closedness and patriotic unity; he works therefore on the "hearts" of the people, on "manners, customs and above all opinion;" these "laws" are the "most important of all" but the legislator works on them "in secret" (2.12, p.91). Included here is also a common religion, for the legislator cannot instruct the people by force or reason. He must put his decisions in the "mouth of the immortals" (2.7, p.79), and only religion can give laws this necessary sense of sanctity (*2D*, p.233).

Such truths about how to mould and lead a people (familiar enough to ancient thinkers) are not known to the thinkers of Rousseau's day (*SC* 2.7, 2.12, pp. 80, 91). So while he agrees with Hobbes that society is determined by the desire for self-preservation, he denies that society can be founded directly on this passion, and even less that it can be founded on the public promulgation of Hobbesian doctrine. Indeed, society requires the deliberate obscuring of this doctrine in favour of the useful myths of religion and tradition (4.18,

p.174). Society must be founded on religion, custom, tradition, or on precisely those things that the enlightenment writers of Rousseau's day did their best to oppose.

In thus rejecting enlightenment, Rousseau returns to the classics and restores to political importance the sense of the particular and the accidental in human affairs, something which the cosmopolitanism and universalism of the natural rights doctrine of Hobbes and Locke, and of most natural or human rights theorists since, had rejected or ignored. Rousseau, by contrast, had read his Montesquieu (2.11, p.90; as had Hume, who adopted the same view here as Rousseau, *Enq* §158, pp.196-67); so he had realised, as had the classics before, the importance of fitting universal principles to the genius of the people, or that the "general objects of every good institution must be modified in each country" according to the locale and the character of the inhabitants (2.11, p.89). Setting up good institutions, however, may not always be possible, depending on the sort of people the legislator is presented with, and indeed Rousseau goes so far as to say that there are very few peoples at all in his day which are capable of freedom and good laws (2.8-10). Since, despite his return to the classics, he retained enough of Hobbes' natural right doctrine to determine legitimacy by reference to it, he in effect declared that most existing societies suffer from an unavoidable illegitimacy where murdering the ruler would be as just as obeying him (cf. *2D*, p.233). That is why there are some astonishingly revolutionary remarks, besides the conservative ones, in the *Social Contract* (3.1, 3.10, 3.18, pp.101, 127, 141); enough, one imagines, to help fuel the French Revolution.

There are some violently anti-Christian remarks too. Christianity destroys the unity of the people by dividing politics and theology, and so renders a "good polity" impossible in Christian states (4.8, p.172). It also destroys patriotism by making people careless of this world and so a prey to tyranny (p.177). Rousseau thus says in open and plain terms what Machiavelli had thought it necessary to say in veiled ones. Nevertheless, it was, he thinks, Hobbes alone of the "Christian authors" who saw this trouble with Christianity; but Hobbes

did not see the remedy, which is total eradication not subordination of it to the state (pp.173-74, 180).

THE ROMANCE OF IDLENESS

Rousseau's politics is not the end of his thought. The social contract may be the solution to the socialization of man, but it is imperfect for all that. It is precarious, forever threatening to break down into particular wills (3.10, p.125). It requires a reversal of the natural order of things (3.2, p.103), or, as Rousseau put it in *Émile* (p.39), "good social institutions are those that know how best to denature man." It cannot always be introduced, for not every people is capable of freedom, and sometimes it can only be introduced on the basis of slavery, as in Sparta (*SC* 2.8, 3.15, p.136). Above all, the freedom it secures is still a sort of slavery. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains," says the *Social Contract*, but Rousseau's aim is not to remove these chains; rather it is to show how they can be rendered "legitimate" (1.1, p.41). Furthermore, the great-souled legislator lives beyond society and with a happiness that does not depend on society (2.7, pp.76-77, 80). So what is the truth about the legislator? And since such was Rousseau himself, what is the truth about him? The answer is found in Rousseau's last work, the *Rêveries d'un Promeneur Solitaire*.

Forced out of society by the hostility of other men, Rousseau began to realise that this was a blessing in disguise, for he lost all his love of society, and became a "hundred times happier" in his solitude (*Rev* 1, pp.57-59, 60). He is now lost to the world, and can turn wholly upon himself (1, p.62); he begins to retrace the steps that took man from the state of nature into political society. The relations history introduced are broken and with them pride; love of self can return to its own (8, pp.162-63), as well as natural pity (9). Like the primitive savage, Rousseau begins to live only for the present moment and for himself (*Rev* 1, pp.62, 64; *2D* pp.176-77, 182ff., 234); and, like the same savage, he acts by instinct or the "impulses" of his nature, not by rules (*Rev* 4, 7; pp.105, 138-39).

Society is a burden, it converts the sweetest joys into duties or "onerous subjugations" (6, pp.128, 130); neither morality, nor even science, goes along with happiness (3, pp.77, 149).

Precisely because nature and morality are different one cannot have both, and there is no doubt in Rousseau's mind that the first is far preferable. Morality belongs to society and both are forced and irksome; besides, freedom for man is not "doing what one wishes" but rather "never doing what one does not wish" (5, pp.136-37). Society is slavery. But then so, paradoxically enough, was the state of primitive man, for the "impulse of appetite alone" is slavery too (*SC* 1.8, p.56). Rousseau's return to this state, however, does not involve this slavery, for his return is a free yielding to nature, and is not so much a following of sentiment as a reflexive knowing and feeling of sentiment (*Rev* 8, pp.167-68). His return to the primitive state is at a far higher level than that state; it is above all a conscious and reflexive return, where the source of enjoyment is less the objects of the natural impulses (as was the case for primitive man), than those natural impulses themselves (5, p.121). His solitary dreaming is thus a sort of sentimental self-indulgence:

> If there is a state where the soul finds a platform solid enough to repose on entirely and to gather there all its being, without needing to recall the past or straddle into the future; where time is nothing for it, where the present lasts for ever, without, however, marking its duration and without any trace of succession; without any other sentiment of privation, or pleasure or of pain, of desire or of fear, than that alone of our existence; and where this sentiment can fill it entirely;—as long as this state lasts, the one who finds himself there can call himself happy, not with a happiness imperfect, poor and relative, such as one finds in the pleasures of life, but with a happiness sufficient, perfect and full, which does not leave in the soul any void it might feel the need to fill (5, pp.121-22).

The most complete return to the primitive state is at the same time an enormous increase in the happiness of that state; it is primitive happiness raised to the level of humanity. The decline to society may have meant slavery for most men, and "decrepitude for the species," but it leads to the "perfection of the individual" (*2D*, p.213) in the person of men like Rousseau. The highest sort of man is a solitary dreamer, a sort of sophisticated drop-out, originating in society, to be sure, but living on its fringes, absorbed in his own sentiments. Not in reasoning or divine contemplation does man reach the heights, but rather in what today we might call a hippy-like day-dreaming.

In the final promenade of the *Rêveries*, we find Rousseau recalling the first days of his youth. For at that time, in the company of Mme de Warens, this "best of women" (10, p.187), and in the space of "four or five years" he enjoyed, in the company of her and of nature, a "century of life and happiness pure and full" (p.186). This "so sweet" state, which "decided" him for "all his life" (p.185), could not, of course, last and Rousseau did not return to anything like it until after he had passed through the "tumult" of the world. That tumult involved a profound exposure to the philosophy, as well as to the civilization, of his times—the modern times of commerce and trade, of 'realist' political philosophy and 'useful' natural science. Rousseau's view of things is a result, one may say, of his original 'romantic' penchants in love and nature, of his distaste for a world where those simple movements of the soul were lost beneath the feverish and often heartless labour of "civil man," but above all of the way his acceptance of modern political science forced him to conceive of those penchants. He may have had his doubts from time to time (3, pp.88-89), but he was sure of his basic "good faith" (p.86). At all events, he did not let his doubts stop him from writing or, more crucially, from publishing what he wrote.

C: CONCLUSION: HISTORICAL RIGHT AND AUTONOMY

In the thought of Hume and Rousseau we are presented with some remarkable doctrines about man and society, but in both cases this comes about because of an attempt to recover a sense of the noble and of virtue. Machiavellian 'realism' of express purpose had ignored, if it did not deny, the existence or the relevance of the higher aspirations of man. But these aspirations could not be dismissed for good; they were bound to make themselves felt again sooner or later. This they do in Hume and Rousseau, whose thought thus serves to reveal that the realist concern with the useful, especially in the form of its chief offspring capitalism (or the emancipation of the passion to acquire), however 'effectual' it may be in practice, is erroneous in principle.

Hume and Rousseau are not dominated by that concern, but they are dominated by the effects of it in others. Both escape Machiavellian realism only to succumb to it again (and Rousseau more so than Hume). What this does to their understanding of virtue and the noble makes their thought so important. This thought involves, in particular, the preference for moral virtue over ancient speculative wisdom; the belief that such wisdom is neither desirable nor possible; and the elevation of sentiment and instinct over reason. In Rousseau this is all part of the claim that the most natural is the most primitive, and that the primitive and instinctual are identical with, or at the root of, human goodness (man is by nature good; *1D* p.107n, *2D* p.172n). His account of the development of man into society implies that society is the cause of evil. It also implies that man is the product of history. The emergence, however, in Rousseau of the 'sense of history' requires to be carefully considered, for he has in fact two forms of it.

There is one sense of history that Rousseau recovered, *via* Montesquieu, from the classics. Hobbes and Locke not only determined the nature of legitimate government according to universal principles (even the classics may be said to have done that); they also required it to be imposed, and thought it could be imposed, universally as well. This was be-

cause of the way they understood natural right. Their adoption of Machiavellian realism meant that they sought to locate right in what they took to be the dominant passion, so that what determines right is also, and at the same time, what necessarily rules all men's actual behaviour. One only needs, therefore, to regard this passion both to find the truth about right and to secure a successfully operating government; the particular and accidental conditions of geography, climate, tradition, custom, character and so forth could be ignored because in comparison they were of no relevance and no force.

The classics did not determine right by something that necessarily moves all men always (they would have denied there was any such thing anyway), but rather by the ideal of human perfection, and that ideal actually moves only the virtuous and wise. In their view what is operative in society is custom (the ensemble of the particular and accidental, or of the historical; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1268b22-1269a28; Aquinas, *ST* IaIIae q97 a1-3; Rousseau, *SC* 4.7, p.168). It is this, not passion, that gives force to the laws, and one must, when legislating, pay particular attention to, and bestow particular care on, this fact. Rousseau just follows the classics in rejecting the belief that the accidental and particular are morally or politically irrelevant.

Rousseau has, however, another sense of history, according to which not only the circumstances and conditions are historically determined (those circumstances and conditions in which and from which particular men live and act), but also their very human nature itself. In Rousseau history embraces not just the particular and accidental but the essential too. This other sense of history he did not find in the classics, and not surprisingly because it is not there. Rousseau himself invented it, or was forced to invent it, under the pressure of his acceptance of the Machiavellian and Hobbesian premise that man is not by nature social. Hume, by contrast, who did not accept that premise, has no such sense of history, though of course he very much has the other sense.

This historicizing has not gone as far in Rousseau as others (notably Hegel and Marx) were to take it, for in him the natural remains as something fixed and universal to guide

both the construction of the just society and the return to nature of the solitary dreamer. Some will say this reservation against history in favour of a non-historical standard set up by nature is a defect in Rousseau's thought, but for him it is the only way to have any standard at all. The progress of history itself will not do, for history cannot be understood as a progress except by reference to an independent standard that distinguishes the progressive from the regressive; the direction history takes is not good just because history takes it. Not only does Rousseau think the direction that history has in fact taken was bad, at least for most men, but also that the identification of what has happened with what is good, or of what ought to be with what is, is ridiculous. It would lead to the justification of absolutely anything (*2D* pp.245-47). Rousseau himself does not establish "the right by the fact" but rather examines "the facts by the right" (*SC* 1.2 p.42; *2D* p.224). In doing this he only follows Hobbes and Locke who also deny that one can legitimately conclude that something ought to be because so it is (*Lev* ch. 20, pp.109-110; *1T* §59, *2T* §§103, 180, 184). What is done is not right because it is done but because it accords with right.

It is false to say that this 'point of logic' was discovered by Hume or Moore, or that naturalists ignore it (cf. Plato, *Republic*, 493 A6-C8). What all naturalists, ancient and modern, say is that the standard of right is determined by nature, and all understand this as an end, the end of nature. Hobbes and Locke, however, adopt a Machiavellian 'real' end, the end of the self-regarding passions, and their morality is relative to that end. Hume and Rousseau both reject this as bad, and they both do so, in effect, by denying that nature is what Hobbes and Locke say it is. Hume, because of his Lockean 'realist' epistemology, understands good as the creation of sentiment, but since sentiment operates naturally, this just makes him a naturalist all over again. For it means nature still in effect determines the good by determining sentiment, or the ends and objects of sentiment.

He is also a naturalist in the manner of Locke and Hobbes, because all three understand the natural good to be pleasure; the difference is that Hume thinks there is a non-

selfish pleasure that arises from contemplation. Pleasure, however, of whatever kind, is an act or movement in appetite; it is in man and not in things (Hume, *Tr* p.469; Hobbes, *Lev* ch.6, p.24; Locke, *Ess* 2.20, 21 §§1-3, 55; Aquinas *ST* Ia IIae q31 a1, q11 a1-2). What this means (and it is Hume who really forces it on our attention) is that the good is determined by acts of appetite, or that the movement of appetite constitutes the good of things. Hence this movement, this actual desiring or willing, must precede any knowing of the good. Without the desiring there is no pleasure and so no good (one must "feel" before one can know, as Locke had in fact said, *Ess* 2.20 §1).

One can, therefore, only speak of a natural good if nature somehow determines the operations of all men's appetites. In Hume this determination is done directly because the sentiment itself is natural and the same in all men. But in Locke and Hobbes it is done indirectly. Holding, in effect, that by nature men's desires or relishes are peculiar and individual to each, they reach a universal desire by standing back, as it were, and viewing, not the particular desires, but the necessary and universal conditions for the satisfaction of any possible desire. This enables them at the same time to determine and to know the good, the universal and instrumental good, prior to any actual desiring of it. For one can see and work out the need, if there is to be any satisfaction at all, for peace and property along with the rules of each, before anyone has actually started to desire them but is still, unreflectingly, absorbed in the immediate passions themselves. This working out is the task of the political philosopher. Thus it is possible for them, but not for Hume, to have an act of knowing the good (though only the instrumental good) that precedes the desiring of it.

The ancients in general did not identify good (whether instrumental or final) with pleasure (apart, in particular, from the notorious Epicurus), but thought that there was another and higher good to which man is directed prior to and independently of any of his actual desires. What this means is that there is such a thing as natural appetite or natural inclination (Aquinas *ST* Ia IIae q44 a2), that is, the directedness of nature to a goal, while for Hume, Hobbes and Locke there is only ac-

tual or conscious appetite. Or, what amounts to the same thing, the only appetite by nature is actual appetite. For this reason the ancients can speak of a natural end or final good that can be known before it is willed, but these three moderns cannot.

The ancients, however, recognized two sorts of conscious desire, the passions and the will, or sensible appetite and rational appetite where, in the first case, there are only relatively automatic feelings and where, in the second, there is reason and free choice. The latter does not appear in the thought of Hobbes, Locke and Hume, or only very minimally, as when in Locke and Hobbes there is choice in following the way of peace (though even this choice remains automatic in the end, for the passions will of necessity go that way once every other way to satisfaction is closed off). A rational appetite or will does appear in Rousseau, however, namely in his notion of freedom and morality. It is in this move, which as such is a return to the classics, that, paradoxically, the break with ancient naturalism (already present in the other three) is made complete. For Rousseau now has to deny that there is a natural desire even in the sense of Hobbesian and Lockean naturalism or Humean sentiment.

This move, which is the crucial one for the development of modern non-naturalism, is not made everywhere in Rousseau's thought but only in the doctrine of the general will. In the original naturalism of Rousseau the natural desires are located in primitive pity and self-preservation, and as these are in time buried beneath a host of artificial desires, natural right requires that they should somehow be recovered. This recovery is itself achieved artificially or by reason, for the natural desires are recovered, not as desires, but as self-willed legislation. In other words, what is given by nature in the automatic operations of sensible appetite is restored by reason in the free operations of the rational will. Self-willed laws achieve in society what original pity and self-preservation achieved in the state of nature; they achieve this, however, simply and solely by being autonomous acts. The natural ends and the natural right are thus reconstituted on a non-natural foundation, in the creative self-legislation of man.

As a result, and in a startling way, natural ends, and natural right, both remain and do not remain. They do not remain because they cease to be ends or objects towards which the will is directed, becoming identical, instead, with the mere acting of the will provided this acting is autonomous. They do remain because, precisely by their being identified with autonomy, autonomy becomes the natural end and the natural right of man and of all men equally. At the level of society, one may say, the good by nature is autonomy. Autonomy, moreover, is identified by Rousseau with the essence of morality, even with the very meaning of the word. It is striking how many authors there are, from Rousseau's day to the present, for whom morality means precisely that, for whom, indeed, this is the very 'logic' of the word. Yet, in point of fact, it is, in its origin, just a transformation of Machiavellian realism. If the reading of Rousseau does nothing else, it reveals the origin of that 'logic', which, precisely because of the use of the word logic, has otherwise been almost wholly lost to view.

For the full explanation of this logic of morality one must turn to Kant, perhaps the greatest of Rousseau's followers. As regards Hume, by contrast, his specifically moral views are of no relevance for understanding the development of later thought; they are but an interlude, if a pleasant one. It is rather his epistemological thought, and only that part of his moral thought which concerned the 'is' and the 'ought', that are of further significance. History, if you like, opted for Rousseau. Or, perhaps, to be more precise, the inherent logic of Machiavellian realism could not, and would not, tolerate as great a return to ancient moral thought as Hume managed to effect.

CHAPTER S5

Kant: Virtue as Unworldly Worldliness

THE IDEA OF THE KANTIAN 'CRITIQUE'

Of all the philosophers of the post-medieval world, Kant is arguably the greatest. The scope and intricacy of his thought, its systematic comprehensiveness, the involved complexity of some of its doctrines, have given it an enormous power to fascinate and attract. Its influence has been profound and lasting. No little importance, therefore, attaches to seeing just how completely it is steeped in the heritage of Machiavellian realism. This is indicated, to begin with, by the fact that in epistemology Kant's inspiration came from Hume, and in morality and politics from Rousseau and Hobbes. The system that results is a remarkable fusion, as well as elaboration, of the elements of that heritage.

Kant's philosophy is above all characterized by the name of *Critique* (*Kritik*), the name he gave to his three major works (the *Critiques of Pure Reason, of Practical Reason* and *of Judgement*, known respectively as the *First*, *Second* and *Third Critique*). Of these the first, which deals with epistemology, is prior not just in time but more importantly in logic, for the second two are decisively determined by the teaching it contains. The first is directed towards the second, for one of its chief aims is the safeguarding and promoting of morality (the subject matter of the second), and it contains the basic presuppositions that delimit the sphere and nature of morality. As this is only achieved by creating a gap between knowledge and morality, the *Third Critique* is introduced as a sort of bridge over that gap. One must begin therefore with the *First Critique*.

Kant sees several advantages following from his critique: it will enable reason to follow the "sure way of a science," it will turn "youth thirsty for knowledge" from "comfortable speculation" about things of which no one does or can know anything towards the "better-founded sciences" (principally mathematics and physics), and "above all" it will have the "incalculable benefit" of silencing "for all future time" all objections to morality and religion (*B* xxx-xxxi; *A* xi note). It will do this by denying to speculative metaphysics the ability to know anything about the things spoken of when these objections are leveled. This "loss" in speculative reasoning will not affect the "interests of mankind" but only the "monopoly of the schools" and their "arrogant pretensions" (*B* xxxi-xxxiii; cf. *Prol* §39, *AA* IV.324-5, *Luc* p.87). Hitherto, in fact, metaphysics has been a sort of battleground where no one has been able to secure any territory; and its ceaseless disputes have just led to scandal among the masses and the clergy (*B* xiv-xv, xxxiv). Kant's critique will put an end to this by limiting the pretensions, and so the conflicts, of speculation; and precisely because of this negative use it will have also the positive one of leaving the field free for morality, or reason in its practical employment, so that morality can flourish without fear of the assaults of speculative reasoners (*B* xxiv-xxv; cf. 2C, *AA* V.146-8; *Abb* pp.244-6, and the similar remarks of Rousseau in the *First Discourse*).

Kant's critique, which he holds is essentially correct and complete in the manner he left it (*B* xxxviii; *A* xii-xiii, xx), is meant to serve a function for speculative reason analogous to that served by a Hobbesian sovereign for men in the state of nature; it will be the common judge that establishes peace in the state of war that reason is otherwise naturally in (*B* 779-780, where Hobbes is mentioned by name). It will do this because it stands above all disputes and judges them by principles "whose standing no one can doubt" (*ibid.*). Kant may have found the "scandal" of metaphysics to rest in the "arrogant pretensions" of metaphysicians, but it is evident that his own critique displays an arrogance of its own. Indeed he admits that this is how it may appear to the reader, but he protests that there is this difference, that while others claim to ex-

tend knowledge, he "humbly" confesses that this extension is beyond his power (*A* xiii-xiv). What he should have said is that he concludes assertorically that this is absolutely beyond anyone's power, and that all must submit to the decisions of his own critique instead (cf. the quite candid confession of his "pretensions" in this regard, along with the justification, *MM* Preface, *AA* VI.206-9; *Sem* pp.147-9).

For all his confidence that he has found the indisputable judge of disputes, Kant cannot help admitting that this judge is far from indisputable, indeed that it has generated disputes of its own. These disputes forced him to make substantial revisions in a second edition of the *First Critique*. He defends himself by saying these were just to correct "misunderstandings," and only in those sections where "competent and impartial critics" were misled (*B* xxxvii-xli); as for other critics he remains silent. Kant, like Descartes, is confident that his system will triumph where all others have failed, and, as with Descartes, that confidence has proved to be woefully misplaced. There is evidently something about man and the activity of reason that makes it absurd to expect any method or system to win universal agreement, even to what is true and demonstrably so (and of this ancient writers, at least, were keenly aware).

UNCRITICAL SCIENTISM

What Kant particularly objects to in existing metaphysics is its "dogmatism." By this he does not mean that it is dogmatic, for reason must always be dogmatic, or proceed by strict proof, in its pure knowledge, but rather that it is dogmatic without "previous critique of its own power;" indeed it is precisely such uncritical metaphysics that is the "true source of all the unbelief that wars against morality" (*B* xxxv, xxx). To set things right, the search for knowledge must be preceded by a determination of the limits of the human mind; reason's dogmatic tendencies must be curbed and disciplined first. Kant's position here is noteworthy in a number of respects. First the very fact that it is felt a discipline is required, or felt

that left to its natural resources reason will fall into absurd errors and needs to be corrected by a method (*A* vii-viii), sets Kant firmly in the tradition of epistemological despair of Bacon and Descartes. This is just as firmly done by the second point to notice, namely that the instrument of this discipline is skepticism. In its "infancy" reason indulges in "dogmatic wandering," but skepticism puts a stop to that, subjecting reason to the "censorship" of doubt. While skepticism thus makes our judgement more cautious and induces "self-knowledge," it yields to the third stage, taken only by a "mature and manly judgement," that of critique, which, benefiting from skeptical doubts, is able to settle determinatively what the limits of reason are, and where it can operate and where it cannot (*B* 788-792). Kant himself is the first to take this step of reason's maturity, but the skepticism that leads him to it is not the "stale dish" Descartes was forced to serve up. Rather it is the unrivalled skepticism of Hume, "the most ingenious of all skeptics," that "celebrated" man who marks the decisive event in the whole history of metaphysics, who interrupted Kant's own "dogmatic slumbers" and gave "a completely different direction" to his investigations in speculative philosophy (*B* 792; *Prol* Preface, *AA* IV.257-260; *Luc*, pp.5-9). Hume's sceptical epistemology (itself a result of the epistemology of Descartes and Locke) is the decisive influence on Kant that sets him on the way of critique.

The model, however, for such critique is not Hume but modern Baconian science. This is the third point to notice, that the "highway of science" is the method Bacon helped to promote in natural philosophy. This method was discovered when, instead of "wandering about" tied to nature's "leading strings" picking up accidental observations without any predetermined design, men started experimenting with nature and forced her to give answers to questions reason had formulated according to its own plan. Thus a "light dawned on researchers into nature" and they learned that "reason only sees into what it produces itself according to its own design" (*B* xiii-xiv; cf. the more obviously Baconian expression in *3C* §68, *AA* V.383-4; *Bern*, pp.230-1). Reason, says Kant, must possess its "principles" already and construct an experiment in

conformity with them; it then subjects nature to this experiment and the particular data thus revealed have meaning for reason only because they are thereby subsumed under reason's principles.

In this passage Kant brings strikingly into the open one of the chief characteristics of modern experimental science, namely the crucial role played in it by theories or hypotheses. Modern science, as illustrated above all by people like Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, is a matter of "refutation or confirmation by experiment" of "hypotheses" (*B* xviii note, xxii note). The experiment tells us something, or is significant, because it is designed according to the principles of a theory which the results of that experiment will test, that is confirm or refute. Kant is much more aware, or candid, than Bacon or Descartes that modern science thrives on theories, theories that do not come from experiment or observation but precede it, or at any rate that are not arrived at by a process of induction or inference from observation. They are rather patterns or models devised independently by the scientist in his own mind, and which he tests to see whether, or how far, they fit the experimental data. What is important about Kant, however, is less that he notices this fact than that he adopts it and applies it to all knowledge simply (cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.341ff., where a particularly enlightening description of modern science is given, but where also science is viewed as authoritative for all knowledge). Kant takes this step because of the profound effect the success of the new science had had on him (*B* xvi; *2C*, *Conclusion*, *AA* V.161-3; *Abb* pp.260-2).

Now since in hypothetical science one only has knowledge by making patterns in one's own mind and fitting data into these patterns, one must, if this method is to hold of all knowledge, reject the proposition, assumed hitherto, that "all our knowledge must agree with objects" and adopt the opposite one that "objects must agree with our knowledge" (*B* xvi). Kant expressly follows the example of Copernicus here. For just as Copernicus, failing of success in explaining the motions of the heavens by the hypothesis that they revolve around the spectator, tried if things would work better by the hypothesis that the spectator revolved instead; so also Kant,

finding no success on the existing assumption about knowledge and objects, tried the opposite assumption. He claims that the results are better and that his hypothesis is thereby confirmed (*B* xx). One curiosity, however, that is immediately worth noting here is that while Kant imitates Copernicus with respect to bringing about a reversal in existing ways of thinking, he rather dramatically departs from him with respect to the direction in which the reversal is made. For Copernicus' astronomical reversal made the spectator revolve around the heavens, while Kant's epistemological reversal makes the heavens, and everything else, revolve around the knower.

But be that as it may, for Kant also holds that his position or reversal is more than hypothetical; in the body of the work it will, he says, be proved "apodeictically" (*B* xxii note) In the body of the work it is indeed 'proved', but the premises used are those of Hume. What in fact we have in Kant's epistemology is a picture, worked out in considerable detail, of what happens to knowledge and being and man when knowledge itself is patterned after the procedure of hypothetical science, that is, when knowledge is declared to be a matter, not of knowing external beings and natures (as the ancients thought), but of subsuming data or phenomena under patterns or rules devised independently by the mind. Knowledge becomes a question of data (or 'facts') on the one hand, and frameworks or theories for unifying and arranging that data on the other. In Kant's thought we are given a classic expression of the effects of an all-embracing 'scientific' method, that is of an uncritical submission to the procedures of modern science—a submission men were dazzled into yielding by the success of those procedures.

To understand Kant's epistemology one must begin with the overriding problem of the *First Critique*, which is identified as the '*synthetic a priori*'. Kant accepted, with the ancients, that science was universal and necessary, but he was puzzled as to how, if this was so, it could advance knowledge. For to do this it must, in its propositions, add in the predicate something to the subject that is not already known in knowing the subject. It must therefore be synthetic, as opposed to analytic (where, in this latter case, the predicate merely says

something that has already been said in the subject and so where it cannot advance knowledge but must be a mere tautologous addition). A synthetic proposition (where the predicate does say something over and above what was already said in the subject) must, if it is to be known to hold, be based on something more than the terms of the proposition. Such a something more can, for instance, be provided by experience, since we can know that A is B if we directly experience this. To know a synthetic proposition in this way, however, is to know it *a posteriori*, i.e. as a result of experience. But experience can establish nothing universal or necessary. It can only show that this A here and now is B; it cannot show that all As, including those not yet experienced, will of necessity be B. Synthetic propositions that are *a posteriori* cannot therefore be propositions of science. Scientific propositions must be synthetic *a priori*, i.e. known to hold in advance of experience (for if I know that all As are necessarily B, I know that any A I may observe will be B *before* I observe it) (*B* 10-14). Since science does exist (as in mathematics and physics) there must be such synthetic *a priori* propositions and the central question becomes 'how is this possible?' or 'what is that something more that unites them?'

According to Kant, Hume was the first to bring this problem to the fore, for he was the first both to admit that science professes to make synthetic *a priori* judgements and to deny that it was possible to derive them, or to derive their universality and necessity, from experience. Hume argued that the supposed universality and necessity of such judgements were just tricks of the human mind. When we repeatedly observe, say, that particular Bs follow particular As, we fall naturally into the habit of expecting a B whenever we observe an A; and then, because of this expectation, we think that *every* A *must* be followed by a B. In point of fact, however, there is no necessity at all for a B to follow every A. The impression we get of universality and necessity is just the impression of our habit of expectation which we mistakenly project onto things and think really exists in things when it exists only in our own minds (*Tr* pp.18, 79-80, 86-87, 466). Hume himself took this difficulty to apply only to the princi-

ple of causality but, says Kant, it extends to the principles of all sciences (*B* 793).

Hume's views on causality follow from his beliefs that we know only sensible images in the mind (whether as impressions or ideas) and that the knowable content of these images is exhausted in the having of them (i.e. the beliefs he derived from Descartes and Locke). For from this it follows that each simple idea or impression is a complete and self-sufficient entity in its own right, distinct and separable from all others. Now it is indeed the case that mere sensible images are just a series of particulars, and that at the level of sense or imagination (where Hume insists on operating; *Tr* 1.1.3, p.10) one cannot detect any necessary or universal connections between them. For since causality implies the dependence of one thing on another, where all things are radically independent, there can be no causality. What connections there are can only be those that experience indicates just happen to obtain, and if we attribute necessity or universality to them, this can only be, as Hume correctly observes, because we have got so used to seeing things like this that by habit we always think them so.

Such is Hume's argument, and it is inevitable given his premises. Kant accepts the validity of this argument, and so of Hume's account of causality, precisely because he accepts the validity of his premises. As far as the content or matter of knowledge is concerned, this is, according to Kant, always and only some image or sensation, some sensible datum. There is not, as there is in ancient thought, a penetration to any intelligible content within sensible objects. Kant does, it is true, have, unlike Hume, a notion of the intelligible, but this is not something one abstracts from the sensible; it is something one imposes on it from the mind itself in the form of a concept, or principle of unity, that gathers the sensible material into one coherent whole. Such is what Kant means by saying that we only have sensible intuition, or that all the content we think is sensible, and that the intelligible is just the form we impose on this sensible content (*B* 33-34; 74-76; 92-93).

Two points must be noted here. First, all this seems fair enough as an account of the method of hypothetical science, for this method does indeed confine itself to empirical data

grasped at the level of sensible observation (either directly or indirectly through instruments), and does indeed interpret this data in terms of a pre-conceived theory or framework for uniting the data into a pattern. But, second, such an account would be wholly rejected by ancient thinkers as applicable to knowledge outside hypothetical science. There is for them an intellectual intuition, by which is not meant (except perhaps in the case of Platonists) a grasp of things not given in sensible experience, but a grasp of the intelligible content, the being, of sensible things. And this is a grasp of something that belongs to sensible things in their own right, not something that is externally imposed on them.

Science, for the ancients, is above all the understanding of the being of things, and this is not only a knowing of something the senses as such do not know, it is also a knowing of something that cannot be classed as data, as 'flat' sensations as it were, having no content beyond what is exhausted in the knowing of them. One must rather class it as 'intentions', that is as objects that are both something definite in themselves and also point beyond themselves, or have an order towards other elements of being. Reasoning and science rest on the collecting of these intentions, that is on a drawing them together in a judgement to perceive their order to each other. This order is not grasped in the mere act of conception, whereby the intentions are first known, but only in the act of judgment, that is only when they are 'collected', not when they are held in isolation. Thus it is that the judgment is not tautologous (for the predicate, being a different intention, does not just repeat what was already said in the subject), and can be necessary and known to be so from the terms themselves. For the order is founded immediately on those terms (and this is how one can know, for instance, the principle of causality). Science or demonstrative reasoning is, properly, the knowing of the order to each other of terms in judgements when these are deduced from prior judgements where the order of the terms is known immediately in the way just indicated.

One must note, further, here that the senses do not perceive data either, but intentions—sensible or individual intentions. There is also, therefore, a sensible judgment, that is a

collecting (by an inner not an outer sense) of these intentions. This collecting is not the imposing of order but a recognition, at the level of sensation, of the order inherent in things themselves. It is because we are aware of sensible objects through diverse sense organs, i.e. because in perception there is an abstraction of one sensible quality of the object from another (colour from taste, smell from shape), that there is an inner sense to collect these abstracted elements and reunite them in a sensible judgement. And this unity the elements themselves point to, because they are intentions and not data (Aquinas *ST* Ia q78 a4).

All this has, of course, gone from modern thought about being and knowing, and in fact it went because of the desire for useful science. For, first, ancient thought about being and knowing is abstract and purely speculative and of no value to hypothetical science and its conquest of nature. Second, ancient thought is not compatible with an all embracing mathematical and atomistic mechanism, since it involves an assertion that the world we ordinarily perceive is a self subsistent reality pretty much as we perceive it. The world we ordinarily perceive is, of course, not the world painted by modern science (that is why Descartes and Bacon felt they had to oppose and overthrow the objective reality of the ordinary world).

Kant is wholeheartedly on the side of modern science, and one of the consequences of the rejection of ancient thought is brought out in his analytic/synthetic distinction. He is the first to make evident, or the first to see with any clarity, that the narrowing down of mind and being effected by modern epistemology makes all scientific thought thoroughly problematic. The union of terms in a scientific judgment must either be justified by those terms or by experience; if the latter the union is contingent and so not good enough for science, if the former it is tautological and there is no advance in knowledge, for the terms, since they signify logically discrete sensible data, must, if they are united through themselves alone, just be signifying the same data twice over. This problem has existed for philosophy ever since, and underlies the thought of most contemporary non-naturalists as well as naturalists. It is,

however, not a problem for most ancient philosophers, who would reject the self limitation of thought that gives rise to it. For them Kant's critique can have no justification because the question it is designed to answer is a pseudo-question. However once Kant has stated his problem as that of the synthetic *a priori*, the only way out is his Copernican revolution: the third thing that unites the terms in these judgements can only be the mind itself, and knowledge must be a question of making things conform to the mind, not the mind to things. The experienced world of nature must become a construction made by the mind out of its own innate principles and sensible data.

This construction has, for Kant, two sources of innate principles: the sensing faculty and the mind. As regards the former, space and time, says Kant, are just properties of this faculty; they belong to its constitution. Hence they are necessarily imposed on all the data received through sensation. Kant comes to this conclusion because of his dissatisfaction with a purely relational account of space and time (such as is found in Hume). One of the consequences of such an account is that it cannot intelligibly be said that things on their own, that is independent of their relations with other things, are in space and time, for, manifestly, if they were, space and time would no longer be relational. But things that are not in space and time independently of their relations with other things cannot ever come into such relations. The reason is again manifest. Relations of space and time can come to be only where there are things in the same or different spaces and times as each other, and things that are not already and independently in space and time cannot be in the same or different space and time as anything. Hence they cannot be in relations of space and time with anything either.

The only way round this problem is to deny that space and time are, in the first instance, relations. They must instead be something absolute in things. But this something absolute cannot be identified with a sensible datum, as a colour, say, or a sound, for space and time are not attached to things like such an extrinsic property but are somehow intrinsic to the individuality of particular things and embrace the very being of

their individuality. To account for these peculiarities Kant thinks the only option left is his own, that space and time are not known from experience but are imposed on experience by our sensing faculty in the very act of sensing (*B* 33ff.).

Aristotle, as one would expect, has another account. The ground of space and time is indeed part of the essential structure of sensible things, namely their matter—understood here as the potentiality of things in contrast to their form or actuality. Because of this, sensible particulars are in their essence changeable and movable as well as extended. Now 'space' is actually an ambiguous term and signifies dimension on the one hand and place or location on the other (Kant does not deny this, of course, but he does not pay attention to it either). Space in the first sense, the sense of dimensions, necessarily belongs to every material thing just because it is material. Hence all material things occupy space in the sense of having some determinate extension. Space, however, in the second sense, the sense of place, is a relative property and not an absolute or intrinsic one as is quantity or dimension. For it consists in relating one body to another according to the absolute or intrinsic extensions of each, saying, for instance, that the one is above, below, in front of, behind the other.

The same holds of time. Particular material things, just by virtue of being material, are necessarily changeable or subject to becoming something else or additional, whether in substance (as in generation and corruption) or in properties (as in locomotion, alteration, growth and decay). Consequently they are necessarily subject to being measured according to their changes. Time is just this measure or measuring of change, and consists in the noticing of the before and after in change (as noticing that now it is here and now there). Time is therefore a relational concept, though founded on the absolute property of changeableness, for it is found through measuring any material thing according to some uniform measure of change. This uniform measure is taken from the constant change of some other material thing, notably the sun, though in principle one could adopt any number of different measures and use them each in turn (*Physics*, bk.4). Now this account of Aristotle's is obviously adequate to explain both the absolute-

ness and the relativity of space and time. But, equally obviously, it does so by appeal to the notions and terminology of 'uncritical' metaphysics. It could therefore never do for the 'critical' Kant.

The 'ideality' of space and time (as Kant termed his own solution to the above puzzle) has important consequences; it means at once that what we perceive through the senses (since it is made spatial and temporal through the act of perception) has its being only in our own minds or sensing faculty, and not in itself. Kant, however, had already come to this belief independently. For it is, of course, the same belief as results from Descartes' doubt, which result Kant accepted for the same reason as Descartes did—the objections of the skeptics, who by forcing us to this position are justly styled "benefactors of human reason" (*A* 377-8). Kant does admit that the opposite belief is the "common prejudice" (*B* 768; as does Hume also, *Tr* pp.192-3,226), but insists its falsity can be seen "by the most ordinary intelligence" and without the need for any "subtle reflections" (*GW* ch.3, *AA* IV 450-1; *Pat*, p.111).

At all events, when combined with the ideality of space and time, this belief leads to the result that any order empirical data may have with respect to each other cannot be given by experience. All such data, as determinations of sense, are determinations of space and time, and so if they have an order or unity this must be one of space and time; hence, as space and time are imposed on them, so their unity must be too. Accordingly Kant does not accept the idea (adopted by both Locke and Hume) that perceptions are already given to us combined in certain ways (as in an apple, say), even if these combinations are necessarily contingent. On the contrary, the empirical data, considered independently of the order we impose on them through the ideality of space and time, are radically incoherent. They are just a "rhapsody of perceptions" (*B* 195), or "nothing but a blind play of representations, i.e. less than a dream" (*A* 112). In itself, that is independently of the ordering of the creative mind, the sensible world is a meaningless chaos.

The ideality of space and time, as it is the cause of this chaos, also proves to be Kant's device for overcoming it. Because space and time are part of the constitution of the thinking being, as well as the universal condition of empirical data, they can be the medium whereby the mind imposes unity on that data. This can happen because space and time, as part of the sensing faculty, can be drawn up into schemata or patterns of unity already in the mind and into which the data given through the sensing faculty can then be made to fit (*B* 177-8, 180-1, 184, 242-3, etc.). This requires that these unities preexist in the mind so that the mind can order space and time, and so experience, into them. Styled pure concepts of understanding, these unities are in fact interpreted as rules for synthesizing data, and knowing is defined simply as this process of synthesis according to rules, or of constructing a law-governed nature. An object is, accordingly, just a series of perceptions or data ordered in some such lawful way (*B* 92-3, 197-9; *A* 125-6; *B* 129-131, 313-14; *Prol* §§23, 36). We can know in advance, i.e. *a priori*, that these rules will hold of all we can ever experience simply because they are really properties of the mind which the mind must inevitably impose on everything that comes within consciousness (*Transcendental Deduction, passim*). The rules are also, not surprisingly, said by Kant to be such that the structure created is mechanistic. Nature, in a fashion that is thoroughly Baconian and Cartesian, reduces to a system of phenomena subject to mechanical laws (*B* xxvii-xxix). We are, in other words, compelled by the very nature of our minds to believe that nature is exactly what Machiavellian 'useful' science says it is.

At the bottom of all this, however, lies the pure unity of the transcendental 'I think'. This 'I think' accompanies every experience and is what makes experience conformable to principles of unity, for these principles are in fact just the diverse routes through which the unity of the 'I think' is mediated to experience (*A* 107ff, *B* 131ff.). Kant hereby takes to an extreme Descartes' diversion of philosophy from being to consciousness; and he is quite aware of it. Aristotle's categories, for instance, which were originally the divisions of being, are transformed by Kant into functions of thought (*B* 105-7,

113-4). The consequence is that all knowledge must be limited to perceptions and their synthesis in the human mind; knowledge of anything else and in any other way is impossible. Such a consequence was, however, inevitable as soon as knowledge had been equated with the procedure of hypothetical science. What needs exploring is just how many and how peculiar are the implications that Kant proceeds to draw from it.

The concepts, or *categories* of understanding (as Kant's transformation of Aristotle leads him to call them), that we use to synthesise phenomena are knowable in abstraction from phenomena and therefore appear to allow of a use beyond the phenomena. But this appearance is an illusion, for taken by themselves, that is, without any sensible content, concepts are empty and give no insight into objects (*B* 75, 305-6). Kant indeed understands illusion to be this supposing that such forms or categories of thought do constitute knowledge of objects, whereas in fact they can be nothing beyond subjective conditions of thinking (*A* 396). Traditional metaphysics is precisely this illusion: it thought it had knowledge where it had, and could have, none. Nevertheless, despite, or rather because, we only have knowledge of phenomena and their subjective synthesis, there arises for us the idea of "things in themselves" or "noumena." These have to be posited as the ground of phenomena or appearances (to say we know things only as they appear is to imply the existence of things as they are), but since they transcend all possible knowledge, they can have only a negative use and just serve to indicate, if they indicate at all, something altogether unintelligible (*A* 249-260; B 306-315).

Kant need not be taken here as saying that these noumena really exist in some world that transcends experience (after the fashion, say, of the real bodies of Descartes or Locke which exist behind the screen of our immediate consciousness). For, regardless of whether he was tempted to believe this or not, the role that these noumena actually play in his thought is as determinative of the way we think rather than as constitutive of what we can never know. For these noumena, or rather the transcendental ideas in the mind that

they change into when the mind engages in its activity of reasoning, since they cannot determine objects of knowledge (for no perceptions can be given as their content), serve only the function of *regulating* thought. They give, that is to say, a certain unity, not to our perceptions (the categories of the understanding do that), but to our operations of so uniting them. Thus, as we are uniting the empirical data, so we are also, under the influence of the ideas, thinking these unities *as if* there were an object underlying them corresponding to the relevant idea (to the idea of God, say, or of the soul), even though we can never know anything about this object (*B* 670ff.). Such noumenal ideas, and their creation of "as if" thinking, come to play an increasingly dominant role in Kant's philosophy, and above all in his moral and political thinking.

THE NOUMENAL WORLD OF CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVES

Kant begins his reflections on morality with the fact of morality, or rather with the sense in man of the right and the wrong. There are some actions that even a "boy of ten years old" can recognise as self-evidently wrong and reprehensible (*2C, Abb*, pp.253-4, *AA* V pp.155-6). Kant's moral writings are full of descriptions of such actions and of appeals to ordinary moral perceptions in judging them, and he claims that the proper sense of morality as he presents it can be deduced from these perceptions, or from an analytical examination of the "concept of morality generally in vogue" (*GW* ch.2, *AA* IV, p445; cf. also ch.1, pp.397-9; ch.3, pp.454-5; *2C*, *Abb* pp.115, 124-5; *AA* V pp.27-8, 35-6). The examples of wrong actions Kant typically gives are selfish ones, where private advantage is pursued in callous disregard of others; and the examples he typically gives of right actions are their opposites, where private advantage is sacrificed for the sake of others, say to keep a promise or preserve the innocent. What ordinary understanding easily recognises is the wrongness of the blatantly selfish and the rightness of the generously selfless.

Kant's moral theory is very much constructed in terms of an attack on selfish advantage as a possible ground or object of morality. But this attack is understood in a particular way. The pursuit of selfish goals is identified as the pursuit of happiness, itself identified as the sum of one's inclinations or pleasures. Happiness in this sense is private and subjective, liable to vary not only from individual to individual but even within the individual himself at different times, and can only be discovered empirically. It is, as Kant implies, sensuous happiness, the happiness of one's animal nature (*GW* ch.1, *AA* IV p.395, ch.3, pp.453-4, p.462; *2C*, *Abb* pp.112-113, 152-3, 125-6, *AA* V pp.25, 61-2, 36).

Now if one sets this Hobbesian happiness at the basis of morality two difficulties in particular arise. First, the morality will be contingent on what one's desires at any time happen to be. The moral action is only to be done if it leads to something one already wants, and one ought only to behave in this moral way because, or if, one will satisfy some want by doing so. Should this not be the case, one is under no obligation to act in the way prescribed. Morality will therefore be hypothetical, or dependent on 'if'-clauses referring to the contingent desires of contingently given individuals. But morality as it is ordinarily understood is not hypothetical; its authority or applicability does not vary with the state of people's inclinations but, on the contrary, stands independently of them, even in opposition to them. It is in some sense "categorical" (*GW* ch.2, p.444; *2C*, *Abb* pp.112-114, *AA* V pp.25-26; cf. Hume, *Enq* §§220-223, for similar ideas). Second, the morality will be "low" and make one draw back with "disgust" (most people's inclinations are typically low and selfish); but morality is something high and has a special "worth" and "sublimity" which would be wholly destroyed if it were thus subordinated to calculations of private interest (*GW* ch. 2, pp.428, 442-3; *2C*, *Abb* pp.108-112, 124-5; *AA* V pp.22-25, 35-36).

These two elements of morality, that it is somehow categorical as well as sublime, or that it applies independently of one's particular desires and is good in itself, are not original observations of Kant's. They are just how he states his recognition of the sense in man of the noble. The noble was

lost in Machiavelli's realism as well as in the morality that Hobbes built on its basis, and Kant is at one with the ancients in protesting against this loss. But his appeal to the noble involves at the same time a particular interpretation of what the noble is, and this interpretation owes more to his epistemology than to the "concept of morality generally in vogue." It amounts to the following. The noble is not a known good, a good that one can perceive and determine one's will by; in fact when one wills and acts in a morally good way, one's will is not determined by a prior recognition of good at all, but rather directly by itself. Kant was aware that this view was somewhat strange, and he had to answer several protests against it (notably from Professor Garve; *2C*, *Abb* p.94, *AA* V pp.8-9; *TP* I, *Reiss* pp.54ff. *AA* VIII pp.278ff.). But his reason for adopting it was quite simple and insistently repeated: any known good could only be a low and selfish one, subject to whim.

To determine the will with respect to some perceived good is to determine it by something "material," and if one takes a review of all possible material principles one will find that they are either subjective and empirical and make this good pleasure, or objective and rational and make it perfection (*GW* ch.2, *AA* IV pp.441-444; *2C*, *Abb* pp.124-130, *AA* V pp.35-41). Not to pursue Kant's argument in detail, his rejection of both alternatives may be reduced to the following. As regards the first, empirical and subjective pleasure must be private happiness or selfishness, and it has already been shown that this will not do for morality. For we only know the empirical, and the empirical in the case of motives is just the pleasure one discovers one feels in view of certain objects. But this pleasure is always qualitatively the same and belongs to sense in every case, both because it is known by experience and because the "life force" affected is one and the same. Hence there are no "higher" as opposed to "lower" pleasures; they are all more or less on a par with those of the "bodily senses" (as Epicurus had maintained; *2C*, *Abb* pp.94n, 107-111, *AA* V pp.9n, 21-25).

As regards the second alternative, note first that while it is true enough that classical moralists distinguished higher and

lower pleasures according to the rank of the objects enjoyed, they did nevertheless (as Kant, unlike Hume, correctly sees) determine moral virtue by reference to perfection and not by reference to pleasure. Kant attacks this idea as follows. The perfection in question is either non-sensuous and non-empirical, in which case (as the *First Critique* has shown) it is really empty and determines nothing; or if it includes the notion of morality within it, as it inevitably does, it will either be circular and assume what it was supposed to explain or, if it contains some determinate content, this content must really be empirical and so perfection will reduce back to selfish happiness. More importantly, however, all material principles, whatever they are, make morality hypothetical, that is dependent on actual desires, and so contingent on the presence or absence of those desires.

On this last objection it is important to note that the perfection to which the classics traced moral virtue is determinable independently of any movement of desire or will, for it is understood from the nature of man (it is the perfection of his being, as the good of anything is such perfection). This means that the good is a possible object of speculation logically separable from any influence it may actually exert on the will. Kant refers to this sense of good in the *First Critique*, but of course his theory compels him to deny that it belongs to the being of things; it is rather a "criterion of thought" that was confused by uncritical thinkers with a "property of things" (*B* 113-115). But more seriously, in morality one is talking about practice, not theory (*2C*, *Abb* p 129-130, *AA* V p 41), and these mark diverse branches of philosophy which, to be diverse, require diverse principles. These principles would, however, not be diverse if the practical took its beginning from principles that are theoretical.

Kant is forced into making such a radical divorce between theory and practice because of his understanding of theory. What is accessible to the latter is scientific nature, and this is the sphere of mechanical causality. A practical reason that started here would only be concerned with what is possible according to such causality, and would itself be mechanical or just proceed according to "technical" rules (which rules

are indeed "corollaries" of theory; *3C*, *Bern* pp.7ff. *AA* V pp.171ff.). But morality cannot be reduced to such mechanism for, quite apart from the fact that it supposes an independence of determination by natural or sensible motives (which, if one limits knowledge to the sensible, can only be understood as pleasure), it requires also a power of self-determination, or a causality of freedom (as will be explained shortly). A good accessible to theory, therefore, would destroy morality and the distinction between theory and practice (and Kant accuses previous thinkers of precisely this; *3C*, *ibid*.). The upshot is that Kant is forced, by his epistemology, to reject any idea of a good independent of a movement of desire or will, i.e. independent of an actual feeling of pleasure on the one hand and an actual self-determination of will on the other.

Before examining this Kantian doctrine of the self-determination of the will, it will be worth pursuing his criticism of classical thought further, for this criticism serves to emphasize the dependence of his moral on his epistemological thought. Kant is particularly hostile to those writers (he mentions Wolf, the Stoics, and the schools in particular; *2C*, *Abb* p.124, 129, *AA* V pp.35, 40) who base morality on some notion of human perfection. They are guilty of two grave faults: fanaticism and pride. Fanaticism is the "delusion of seeing something beyond all the boundaries of sensibility" or "raving with reason" (*3C* §29, *Bern* p.116, *AA* V p.275); in other words, rejecting the conclusions of the *First Critique*. And pride or "moral fanaticism" is, not surprisingly, rejecting the conclusions of the *Second Critique*, that is, trying to base morality on something other than the will itself (*2C*, *Abb* p.179, *AA* V, pp.85-6).

This moral fanaticism, i.e. this claim for knowledge of the noble, together with a "heightening of self-arrogance" that exhorts men to actions as "noble, sublime, and magnanimous" Kant finds especially objectionable. For not only does this entail, whatever may be said to the contrary, that the motive is "pathological," or a sort of sentimental romanticism and self-love, but also a "windy, gushing, fantastical kind of thinking" is induced, flattering men that they have a "voluntary goodness of spirit," whereas in fact they are only moral if they are

subjected to the "yoke" of duty (*2C*, *Abb* p.178-9, *AA* V p.84-6). In the context Kant appeals to the teaching of the Gospel, which by its "appropriateness to the limits of finite beings" first brought men under the "discipline" of duty, and did not let them "go fanatical with dreamed-up moral perfections" but set the "limits of humility (that is self-knowledge)" to "self-arrogance and self-love." It is almost as if the Gospel was the original critique, the first teaching of the Kantian limits on man.

For Kant morality is a matter of laws, or of 'oughts', and this does indeed have a basis in the ordinary understanding. Morality is about human action, about doing things, and in reaching a moral decision one has reached a decision about what one ought to do. Now this is just what a law expresses, a judgement about how to act (thought it does so universally, while our ordinary decisions are about particulars). It certainly is the case that morality comes to us above all in the form of 'ought' and 'ought not', 'do' and 'do not'. The question, however, is what this amounts to. Kant treats it as authoritative, and supposes that law is the essence of morality. But this is to assume that ordinary understanding is self-consistent and self-aware. This is not an assumption that was shared, for instance, by Socrates.

When asked to say what the various virtues are, Socrates' interlocutors, as men of ordinary perceptions, typically reply in terms of a set of rules or things to be done and not done, as for instance that justice is paying back one's debts, not telling lies, and not cheating (*Republic*, 331). For Socrates, however, this just proves to be the beginning of a philosophical ascent that proceeds from the realization that a set of rules is inadequate to capture the essence of right behaviour to a recognition that it is neither in rules, nor even in action, that moral virtue ultimately finds its source and its justification. Rather it finds this source and justification in something that transcends the level of moral virtue altogether, in some vision of the highest and best, that is, in knowing and above all loving the fine and the fair. The perceptions of ordinary citizens are not so much wrong as confused; they are founded on a genuine grasp of truth, but this grasp is incomplete and un-

sure, and cannot account for itself. When it tries to do so it falls into self-contradiction, that is, into errors that it can be made to see by its own lights to be errors. Since, moreover, it is love, not obedience to rules, that is the ultimate, the way upwards has a better beginning in eroticism than in legalism (cf. Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, 201a-212c; and if one wants Gospel support for this, one may consider the contrasting responses to Christ of the woman and the Pharisee in *Luke* ch.7, vv.16-50).

None of this, of course, is going to be tolerated by Kant, both because it involves a transcending of the limits he had set to knowledge, i.e. fanaticism, and because it leads to a playing down of the notion of submission to rules, and hence a passing beyond the level of ordinary perceptions. For Kant these perceptions are really quite sound. Ordinary human reason may not conceive the first principle of morality in its universal form, but it always has it "before its eyes" when making its particular judgements. If it stuck to this practical employment there would be no need for philosophy, but reason in its theoretical use, as well as philosophers themselves and the temptations of one's inclinations, create a need for philosophy to defend ordinary "wisdom" and its "innocence." This defence is a corrective and naturally takes the form of a "critique" (*GW* ch.1, *AA* IV pp.403-5; *2C*, *Abb* p.253, *AA* V p.155). Kant is following Rousseau here who likewise held that ordinary unsophisticated thinking is morally correct and that philosophy is only needed to defend it. It was Rousseau, after all, who taught Kant to respect the ordinary man (*AA* XX, p.44).

It should not be surprising, therefore, if in the light of this, Kant undertakes his moral investigation by orientating himself towards it from the point of view of the laws implicit in actual moral practice. Actions manifest, in a particular case, the application of a general rule, or, as Kant terms it, a "maxim" (*GW* ch.2, p.420n; *2C*, *Abb* p.105, *AA* V p.19), and the only question that he asks is about the status of these rules: which of them can count as moral and which cannot? He is able to establish quite easily (though he does unnecessarily labour the point) that rules or policies of action directed to selfish goals are not what is meant by morality. In accordance

with his belief that all rules directed to attaining some preconceived goal, that is all "material" maxims, must be selfish, he is forced, in banishing all such material elements, to a point where all that is left is the mere form of a law as such, that is to the mere ordering or commanding of something without any goal or good in prospect as the ground of it (*GW* ch.1, *AA* IV pp.399, 402; *2C, Abb* pp.114-115, *AA* V p.27). The consequence is that morality becomes law-abidingness simply.

Now the form of law as such is the form of universal and categorical law (form is universal and morality possesses universal application; it does not depend on what one's inclinations happen to be). So the first principle of morality and duty is to act according to universally, categorically binding, law, or the first law of practical reason is the "categorical imperative" and reads: "so act that the maxim of your will can always at the same time count as principle of a universal legislation" (*2C, Abb* p.119, *AA* V p.30; *GW* ch.Aa IV, p.402, ch.2, p.420-21). This is the central teaching of Kant's moral theory; the conclusion reason must come to when properly governed by critique. Without that critique it pursues "all possible wrong ways before it succeeds in hitting the only true one" (*GW, Pat* p.441). This finding of the categorical imperative, under the guidance of critique, is, one may say, Kant's substitute for Socrates' ascent, under the guidance of philosophy, to the "fanatical" vision and love of the good.

Since all knowable goods are, for Kant, too low for the moral or rational will, if the will is to be determined by anything it cannot be by any good, and so all that is left as a worthy determinant of it is itself. Morality is not just obedience to universal law, it must be obedience to law as imposed on the will by the will itself; it must be obedience to self-legislation. Any other legislation, the imposition of any law or 'ought' on the ground of some good, will not only be low, it will be alien; it will be "heteronomy." Morality is therefore of necessity "autonomy" (*GW,* ch. *AA* IV, p.440-445). Autonomy is the way Kant accounts for freedom. Freedom, or some power of choice over one's own actions, is necessarily implied in moral action, indeed in human action generally, wherever an 'ought' is applicable (for 'ought' makes no sense where there

is only the idea of compulsion; cf. Rousseau, *SC* I.3). But Kant is forced by his theory to equate freedom with autonomy, that is, with the radical independence of the will from determination by anything but itself. The reason is simple: all determination by a knowable good would drag it into the world accessible to knowledge, namely nature, and this is the sphere (as the *First Critique* showed) not of freedom but of necessity, mechanical necessity.

Freedom of the will, however, is also determination of the will by the will, and this requires that the will have a causality that is not part of the causality of nature. Freedom becomes spontaneity, "pure spontaneity." A free, non-mechanical will, since it cannot belong to the knowable world of phenomena must belong to the unknowable world of noumena; it must have a power we do not and cannot understand, and its operations must spring up in us we know not why nor how. Acting spontaneously out of a ground that exceeds all possible understanding, the will imposes categorical laws on itself, or categorical 'oughts', 'oughts' that, for us, are and must be totally unfounded (*GW*, ch.3 *passim*). These 'oughts' it also issues ceaselessly and inescapably, for the "pure moral law unflaggingly binds everyone as a command" (*2C, Abb* p.241, *AA* V p.143).

Kant is the first thinker fully to separate the moral 'ought' from good; the first to say that morality is a matter of unconditioned or unfounded 'oughts' which reason as freedom or will, that is in its practical employment, imposes on itself immediately without the interposition of any good (*2C, Abb* pp.134-5, 153-4, 164, *AA* V pp.44-46, 62-63, 71-72; *MM, Abb* p.278, *AA* VI p.222). In direct opposition not only to ancient thought, but to all previous thought, he overturns the priority of good and sets 'ought' in its place. The good does not determine the 'ought'; the 'ought' determines the good.

PURE WILLFULNESS

Kant has enormous respect for the autonomous will and its unfounded 'oughts'; indeed he is carried off by it. Of the two

things that filled his mind with "ever new and increasing admiration and awe," namely "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me," the latter ravishes him more. The first is the sphere of the sensible, and though this gives us a view of "a numberless multitude of worlds" that "annihilates" our importance as physical or animal beings, the second, which is the sphere of the noumenal, of man as an intelligence, "endlessly exalts" our "worth" (*2C*, *Abb* p.260; *AA* V p.161-2). At one point he even cries out, in a manner worthy of Rousseau:

> Duty! thou sublime, mighty name...what is your origin, and where is found the root of your noble descent, which proudly strikes out all kinship with inclinations?...It can be nothing less than what exalts man (as part of the sensible world) above himself....It can be nothing other than personality, that is freedom and independence of the mechanism of the whole of nature, yet viewed at the same time as a power of a being which is subject to special laws, pure practical laws given by its own reason (*2C*, *Abb* p.180, *AA*, V pp.86-87).

This passage neatly reveals the pedigree of Kant's moral ideas: a combination of the sense of the noble with the critique of knowledge. It is because of the latter that the sense of the noble is changed, from the "fanatical noble" of the ancients, to the "sublime noble" of freedom and its moral law. Worth noting here is that Kant uses the German '*Edel'* for 'noble' in stating both his own case and that of the ancients, but he particularly associates his view of morality with the sublime, the German '*Erhaben'* (*2C*, *Abb* p.178-79; *AA* V pp.84-5). The sublime is defined as the "simply great," and Kant has no doubt that morality is precisely that (*3C* §§25, 27, 29, *Bern* pp.86, 96-97, 104-116; *AA* V pp.248, 257-8, 264-276). Kant, therefore, nicely illustrates for us what happens to the noble when it is associated with the despair of speculative reason.

One must, however, be clear about what sort of nobility Kant's notion of it really amounts to, and not be swept along

by his rhetoric. Note, therefore, to begin with, that Kant draws a distinction between right, or the legal and juridical, on the one hand and ethics or virtue on the other. The former concerns the agreement of external actions with the moral law, and the latter the agreement of intentions or motives with it, that is, when one obeys the moral law for its own sake and not for something else (*MM Abb* p.269, 275, *AA* VI pp.215, 218-19). In the first case all that is in question is something purely formal, for the requirement of duty is just that the maxim of actions be fit to be universal laws, i.e. that it be in conformity with the categorical imperative. What the deed is, or why it is done, is of no relevance: "a deed is right or wrong in general when it conforms or does not conform to duty; duty itself may accord with the content or motive of the deed, of whatever kind it may be" (*MM, Abb* pp.280-82, *AA* VI pp.223-25).

Now any deed that does not conflict with duty is allowed, and one has the freedom or right to do it; this is because, being capable of universalisation, it can be done without interference in the right or freedom of anyone else. Hence, whatever the deed and whatever the end of it, provided it can stand with universal law, it is not only right but also a right, and it is injustice to be hindered from it (*MM, Abb* pp.278, 285, 307, *Sem* p.169-70, *AA* VI pp.222, 375, 396, 229-231). The things men actually do and pursue, the material objects of their will, are just those they happen to find their pleasure or their happiness in. Moreover, to each man his happiness is individual and personal; it is what he himself finds it to be, not what someone else says it must be (it is whatever "turns him on" as the saying has it; *MM, Abb* p.270-71, *Sem* p.263, *AA* VI 215, 454). Since these self-interested or selfish pursuits provide the material that is to be subsumed under the form of universal law in order to constitute right, it follows that right is just universalized self-interest or selfishness; one may rightly pursue one's own private pleasures provided they are compatible with everyone else pursuing theirs. Morality in this sense, therefore, is Hobbesian: the safe pursuing of the objects of one's passions or a selfishness that, by the Rousseauan device of universalizing (as found in the general will), is 'disarmed' so that it leads to peace not war.

Kant's morality of right is Machiavellian (*TP*, *Reiss*, pp.74, *AA* VIII p.290-91).

If this was all there was to Kant's moral thought, it would be hard to explain how he has acquired a reputation for high moral purpose; that reputation has to be traced not to his morality of right and law but to his morality of virtue. Virtue or ethics is doing one's duty for duty's sake, and this, unlike right, does determine an end or something material; it determines an end one ought to pursue (while right determines only ends one *may* pursue). The problem is to find such a categorical end, an end that is also a duty. The solution is as follows: "One can conceive the relationship of an end to duty in two kinds of way: either starting from the end to find out the maxim of actions in accord with duty, or conversely, beginning with this to find out the end which is at the same time a duty." Jurisprudence proceeds in the first way, for it is left "to each man's free will what end he will set himself for his action," but the maxim or rule of it, that makes it accord with duty, is that "the freedom of the agent be able to exist together with the freedom of every other according to a universal law" (i.e. just the formal condition of right discussed above).

Ethics, by contrast, proceeds in the second way, for in it "the concept of duty will lead to ends, and the maxims, in view of the ends which we ought to set for ourselves, must be grounded on moral principles" (*MM*, *Abb* p.292-93, and for the general points, pp.290-92, *AA* VI pp.382, 379-382). In other words ethics takes the morality established in jurisprudence, i.e. right, and makes this its end; and so the purely formal element—conformity to universal law as such—becomes the material element and a goal or an object of pursuit. The 'ought', if you like, does not just become prior to the good; it becomes itself a good, and indeed the only good that is unreservedly or categorically good. The only good that is high enough for moral duty is moral duty itself. (One may compare here the way Hare's purely formal logic of ethics becomes his ethics.) So much, however, was plain from the start, when it was said that virtue is doing duty for the sake of duty (and so when it was said, at the very beginning of the *Groundwork*, that the only good thing without qualification is

the good will). What is more important is the way Kant fills this out, or what ends the end of duty is made to determine.

Kant reduces these ends to two: one's own perfection and the happiness of others. The first is the "cultivation of one's power (or natural talent)…and also of one's will." One's power is all one's faculties generally, and is basically one's capacity to set ends to oneself or one's skill, that is, one's ability to stand above all natural things and subject them as means to one's own use. Skill is, one may fairly say, one's ability to conquer nature, and one is duty-bound to develop this skill as much as possible so as to be "fit for all ends that could come to one." One's will, on the other hand, is one's capacity for morality, that is for respecting, and acting for the sake of, the moral law. It is one's ability to act with virtue as well as with right, and one should "be intent on this with all one's power." As for the happiness of others, this is first their private pleasures, and consists in making "their permitted ends one's own" (i.e. those of their ends that can be universalized); but secondly it is their moral well-being, not directly but indirectly, insofar as it requires one to refrain from anything that could give them remorse of conscience, i.e. any "scandal" (*MM, Abb* pp.296-99, 302-304, *AA* VI pp.386-388, 391-394; 3C §83, *Bern* pp.281-83, *AA* V pp.431-433).

If one considers all this, together with the duties that Kant thereafter enumerates as derivative from these principles, one may say that the ends that are duties are reducible simply to the nature of man as freedom, that is to say, as a being who determines his own ends according to his own will and independently of any subordination to something outside him. Such is the case both with respect to the control of nature and, above all, with respect to morality, that is, with respect to man's status as a being subject to and author of the imperative that universalizes private happiness. Whatever is necessary to engender, promote, or preserve this "sublimity" of man's being, namely his personality, belongs to virtue. In other words it is one's duty to further the conquest of nature and foster in oneself and others respect for 'realist' or Machiavellian morality. Not to do this, i.e. not to adopt the perspective of Ma-

chiavelli, is a crime against duty and against right. It is to be an arrogant fanatic.

Respect for duty and the qualities it requires one to cultivate do, it is true, lead Kant to his vision of the man of virtue. But what is this virtue? As sensible beings, men have inclinations, which as such are just movements to pleasure and involve no regard for the law. Even if these movements do not always oppose the law, so that one is not always required to resist them, one is certainly required, from the moral perspective, to disregard them. That is why the law comes to man as a constraint or hindrance to inclinations, requiring not only that they be subjected to the discipline of universalisation, but that the *universalisation*, not the *universalized inclination*, be the object of the will. So note two things in particular here. First, following the law is not a matter of caring about what we or others are inclined towards, or what our particular ends or 'relishes' are (as was the case in classical thought). Rather it is a matter precisely of *not* caring about that and caring instead about making sure that we and others, whatever our inclinations, always universalize them, or never pursue inclinations that interfere with others pursuing their inclinations. Second, as we can never be without inclinations, and as inclinations, until we universalize them, always have the potential to conflict with the inclinations of others, we can never be without actual or potential opposition to the law. Hence arises, according to Kant, the evil principle, or the evil will, which is an ineradicable part of man (reminiscent of the doctrine of original sin; *Rel*, p.31, *GW*, ch.3, *AA* IV pp.454-5).

This evil principle is opposed to the good principle, or to men's capacity to propose to themselves and adopt the law of duty. The cultivation of this capacity in resistance to the evil principle is what virtue essentially is. It is therefore fortitude, an ascetic bearing up under the pressure of one's evil desires for the sake of duty. Kant certainly does not want men to be slaves of their passions, but because he thinks we always have evil desires even when we do what is right, his virtue never gets beyond what Aristotle called continence. In fact, for Kant, Aristotle's virtue would amount to holiness, for a holy being has no sensible nature to oppose the rational will.

Aristotle, however, does not suppose a virtuous man is without inclinations; only that his inclinations have been reduced to the virtuous mean. In effect, by equating virtue with holiness, or with the absence of inclinations altogether, Kant is denying that man's sensible nature is reformable; it remains in his eyes an ineradicable source of evil in man.

Kant's hostility to ancient thought is now readily intelligible, for such thought leads men to suppose that they are capable of more than continence. In fact, of course, men are not capable of more than this and so ancient thought just serves to weaken the sense of duty and its sternness, and to allow inclination, especially un-universalized inclination, to return under the guise of "natural goodness of heart." But any such goodness of heart could only be something pathological, and so will reduce to romanticism, enthusiasm and self-love. Duty and morality are inevitably destroyed as a consequence. But it is in duty that man finds his true dignity and his freedom, which mean precisely not being subject to anything outside one's own will. Above all they mean not being subject to inclination. The ends one pursues are to be those one chooses or imposes on oneself by one's universalizing will, not those one receives from inclination or from any source other than one's own will. This is what Kant has in mind when he formulates the categorical imperative (the principle of duty) also in terms of treating oneself and others always as an end, never as a means (*GW* ch.2, *AA* IV pp.427-429). For to be an end is basically, for Kant, not to have any end beyond oneself, not to be subject to any end one does not, in one's rational will, freely adopt for oneself.

The principle of the rational will, however, is duty, and duty is the universalizing of private pleasures, and hence the ascetic virtue Kant presents, however stern in itself, is low in its object. Virtue is asceticism or continence for the sake of 'realism'. If Rousseau's transformation of the Machiavellian heritage was breathtaking, Kant's is even more so. Whether, however, his notion of duty for the sake of realism, stern and severe though it may appear, is really elevated or noble is a question that well deserves reflection.

THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY

Kant's views about knowledge and morality lead to a radical divorce between the two. The former constitutes the world of nature, that is of phenomena organized according to a system of mechanism, and the latter the world of freedom. This divorce between the moral and the natural is the divorce between the 'ought' and the 'is', between 'values' and 'facts'. Kant paints it in the starkest terms, and he is the first to do so (*3C, Introduction*). At the same time he forces firmly on one's attention that the root of this divorce is not 'logic' but that the 'is' is understood as the 'realist' and the 'useful' scientific.

This divorce, however, creates a problem, which others have not necessarily ignored (Hare, *Freedom and Reason* ch.4), but which they have evidently not felt as keenly as Kant himself did. The moral world has an effect on the natural world, for men's moral actions are part of the natural or phenomenal world; but the moral is the free, and the natural is the mechanically necessary. We have the paradox that man's actions viewed as phenomena are determined, but viewed as moral they are free (*B* 577-78). How is this to be explained? Well, to begin with, there is, strictly speaking, no contradiction involved here, for natural or scientific law is what reason makes in its theoretical employment and moral law what it makes in its practical employment. Reason is thus operating at two diverse levels, and even if it operates at each level about the same territory it can never come into conflict with itself. The problem, then, is not so much how to bridge the gap between two worlds as how to effect the transition between two "modes of thinking." The answer is, in effect, a third mode of thinking, the "purposive" mode of judgement.

There are two modes of judgement, the "determinant" and the "reflective." The job of judgement is to subordinate particulars to a universal law or rule (as the *First Critique* showed, *B* 91-94, knowing is an act of judgement and consists in synthesizing data into patterns); and if this rule is given as one of the *a priori* categories of understanding, it determines objects of knowledge. But these concepts are highly universal

and only determine objects of experience in general (*B* 165, 263), and hence leave a great deal undetermined. Nature, however, even in its particular state is not undetermined and not chaotic, for it is subject to particular laws and these laws can be discovered (which is what individual scientists in their experiments are actually doing). Since these laws can, however, only be discovered from experience, they must be viewed as contingent. This presents a problem. The concept of nature "requires" that the particular patterns be called laws, and yet laws imply necessity. This necessity is inaccessible to our determinant judgement because, in the case of these particular laws, no necessity can be found for them in the *a priori* categories of our understanding. The only way out, then, is the other mode of judgement, the reflective judgement.

The reflective judgement, in order to establish this necessity of the particular and heterogeneous laws, thinks them as systematically subordinated to higher ones. It thinks them, in other words, *as if* they had that unity they would have if an understanding, though not of course our understanding, had furnished them. Now the reflective judgement differs from the determinant in that it is not concerned with giving laws to nature (i.e. with unifying data) but with giving laws to itself, that is to our thinking about nature. It governs not what we think but how we are to think what we think; it is, as was remarked earlier, regulative and not constitutive. The rule it thus applies to itself it cannot have got from experience; it must instead possess it *a priori*. But since to think of nature as subordinated in this sort of way to a regulative understanding is to think it as having a purpose, this *a priori* principle of judgement must be purposiveness (*3C, Introduction*).

Purposiveness is manifest in two ways. First, subjectively, when the view of nature as ordered to the subjective needs of our faculties pleases us by that very harmony; this is either the beautiful, when objects are viewed as purposive for our needs for knowledge, i.e. as fitting our concept of nature, or the sublime, when they are viewed in their relation to our freedom, as available for a supersensible use (and this is how purposiveness, or reflective judgement, has appeared in the theoretical and practical realms of the *First* and *Second Cri-*

tique). Second, purposiveness is manifest objectively when the whole natural system is viewed as purposive in itself, that is, as teleological. Now of these two kinds of purposiveness, the subjective and the objective, the first leads us from the theoretical mode of thinking to the practical mode because it cultivates, in the case of the beautiful, disinterestedness (a regard for things without reference to private interest), and, in the case of the sublime, the sense of the greatness of freedom. The second kind also leads from the theoretical to the practical mode of thinking because it represents nature as subordinate to moral purpose (*3C*, *Bern* pp.23-29, 32-33, §29, pp. 106-107; §59, pp.196-200; *AA* V pp.186-192, 195-197, 266-67, 351-54). It is this latter kind of purposiveness that deserves special discussion here.

We do not know how far this purposiveness goes, but our reason has a need for it to be total. If the variety of heterogeneous laws could not be reduced to a principle we would have to accept the fact, but we "more gladly listen if another offers us hope" that this is not the case, for it is a "behest of our judgement to proceed according to the principle of the suitability of nature to our knowing power" (*3C*, 25, *AA* V p.188). Now there is both internal and external teleology. The former is the orderedness of the parts to the whole in organic beings, where nothing is to be viewed as vain or the result of a "blind mechanism of nature;" and we cannot, when examining living things, avoid attributing this purposiveness to them (*3C*, §§64-66, *Bern* pp.216-224, *AA* V pp.369-77).

This internal purposiveness, of course, is Kant's recognition of the teleology that proliferates in Aristotle's biological writings (and which Bacon so sharply attacked). But while it actually belongs to things for Aristotle, it does not for Kant, for it is just the application of a regulative principle to the way we think (as far as strict science is concerned, nature is mechanical, §68). This recognition has a consequence for Kant, therefore, that it does not have for Aristotle. Once the idea of teleology has been validated here, one is "authorized, nay called upon" to "expect" it everywhere (the idea or supersensible principle is a unity, and if validated is validated wholly and not partially; *3C* §§65, 67, pp.222, 226-8, 375-6, *AA* V

pp.374, 380-1). That is to say, one must expect it where there is no such warrant for it, i.e. in external relations and not just in the internal structure of bodies. This refers to the advantage things get out of natural processes that are accidental to them, as that plants take root in mud the tide casts up on coasts, or that snow makes travel easier in the north (by sleigh), or that driftwood is used for fuel (§63, 212-216, *AA* V pp.366-69).

It is impossible to view all these accidents as designed unless one views the beings they benefit as themselves purposes of nature, things she plans should exist and therefore provides for them. This itself is thinkable only if nature has a final purpose, a purpose not relative to any other (our judgement requires unity and order, which in the case of purposes is a final purpose; §68, 228, 381; §86, 294, 443). Such a purpose can only be man, for he is the only being who has no purpose beyond him, but sets his own purposes and subordinates the rest of nature to his use. He is the being who is an end in himself and not directed to something else as end (§67, 224-5, §82 276, §83, 281; *AA* V 378, 426-7, 431; *GW AA* IV 428-9). Man's happiness cannot be this purpose, not just because happiness is sensible and conditioned and the final purpose cannot be, but because nature seems to oppose happiness, this purpose of ours, and use it for a purpose of her own. This is shown not only by the fact that there are natural disasters, but also by the fact that man is endowed with reason, and reason, when applied to the pursuit of happiness, leads in fact to misery and war (like Rousseau, Kant supposes instinct is a better guide for happiness; *GW AA* IV 395-96). The final purpose, therefore, can only be man as freedom, that is as able to turn the earth to his own use, and to propose to himself the moral law—which is the only job that practical reason is fitted for. It is in fact precisely wars and disasters, or "brilliant misery," that nature uses to achieve this "culture" of man (§83, p279-84; *AA* V pp.429-434).

It is in this last point that Kant's regulative teleology produces its most remarkable result: the reduction to purpose of that most purposeless of things, history. Viewed as the record of what men have done in the pursuit of their own purposes, history displays no pattern; it is rather made up of

"folly and childish vanity." Reason, of course, cannot tolerate this lack of order, and Kant, in express opposition to those who say history has no "rational aim" but in accordance with the behest of reason, "more gladly listened" to someone who offered him hope that this was not so. That someone was Rousseau, the Newton of the moral world (*AA* XX 58), who first revealed how to find a purpose, a purpose of nature, behind "this senseless course of human things" (*UH*, *Reiss*, 41-2, 53, *AA* VIII pp.17-18, 30). The clue is in the history of Rousseau's *Second Discourse*, but while for Rousseau this history is a result of accident and to be regretted, for Kant it was intended by nature from the start and is to be welcomed. Nature's purpose is the full development of man's powers, or, to use Rousseau's terms, the actualization of his perfectibility; and for Kant that means the development of his skill and his morality, or in other words the conquest of the earth and the establishment of 'realist' political states (Kant has, it must be noted, none of Rousseau's reservations about autonomous morality or of his disgust for modern civilization).

In working out this history Kant is as much indebted to Hobbes and Locke as to Rousseau, for nature's instrument is war, or basically man's "unsocial sociability" (*UH*, *Reiss* 44, *PP*, *Reiss* 110-111, *AA* VIII pp.20, 363-65). Without their bad and unsocial qualities, and without the push of pain from behind, men would lead an "Arcadian, pastoral life of perfect concord, self-sufficiency and mutual love," i.e. that life intermediate between the primitive animal and the civilized man that Rousseau took to be, for most men, their "best" state, the state they were made for (*2D*, 211-213). But this, as even Rousseau would admit, is an imperfect state, and for Kant that is a decisive argument against it. "All talents would forever remain hidden in a dormant state: men, as good natured as the sheep they pasture, would scarcely procure for their existence a greater worth than that their livestock have." For this reason "let nature be thanked for the quarrelsomeness, for the resentful, competitive vanity, for the insatiable appetite to have and even to rule! Without these, all excellent natural talents would slumber eternally undeveloped" (*UH*, *Reiss* 45, *AA* VIII 21). The classics would certainly, like Kant, take the side of per-

fection against imperfection, but a whole world separates the ideas of perfection involved.

If man's unsocial sociability, that anti-social selfishness which yet cannot do without society, is the great engine of progress, it is not the goal; that is rather justice and perpetual peace. History has to be viewed as the record of men's conflicts forcing them ever onwards towards a just social order. A just social order is the maximum of freedom, i.e. the maximum pursuit of private happiness, combined with the maximum of force to keep this freedom within the limits of right, or to ensure that the pursuit of private happiness by each is compatible with the pursuit of private happiness by all. That is why Kant's idea of right requires him also to adopt the idea of a Hobbesian or lawless state of nature. Right as such is universalized selfishness and includes no idea of moral disposition or a willingness to universalize; it therefore requires something else as its sanction, namely fear and the threat of force. That is also why Kant's idea of a just society requires him, further, to adopt the idea of a social contract as well as the Rousseauan idea of the general will, which alone can legislate or decide what is right (these are all, be it noted, *ideas* in the technical sense for Kant: they have to be assumed as rules for regulating how we are to think). The fundamental rights of man are understood in the same light; they are liberty, equality and independence. Each citizen equally, and independently of the wills of others, is to obey no law other than the one to which he has given his free consent. That is why the only legitimate government is republican government. Kant also believes there is a contemporary event that backs up his view of history, and shows that man is morally advancing: the French Revolution (*UH*, 45-46, 50; *TP*, 73-74, 79; *PP*, 99n-100, 112, 117, 123; *CF*, 181-82; *MM*, *Abb* 275, *Sem* pp.172-3, *Reiss* p.139; *AA* VIII pp.22, 27-28, 289-297, 349-51, 365-66, 371, 378-9; *AA* VII pp.84-86; AA *VI* pp.218-19, 232-33, 313-314).

The idea that man's vice necessarily leads to right, which is what all this boils down to, is easily intelligible once vice is defined as the pursuit of private happiness without regard to others, and right as the same pursuit disciplined by universalisation. History is the record of how man takes the

step from the war of the first to the civil peace of the second. The final step, however, is not states but a universal state, or as near to such a state as possible. For states are in a lawless condition with respect to each other and just as right requires the entry of individuals into society, so it also requires the entry of states into society. Perpetual peace is identical with the actualization of a realist world state (cf. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* 158, *Moral Thinking*, Preface). The chief instrument for this is the "spirit of commerce," or the spirit of capitalism, which "cannot exist together with war" (*PP*, *Reiss* 114, *AA* VIII pp.368).

The problem of setting up a state, even a world state, must be "soluble" because it does not require the "moral betterment of mankind" but only the application of the "mechanism of nature" so that the "conflict of their hostile attitudes" compels men to submit to laws. That is why this problem can be solved "even by a nation of devils (if they only have understanding)." One just has to exploit men's evil passions, in true Machiavellian style, so that, though opposed in their private attitudes, yet in their public conduct men behave "as if they had no such evil attitudes." That is why Kant declares that nature, through its mechanism of the selfish inclinations, "irresistibly wills" the reign of right (*PP*, *Reiss* pp.112-13, *AA* VIII pp.366-67). Nature does not, however, irresistibly will the reign of virtue, and that is because she cannot. At this most crucial stage in the moral education of man, Kant's historical mechanism gives out (as Hobbes' mechanism of the passions had given out at a similarly crucial point). No one can be compelled to be virtuous, that is to adopt right or duty as his end, because man is free and can only have an end by choosing it himself (*MM*, *Abb* pp.275-6, 291-2, *AA* VI pp.219-221, 381-2). The reign of right does make the emergence of virtue easier; it does mark "a great step towards morality" but this is not the same as a "moral step" (*PP*, *Reiss* p.120n, *AA* VIII p.375n). Here is one contingency for whose reduction to necessity Kant could find no idea in his reason. It was left to Hegel and Marx, through their dialectics of history, to achieve that.

For Kant right is an absolute, imperious demand. It cannot be mitigated according to the necessity of the circumstances. The rights of man are "sacred" and allow of no "half measures;" all politics must "bow the knee" to right. Since, moreover, men throughout the earth have now entered more or less into a universal community, the point has been reached where a violation of rights anywhere is felt everywhere, and it becomes, one may say, a categorical imperative to advance the rights of everyone throughout the world. There can be no yielding here to the qualifications of prudence (*PP*, *Reiss* pp.107-8, 122, 125, *AA* VIII pp.360, 377-8, 380). Kant's political thought is thoroughly doctrinaire: politics is not a matter for the statesman, informed by long and careful experience of men and affairs, and permitted, in the pursuit of the common good, a broad scope for the exercise of practical wisdom. Politics is something much easier and simpler than that, for it is determined at once by *a priori* ideas which one does not derive from, but which one imposes by thinking on, the facts of experience. Such thinking is an absolute requirement, for otherwise morality would be abolished. If one is going to act morally one simply is compelled to think all the ideas that are tied up with it—freedom, social contract, perpetual peace, the progress of history. For this purpose experience has even to be disregarded. As Kant says of the idea that nature is inevitably promoting perpetual peace, it may be "far-fetched in a theoretical intention, but in a practical one it is dogmatic and, with respect to the reality of practice, well-grounded" (*PP*, *Reiss*, pp.109, 116, *AA* VIII pp.362, 370).

Like Machiavelli Kant sets theory aside in favour of the perspective of practice, and the ideas he creates as a result become in effect dogmatic devices for refusing to brook any opposition, and for demanding, in the name of morality or practice, that no one question the teaching of the modern project, or disbelieve in the progress of history (*CF*, *Reiss* p.185, *AA* VI pp.87-89). This dogmatism is accorded by Kant the title of "enlightenment." It is defined as thinking for oneself, above all in religion where submission to authority is "the most obnoxious and dishonourable" kind of man's "self-incurred immaturity." Using one's reason in freedom, think-

ing one's own ideas "without the guidance of another," and speaking them in public, is for Kant the maturity of man and he demands it as a right (*WE*, *Reiss* 54, 59, *AA* VIII pp.35, 41). But not only is this freedom itself understood in the terms of the Kantian critique; it must take place according to the determinations of that critique as well. There is nothing to fear from free speech and free thought, nor indeed from exposing the young to the "dangerous propositions" of atheism, materialism, or skepticism, provided however that that teaching is on the "presupposition of a thorough instruction in the Critique of Pure Reason" (*B* 780-85).

Evidently enlightenment is not compatible with the freedom, whether in thought or speech, to oppose enlightenment, nor indeed with thinking according to any "guidance" but that of Kant.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF MACHIAVELLI

By the confession of contemporary moral thinkers, Kant is a decisive influence on their thought, and indeed the coincidence of ideas is considerable. It is therefore worth stressing the following points.

First, Kant's separation of 'ought' from good and at the same time from 'is' is due to the way he understands those terms, and hence above all to his theory of knowledge, for it is this theory that determines everything else. Using modern hypothetical science as his model and, in particular, taking for granted Descartes' premise that we know only the contents of our own consciousness, he produces a philosophy whereby it is we who, through our mental operations, create nature out of chaotic phenomena and innate principles of unity. Since the world we thereby produce is a scientific, mechanical one, not transcending the level of phenomena and particular pleasures, it becomes impossible, in terms of it, to account for our sense of moral right and wrong, or of virtue and nobility. Morality has to be located in the unknowable non-natural realm of noumena, and it must, therefore, come to us out of this necessarily unintelligible ground in the form of imperious categori-

cal ‘oughts’, lacking any foundation in a known good. This ground is identified as freedom or the noumenal self understood as radical independence and radical self-determination. Hence just as we make nature by thinking, so we make ‘ought’, and the moral good, by willing.

Second, the transcendent self or ego, that was implicit in Machiavelli and made explicit in Descartes, thus undergoes an apotheosis at the hands of Kant and emerges as a kind of free, absolute creator. The ego is limited only in that the data it fashions it must first receive in sensation from an unknown source, and also in that there is an unknown world it cannot penetrate and does not determine. This limitation of the ego in Kant was soon to be corrected by Hegel in the ego’s favour, but it is important to stress that that ego is derivative from Machiavelli as well as from Descartes. The free, all-mastering mind that was inevitably implied in Machiavelli’s project, but about which Machiavelli himself was silent, is the mind that becomes explicit in the Cartesian and Kantian ego. To this extent, Kant, like Descartes, is doing no more than work out the logic of Machiavellian ‘realism’.

Third, the transformation of the properties of being into properties of consciousness, which is so marked a feature in Kant, is just part of this fundamental Cartesian shift, consequent upon the desire for usefulness and the acceptance of skepticism. Kant is as much a part of this tradition of epistemological despair as Hume. The only difference, by way of compensation as it were, is the emergence of a dogmatic and despotically legislative consciousness.

Fourth, all this just brings into even sharper focus the extent to which one’s views of good and bad are necessarily bound up with one’s views of how things are, or with one’s vision of nature and being as a whole. This dependence is still a marked feature of contemporary moral thought (save that the vision of the whole now generally goes under the name of a theory of meaning). Seen in this light, every thinker is a naturalist, or determines what he thinks about good with reference to what he thinks about nature. Non-naturalism is thus a misleading name for non-naturalists, for what sets them apart is not that they think nature is irrelevant but that they

have a particular view of it. And by nature must be understood here both human and non-human nature. For not only is one's view of the moral good relative to one's view of the nature of man, but also one's view of human nature is itself relative to or tied to one's view of non-human nature. This is evident in Kant (and latterly also in Hare), whose view of moral good is relative to his view of human nature as freedom, and whose view of human nature as freedom is itself relative to his view of non-human things.

Firth, it is a consequence of Kant's analysis of knowledge and morality that in politics and history he is dogmatic and doctrinaire. We are obliged, from the practical perspective, to suppose all that is implied in that view, and to interpret experience according to those practical ends. It is not necessary that one be able to establish one's interpretation by the evidence, for morality or practice imposes on one the duty to adopt that interpretation. It does not, in fact, really matter what the state of the evidence is, whether slight, lacking, or even conflicting. It is sufficient if one's view or one's goal cannot be proved to be unrealizable (*TP*, Reiss pp.88-89, 92, *AA* VIII, pp.308-309, 313; also *MM*, *Reiss* pp.173-5, *AA* VI pp.354-55). This conclusion is, of course, a necessary consequence of Kant's divorce of theory and practice, for this divorce entails that nothing from the sphere of theory, or nothing from experience and the facts accessible to reflection, is fit to be used to limit or give directions to practice. Put in plain terms, what all this amounts to is a moral sanction for blind prejudice. That the prejudice or interpretation (the *a priori* 'ideas') one has to assume is that of the writers of the Machiavellian realist tradition is not surprising given that the morality, the practical perspective, is itself thoroughly Machiavellian to begin with.

Sixth, what we are given in the Kantian philosophy proves to be a remarkable synthesis of the Machiavellian tradition: useful science and realist morality, dependent on a transcendental ego, and issuing in the necessary progress of history towards the completion of the modern project. It is, if you like, a thoroughgoing exposé of how being and the noble seem alone able to return when set against the background of

skepticism and realism in theoretical and practical reasoning, namely as creative consciousness and unfounded 'oughts'. But, and more importantly, this Kantian philosophy makes it, as a result, both immoral and impossible to question or doubt the validity of modern thought—and indeed impossible because immoral, because contrary to the inexorable demands of our practical reason.

Seventh, Kant has gained a reputation for high moral purpose and seriousness because of his doctrine of the categorical imperative, his dogmatic doctrine that one must act on the absolute principle of duty, no matter what. Apart from the fact that this requires morality to be reduced to an inflexible legalism, it hides, in this its formal aspect, just how debased that principle of duty really is. For all Kant's extravagant and enthusiastic claims, that duty never rises higher than the universalizing of private pleasure. Even if morality is higher than legality, because it pursues duty for duty's sake, this respect for duty is just respect for universalizing, and man's dignity, his moral personality, is no more than his capacity for such respect. There is not in Kant, as there is in the ancients, a hierarchy of ends or activities: all pursuits, even philosophy and charity to the poor, are originally at the same level—pursuits of private pleasure. There is not even a hierarchy of pleasures, for Kant accepts, as already noted, the Epicurean doctrine that pleasures are all of the same kind and differ only in amount (*2C*, *Abb* pp.107-111, 125, *AA* V pp.21-25, 35).

The only thing that creates a division or a hierarchy is universalisation: all those ends that can be universalized are right, and all those that cannot are wrong. Apart from this, there is no division, not even within these levels, for those that are right are all equally right and those that are wrong are all equally wrong. One only begins to get a hierarchy when it comes to virtue, but virtue is simply all that is involved in having respect for this uniform division, this idea of right. Universalising is a kind of leveling: right permits each freely to do his own thing provided he does not at the same time prevent others from doing theirs, and virtue requires that one respect this state of things, or endow it with the aura, as it were, of sacred inviolability.

That this position is the position of contemporary liberalism is clear (cf. how Hare and Rawls both speak approvingly of Kant, and use his doctrines, when stating liberalism: Hare, *Freedom and Reason* p.179, Rawls, *Theory of Justice* pp.251ff.). But precisely because it is a leveling, it could only strike ancient thinkers as base. In their view some pursuits are in themselves excellent, and others are in themselves base, regardless of whether they can be universalized or not. Universalising, in fact, means that some nobles things will be set on a par with some base things, or even below some base things. For it may well be that some noble things cannot thrive without the suppression of some base things, but these base things might be capable of universalisation (as would be the case, no doubt, with many of the things that the ancients thought needed to be suppressed if a serious education of the young in virtue was to be achieved; Plato *Republic passim*, Aristotle *Politics passim*). If, therefore, some noble things conflict with base things that are universalisable and thus right or rights, these noble things themselves will have to be suppressed. And this is not only base, it is a distinctive mark of tyranny (Aristotle, *Politics* 1313a34-b10).

Liberalism in this light is not only realism it is tyrannical baseness. It may have ravished Kant, but it would have disgusted the ancients. One does not, however, have to go to the ancients to find this disgust. It screams out in the writings of Nietzsche. Nietzsche may shock modern liberals, but for anyone who wishes to understand man and the vital questions of goodness and nature, he is of immeasurable value. His disgust is, nevertheless, not the same as the ancients' would be, because it is understood against the background of the philosophy of history. Nietzsche's attack on Kant the moralist was decisively influenced by his acceptance of Kant the historian. It was the development of this side of Kant's thought (a development Kant himself expected, *UH*, *Reiss*, p.42, *AA* VIII p.18) that, in the persons in particular of Hegel and Marx, intervened between Kant and Nietzsche. It accordingly set the stage for, as well as fashioned, his Dionysian iconoclasm. But that is another and longer story.