

Irving Louis Horowitz

Persuasions & Prejudices

An Informal Compendium of
Modern Social Science
1953-1988

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1989 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Catalog Number: 88-28795

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Horowitz, Irving Louis.

Persuasions and prejudices: an informal compendium of modern social science, 1953–1988 / Irving Louis Horowitz.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-88738-261-4

1. Social sciences—United States. 2. Social scientists—United States.
3. Political sociology. I. Title.

HS3.U5H67 1989

300'.973—dc19

88-28795

ISBN 13: 978-1-4128-6289-9 (pbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-88738-261-1 (hbk)

To the memory of my sister

Paula
1919–1985



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Preface

At first blush the preparation of a volume based on reviews and review essays seemed like one of the less onerous tasks that I have had to face in recent years. After all, how complicated can it be to assemble a lifetime of reviews, stack up the relatively decent ones, organize them into some sort of thematically meaningful mosaic, discard the irrelevant or blatantly poor ones and offer them to the professionally interested public?

That was nine months ago. Far from being a simple chore, this turned out to be a Draconian task involving a great amount of time, a substantial intellectual challenge, and the participation at technical levels of some extraordinary colleagues and support staff. If nothing good comes easy, then this should be a well received volume indeed.

To start with, materials that appeared in many and diverse journals are proof positive that there is simply no uniform standards in matters of grammar, punctuation, spelling—the *Manual of Style* issued by the University of Chicago Press notwithstanding. To assemble these 87 items, drawn from more than 50 professional journals and public interest magazines represented a daunting challenge—one met with considerable skill by Christian Kirkpatrick, who copy edited the volume.

Then there was the problem of whether to follow unflinchingly the published version, or the manuscript version. The latter, when available, tended to be longer and less tailored to the needs of the journal, and more in tune with my exact thinking at the time. On the other hand, one wants to be fair to the published version, for the sake of authors reviewed, no less than for the journals carrying such reviews. For the most part, the published version was adhered to closely. But when paragraphs or phrases had been exorcised at the hands of remorseless editors, the manuscript version became critical. In short, no effort was made to embellish or improve the text. But an effort was made to restore the statement to its full-bodied flavor, if it made a difference.

In several instances, when the published version appeared only in a foreign language journal, a different sort of problem arose: the absence of an English language version in any form. Thus I was in the position of either translating the review or review-essay back into English, or ignoring such efforts. One can become extremely selective under such trying circumstances. Speaking

of English and translation: since quite a few of these texts first appeared in the United Kingdom, the gap between “American” and “British” versions of the language had to be attended. I chose to make standard “American” usage uniform throughout, despite my personal affection of the language of the Isles.

In a number of important instances, I found that I had reviewed the same author on more than one occasion. In these cases, and again some important figures were involved, I chose to place the two reviews into a single review panel—preferring the risk of being slightly different in appraisal, rather than leaving the materials in their pristine form and running the far graver risk of appearing to display a weak editorial hand. When the reviews were not separated by many years, the results are fluid, but when the reviews were distinguished by being five and sometimes as many as fifteen years apart, this technique did not work as well. Here one must simply ask for a reader’s indulgence.

Not every item in the volume that follows was actually a review. In a few cases, the review portion was ensconced in a larger intellectual canvas, while in other instances, the individual under consideration was dealt with in a context of self-analysis rather than appraising the work of others. After all, the purpose, or at least a purpose, of this volume is to come to terms with those figures who shaped my own sense of the fabric of modern social science. While in most cases the review process has given me this opportunity, there were a few figures on whom I have commented, who would have been left out of the reckoning on a strict constructionist basis. Again, this is all a matter of walking the fine line—with what success I can only leave to the judgment of reviewers and critics.

But for all of the challenges and pitfalls this sort of effort entails, the actual undertaking was deeply satisfying. I am able to present in a format and to a forum those elements of my work that have been obscured by the nature of the review process itself—the limits imposed upon the assessment of the work of others, rather than the positive statement of self. This is, in short, the critical side of my work. I do not mean by “critical” negative, since I like to think of criticism as a positive act of shared dialogue and overcoming the obstacles of one-sidedness, together. I would like to think that the readers of this volume will receive a basic education in some main currents of contemporary social and political thought, and as I say in the introduction, a sense of theory construction that results from a constant examination of the practice of other theorists.

I have been blessed with the opportunity, just about from the outset of my intellectual life, of being able to discuss the major figures of our times and not a few works written by less-than-major scholars, who nonetheless performed the noble task of examining and interpreting the major figures of other times. If this sometimes leads to a remoteness in the review process, to a process of analysis twice removed from the actual realities that social science must deal

with, it also affords a sense of the whole, an overview that the workers in the vineyards both need and rarely receive. Many of the people whose books I have commented upon over the years remain good friends. I like to think that the force of criticism (and sometimes response) only served to strengthen the bond of friendship.

Reviews are not fashionable in social science. They expose the reviewer to ridicule and rebuttal. They sometimes do take away from other, more constructive work. They often reflect more the biases of the reviewer than the shortcomings of the writer. Yet reviewing is a very active way of reading. The review assignment is a matching of wits and talents. It is an act of literary analysis no less than of academic synthesis. But when performed with skill and moral decency, the review, better than any other device, serves to alert a community of scholars to just what are the main issues of an age. The review provides a sense of the whole in an environment of discrete parts. It is an interactive dialogue in which the reviewer not only enters the ring with an author but compels the professional reader to consider and choose between authorial and editorial judgments. In short, the review process is a high risk process—but one well worth taking in the name of the survival of science itself.

I have already mentioned the yeoman efforts of Christian Kirkpatrick. I should also add that nearly all of these reviews, written over the thirty five year period covered, were read, criticized and improved by either or both Danielle Salti, whose friendship dates back to my years in South America; and Mary E. Curtis, my wife and love for many years. Both have sharp professional judgments, and both rendered their opinions with a strong sense of protecting me no less than making the final product better. It would be unpardonable to load on them any problems in what finally emerged, but it would also be unthinkable to pass up this opportunity to express my special thanks to them both.

This is the first time that I have worked through the magic of computer-generated composition. That means many things—above all, a very close involvement with every stage of the prepublication process. At first, this meant the careful supervision of our wonderful administrative assistant at Transaction, Marlena Davidian—who inputted every single one of these reviews and review essays and who made every correction indicated with her usual sense of craft and concern. The proofing and indexing of the work was undertaken by myself. Again, the word processing programs are now so highly refined that errors that in the past were readily overlooked or simply not picked up no matter how many times the work has been gone over, now become a matter of routine—time-consuming routine to be sure.

I have saved for last my appreciation to my colleague of two decades at Transaction, and dear personal friend, Scott B. Bramson. His work at the technical level has been nothing short of revelatory. What one can do with computer spacing and design is an indication of just how momentous cold

type composition has become in the last few years. The remaining crudities and weaknesses of such computer generated script have been overcome with stunning and telling effect by Scott. In addition, by working together throughout this lengthy process, we were able to make the changes and alterations necessary that would simply have not been possible in more conventional modes of composition. But Scott's labors went far beyond the technical and to the heart of the intellectual. His understanding of what each review essay attempted, how each fitted within a section, and how these sections in turn served to unify the final text, only served to make the process of creating this book a joy unto itself—so that whatever its reception in the post publication phase, the happiness of the activity, of meeting each challenge as it arose, itself represents a special and unforgettable event that I shared with Scott.

Finally, I should like to briefly explain my dedication, although none is really needed. My sister Paula was probably the first "reviewer" I ever knew. By that I mean she read with a pencil in one hand and paper next to the book. Every important book she read became a mechanism for enlarging her vocabulary (she came to the United States from Russia as a young girl of eight), as well as enlarging her sense of the world. Reading for Paula was a very active undertaking. And in a small household where English was truly a second language, this sense of text as discovery played no small part in my own intellectual formation. So it is to the memory of her dear soul that this book is consecrated.

Irving Louis Horowitz
September 1st, 1988

Introductory Essay

Persuasions and Prejudices: An Informal Compendium of Contemporary Social and Political Theory

In one of his most probing reviews, the great literary critic William Empson notes that making a book out of old reviews and articles “might seem scraping the barrel rather”. One is tempted to add for special effect: *rather*. Yet, he and his executors did go ahead and do just that in *Argufying*. This only proves that in such matters, it is whose barrel is scraped and not whose ox is gored that counts the most.

If it seems odd that I am taking comfort by comparing myself with a literary type, this in part at least reflects my own opinion that the reviewing process is a literary artifact first and foremost. Even a casual look at the review sections of professional social science periodicals clearly reveals that in reviews care is given to matters of taste, judgment, and style—elements not especially apparent in the articles published in these very same journals.

As the reader can detect from this opening remark, I am sensitive to the fact that introductions too often are essentially rationalizations, or more pointedly, preemptive strikes at potential critics. They are presented with a touching belief that self-awareness or even firm declarations of shortcomings or eccentricities may be sufficient to ward off the evil spirits of the negative appraisal. This time, I have little confidence that such a tactic may work. Those who disdain special collections should have a field day with this rag-bag collection of reviews and review essays (to paraphrase another of Empson’s self-deprecatory comments). On the other hand, those who enjoy their professional reading in bits and pieces should find this collection a reasonably enjoyable experience.

These wildly different responses duly acknowledged, I still dare offer this volume for a variety of reasons that I am inclined to believe are valid although entirely without proof—outside eating the pudding, or in this case, reading the book. Over the past 35 years, I have published four collections of my work, starting with *Professing Sociology*, covering the period between 1954–1966.

This was followed by *Foundations of Political Sociology*, covering the period 1967 to 1972; which in turn was followed by *Ideology and Utopia in the United States*, covering 1972–1977. Finally, and most recently, there was *Winners and Losers*, which treats the era from 1977 through 1984. I am essentially an essayist, in contrast to writers of articles or full scale monographs. This additional presentation to the marketplace of ideas, *Persuasions and Prejudices*, is a deeply gratifying opportunity to share a genre of my work spanning the entire period of my professional life.

The initial question I had to confront in compiling these essays is clear enough: What is the public virtue served by a volume of my reviews, or at least a substantial selection thereof? The answers are partially subjective: to set the record straight. However, this volume also provides me with an opportunity equally objective: to show how, in the process of evaluating others, a reviewer works toward the creation of social theory, and does so without becoming a thoroughgoing skeptic about establishing the contours and contexts of social existence. These mixed motives are not unimportant. I have a strong commitment to theoretical issues, although I have expressed such concerns in the review pages of scattered journals and periodicals over the years, rather than developing social theory in a life-long project extrapolated from everyday affairs.

I should strongly urge the patient reader who thinks that social theory must be constructed systematically, building block by block, with so many things to do, he or she need not waste time but should proceed to other forms of reading. System building is not synonymous with social theory. The history of systems is one of broken intellectual promises and visions of utopias that lead only to heartbreak and frustration. However, for readers who view theory as something more modest, albeit still substantial—using a relatively modest cluster of concepts to make sense of a large number of events, this volume can be considered an effort to understand the world. This view of theory does not demand that one knows, or even cares to know, all the other writers and thinkers whose work contributed to such a cluster of concepts. Rather, theory is constructed through a discourse of deep meaning with the spiritual remains of those thinkers long since dead in the corporeal sense. In this way, theory provides cultural continuities for the social sciences. The review process is an essential technique for revealing the benchmarks of such continuities—and at critical junctures, breaks—in the great chain of cultural being.

Admittedly, this is hardly the dominant view of the review process. Indeed, this is an age that disparages reviews in the most subtle ways: first, by denying the necessity of this form of literary activity for senior scholars, and relatedly, by assigning reviews to younger scholars as a form of socialization into the world of scholarship. Happily not everyone shares in this pleasant fiction, which has the manifest function of reducing controversy among peers and the apparent latent function of increasing a sense of the scientific by so doing. That science

is itself a world of conflict and controversy seems to have escaped the notice of those who think of reviewing as a lesser form of activity.

At one and the same time, theory is a matching of wits, a summing up, and a set of guidelines with which to navigate experience. To create or examine theory in this sense means to ransom time, to traverse time. But theory is not history. Ideas are theoretically significant precisely because they transcend time, at least ordinary time. Theory permits the gradual inculcation of cultural domains, sometimes referred to as theoretical norms, that have a certain value beyond the immediacy of a particular series of events. If theory fails this test of trans-historical meaning, it is nothing more than journalism—in either the good or bad sense of providing observations on the nature of current events as experienced or remembered.

In my view, the discourse between the reviewer and the work under consideration permits several quite special aspects of the meaning of theory to emerge. First, an author's level of consistency in substance and style, over time can itself be viewed as a form of theorizing. For the author paints a picture of expectancies as well as performances in the review process. Second, the choice and quality of texts considered itself becomes part of the intellectual profile of the title reviewed and the person reviewing. Admittedly, one is not always the master of one's own fate in this matter, but surprisingly enough, a senior reviewer does at least have a chance to define through delineation. As a result, theory is in part at least a patchwork of inherited theories about society and polity that come before, the collective representation of the review process is a good guide into the nature of one's own theoretical fabric. Third, teasing out what is important in the work of others often depends on a clear-eyed notion of what has been important to one's own work. And in this process, the reviewer avoids a dialogue of the deaf and creates the foundations of professional intercourse.

In my case, the operational propositions clearly involve the pairing of several key concepts: the relationship of political democracy to socioeconomic development, the relationship of individual rights to collective obligations, the relationship of particular social practices to abstract ideological rationalizations. Each of these relationships can readily be subsumed under an old-fashioned moral code in which each person counts as one; in which evidence should determine both personal and political behavior in a society that does not take it upon itself to punish or circumscribe the behavior of individuals for mistakes in judgment.

In reflecting upon these strands of thought, I am struck by my old-fashioned sense of the new social science. For I have put forth in review after review a sense of theory that does not rest on being right while all others are wrong, or condescendingly less than right. Rather, I think that a twentieth century sense of the theoretical must accept that theory consumers can choose what economists sometimes call a basket of goods, To this I would add the need for a basket of services, since modern theory must also be judged by its sound and

solid utility in a variety of circumstances. Hence, the individual has a right to change theory with a frequency normally reserved for changing commodities or services: as needed and when needed. Parenthetically, the obligations of the scholar is to continually broaden those theoretical possibilities.

This analogy does not signify that theories are of relative worth, any more than the variety of automobiles available to a consumer signifies that a Mazda is as good as a Mercedes. Many theoretical decisions are made even in choices about automobiles: ranging from how much money one can spend; to whether one wishes to purchase outright or buy on credit, to the goods that the purchaser of the higher priced, albeit superior vehicle, might have to forego. Thinking about theory in this way, I submit ensures against intellectual rigidity. It helps us to quickly realize that the concept of a society is far larger than the concept of a social science. In a primary sense, what needs changing and examination is the society. Social science is but a tool for such alterations. The review process locates the sources of such alterations and makes some educated guesses as to whether they are well articulated or have a workable prospect for success.

Over the course of the years I have been constantly impressed by how many scholars prefer to make simpletons of themselves to preserve a pet theory or grand concept rather than come to terms with a changing reality. I take as the great virtue of the new sociology its insistence on the primacy of social reality as a measure of the worth of social theory. In this way, hopefully, the old and the new in this vision of the theoretical come to a fine meeting point.

The theory set forth in this manner is not merely of the middle range, in contrast to system building on one side and narrow empiricism on the other. Rather, the range of a theory, the magnitude of its worth, depends upon circumstances that themselves change and emerge in the crucible of everyday existence. In this special sense, theory is akin to policy, providing the deep background of choice and circumstance.

The categories of investigation, like the parameters of theory, are subject to a variety of shifts that heavily depend on what is being looked at. There is something arbitrary, even unwieldy, in the self-congratulatory concept of theories of the middle range. It seems to imply that a specific range of experience is more valid than any other or that there is something peculiarly fair minded about not looking at the very small or the very large during research or investigation.

In this sense, a defining characteristic of this volume is not the range at which the people being reviewed worked, but the interesting nature of their observations and asides on the world they look at. Such judgments extend to stylistic and personal as well as contextual considerations. One of the great joys of reviewing the efforts of top flight people—and I dare say that many of the scholars and politicians reviewed herein merit such an appellation—is that the qualities of their own writings often spill over into the review itself. In

this way, looking at others is a Meadian paradox, since it also entails looking at oneself. And in the psychoanalytical tradition at least, this is the highest form of theorizing.

Creating a good review is an artisan-like task, an act of intellectual craftsmanship, a strategic presentation of responses no less than a broad outline of contents. Indeed, one reads reviews for the same reason that one writes them. Or it may be vice versa: to determine if the opinions and ideas of others are in fact in concordance with one's own vision. Testing whether the views of authors can stand scrutiny in contexts other than those they stated or thought of is after all at the foundation of theory construction. In this sense, theory is a dialogue between the author of a book and a reviewer of that book, and is built into the interaction afforded by the review process itself.

The importance that a book is said to possess derives from what reviewers and commentators establish as important. In this, the review process is not simply a parasitical attachment to the book, some necessary evil to be tolerated by a beleaguered author, but is central to both the process of theory construction and historical confirmation alike. In the social sciences, as in the sciences generally, the reviewer shares with the author a common universe of discourse, a shared domain of relevance, that makes the review an integrated part of the production of knowledge.

A central element of reviewing others is the search by an author for him or her, in this case myself—for some set of threads that emerge and reemerge over the years in reviewing a wide range of works. For it is what we are looking for, what all of us are looking for, that determines responses to a volume, no less than the review itself. As a result, it is important to be fair. The reader, the professional reader that is, fully understands that the style of presentation bespeaks loudly of the fairness and humanity of the reviewer, no less than the greatness of the volume. Such concerns have not inhibited my reviewing style, but they have made me acutely sensitive to the ordinary reader, who is profoundly aware of any hint of bias in the review process. To this reader, being attacked in a review or by the author who has been reviewed, is far less punishment than being accused of bias in one's assessment.

These review essays also reveal a personal odyssey. They convey a sense of not only what I have read but what I have considered to be important. I have been blessed, or cursed, as the case may be, with not being an expert in a narrow band of theories or subjects. Hence, I have not been confined in my reviewing assignments to a singular area. Doubtless, those who review as specialists point have an advantage, but it is a limited watch-dog edge at best.

Let me be more precise. The review process is, over time, a bracing experience. The least important question to ask a reviewer is "which side you are on?"; and the most important question is: "how good is the work?" To review the work of others primarily as an act of confirmation of self-belief is doubtless the least beneficial, not to mention least enjoyable, approach. For the reviewer

must assess the quality of the author's performance within parameters defined by the author. This element tests, sometimes pits, the expertise of authors and reviewers alike.

In the world of social science, both reviewers and reviewed are essentially committed to a similar universe of discourse and realm of belief. In the world of reviewing fiction this is not necessarily the case. For while a novelist sometimes reviews another novelist, much more often a person called a critic who reviews a person called a novelist. But in the scientific realm, the significance of a review derives not simply by its estimate of a book but by the personal biographies that link reviewer and author in sometimes mortal combat. Thus, both a common core of consensus and an uncommon store of background factors fuse to make the processing of reviewing, at its ultimate point, a process of theory formation and reformation.

I am aware that over the years my reviews have changed: they have become longer, less certain, more comparative. I would like to think that they have also gotten better. But what an elusive concept is this notion of the "better"! Does it mean better than one's earlier performance, or better than others now? Another way of expressing the better is the way in which criticisms can be made with a deft touch rather than a heavy hand. In short, quality in reviewing is as much a function of literary manners as it is of social scientific methods. This cross-fertilization of fields, or rather, of content and form, is nowhere more clearly set forth than in the reviewing process.

Let me now briefly turn to the organization of the volume, since it is a sufficiently unusual genre to cause some formal difficulties, or at least necessitate some special techniques for handling a variety of different contingencies. This volume is organized in terms of the "greats", that is to say, reviews of books written by important scholars or theorists of the first rank clearly merited inclusion. Volumes that are collections or biographies of great thinkers are also included under the heading of the great—to give my work a sense of literary consistency. Books I reviewed that neither have a great author, nor are works on such authors, have for the most part been excluded from consideration—even though my reviews may well have been decent statements on important subjects, in its own right.

One other matter of organization deserves attention. I have developed a table of contents organized under subject headings. The table's five-part thematic represents the broad areas of my work. They are first, philosophical antecedents to social theory; second, social research as ideology and utopia; third, ethnicity and religiosity; fourth, development and change; and fifth, the ethical foundations of political life. Of course, these categories are somewhat artificial, since their overlaps are almost as evident as the boundaries between these themes. Still I have been fortunate to have drawn review assignments that cover the major areas of my interests. I do hope that they also reflect the reader's interests.

Rather than organize this volume by either the original date of publication or by alphabetical order, I have organized it thematically, around those subject areas that I have spent a lifetime researching and examining. To be sure, the first section does tend to cluster at the earliest end of my work, when I was exploring linkages and cross-overs between philosophy, history, and the sociology of knowledge. And the second section reveals my involvement with problems of developing areas in the 1960s, doubtless as a consequence of my Latin American experiences. The remaining three segments are far less tidy in calendric terms, and perhaps no less in intellectual terms. But they do reveal my long-standing professional interests in politics and morals as the bedrock of social research, and a few personal concerns along the way.

A special category of review that must also be mentioned, the preparation of forewords for special books. A number entries are not reviews as such, but prefaces written for a special work or a deceased colleague who merits particular appreciation. For example, tributes to my dear, departed friends Gino Germani and Cesar Graña, who are significant figures in contemporary social thought, help round out a sense of the present moment in the social sciences. While these prefaces have not been selected by a third party (a journal editor) or published in an independent forum (a scholarly or professional journal), they carry sufficient weight to merit inclusion.

I should further observe that I have included one essay that does not follow my own rules for inclusion in this volume, and that is the essay on C. Wright Mills. It is in fact a set of reflections that I have delivered a number of times and in a variety of lecture halls after publication of my book, *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*. I could readily have included the review I wrote of Mills's last book, *The Marxists*, written for *The American Scholar* in 1962. But I felt that the essay on Mills, a self-reflection of sorts that was previously unpublished, would be of far greater interest to the reader.

While I have made much of the uniqueness, even the eccentricity of this volume, there is one sliver of tradition to which it belongs. From Pascal's *Pensees*, to La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes*, to Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*, and finally Durkheim's contributions to *L'annee sociologique*, there is a marvelous French tradition of treading lightly on heavy subjects. Indeed, the thoroughly baseless charge that the French are less substantial than the Germans and less empirical than the English, derives in some measure from this tradition in which brevity is a virtue and sanctimony a vice.

Certain practitioners of the French style are to be found in American sociology—the most notable being from opposite sides of the political pole: Lewis A. Coser and Robert Nisbet, both of whom I am proud to call friends. But certainly the sort of effort represented by this volume is clearly not favored by those who equate methodical rigor with empirical truth. For the review process is an examination of persons no less than processes, motives no less than structures.

This introduction now having provided what must pass as a rationale for the production of this volume, I commend this book to what every author hopes for: an interested reader in search of some interesting notions. To satisfy the reader, it must still pass muster as a unified whole. Whatever the points of origins of each contribution, the work has to be valuable as a statement of integration no less than of prejudices and preferences of an author. Again discussion returns to theoretical moorings as the true source of this effort.

I do not know whether this enterprise will confirm those of my critics who believe that I lack theory, since any effort to create a theory out of the thin cloth of reviews and review essays is *prima facie* evidence to that fact, or whether it will convert old sparring partners into new friends who recognize that theory may come wrapped in different packets serving a variety of purposes. At least the prejudices of which I speak are not wrapped in the bunting of a disguised ideology, but are stated plainly enough. Reviews have a remarkable way of exposing the reviewer no less than expressing the contents of a book reviewed. That is a risk I must obviously and willingly accept.

Part I

Philosophical Antecedents to Social Theory



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Sense and Structure in Social History*

Baendel, Gerardo L.

More than a century ago, in 1845 to be precise, Marx described German historiography as “a series of ‘thoughts’ which devour one another and are finally swallowed up in self-consciousness.” This is so much the present status of the theory of history in Hispanic American letters, that while one might challenge Marx’s appraisal in terms of mid-nineteenth century Germany, there can be little argument that it characterizes contemporary *historiadores*. The very imbalance of materials, the mountainous literature in the philosophy of history vis-à-vis the relative paucity of useful studies in historical subjects as such, leads one to the irritating (but accurate) conclusion that Latin *pensadores* are more concerned with blue printing than with making history.

This is admittedly a harsh reading of the intellectual climate, but one that is not intended as a blanket generalization. Indeed such a judgment could not possibly cover such excellent theorists of history as José Luis Romero of Argentina, Antonio Gomez Robledo of Mexico, Gilberto Freyre of Brazil, and Arturo Ardao of Uruguay, among others. Nonetheless, there remains a strongly dominant tendency in Hispanic American historiography to follow fashionable European currents. Philosophic novelties rapidly find their way into historical discourses. Positivism, neo-Thomism, Spiritualism, Hegelianism, were some of the earlier rages. At present there is a powerful tendency to weave French existentialism into the historical fabric. So insistent has this last-mentioned tendency become in recent years, that the Uruguayan educator-philosopher Vaz Ferreira was moved to say that there was more agony (literary at least)

* Gerardo Leiserson Baendel, *Estructura Y Sentido de la Historia: Según la Literatura Apocalíptica* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1959), pp. 147.

León Dujovne, *La Filosofía de la Historia, de Nietzsche a Toynbee* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Galatea Nueva Vision, 1957), pp. 204.

Carlos M. Rama, *Teoría de la Historia: Introducción a los Estudios Históricos*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1959), pp. 238.

over the consequences of the Second World War in South America, where not a shot was fired, than in the battle fronts of Europe.

To be sure, the idols of the *pensadores* have dramatically shifted since the conclusion of hostilities in 1945. The prewar period was dominated by an existentialism of the Right—by Spengler, Dilthey, and Heidegger. The postwar period is dominated by an existentialism of the Left—by Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Camus. The “victorious” French have replaced the “defeated” Germans in the affections of the *pensadores*. That the shift has been more verbal than real is indicated by the fact that the fundamental tenets of the leisurely Hispanic American *Weltanschauung* have remained fully intact.

The North American intellectual nourished on a steady diet of Pan-americanism must be startled by the nearly complete absence of any serious consideration of U.S. contributions to the study of history. With the exception of Toynbee, the same statement can be made of English efforts. And given the architectonic nature of Toynbee’s work, this exception very definitely proves the rule. Leaving aside the reasons for this disregard, which must necessarily include the shortcomings of historical theory in the English-speaking world, such exclusion effectively narrows the scope of Hispanic-American considerations of alternative models for the study of history. Thus, in the three books under consideration, Rama makes only a passing reference to Becker’s efforts (despite the fact that Becker’s work and Beard’s classic texts are available in good Spanish translations) and Baendel makes only a few bibliographical references to American studies in religious history. This neglect, I should add, is not due to any linguistic failings, since each of these authors has a more than adequate command of the English language.

The disregard of American or English works is matched by an overwhelming attention to French and German materials, mainly of a late nineteenth-century vintage, which gives an archaic touch to the volumes. There is Baendel’s “discovery” of the analogies between the Testaments and the philosophy of history, Rama’s declaration of the Nietzschean objections to history as a destroyer of social action and human morality as the last word on the subject, and Dujovne’s restatement of the crisis-in-culture theme as occasioned by the rise of modern science and technology. What complicates a judicious consideration of these studies is that, considered strictly from the perspective of recent contributions to the philosophy of history, they are prosaic and pedestrian. Yet, from a Hispanic American perspective, they symbolize the actual state of affairs motivating the *historiadores*.

The scope and content of these books differ. Carlos Rama, one of Uruguay’s best-known sociologists, examines history first in its relation to other literary and scientific disciplines, and then examines such problem areas of historiography as concept formation, periodization, and the cognitive status of findings. Baendel of the University of Chile correlates eschatological doctrines and the circular and linear theories of history to which they

give rise. Léon Dujovne, Professor of Philosophy at Buenos Aires University, sets for himself the more modest goal of analyzing from a humanistic standpoint the theories of history advanced by Nietzsche, Spengler, Jaspers, Bergson, and Toynbee.

Given the different thematic orientations of these works, their core of consensus is surprising, especially since they were produced in obvious independence of each other. They concentrate on essentially the same range of European writings. And each volume represents a work of commentary rather than an attempt at fresh, positive insights into the problems examined. (Dujovne and Rama seem more aware of this self-imposed limitation than does Baendel.) Each work has the discomfiting feeling of starting in heaven and going upwards. From the philosophy of history, these scholars move variously into the history of the philosophy of history (Rama), the religious impulse of the philosophy of history (Baendel), and the meta-philosophic criticism of theories of history (Dujovne).

There is an absence of biographical information on the figures examined; an absence of the possible social or scientific motivations of men like Spengler, Bergson, or Croce; consideration of what these theorists of history were for or against politically and economically (i.e., concretely). Thus, even when these authors voice criticisms, they convey arid formalism. Croce's familiar objections to a scientific history are presented with the standard references to Croce's mistakes—but without an historical accounting of Croce's passionate defense of liberalism in the face of the fascist alternative of Gentile and the marxist alternative of Gramsci. Jaspers' refuge in the intuitions of humanity and self-reflection of individuals is duly noted and criticized—but without considering Jasper's acute analysis of the historical causes and consequences of German nazism, and more recently, without regard for his keen analysis of the dangers of thermonuclear war in a world of conflicting nationalisms. After all, at least some of the theoretical differences between Jaspers and his existentialist mentors must be explained by the differing responses to concrete circumstances. The posture of individual heroism in military battle might have been a suitable notion for a nineteenth-century romantic, but the disappearance of the distinction between combat and noncombat zones and military and civilian personnel necessarily changes the contents of the heroic vision—rationalist or irrationalist.

Paradoxically, the common deficit of these three volumes have is their lack of historicity. They are, to put it bluntly, static. Baendel moves from a consideration of ancient Hebraic and Christian texts to a hurried and unclear examination of philosophers of history proper. Dujovne's work makes a textual analysis of several major figures that is quite independent of their social moorings, or for that matter, of each other. Rama takes a rambling canvass of the opinions of the major figures in the theory of history, without any discernible purpose. There is a sense of irresolution and indecision in these efforts. Baendel

has no clear idea of where theology leaves off and history begins; Dujovne shows a similar lack of awareness as to where the philosophy of history ceases and social theory commences, and Rama's book, which potentially has the stuff of a serious accounting, ranges so superficially over standard texts that the reader is caught in an endless chain of quotations, paraphrases, and asides.

These volumes well illustrate the dilemmas of the *historiadores*. Having established standards for living the life of ideas and eschewing the life of labor, they remain confronted by a growing demand for the products of the latter and an expanding supply of the former. Thus they attempt to capture the historical muse, in the hope that providence will provide what the *historiador* cannot—an advanced, modern form of industrial life in an intellectual climate of precapitalist techniques and postcapitalist ideologies. Unfortunately, these studies in the theory of history do little to remove the suspicion that even the most adept *pensadores* (which these men can justifiably claim to be) are ensnared by this double-bind of traditionalism and futurism. The inconclusive and indecisive nature of these works reflect the larger oscillations in Hispanic-American intellectual history—a history that can examine past and future trends in the traditional manner of grand theory, but that has yet to settle accounts with the historical present.

From *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, vol. 2, No. 1 (1962), pp. 85–9.

Science and Society in the Enlightenment*

Diderot, Denis

In his book, Aram Vartanian aims to examine concretely the huge debt the philosophers of the Enlightenment owed to the physics of Descartes, by unfolding the organic connection of Diderot's materialism to the scientific materialism of Descartes. Vartanian chose these two figures as the highest expression of French philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. What Marx asserted in his *Holy Family*, Vartanian proves by referring to the literature of the Enlightenment—that by sharply differentiating the realms of nature and God Cartesian dualism opened the pathway, not simply to the metaphysical-teleological reaction of Malebranche, but more profoundly to the revolutionary materialism of LaMettrie, Buffon, Holbach, and Diderot. In Descartes, materialism and idealism, naturalism and supernaturalism coexist. The demands of the eighteenth century bourgeoisie and agrarian democratic forces revolutionized Cartesianism, making consistent with the material facts of natural and social existence. In the meantime, the ancient regime purged Descartes of his materialist physics and wrapped about itself the mantle of his metaphysics of doubt. The author contends that no such bifurcation existed in Newtonian philosophy, which had erected on its physics the metaphysics of a *deus ex machina* and *primum mobile*. Descartes' assertion that the concept of matter is in and of itself sufficient cause to explain the natural world, did not require, and in fact rejected, any supernatural interference in the functioning of nature. But the reasons why LaMettrie and Diderot responded more readily to Cartesian than to Newtonian science do not necessarily follow from Vartanian's observation. For Holbach saw similar problems in Newton as in Descartes—and feared the broad adoption of a mechanistic science without shedding the theistic shell.

* Aram Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes: A Study of Scientific Naturalism in the Enlightenment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 336.

Vartanian's main thesis is that Descartes' natural philosophy "culminated in the ideology of Diderot and certain of his contemporaries." This view was culled from a review of both great and obscure Enlightenment philosophies. The author states in his preface: "In tracing the evolution of materialist science from its Cartesian sources to Diderot . . . a definite method has been observed. This is to give the fullest scope and weight to the testimony and other materials provided by actual eyewitnesses and participants, even when these latter are no longer remembered on their own merits." This approach, whatever its shortcoming, gives a solidity to *Diderot and Descartes* often lacking in other works on the Encyclopedic movement. In examining historically how Cartesian rationalism and mechanistic biology affect the concept of man as the most complex physical and physiological machine, Vartanian has performed a service by helping to reconstruct the forces shaping French materialism. In certain respects, Vartanian has done for Descartes what E.A. Burt did for Newton in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, but without quite the same command of intellectual context that Burt exhibits.

Nonetheless, in his anxiety to reveal the link between Cartesian physics and the Enlightenment, Vartanian tends to negate the twofold derivation of Encyclopedic naturalism. Those who had a predilection for natural philosophy were more indebted to Descartes and Gassendi than to Bacon and Newton. At the same time, those oriented to social theory, such as Rousseau, Voltaire and Helvetius, responded less to the rigors of Cartesianism than to the English empirical tradition of Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke.

Vartanian tends to overlook that the deep concern and skill of English utilitarianism in questions of social theory appealed to all philosophers who understood the barrenness of a revolution in philosophy without a revolution in social practice. For this reason, Holbach, Buffon, Condillac, and Diderot owed a great deal to the social currents derived from English constitutional theory. Nor can Vartanian justifiably claim that this sort of social analysis is outside his intent. The philosophy of the Enlightenment, and particularly of militant anticlericalism, was in Diderot's words "full of humanity." The application of philosophy to the needs of society qualitatively differentiated Diderot and his associates from Descartes and the seventeenth century evolution of mechanics. By striving to show the harmonic lineage from Descartes to Diderot, however, Vartanian creates distortions that are a disservice to the view of both Descartes and Diderot. For example, that Diderot was not only a revolutionary philosopher but a philosopher of the French Revolution apparently falls outside the purview of this study in the history of ideas. Yet it is this social fact rather than philosophical doctrine that can best explain both the identity and difference between Diderot and Descartes.

From *Science and Society*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1954), pp. 185–86.

The Pre-History of the Sociology of Knowledge*

Dilthey, Wilhelm

Dilthey's place in modern intellectual history is securely planted, interestingly enough, no less in Latin America than in his native Germany. Dilthey's prominence as a historian and philosopher of culture has steadily increased, despite the fact that the romantic *Weltanschauung* that gave birth to his style of work has long ceased to function. It is surprising that little interpretive literature exists on Dilthey's social theories, since the real core of Dilthey's novelty inheres in his ambitious redefinition of the character and structure of social science vis-a-vis philosophy and physics. In this aspect, Dilthey no less than Simmel or Durkheim must be viewed as a pioneer in giving sociology new vistas, albeit bottled in old solutions.

In the body of his work, Dilthey acknowledged no sociology other than the sociology of knowledge, that is, a sociology of human understanding and feeling. The human sciences, *Geisteswissenschaften*, differed from the natural sciences, *Naturwissenschaften*, precisely because all human creations involved consciousness of direction. Nature *exists*, but only man *lives*. This distinction between the human and the physical is the most basic one in Dilthey's works. Embellished, altered to meet different issues, this inheritance from his early writings on Schleiermacher never leaves the center of the stage in Dilthey's intellectual drama.

Dilthey's contribution to the sociology of knowledge proceeded from a critique of sociological method as it was originally formulated by Auguste Comte. It was essentially a repudiation of the reductionism entailed by "social physics", which erroneously translated of the *Geisteswissenschaft* into a *Naturwissenschaft*—the human sciences into a natural science. "My polemic against sociology concerned the stage in its development which was characterized by Comte, Schäffle, Lillienfeld. The conception of it which was contained in their works was that of a science of the common life of men in society, including among its objects also law, morality, and religion.

* Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 12 volumes, (Leipzig-Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1914–1936).

Sociology could not be a theory of the forms which psychical life assumes under the conditions of relationships between individuals. Dilthey believed this role of the psyche to be the key to the social sciences in contradistinction to the physical sciences. "My rejection of sociology applies to a science which aims at comprehending everything which happens *de facto* in human society in a *single* science. The principle underlying this synthesis would be that what happens in human society in the course of its history must be comprehended in the unity of one and the same object." But this objection to unified science has deeper roots—specifically, a rejection of the belief that human beings, no less than rocks or birds, are in nature no less than of nature. In this sense, the source of Dilthey's attitude toward sociology derive from his essentially anti-evolutionary of nature as such.

Dilthey conceived his intellectual task to offset any attempt at mimetic reproduction of the methodology of the physical or biological sciences. The human sciences needed their own methodology; without one, they could not progress in solving human problems. Physics starts from nature; sociology must begin from its unique element, consciousness. To illumine the preconditions of this new world of study, Dilthey recalled the memory of Bacon's *Novum Organum*. The German founder of *Geisteswissenschaft* saw himself as clearing the ground of the debris that gets in the way a truly understanding of man. "Ever since the celebrated work of Bacon, treatises have been drawn up, especially by natural scientists, discussing the foundation and method of the natural science and so leading up to the study of them. . . . There seems to be a need for the same service to be performed on behalf of those who are concerned with history, political theory, jurisprudence or political economy, theology, literature, or art." The "idols" in Dilthey's case consisted in appeals to transcendental laws for establishing human knowledge and in equally false appeals to the laws of physics for social knowledge. As a consequence, Dilthey's work started out as a battle against the dual terrors of supernaturalism and reductionist physicalism. The former seeks truth in transhistorical absolutes having no rational base, while the latter seeks absolute wisdom by copying the findings and methods of physical science in disregard of the differences between atoms and minds.

Dilthey's attitude toward the weaknesses of supernaturalism derived, not from naturalistic leanings, but rather from the mystical components that were the special hallmark of the German *Aufklärung*. The idea of *weltgeist* in Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing elevated the life of reason above the lofty religious spirits of antiquity. Dilthey detected the same pantheistic position in the writings of J.G. Hamann, who saw in "the word" what Lessing saw in "the life of reason." Likewise, Dilthey's attitude towards positivism was stimulated by the negation of the Kantian *noumenal* world it entailed. If, as Comte indicated, one cannot go beyond experience for scientific knowledge, then the entire world of the human spirit, along with the *Aufklärung*, was doomed to dismal failure. Thus,

Dilthey viewed the German Enlightenment as the key point in the evolution of the human sciences to a psychologically meaningful level—because the person as starting point alone could avoid transcendental metaphysics without collapsing the range of the human spirit into a soporific positivism.

An ontology independent of both supernaturalism and positivism was only an instrument for Dilthey, his goal being an effective synthesis of the classical philosophic heritage. His inability to arrive at this synthesis led Dilthey to move the formalism of Kantian categories and the historicism of the Hegelian dialectic. Just as Kant recognized values of Comtian positivism (the better to overcome it), Dilthey saw its main asset as taking society as a given entity and making an uncompromising stand for the individual against the systematization of life. In the main, sociological positivism offered a critique of idealism not far from Dilthey's own study, "The Three Fundamental Forms of Systems in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century." This individualist ideal, however, was precisely what the Hegelian phenomenology of metaphysics with its dialectical march to reason frustrated.

In his abbreviated work "The Young Hegel," Dilthey, like Lukács forty years later, saw that Hegel had created the historicist legacy without populating this legacy with real humans. The individual was brought into harmony with a rationalist world view he never participated in as a sensuous creature. Dilthey was in the paradoxical position of trying to preserve the individual through a compulsive appraisal of history as relative, while preserving the historical by declaring the individual as sovereign. Dilthey believed that Immanuel Kant resolved the dilemma: in a total historical connection and a total philosophy of man.

Dilthey thought like a system builder, but he realized that just as Kant at the end of the eighteenth century had destroyed teleological, cosmological, and ontological proofs for supernaturalism, so had the natural sciences cut to pieces all metaphysics by the end of the nineteenth century. This was the situation as Dilthey began to examine the role of the human sciences in the historical career of men.

The intellectual locus of Dilthey's work thus fixed, we must turn to the far more difficult task of ascertaining and examining what Dilthey stood for what he fought against. For Dilthey, sociology could not be a unique science, because the sociology of knowledge—and latterly, the knowledge of society—lend a note of contingency and an irrepressible relativism to social existence. Consciousness is the great divide between the natural and the human sciences. "Mankind, if apprehended only by perception and perceptual knowledge, would be for us a physical fact, and as such it would be accessible only to the natural sciences. It becomes an object for the human sciences only insofar as human conditions are consciously lived, insofar as they find expression in living utterances, and insofar as these expressions are understood." This view, which superficially resembles Bergson's *élan vital*, in fact attempts to objectivize the subjective history of the individual. However fragmented by

relativism his Geist became, Dilthey could not escape the perils of Comtian positivism without falling into the pitfalls of Hegelian historicism. What began in Dilthey as a defense of the individual against the encroachments of physics, ended as defense of the historical consciousness against the encroachments of real individuals.

Dilthey linked the critique of sociology as a positive science and the parallel effort to give the sociology of knowledge a methodology over and above the ordinary scientific method, to a need to see understanding as a special category. The principle of a unified science, of placing everything in human society as a subject to be comprehended in the unity of one and the same system of thought, is at the core of Dilthey's critique. Dilthey recognized two possible views of sociology: Simmel's, which holds that sociology is a new name for old wine. (Dilthey expanded this to mean that sociology means only the second part of the philosophy of human sciences, the first part being psychology), and the second and rejected view of Comte, which sought a unifying principle for explaining and bringing together under the general interest such things as religion, art, morality, and law. Dilthey maintained that by rejecting metaphysics as a "life position," positive sociology succeeded only in the reconstruction of the most absurd, anthropocentric metaphysic, whereas the human sciences' negation and suppression of philosophy allowed for the first time a truly philosophical posture and life position.

Dilthey assigned to philosophy the task of "locating the historical position of each one of the central theories in its own development," and attempted to assess the historical values of these theories. But such an assessment, as Dilthey well knew, is specifically a sociological undertaking. Thus he expected philosophy to become transformed into the sociology of *Lebendigkeit*. Philosophy, that welding of individuality and sociality, can better treat problems of knowledge because it alone can avoid the fallacy of reducing the individual to social statistics. However, although Dilthey spoke of maintaining the integrity of the individual, he actually promoted the integrity of a telos in which the individual, far from free, is actually predetermined. This is clearly the case when he wrote that "if we could conceive an isolated individual treading the earth, supposing him to live long enough to develop, he would evolve those functions out of himself in complete isolation."

Locking the individual into a teleological context allowed Dilthey to believe that the way out of the impasse of metaphysical systems was the transformation of philosophy into a sociology of feeling and understanding. This special variant of the sociology of knowledge would become the methodology of the human sciences in contradistinction to logic, which would remain the methodology of the inorganic and physical sciences, or psychology, which would remain the method of the comparative study of languages.

Dilthey's initial call for an end to philosophy collapsed into the much less daring position that philosophy should pay more attention to social events

and that sociology, should become more philosophical. Both should receive sustenance from the historical flow, the only source of truth for human beings. "The variety of ways of thought, religious systems, moral ideas, and metaphysics corresponds to the variability of forms in human life. This is an historical fact. That which is conditioned by the historical situation is relative as to its objective worth." Philosophy in this context becomes the philosophy of philosophy, or better, the historical sociology of consciousness.

While Dilthey separated questions of philosophy from those of sociology, this nascent view became the Achilles' heel of the relativist wing (Alfred Weber, Karl Mannheim, Friedrich Meinecke) in the sociology of knowledge. It philosophizes the social question by substituting the metaphysical question: how can one attain to truth?, for the empirical question: under what conditions is truth obtained or frustrated? Put briefly, while Dilthey gave philosophy a social task, he subsumed sociology under the larger category of *leben*, that is, life as a continuing historical process without a stable structure.

The further examination of Dilthey's sociological perspective involves an appreciation of his vision of philosophy and history, for clearly he viewed sociology in just such "human" terms. Dilthey's critique of philosophy is devastating: it takes the claims of science at face value and the claims of human life as a matter to be lived rather than to be evaluated.

Always the metaphysical urge to penetrate into the kernel of this whole is at odds with the positive demand for universal validity in its knowledge. These are the two sides which belong to the essence of philosophy and which also distinguish it from the most nearly related fields of culture. In contrast to the physical sciences it seeks the solution of the riddle of the world and life. And in contrast to art and religion it aims at giving this solution in a universally valid form.

In Dilthey's opinion, philosophy as *Weltanschauung* evens the battle against all sorts of reductionist tendencies. "The time is past" he writes, "when there can be an independent philosophy of art, religion, law, or of the State. The powerful cohesion which is thus established is the highest realization of philosophy and is destined to guide the human race. The natural sciences have transformed the outer world. In the great world epoch now evolving, the human sciences are winning an ever-increasing influence." As for Hegel, the "death" of the old philosophizing only ushered in a new era for philosophy. Philosophy in its historical context as an ally and stimulant to the sciences gives way to philosophy as a private affair, a penetration into the psychological, a discipline unique in its ability to transcend the scientific world of changing reality. Thus, far from burying the tradition of absolute German idealism, Dilthey established an impregnable fortress for it to operate independent of a relativized universe.

What is new in Dilthey's style of philosophizing? What is its social role? The development of social science clears the ground for a theory of philosophy

as a personal peculiarity. "Philosophy is a personal peculiarity, a type of character which has always been credited with the capacity to set the mind free from tradition, dogma, prejudice, from the power of the instinctive affections, and even from the dominion of external limiting circumstances." It is in sum an ideal of life and a world view fulfilled in individual genius. Thus, Dilthey prepared in advance an answer to his own relativism. The individual genius, like the social scientist in Mannheim, alone is free from the ideological limitations that beset the rest of mankind. Implicit in both is the intellectualist fallacy that pure knowledge is both possible and ideologically unconditioned. According to this view, the apprehension of life is something of an incantation—protection against the storms of objective history. In Dilthey, the genius, the man of knowledge, plays the role of the *freischwebende Intelligenz*. The chronic ailment of the *Geisteswissenschaft* is that it is always discontented with its own historicity, with its rationalized irrationalism.

This becomes particularly clear in Dilthey's theories of history, in which he worked with a theory of social knowledge "that is conditioned by historical situations" and therefore "relative as to its validity." Dilthey next considered world views, *Weltaun-schauungen*, in relation to life, *Lebendigkeit*. "The views of life and of the world find themselves in contradiction to one another. None of them can really be proved. More, any one of them can be refuted by demonstrating that it is insufficient in front of reality. Thus it is shown that these basic forms express the aspects of life in relation to the world posited in that life." But this thoroughgoing application of historical relativism is what Dilthey wanted to transcend. For the great polarized concepts of history and life contain the transient and the permanent, the apparent and the real, the phenomenal and the noumenal. If Dilthey discounted empirical sociology, he did so in the way that Plato discounted physics—for its audacity to claim the empirical as the realm of truth and not simply opinion.

Dilthey's radical critique of sociology, which started as an attempt to overcome dualism, itself dissolves into a bifurcation of history and psychology:

history does indeed know of the various assertions of something unconditional as value, norm, or good. Such assertions appear everywhere in history—now as given in the divine will, now in a rational conception of perfection, in a teleological order of the world, in a universally valid norm of our conduct which is transcendently based. But historical experience knows only the process, so important for it, of making these assertions. On its own grounds it knows nothing of their universal validity.

Even if we overlook the obvious cognitive problem of claiming that "history knows," as if history is something other than the careers of men, Dilthey was aiming for something more than historical relativism—which after all shares

the same partial knowledge as do all other sciences. He desired the idea of classical idealism once again:

The play of [to us] soulless efficient causes is here replaced by that of ideas, feelings, and motives. And there is no limit to the singularity, the wealth in the play of interaction, which is here revealed. The waterfall is composed of homogeneous forward-thrusting particles of water; but a single sentence, which is but a breath in the mouth, shakes the whole living society of a continent through a play of motives absolutely in individual units; so different is the interaction appearing here, *i.e.*, the motive arising from the idea, from any other kind of cause.

For Dilthey, the task of human understanding is to liberate the social from the empirical. An image of the world, a *Weltbild*, determines the value of life, *Lebenserfahrung*, and consequently establishes a practical ideal. In Dilthey's terms, the world view defines the experiences of life, giving them form. It is a further form of communication. For Dilthey, one can really understand only like mentalities. Thus, the doctrine of *Verstehen* comes to define the limits of wisdom. We intuit truth; we can explore factually only opinions. Consequently, sociology can never claim a special comprehension of the nature of man.

If the scientific spirit, the rationalistic approach to problems of men and society, is not the same as the ideological spirit, the impassioned approach to problems of men—and I make the assumption *ex cathedra* that they are in fact different—Dilthey took his stand with ideology, with the *Weltanschauung*, in direct opposition to science. For Dilthey “it is in the region of the understanding of life, of freedom, that originate and develop the valuable and powerful world views. These world views, however, are different in terms of the laws determining their formation, in terms of their structure, and of their types, according to the religious, the artistic and the metaphysical genius.” The sociological relativity of knowledge does not make ideas more susceptible of social analysis, but rather, makes a place for the ideologue untouched and untouchable by the social structure.

Liberation from historical events, rather than living in them, was Dilthey's *traum*. And if his criticisms of the social sciences are sounded in a modern motif, his resolutions recall ancient Greek philosophical themes. “What man is, only his history tells. In vain others put the past behind them in order to begin life anew. They cannot shake off the gods of the past because they become haunting ghosts. The melody of our life is conditioned by the accompanying voices of the past. Only by surrendering to the great objective forces which history has engendered can man liberate himself from the pain of the moment and from ephemeral joy.”

In such sentiments, one can only recollect Dilthey's claim of having performed another *Novum Organum*. However, we find a reversal of the Baconian

ideal. Whereas Bacon announced as his supreme intention a method and system for man to control nature through empirical understanding, Dilthey surrenders himself to the great gods of nature, in a quaint pandemic vision. For Dilthey, one transcends history, while for Bacon, history is made to surrender to man in the art and act of discovery. This great chasm separates not only Bacon and Dilthey, but more profoundly, science and metaphysics.

I shall attempt no general assessment of Dilthey's achievement or his indebtedness to the Neo-Kantian Baden school of sociology; something of its scope and weight have been suggested in this brief exposition. I would be presumptuous to seek to place his work in an historical or philosophical perspective in a few words. It suffices to say that Dilthey has created a genuine, albeit diffuse way of raising the question: What is sociology?

Although Dilthey disclaimed any intention of propounding a specific theory of sociology, it is clear that he did just that—intentionally or otherwise. To say that sociology is not an independent science, that sociology is part of a general frame for human understanding of the conscious life, that moreover it is that part of the *Geisteswissenschaft* dedicated to pointing out the interpersonal relations of man to man, that it is a particular form of the reductionist fallacy of conceiving of sociology as an independent social science—all this is as much a general characterization of sociology as we could ask of a philosopher who has made social theory his life's work.

What then is the adequacy of Dilthey's schema in the light of present-day knowledge about social science research? Dilthey's historicism expresses itself in the classic form. Truth is subsumed under the category of process, and process in human terms is historical. The next step, and I should say, an illegitimate one (i.e., the historicist fallacy) is to conclude that truth is therefore a property of change. Since no historical truth is absolute, truth itself becomes relativized. That Dilthey recognized the problems raised by his relativism is clear. He was enough of the Hegelian to realize that a realm of truth, sacred or profane, must exist in some form—either empirical or normative. For this reason, he set upon the theme of the genius—the poet, the philosopher, or the prophet—to reveal the permanent truths for a transient civilization.

This is no more of a resolution to the relativist dilemma than that made by other sociologists of knowledge who persist in searching for a theory of how knowledge is possible. Even from an epistemological point of view, élitism, whether of the poet or the philosopher, does not resolve the question of truth; it only systematizes rules accepting social beliefs and myths. The extension of Dilthey's relativism has been intensely criticized by Karl Popper, Raymond Aron, and Charles Frankel, and it would be superfluous to detail these criticisms in a review. What can be said is that to make truth contingent upon historical evolution is to commit the genetic fallacy all over again—to ground a theory of truth, not on empirical principles, but on suppositions from a history that offers a history of consciousness apart from social life.

As a result of such theorizing, it must be granted that the relativists in the sociology of knowledge have refused to take seriously the scientific status of the sociology of knowledge. They find particularly painful the acceptance of ordinary scientific method as the means of establishing the truth of propositions, even those propositions offered by the sociology of knowledge. Thus the battle of false options continues.

This raises the further question of whether, in Dilthey's sense, a social science can exist at all. Surely, if Dilthey's critique of nineteenth century positivist sociology is accepted unqualifiedly, no social science can. However, the fruits of contemporary research, its capacity to portray and predict social structure and movement with some accuracy, tend to indicate that quantitative analysis, employing models derived from everything from physics to anthropology, do in fact contribute to a deeper understanding of that very life process Dilthey held to be apart from social analysis.

The widespread development of mathematical scales for registering beliefs (Lazarsfeld), field theories for establishing the psychic components of social behavior (Lewin), statistical surveys registering the degree of human credulity (Cantril), analysis of propaganda impact and technique (Lasswell), and the casting of historical theories as paradigms (Merton) have gone a long way in showing that fears of social science becoming a surrogate for religion, in the sense anticipated by Comte, are groundless. Certainly, if we define sociology as what the sociologists are doing, we can lay aside permanently Dilthey's fears that sociology as a science cannot arrive at empirical truths. It is only by making truth normative that Dilthey's thinking can be considered substantive. The difficulty is that this is not properly a question for sociology, as Dilthey imagined, but a question for the philosophy of the social sciences.

Dilthey's insistence upon the integrity of the human sciences is not so much incorrect as it is incapable of providing a useful and viable option to empirical social science. Dilthey's followers must show in what way the *Geisteswissenschaft* can better lead to the creation of urban and rural planning and analysis; the redistribution of political power; and the understanding of conscious deception through propaganda and unconscious self-deception through economic interests; etc. Failing in this, historicism must admit, if not its retrogressive scientific character, at least that its real focus is ideological rather than sociological. Not that sociology lacks for ideas, but a system of philosophical history simply cannot claim for itself the right to supersede or eliminate scientific activities.

My last major objection to Dilthey is his juxtaposing of social science to the sociology of knowledge. Precisely because there is such a thing as science in general, one can speak with assurance of a sociology of knowledge. Their methods are roughly analogous, and their respective limits (that is, the analysis of the formal characteristics of human beings as social beings) cannot be separated or bifurcated. The goal of the sociology of knowledge, as a part of

sociology, is the objectification of the subjective, and subsequently, the rationalization of the irrational in social behavior. To devise a special method for the sociology of knowledge over and against sociology in general, as Dilthey did, only returns the sociology of knowledge to its Hegelian womb, at a stage in scientific development that has transcended the battle of the *geist* against history.

What commences as a critique of science for preempting the field of human operations attempts not to frame a realizable alternative method for studying and changing men, but a means to insulate human relations and consciousness against the impact of the scientific revolution itself. This is no less true of Dilthey than of the romantic tradition in late nineteenth century Germany, which gave his work wide currency. Romanticism attempts to insulate the feeling man from the penetration of cold analysis. While this may have been useful during the age of Enlightenment and positivism, when the bland promises of the universe of progress were apparently guaranteed by scientific findings, the present distinction in scientific work between value-predicates and value-judgments has made romanticism methodologically obsolete.

Dilthey's option to sociology serves too many inherited doctrines not to invite suspicion. He placates the sociologist at the expense of psychology; he placates the philosophers at the expense of sociology, and he placates the metaphysician at the expense of philosophy. Far from solving the issue of the actual status of social science vis-a-vis natural science and the connection of philosophy to both, Dilthey only succeeds in widening the gulf between sociology and social philosophy, between empirical efforts and theoretic constructs. Perhaps "history" will record as Dilthey's highest achievement just this indication of how far we have still to travel to realize that much heralded phrase—the union of practice and theory.

Originally published as "Prehistoria de la Sociología del Conocimiento: Bacon y Dilthey" in *Cuadernos de Sociología*, vol. 13, whole no. 22 (1960), pp. 189–214.

Staking Present Claims on Past Icons*

Durkheim, Emile

A science in a period of primitive intellectual accumulation scarcely concerns itself with its history. Even for the admitted philosophic ancestry of sociology, this maxim holds true—particularly in the United States, where sociology strives mightily to present itself in a natural science image. If studies in the history of sociology have been spared a moribund fate by the efforts of Harry Elmer Barnes, old Howard Becker, and forever young Pitirim Sorokin, it is nonetheless true that the post-World War II atmosphere in sociology, emphasizing research at the expense of theory, has not encouraged serious self-reflection and critical summation.

A notable exception to this lethargy has been Kurt H. Wolff, whose editing, translating, and authoritative analysis of the social philosophy and sociology of Georg Simmel has placed American scholarship in his debt. It would be pleasant to record that this commemorative volume on Emile Durkheim reaches the same Olympian heights as its editor. However, such a judgment is not possible, given the uneven and often erratic quality of the contributions to this volume. This extends even of some of Durkheim's shorter statements, in which landmark contributions to the *Année sociologique* (akin to Max Weber's essay on objectivity in social science at the time he became coeditor of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*) are offered side by side with amateurish student notes taken from Durkheim's lectures on *Pragmatism and Sociology*. The latter can only serve to offset his reputation as a sophisticated and knowledgeable philosophic observer.

* Kurt H. Wolff (editor), *Emile Durkheim, 1858–1917: A Collection of Essays, with Translations and a Bibliography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1960), pp. 463.

Philippe Besnard (editor), *The Sociological Domain: The Durkheimian and The Founding of French Sociology*. (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press, and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1983), pp. 296.

The symposium contains workmanlike essays tracing the intellectual career of Durkheim (Henri Peyre), his impact on American sociology (Roscoe C. Hinkle, Jr.), Japanese sociology (Kazuta Kurauchi), and Anglo-American trends in cultural anthropology (Paul Bohannon). There is a perfectly charming and urbane piece on the ambience of the Durkheim School between the wars (Bougle, Mauss, Fauconnet, Granet, and Levy-Bruhl) revealing the personal and social ethics of these scholars. This kind of writing is all too rare and precious to be brushed aside. Albert Salomon, in his essay on the legacy of Durkheim, ably contends that he alone among the masters of classic European sociology created a school and a style of thought. This is seconded by Honigsheim's bibliographical study showing Durkheim's influence on nearly every major study of religion undertaken by anthropologists, historians, philosophers or sociologists, after the First World War.

The essay most critical of Durkheim's work is contributed by Lewis A. Coser. His effort to prove the now fashionable thesis of Durkheim's conservatism, though rich in suggestive criticism of the holism that prevented Durkheim from studying conflicting subgroups and subcultures, is not completely successful. Neyer and Richter, each in their own way, demonstrate that a *Dreyfusard*, a supporter of Juarez, an enthusiast of both Cartesian rationalism and English political pluralism can be called conservative only if one offers a special construction of the word, apart from its historical associations from Plato to Burke. Indeed, Richter catches something of the anticonservative quality in Durkheim's work quite nicely. "His perspective is dominated by his unquestioning faith in science, freedom of thought, and the reality of progress. His work, when read carefully, reveals no nostalgia for the past; he finds almost nothing commendable about the type of social cohesion characterized by traditionalism and an unquestioned religious authority." The argument for Durkheim's conservatism is further weakened by the fact that his neglect of factors of social instability and power conflict can just as easily be read, as Salomon does, as a Machiavellian view of man in which instincts and passions are channeled through the *conscience collective*, whether such a conscience dictates individualism or socialism.

My own view is that Durkheim's position on the conscience collective is derived from that line in the secular French Enlightenment, extending from Montesquieu to Helvetius, that emphasizes social responsibility for individual needs. This best accounts for Durkheim's classic liberalist convictions. It must also be noted that many conservatives have dealt primarily with problems of power and violence (Burkhardt and Acton), while many liberals have shown a distinct lack of concern for such issues. This is particularly evident in the English pluralistic tradition from Locke to Mill in which consensus is viewed as the sum total of conflicting parties and classes. Nonetheless, Coser's provocative statement, when juxtaposed against the presentations of Neyer, Richter, and Salomon makes for the most stimulating reading in the symposium. For

Coser shows that one can be conservative in attitudes even while expressing liberal and even radical beliefs in politics.

The essay by Talcott Parsons on the integration of social system is less an analysis of Durkheim's position than an exposition of Parsons's own outlook. As an insight into a major source of Parsons's structuralism, this is an interesting article, but as an illustration of Durkheim's interests, it is without significance. Significantly, Parsons refers to all of his own major works (and some of his minor studies as well), while paying cursory attention to any of Durkheim's writings other than *The Division of Labor in Society*. The essay by Hugh D. Duncan, an otherwise fine scholar, unfortunately falls into the same class, with the added deficit of showing every sign of being hastily assembled. The impressionistic potpourri of ideas on comedy, tragedy, ritual, and drama show little relation to Durkheim's views on social solidarity. In marked contrast to this is Albert Pierce's article, which seeks to relate Durkheim's efforts to current sociological views on functionalism. Pierce gives us an altogether superior study, arguing that Durkheim's careful separation of function from needs distinguishes him from most contemporary theorists. Pierce suggests that such distinctions leads to a useful theory of social change and not just to a formalism of structural symmetries prevalent in modern functional sociology.

In brief, *Commemoration* at its best augments the fundamental elucidations of Durkheim's thought made earlier by Alpert in the United States, Ginsberg in England, and Gurvitch and Friedmann in France. But its value for philosophers is limited by the absence of essays on Durkheim's epistemology and moral philosophy.

* * *

In his appropriately generous preface to *The Sociological Domain*, Lewis A. Coser writes that the volume edited by Philippe Besnard on *The Durkheimians and The Founding of French Sociology* is "both a contribution to the history of the Durkheimian movement and a study of the institutionalisation of a new discipline." I would say that he is right on both scores. But oddly, it is more dubious to infer from this that "Durkheim and his co-workers are in many respects our contemporaries". Indeed, after completing this set of twelve essays, the distance between the late twentieth and late nineteenth (and even early twentieth) centuries—in sociological terms at least—never seemed greater.

To his merit Professor Besnard's tight and tough editing of these papers prevents him and his colleagues, for the most part at least, from giving way to any exaggerated claims of unity within the Durkheimian school, or sweeping serious differences under old intellectual rugs. The two sets of documents, the letters of Durkheim to his colleagues Paul Lapie and Célestin Bouglé and the letters from Henri Bergson and Léon Bernard on the "Lapie affair" (i.e., the introduction of the teaching of sociology in the French Ecole Normales Primaires), underscore two of the more important papers in this volume.

Hopefully, more primary materials of this sort will soon emerge from the Durkheim circle in Paris.

Besnard's two papers, along with the finely etched paper by John E. Craig (the only non-French contributor to this volume) on Maurice Halbwachs, provide a solid framework for considering the Durkheimian tradition a school of long standing. By focusing on the *Année Sociologique*, Besnard shows concretely how Durkheim and his followers worked over the 1896–1912 period to define an area and involve a group of roughly fifty scholars who in their thousands of reviews, short notes, and comments created a field in the absence of organizational institutionalization. In this, Durkheim was the student of Diderot and the great tradition of the French *Encyclopedie*—who a century earlier also organized the life of ideas as a life of scientific organization. How strange it is that this parallel is nowhere mentioned by any of the contributors.

Marcel summarized this linkage when, in his 1930 statement in support of his application for a position as professor in the College de France, noted that the “school” represented “working together as a team.” Like Diderot before him, Durkheim was convinced “that collaborating with others is a drive against isolation and the pretentious search for originality.” Mauss also gives an answer, albeit a partial one, for why the Durkheim school, though it valiantly attempted to reconstitute itself after World War I, essentially failed to do so. The sociological problems had not so much changed from 1912 to 1919, as had the professional personnel. The war snapped the essential continuities of social and institutional order. It was a Durkheimian “social fact” that sundered an “intellectual force.” But let Mauss's own poignant words carry the message of disintegration:

The greatest setback of my scientific life was not the work lost during the four-and-a-half years of war, nor from a year lost due to illness, nor even my helplessness brought about by the premature deaths of Durkheim and Hubert, it was the loss of my best students and friends during these painful years. It could be said that it was a loss for this branch of French science; for me, everything had collapsed.

In efforts to reconstruct and deconstruct the history of social science, it is perhaps wise to remember how deeply and profoundly worldly—and by that I mean items of slight theoretical discourse—events impinge upon seemingly impregnable doctrinal considerations.

The papers in the first part, on the Durkheimian group and its contexts, are superb. They confirm the importance of Durkheim's intellectual force as a political factor in French life. A sense of the *Année* emerges that is quite distinct from any individual book or essay. The Durkheimians were an organizational force for secularism and republicanism—quite apart from latter-day arguments concerning Durkheim's conservatism or radicalism. Victor Karady suggests that the collapse of the Durkheim School, like its rise, was less a matter of

ideas than of the integration of sociologists after World War II into the professional training of philosophy. Sociology became theoretical, even rhetorical, and ultimately empty of significant empirical content. George Weisz's paper reinforces this theme by noting that Durkheim's influence was great because his sociological domain was drawn tightly. When this knitted fabric unraveled, so too did the Durkheimians. I confess that Weisz's attack on Terry Clark's notion of the significance of clusters in French faculties of letters leaves me unconvinced; since Clark does not deny that key institutional questions were fought through at the faculties and disciplines-only that faculties can function as clusters. Roger Geiger's paper, the final one in this section, is a model of how to write about ideas in the context of institutions. He clearly shows how Durkheim's sociological style was used in secularization of the French educational system, but used in a manner that could neither preserve nor protect Durkheim's efforts from the normal processes of erosion.

The papers in the second section seek to explore the scope of Durkheim's thought on other sociologically related fields. Clearly, the areas of ethnography and law were most significantly affected as François A. Isambert and W. Paul Vogt make plain. But from my own viewpoint, Pierre Favre's paper on the *absence* of a political sociology in Durkheim is the most fascinating. His undertaking parallels my own earlier effort on Durkheim's theory of the modern state to explain this absence. But although Favre makes it quite clear that the *Année* consigned political sociology to a bibliographical category and deprived it of a place in the natural division of sociology, he fails to answer why this should be the case.

I would suggest that Durkheim and most of his colleagues thought of society as essential to the normative character of order, whereas they viewed as a legal imposition to create artificial order in society. Admitting Machiavellian and/or Hobbesian categories would have destroyed the possibility of sociological imperialism. And in the choice between social reality and sociological theory, the former yielded to the latter—with disastrous effects on the Durkheimian school. The final two papers by Besnard and Craig make painfully clear just how damaging is this substitution of the sociological wish for the social fact.

The post-Durkheimians like François Simiand and Maurice Halbwachs struggled mightily to preserve their master's thought. But a deteriorating series of "debates" occurred between sociology on one hand and law, geography, history, and economics on the other. Then arose a parallel, internal struggle amongst the Durkheimians for the mantle of the master (i.e. whether Durkheim's vision is specific or general, quantitative or qualitative, based on statistical regularities or laws of nature). In short, Durkheim's efforts became transformed from a sociology of events into a philosophy of society. The end was at hand.

Publishing and editing journals and annuals is hard work involving much contact with others: from gate-keeping functions with authors to marketing

functions with readers. Durkheim, Hubert and Mauss had the rare energy and capacity to do the hand work as well as the vision to perform the head work. Their intellectual progeny did not have such drive. In this sense, Besnard's volume might be read with profit not simply by those for whom Durkheim and his School is a towering intellectual achievement, but no less by those who consider his work a momentous publishing feat. One hopes that Professor Besnard will continue producing work in this rich vein. As a master pupil of Durkheim, he can be counted on to do so.

From *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1962), pp. 419–22; and from *History of European Ideas*, vol. 7, no. 1(1986), pp. 102–05.

On the Social Theories of Fascism*

Gentile, Giovanni

This brief notice is intended as review, appreciation, and plea: a review of recent Anglo-American efforts to come to grips with European social and political philosophies, an appreciation of H.S. Harris's masterful effort at filling a huge void, and a plea for more of the same by indicating the sort of work that remains undone.

Italian philosophic thought in the twentieth century has clustered about three major intellectual bastions, each having a distinctive ideological trajectory. Fortunately for the historian of ideas, each philosophic position has firm and clear political correlations—fascism, liberalism, and socialism. The liberal figure, Benedetto Croce is very well known in the Anglo-American world of letters. Scarcely a work of his has not found its way into our language, on every subject from esthetics to economics. This is clearly as it should be, since on both sides of the Atlantic the major emphasis has been on developing a meaningful liberal typology—one that would include provisions for individual liberties and societal obligations. That Croce is one of the very select few twentieth century figures (along with Russell, Dewey, and Laski) who has achieved anything approximating a synthetic form of liberalism is reason enough to explain his enduring fame.

Although this interest in Croce has created a powerful and positive image of Italian social thought in the present century, the price paid for this exclusive emphasis might, in the long run, prove more costly than the benefits derived. For what we now have is a virtual absence of work on Italian social thought.

* H.S. Harris, *The Social Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 387.

Giovanni Gentile, *Genesis and Structure of Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 228.

Giovanni Gentile, *Le Origini della Filosofia Contemporanea in Italia*. V.A. Belleza (editor), (Firenze: Sansoni, 1957)

More than a quarter century has passed since Herbert Schneider's sourcebook, *Making the Fascist State*, and we have yet to receive a work of the same caliber. Where are the much-heralded benefits of retrospective analysis? Examining why this scarcity has occurred in a world of intellectual affluence, would take us too far afield. However, it is clear that the dogma of liberalism has tended to blunt rather than to promote an understanding of the polarized forces of Right and Left (represented in Italian philosophy by two titans, Giovanni Gentile and Antonio Gramsci) by means of a presumed consensual blanket in which bygones are bygones and all cats are grey after all.

That Gentile and Gramsci, who along with Croce formed the triumvirate of the Hegelian legacy in Italy, have been comfortably ignored on American shores. This reflects an unhealthy provincialism in our political and philosophical analysis. The cult of Croce is curiously, Anglo-American rather than Italian in origin. In Italy, where the forces of politics are still the practical expression of social philosophy, the names and works of Gentile and Gramsci are equally well known. It is thus an important milestone to record a work on Gentile by an Englishman partially trained in the United States. Gentile was the spokesman for an activist idealism (I think the word activism better expresses Gentile's intent than does the more placid word actual) that resolved itself into a "pure" fascism.

If I may anticipate my comments on Harris's work, it is only to say that Harris's interest in restoring Gentile's place as a decisive figure in modern Italian thought that causes Harris to present a one-sided picture—Right and centrist intellectual forces alone figure, while the long shadow Gramsci cast is left out because it suited Gentile's purposes to do so. With the exception of the historian H. Stuart Hughes' cavalier statement of Gramsci's views in *Consciousness and Society*, no accounting of Gramsci and the whole tradition of Italian social philosophy from Labriola to Mondolfo has yet appeared.

Cassirer, in *The Myth of the State*, shrewdly observed that the potency of Hegelianism could be symbolically gauged by the conflict between the Nazi *Wehrmacht* and the Red Army. This is true enough, but an even more potent measuring rod of the Hegelian image in the modern world was Italy during the Fascist period. Here three strands of Hegelian wisdom vied with one another for supremacy: the Hegel who saw in the state of fulfillment of human organization (Gentile), the Hegel who saw the will of the state as subservient to the "indwelling spirit" of human liberty (Croce), and the Hegel who saw the state as a self-negating moment in the historical impulse toward human emancipation (Gramsci).

But I should like to examine not the confrontation of these three visions of Hegelianism, but their essential unity. For Hegel provided each of these three figures with common ground rules—including an abiding respect for unfettered thought, a historicity in looking at problems of social structure, and a respect for all hitherto existing forms of culture. Hegel proved not so

much the Archimedean lever, as the Achilles heel for all three: a suspicion that Croce's liberalism was too historical and not enough empirical; an equal suspicion that Gramsci's socialism was too humanistic and not enough bolshevik; and as Harris well shows, a view of Gentile as a fossilized Fascist, unwilling to take the leap into either irrationalism or religiosity. The struggle of Italian social philosophy to uphold the honor of free men in a free society against the forces of political and intellectual obscurantism, is with all its ambiguities and frustrations, the message common to Gentile, Croce, and Gramsci—precisely because they shared Hegelian premises.

Turning now to a consideration of the book by Harris, we must first note that it is remarkably free of dogmatic attachment or criticisms of Gentile's efforts. The author sees his work as an "essay in salvage," distinguishing Gentile's philosophic idealism from his political preferences. In large measure, the salvage operation is a success. Gentile's position was forged in the crucible of post-Hegelian controversies about the relation of phenomenology to epistemology, man to authority, experience to essence, historical change to perennial values. In short, the dichotomization of post-Hegelian philosophy rather than the March on Rome shaped Gentile's thinking. Harris persuasively argues through close textual examination that Gentile's position was crystalized by the end of World War I, including his belief in an elitist reorganization of education, the participant theory of human thought, and the idealist epistemology in which no man can stand aside from practice without abdicating moral responsibility. If anything, Gentile's views resemble those of Plato as envisioned in *The Republic*, with respect to the moral center of political gravity.

In his analysis of Gentile's early period, Harris is forthright and properly critical. In comparison, the work of Gentile during the Fascist era (1922–1944) is handled with less skill. True, relating philosophic postures to political perspectives of the times and the personality of Gentile to his obligations as Fascist minister of education, is a formidable undertaking. That it was done at all attests to the capacities of Mr. Harris—his refusal to hide behind the texts. Nonetheless, a trend towards apologetics sets in as Gentile's political involvements take priority. Harris strains to show that everything from Gentile's blackjack theory of education to his blind support of the Nazi-Fascist alliance really has a virtuous "metaphysical" explanation. After all, the author tells us, a blackjack is not as damaging an educational weapon as a mace (it can only injure and not kill the student), whereas Gentile's support of the Fascist cause to the bitter end is but a living out of the practice theory of morality. Such an approach smacks of balancing the ledger entries at the end of an accounting period. Can it not be assumed that something less ethereal than moral uplift was at stake in Gentile's strange equation of fascism with the causes of humanism and liberalism? As the Italian proverb has it: when a moth is about to expire, it flaps its wings furiously.

The paradoxical conclusion is that Harris's work, rather than rehabilitating Gentile's social philosophy, only demonstrates once again how susceptible this form of actual idealism is to totalitarian uses and abuses—to that immoral exaltation of power Gentile *sometimes* worried about. Thus, rather than a resuscitation, the book is in effect a warning that an oracular and woozy idealism uninformed by the social sciences and unresponsive to the empirical and pluralist elements in the liberal tradition, can become a philosophy of the crematorium. Mr. Harris's disingenuous urge to guard his man from criticism, which seems to grow with each chapter, has an unanticipated consequence of calling into doubt his own sincere efforts at a politic-philosophic synthesis—and perhaps worse, raising doubts as to the significance of Gentile's intellectual remains.

Although one must be grateful to Mr. Harris for making available Gentile's *Genesis and Structure of Society* (volume 9 of the *Opere Complete*), it is hard to share in his judgment of the work's fundamental importance. Indeed, it is more interesting from a historical than a sociological or philosophical perspective. It shows Gentile late in his life, tormented by the decay and disintegration of the Fascist state, returning to a position of "pure" Hegelianism to find justification, if not relief, from his own commitments. Although in theory Gentile's *Genesis* is an offspring of Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, in philosophic acumen it is too programmatic and dogmatic to stand with the parent work. Naïve formulations abound, without the redeeming qualities of Gentile's pre-Fascist writings (e.g. "It is not nationality that creates the State, but the State which creates nationality"!) or the equally fuzzy notion that "since we can also say that the State is man, it follows that nothing human can be alien to the essential nature of the State." These and similar platitudinous commentaries make this work read like a bizarre and surrealist reworking of Pope's *Essay on Man*.

Gentile's general isolation from the Franco-Italian social science of his own age, from the work of Pareto, Mosca, Michels, and Sorel, marks him apart from both Croce and Gramsci. This work, apologies for its hasty production under difficult circumstances set aside, shows Gentile to be a thinker unable to move beyond the romanticist-historicist illusions of the early nineteenth century. His failure of nerve in the face of fascist aberrations of the *Risorgimento* takes the form of a retreat from social realities through entrapment within metaphysical theories of state authority as the sole path for human salvation. If all states were indeed perfect embodiments of moral behavior, this might be useful. Until that time, however, it would be a cruel hoax to equate statist ideologies with humanism. As Harris himself acknowledges, "the worst danger involved in this tendency to confuse the transcendental state with the actual structure of governmental authority is that it leads with inevitable logic to a kind of intellectual despotism."

The four tomes of the Gentile *Opere* to be considered are actually one study on the antecedents and character of philosophy in modern Italy—from

the *Risorgimento* to the First World War. Gentile's prolific and proliferating tendencies as a writer can perhaps best be gauged by the *Opere Complete*, which shows nine books on systematic philosophic exposition; twenty-seven on the history of philosophy; eleven on miscellaneous subjects ranging from the reform of the educational system to *Culture and Fascism*; eight volumes of essays and briefer monographs concerning esthetics, literature, philosophy, and its history; and four volumes of correspondence. Thus *Le Origini della Filosofia Contemporanea in Italia* must be seen as but a fraction of Gentile's output.

Several distinctive aspects of this enterprise deserve mention. Gentile's idealism, though it reveals the inevitable march in Italian thought from neo-Platonism, positivism (including its materialist variants), neo-Kantianism, to the post-Hegelian synthesis, is of interest for the secular framework in which the priority of idealist claims is said to occur. Since Gentile, views religion as a Hegelian moment in the universal judgment of morality upon men and society, he does not deal with those philosophers who place theological values in the forefront, as part of the modern philosophical movement. Indeed, he sees the most prominent such trend, neo-Thomism, as a brief appendix between the Kantian and Hegelian trends.

Some of the personal problems Gentile encountered with the Fascist movement, particularly the intellectual wing that sought a return to Catholic orthodoxy, are anticipated in these early writings. One reason he sees modern philosophy as modern is its joining the idea of the good to the idea of nationhood. He sees Italian philosophy as a response to the legacy of Plato, Kant, and Hegel because each of these major figures, in distinctive ways, illuminated the main problems of the new epoch: the mythic dimension of the act, the ethical dimension of the act, and the historical dimension of the act. Positivism, that trend which Gentile most criticizes nonetheless belonged to the modern world because of its central focus on action as such. These volumes therefore help to explain Gentile's own philosophy no less than the philosophies of the figures he discusses.

These four books are a treasury of information on men and movements obscured by time, place, and tradition. It is nonetheless difficult to see how any future assessments of Italian philosophic history could fail to take note of *Le Origini*. The essays on Ardigò, Vera, and especially Spaventa, show to good advantage Gentile's deep penetration and fair treatment of philosophic systems other than his own. It is also clear that the influence of the Hegelian Bertrando Spaventa on Gentile's thought is much more considerable than has hitherto been stated. Gentile notes two things in particular that marked Spaventa apart from his colleagues: first, his active political role in the *Risorgimento* and second, the national idea in his philosophic approach. These are precisely the characteristics exhibited by Gentile's actual idealism. An outstanding interlude in these volumes is Gentile's critical commentary on Cesare

Lombroso's "Criminal Anthropology" as illustrative of the consequences of taking seriously Moleschott's vulgar materialism.

In concluding, we might note several attractive features of the Harris volumes that should induce more work in this field. First, there is an excellent bibliographical index, both intelligible and useful as a checklist of themes covered in the book. Second is a very high-quality introductory essay to his translation of the *Genesis*. In this essay, Harris shows exactly what has and has not been done in Gentile studies in the English language, and further, the main points yet in contention. Finally, mention ought to be made of the physical composition of the companion Harris study and translation. From the spacing and typesetting to the paper stock and cover design, nothing but the greatest care is exhibited. Few authors can boast such care on the part of their publishers. The added inducement of reasonable pricing should earn these books the representative they deserve. There can be no doubt that for many years to come, Harris' presentation will be the standard by which other investigations in *Italian social philosophy* will be judged.

From *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1962), pp. 263–68.

On Power and Statecraft*

Hobbes, Thomas

When we consider the ever expanding relevance of such questions as the nature of state sovereignty, the role of power in the social organism, the relation of coercion to liberty, and the possibilities for developing a science of political behavior, we are invariably drawn to consider the views of Thomas Hobbes. His *Leviathan* was a monumental construction, infused with the spirit of Plato's *Republic*. For here too was an effort to account for the total functioning of man—from the source of our knowledge to the consequences of citizenship in a commonweal. Indeed, Hobbes's work is the most cogent realist exposition in classical philosophy. For those who insist that Thrasymachus' power thesis was brushed aside too conveniently by Socrates, this work rights matters. It is sometimes overlooked that over half the *Leviathan* is taken up with metaphysical, religious and linguistic issues. For it is the relation of these matters to polity that provides Hobbes with the foundations of social science.

In contrast to the crucial place Hobbes occupies in philosophic history is the small quantity of work done on his theories. For every book that examines his theory of knowledge and reality there are at least several dozen expositions of the Kierkegaardian either/or. A similar paucity may be noted in studies of his political philosophy. Part of the reason for such neglect may be that Hobbes's views have been subsumed in and provided a more mature foundation by later political philosophers like Rousseau and Hegel. Another reason may be that Hobbes's logico-deductive method is a mechanical juxtaposition of geometric axioms and thus has an arid, archaic quality. Yet another cause of this neglect may be a reaction to Hobbes's sense of self-importance, not merely as a theorist but as a political figure. However, making allowances for these and other reasons, it must be confessed that Hobbes presents too strong a diet for most contemporary critics. Highly romanticized theories of political democracy and state sovereignty, which it might be added were no less current in the seventeenth century than they are now, can only be confounded by a tough-minded philosopher who sought to expose the inner-springs of human action with the latest instruments provided by mathematics and natural science.

* Richard Peters, *Hobbes* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956), pp. 272.

This is by way of introducing the reader to Richard Peters's excellent book, *Hobbes*. Earlier efforts, such as Frithiof Brandt's *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (1928), and Leo Strauss's two works on *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (1936), and *Natural Right and History* (1953), may each in its own realm be superior to Mr. Peters's volume. But no single book offers a more judicious appraisal of Hobbes's total philosophic standpoint.

The author notes the manifold source of Hobbes's outlook: the Baconian concept of knowledge can manipulate nature to human goals; the Cartesian belief that a sound scientific method is the key to the secrets of man and nature; the then widespread belief in the values of the geometric approach for solving problems from epistemology to ethics (i.e., an approach that started from self-evident deductive principles and concluded in a philosophy of civilization logically proceeding from such axioms). Mr. Peters also notes that Hobbes's translation of Thucydides stemmed from an appreciation of concrete historical research in the deductions of the philosopher. In addition, the author justifiably minimizes the connection between Machiavelli and Hobbes, showing the latter to represent a step forward "from shrewd, fallible, common sense about his country's plight to the certain knowledge of the scientist." It would, I believe, have been useful had Mr. Peters made more of the connection of the *Leviathan* to *The Republic*. It is possible that the entire groundwork of Plato's work (not just the shared belief in geometric method) was foremost in Hobbes' thinking. That Hobbes seems to be reacting to Plato's classic may be worth examining. For what is the *Leviathan* if not an effort to prove that self-preservation rather than justice, power instead of ideals, is the framework of society? It may also have been worth mentioning the possible indebtedness of Hobbes to his nominalist predecessors, particularly William of Occam and to the early physicalism of men like John Dumbleton. Even pre-Baconian England had a tradition amenable to the Hobbesian philosophy.

The idea, taken as a self-evident proposition by some, that materialism implies a humane libertarianism is nowhere better refuted than in Hobbes. Materialist in his theory of knowledge, disciple of the forward motion of nature and society, a confirmed critic of established religions, Hobbes defended with equal vigor an absolutism that urged a political reconstruction based upon common law and natural rights. Hobbes was concerned with developing a theory of absolute sovereignty based on his self-evident axiom that peace is the prime condition for the survival of mankind. He who provides the peace must in turn be provided with absolute popular allegiance. Men in a condition of nature, due to their essential egoism, are in a state of conflict; they therefore yield their private sovereignty to a larger authority as the only assurance for the survival of the human species, according to this thesis, the breakdown of central authority leads, not to democracy but only to dismal anarchy. As Mr. Peters cogently notes, the apparent incongruity between Hobbes's materialism and theory of the state makes quite good sense if one remembers that "the main enemies of the sort of absolutism

which he envisaged were indeed those whose belief in individual liberty assumed predominantly religious forms, or those who, because of their Catholic convictions, could never give the kind of undivided allegiance to a sovereign which he demanded of them.” It is nonetheless surprising that the author did not make more of a distinction between what Hobbes deemed essential and accidental in his theory of sovereignty. For Hobbes was not so much concerned with whether Charles or Cromwell or even Lilburne achieved power. He was concerned with preserving property rights. He who best achieved this proprietary end deserved popular support. Otherwise Hobbes would have no need to issue the ultimatum: either preserve the peace or be replaced by a sovereign who can.

Peters has a keener appreciation for Hobbes’s England in general, than for the specific relationships Hobbes lived through. This is conveyed in his contrasting Hobbes to other thinkers of the age with whom Hobbes had little in common or in contact. The discussion of such shrewd clerics as Bishop Bramhall and Bishop Butler to his right and the constitutional democrat, John Locke, to his left indicate the actual range of discourse in political philosophy. Bramhall raised the important issue of how a determinist theory of human motivation can be meaningful, since to speak of man as rational seems to imply the free choice of men to select between alternative modes of life. Butler criticized Hobbes for failing to make a distinction between the end towards which an activity is directed and the satisfaction such ends may bring. From a quite different position, Locke denied that hedonism implies absolutism. In a solemn warning, Locke said, “he that thinks absolute power purifies men’s blood and corrects the baseness of human nature need but read the history of this or any other age to be convinced to the contrary.” It would have been a welcome addition had Peters informed his readers how Hobbes reacted to such broad-ranging discussions of the state of society.

In reviewing an earlier volume in the Penguin series, I noted an apparent effort to reduce the history of philosophy to the history of linguistic muddles. This opinion happily needs to be greatly modified in Mr. Peters’s effort. It is particularly evident in the author’s confession that even Hobbes’s errors were a great achievement because he was wrong in the right sort of way, that is, he was wrong in thinking that the geometric method could provide a universally valid philosophy, but right in seeing that solution to epistemological and political problems in science. Mr. Peters’s book will undoubtedly lead more people to Hobbes, and I cannot think of a better reason for reading this finely etched appreciation.

From *Science and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1957), pp. 284–86.