

# AUTHORITY AND THE FAMILY

## 1. CULTURE

THE history of mankind has been divided into periods in very varying ways. The manner in which periodization has been carried out has not depended exclusively on the object, any more than other concept formations have; the current state of knowledge and the concerns of the knower have also played a part. Today the division into antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern times is still widely used. It originated in literary studies and was applied in the seventeenth century to history generally. It expresses the conviction, formed in the Renaissance and consolidated in the Enlightenment, that the time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the fifteenth century was a dark era for mankind, a sort of hibernation of culture, and was to be understood only as a period of transition. In contemporary scholarship this particular periodization is considered highly unsatisfactory. One reason is that the "Middle Ages" were in fact a time of important progress even from a purely pragmatic viewpoint, since they saw decisive advances in civilization and produced revolutionary technical inventions.<sup>1</sup> A further reason is that the usual criteria for making the fifteenth century a dividing point are partly indefensible, partly applicable in a meaningful way only to limited areas of world history.

In other periodizations the subjective factor is even more evident. The conception which Church Fathers and Scholastics

1. Cf., for example, Lefebvre des Noëttes, "La 'Nuit' du moyen âge et son inventaire," *Mercur de France*, May 1, 1932, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 2 (1933), 198ff.

defended for centuries was dominated by the ideas of the creation of the world, the birth of Christ, and the expected end of the world, although various parts of biblical or secular history were intercalated into the scheme, especially between the first two events. Harking back to Roman historical writing which considered the founding of the city to be a normative event for dividing up history, the French Revolution made its own beginning into the start of a new computation of time. Today this practice has been imitated by regimes that wish to highlight the decisive significance of their own seizure of power. These modern regimes, however, while indeed bringing a reform of the whole apparatus of government, also seek to consolidate rather than reshape important forms of social life, especially the economy, social classification, the conditions of ownership, and basic categories of national and religious life. Consequently, their mere appearance on the scene does not provide the contemporary desire for a valid structuring of history with an adequate point of departure. The traditional threefold division of history corresponded to the state of knowledge and the concerns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, just as the ecclesiastical periodization did to the essentially religious outlook of the Middle Ages. But the purely political periodizations being proposed today, like a whole series of modern attempts by theoreticians of history,<sup>2</sup> bear the mark not only of historically conditioned interests (which is inevitable) but also of superficiality.

Scientific criticism of the divisions which have been offered, and an increased attention to this problem in general, arose out of the growing conviction that the history of mankind as a whole or at least of large groups of European peoples along with certain parts of Africa, Asia, and America presents even to the more penetrating eye a structured unity and not a disorganized and chaotic series of occurrences. In this view the periods of history are not mere collections of events with an arbitrarily posited beginning and end. They rather stand in contrast to one

2. Cf., for example, Kurt Breysig, *Der Stufenbau und die Gesetze der Weltgeschichte* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1905).

another because each manifests certain structural elements proper to it and proves therefore to have a relative unity. It remains difficult to set precise boundaries, but this cannot obscure the very definite differences between the high points of such periods. Even in other theoretical fields, for example biology, it is easier to describe significant instances from various areas than to pinpoint the transition between them.

The effort to distinguish historical periods from one another by means of characteristic peculiarities has been preceded by research in the various disciplines which deal with life in its historical dimension. The histories of law, art, and religion have sought to establish divisions based on criteria proper to themselves. Apart from some scholars who are content with simple accumulations of facts, the conjecture is rather widely held that the lines of development within these areas do not run without connection between them but rather give expression to a deeper law common to them all. The reason why Auguste Comte's theory of the three stages through which every society of its nature passes must today be rejected is not that the attempt to comprehend great ages of mankind in as unitary a way as possible was a mistaken one. The reason is that the yardstick applied to history was rather extrinsic and derived from an unsatisfactory philosophy. Comte's procedure suffers especially from the absolutizing of a particular stage in natural science or rather from a questionable interpretation of the natural science of his day. His static and formalistic conception of law makes his whole theory appear relatively arbitrary and unconstructive. The physicist in his researches may justly prescind from the historical process. But we expect the philosopher of history and the sociologist to be able to show how their individual theories and concept formations and, in general, every step they take are grounded in the problematic of their own time. Comte, Spencer, and many of their successors are unconscious of these connections and even deny them in their conscious views of science. It is this that makes their periodizations rigid and inconsistent.

The conviction that society has passed through periods, each with its relative unity, that is, through various forms, is not

lessened by the lack of concrete sociological systems to lend support. In Germany the conviction has remained alive since the time of Herder and Hegel, although it has been represented more in critiques by political economists and in large-scale historical writing than in professional philosophy. In his lectures on the periods of modern history Ranke maintains that "apart from certain basic, unchangeable, eternal ideas, for example in the realm of morality, every age has its special tendency and special ideal."<sup>3</sup> From the viewpoint of the philosophy of history it was Dilthey who provided the major formulation of the idea:

We can mark off periods within the course of history, in which an intelligible unity embracing everything from the conditions of life to the highest ideas is formed, reaches its climax, and dissolves again. Every such period has an internal structure in common with all other periods, and this structure determines the interconnection of parts, the unfolding and modification of tendencies. . . . The structure of a given age proves to be . . . a coherent association of subordinate connections and movements within the great complex of forces that make up the period. Out of very diverse and changeable elements a complicated whole is formed. This whole now determines the significance of everything that is at work in the period . . . It is here that the task of analysis lies: to recognize in the varied expressions of life a unity of values and purposes. In so far as such unified expressions of life thrust towards absolute values and purposes, the circle is closed within which the men of that age are locked. For the circle contains opposed tendencies as well. We saw how an age puts its mark on these, and on other tendencies as well, and how the dominant trend hinders their free development.<sup>4</sup>

In idealist philosophy the periods originate from the self-revelation of an intellectual being: for Fichte they correspond to a world-plan that is a priori deducible; for Hegel they represent stages of the self-objectivizing world-mind; for Dilthey they express ever new sides of the general nature of man. Materialism, on the contrary, rejects such a metaphysical factor and tries to find an answer by uncovering the economic dynamism which determines the course, development, and decline of each period.

3. Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte* 4 (Leipzig, 1910<sup>5</sup>), p. 529.

4. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* 7 (Leipzig, 1927), p. 185f.

It tries to comprehend the historical transformations of human nature in terms of the ever-varying shape of the material life-process in each society. Alterations in the psychic structure which characterizes not only individual cultures but even particular groups within a culture are regarded as moments in a process, the rhythm of which has been dictated in history up to now by the development and sudden transformations of man's relationship to nature as he tries to prolong his existence; that is, by economic necessity. In seeking to trace the outlines of this process in which men act with powers that are promoted or hindered or opposed to each other by the very process itself, the materialist view claims to be putting its finger on what Dilthey calls "the unchangeable and recurring factor in the historical process." It regards such an investigation as the primary object of study, on which "depends the answer to all questions about progress in history and about the direction in which the human race is moving."<sup>5</sup> But the materialist view is not dominated by fatalism, as the idealist theory is. In materialism, individuals and social groups, working and struggling, of course, with such capabilities as previous historical development affords them, have an effect, in turn, on current economic relationships. In idealism, on the contrary, an intellectual force whose essential traits are antecedently fixed is the originator of events; history, consequently, is not a process of interaction between nature and society, already existent and emerging cultures, freedom and necessity, but is the unfolding or manifestation of a unitary principle.

In the diverse views represented in classical German and French sociology and philosophy of history, two points are maintained by all. On the one hand, history has an inner unity, and the broad lines can be drawn which connect the destiny of the present age with that of the most ancient social formations. On the other hand, because his insight is sharpened by his own problems, contemporary man finds in history certain unified structures and distinct periods, each of which puts its characteristic stamp not only on economic relations, law, politics, art,

5. *Ibid.*

religion, and philosophy, but even on the individual. The distinction between these segments of history, a distinction which finds expression in man's psychic make-up as well as in his institutions and works, is taken to be a distinction of cultures. The word "culture" here includes those phenomena which under the name of "civilization" are often distinguished from culture in a more restricted sense and which in an especially evident way are derived from and related to life as it is lived in a given society. Both the pragmatic reactions and contrivances of men and the so-called spiritual expressions of the life of peoples and classes show characteristic traits according as they belong to one or other of the great historical complexes which we call periods or stages of development of mankind. By such signs, which form a sort of index, the genuine student of history recognizes the historical location of a particular event or work, somewhat as the biographer of a scholar or poet can determine the period in which a newly discovered sentence of his subject was written.

None of the great historical complexes remains a fixed structure; between all its subordinate parts and areas there is a continuous interaction which is characteristic of that complex or period. All cultures hitherto known manifest simultaneous and opposed regularities. On the one hand, within a period there are processes which are repeated with a more or less broad similarity, for example the process of mechanical work or the physiological processes of consumption and reproduction, as well as the daily conduct of life under law and the functioning of the apparatus of social intercourse generally. On the other hand, cultures are dominated by tendencies which despite such repetitions are continuously altering the position of social classes in relation to one another as well as the relationships between all areas of life, and will lead finally to the decline or even the conquest of the cultures in question. Even this, however, is not true of all cultures in the same degree. For example, the structure of Chinese society and its accompanying forms of life showed enough stability even in the nineteenth century to put up some resistance to the inroads of the Western European

method of production; the same is true of India. However, for the form of society which is presently dominant in Europe and has extended to America and also left its mark on all the colonial sectors of the world, it is in the highest degree true that despite the uniformly recurring processes within it, inner forces are driving it towards destruction. This particular form of human life in society is obviously in a state of crisis. The whole of contemporary sociology as well as any historical research which cherishes the great historical concerns are seeking a unified theory to account for this interplay of forces. The interplay is taking the form, on the international scene, of a struggle between the great national power-blocs, and, on the domestic scene, of the conflict of social classes. The second of these two antagonisms is dominating European history ever more fully, and obviously plays a key role in the introduction of one or other kind of regime and in the decisions for war or peace. The interaction of the two antagonisms, which itself is conditioned by more profound economic tendencies, is going to decide the fate of our present culture.

Any reflection on culture which at this critical moment can come to grips with the present period and thereby with earlier ones as well, must be concerned with the role of particular cultural spheres and their changing structural interrelationships in the maintenance or dissolution of given forms of society. If the great social unities, especially that of our present experience, develop according to an immanent dialectic, then the forces which have been molded into unity tend to maintain the given way of life by which they are in turn sustained. But they can also work in opposition to each other and to these ways of life and so destroy the unity. If the direction and tempo of this process is ultimately determined by regularities within the economic apparatus of a society, yet the way in which men act at a given point in time can not be explained solely by economic events which have transpired in the immediate past. It is rather the case that particular groups react according to the special character of their members and that this character has been formed in the course of earlier no less than of present social

development. Such a character arises under the influence of all social institutions taken together, and these function in typical ways for each social stratum. The process of production influences men not only in the immediate contemporary form in which they themselves experience it in their work, but also in the form in which it has been incorporated into relatively stable institutions which are slow to change, such as family, school, church, institutions of worship, etc. To understand why a society functions in a certain way, why it is stable or dissolves, demands therefore a knowledge of the contemporary psychic make-up of men in various social groups. This in turn requires a knowledge of how their character has been formed in interaction with all the shaping cultural forces of the time. To regard the economic process as a determining ground of events means that one considers all other spheres of social life in their changing relationships to it and that one conceives this process itself not in its isolated mechanical form but in connection with the specific capabilities and dispositions of men, which have, of course, been developed by the economic process itself. The whole culture, therefore, is caught up in the dynamism of history, and the cultural spheres—customs, morality, art, religion, and philosophy—form, in their interconnection, dynamic influences on the maintenance or breakdown of a particular form of society. Culture at each moment in time is a sum-total of forces at work amid the change of cultures.

The materialist view, then, maintains that cultural arrangements and processes, in all areas of life, in so far as they influence the character and behavior of men at all, are conservative or disruptive factors in the dynamism of society. Either they provide the mortar of the building under construction, the cement which artificially holds together the parts that tend towards independence, or they are part of the forces which will destroy the society. Against such a view objection might well be raised. It is not—the objection would run—the historically developed psychic peculiarities or set of drives characteristic of men in a particular society according to their social group that



determines whether outmoded relations between productive elements are to be maintained and, with them, the social structure built upon them. The decisive factor (within the framework of economic possibility, of course) is rather the State's ability to govern, the organization of its powers, and, ultimately, its physical force. In the history of all developed societies the knowledge and capabilities of men and the corresponding material apparatus of production have been such that only through a characteristic division of men into leaders and followers could the social life-process go on. Even though, at least in periods of growth and flowering, the life of the whole society depended on this division, yet the upper strata of society formed a relatively small nucleus, for which the existing form of society was not only necessary but had become the source of their power and well-being. Furthermore, in so far as previous forms of human life in community conditioned the existence of the whole and its cultural progress, countless individuals, according to their place in the whole, had to pay for such progress with wretchedness that had no meaning for them, and finally with death. If, then, despite this cost, men persevered in a particular form of society, this could only have been by coercion. Why, then, the supposed need for a dynamic concept of culture? Why the supposition of a kind of intellectual cement holding society together, when the cement is at hand in the highly material form of the State's executive power?

This objection is not easily answered. It represents a recall to realism in the face of theories which turn human nature, conscience, or reason, or moral and religious ideas, into stable, independent essences and try to explain the functioning of society by the influence of one or more of them. Such idealistic and rationalistic conceptions of society inevitably fail to solve the problem, and the reason is precisely that they either ignore or at best regard as accidental the connection of lofty ideas with the power relationships in society. Insight, for example, may be an important factor in the development and continuance of society; it may even be the immediate ground of socialization, as

many theories of Enlightenment times or a psychologist like Freud claim.<sup>6</sup> Yet the whole psychic apparatus of members of a class society, in so far as they do not belong to the nucleus of privileged people, serves in large measure only to interiorize or at least to rationalize and supplement physical coercion. The so-called "social nature" of man, his self-integration into a given order of things, whether the ground of this order be pragmatic, moral, or religious, is essentially reducible to the memory of the acts of force by which men were made "sociable" and civilized and which threaten them still if they become too forgetful. Nietzsche more than anyone else saw what underlies social relationships. That men may pay heed to the insight and promises of other men and the regulations of life in common and may even trust in them at need, is a phenomenon with a frightful history behind it.

"Something is burnt in so as to remain in his memory: only that which never stops *hurting* remains in his memory." This is an axiom of the oldest (unfortunately also the longest) psychology in the world. It might even be said that wherever solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and gloomy colours are now found in the life of men and of nations of the world, there is some *survival* of that horror which was once the universal concomitant of all promises, pledges, and obligations. The past . . . wafts to us its breath, and bubbles up in us again, when we become "serious." When man thinks it necessary to make for himself a memory, he never accomplishes it without blood, tortures, and sacrifice; the most dreadful sacrifices and forfeitures (among them the sacrifice of the first-born), the most loathsome mutilations (for instance, castration), the most cruel rituals of all the religious cults (for all religions are really at bottom systems of cruelty)—all these things originate from that instinct

6. Freud writes in his description of the evolution of culture: "After primal man had discovered that it lay in his own hands, literally, to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another man worked with or against him. The other man acquired the value for him of a fellow-worker, with whom it was useful to live together" (*Civilization and Its Discontents*, tr. by James Strachey [New York: Norton, 1961], p. 46). The decisive cultural step consists in the fact "that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction" (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

which found in pain its most potent mnemonic . . . Alas! reason, seriousness, mastery over the emotions, all these gloomy, dismal things which are called reflection, and all these privileges and pageantries of humanity: how dear is the price that they have exacted! How much blood and cruelty is the foundation of all "good things."<sup>7</sup>

But if past and present coercion plays its part even in the sublimest movements of the human psyche, yet the psyche itself, like all the mediating institutions such as family, school, and church which form the psyche, has its own laws. The role of coercion, which marks not only the origin but also the development of all States, can indeed be hardly overestimated when we try to explain social life in history up to the present. The coercion does not consist simply in punishment for those who violate the imposed order of things. It consists also in the hunger of a man and his family which over and over again drives him to accept the existing conditions for work, among which must be numbered his good behavior in most areas of life. But in the course of development the cruelty and publicity of punishment could be reduced, at least in certain economically well-off periods. In addition, threats of punishment have become increasingly differentiated and intellectualized, so that, in part at least, terror has changed into fear and fear into caution. And as in periods of economic growth and increased social wealth some functions of punishment could be taken over by its positive counterpart, the hope of reward, so too the lords and sentinels who originally, in keeping with primitive traits of the psychic apparatus, were supplemented by an army of spirits and demons, were partially replaced by a divinity or a world of ideas, conceived in brighter or darker colors according to the spirit of the age. All this already means that naked coercion cannot by itself explain why the subject classes have borne the yoke so long in times of cultural decline, when property relationships, like exist-

7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, tr. by Horace B. Samuel in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), Second Essay: "'Guilt,' 'Bad Conscience,' and the Like," section 3, p. 45.

ing ways of life in general, had obviously reduced social forces to immobility and the economic apparatus was ready to yield a better method of production. The historian must here study the whole culture, although knowledge of material conditions is, of course, the basis of understanding.

The complicated historical process in which coercion was partially interiorized was, in addition, not a simple transposition to the intellectual level, a simple registering of terrifying experiences by calculating reason, or a univocal projection of them into the religious and metaphysical sphere. Instead, new qualities arose everywhere in the process. Thus, for example, the relationship of the individual to God was not a matter of pure dependence, even at the beginning. Rather the idea of God provided a framework for the limitless wishes and feelings of revenge, the plans and desires, which have arisen in connection with the struggles of human history. Religion indeed derives its whole content through the psychic elaboration of earthly data, but in the process it acquires its own specific form, which in turn influences the psychic apparatus and destiny of men and is a reality within social evolution as a whole. The same is true of moral ideas, art, and all other areas of culture. Although moral awareness, conscience, and the concept of duty, for example, have developed in intimate connection with coercion and necessities of very varied kinds and are largely to be understood as interiorized force, as external law taken into the psyche itself, yet in the psychic economy of the individual they are in the last analysis specific powers which lead him not only to accept existing conditions but also at times to oppose them. Furthermore, the regulation, for example, of sexual intercourse within the framework of marital union and family was economically conditioned and, in part, the result of fearful coercion. Despite this, the romantic love which arose in the course of such regulation is a social phenomenon which can drive the individual into opposition to or even a break with society. The historically conditioned and not originally "natural" linking of sexuality and tenderness, as well as the friendship and fidelity which become natural to men, are among the cultural elements which play a

specific role in certain social developments. They are a characteristic human trait at a given period and can be generated ever anew by suitable cultural habits while conditioning these in turn. When men are reacting to economic changes, various groups act according to their human characteristics at that point in time, and these characteristics cannot be explained by immediate present circumstances and without a knowledge of the contemporary psychic make-up. But if cultural factors in the social process as a whole (into which they are inextricably interwoven) acquire a proper significance because they operate as characteristic traits of individuals at a given time, all the more do the institutions which are grounded in such traits and help to confirm and continue them have a definite even if relative life of their own. The bureaucracy which operates the State's coercive apparatus has its own interests and power, but so does the staff of any cultural institution in the strict sense.

Culture is today being studied descriptively from the viewpoints of intellectual history and the morphology of cultures. In such study culture is essentially regarded as a unity that is independent of and superordinate to individuals. On the contrary, to regard culture as a dynamic structure, that is, as a dependent but nonetheless special sphere within the social process as a whole, is an approach that is not congenial to a contemplative outlook on history. Such an approach, therefore, is also not equally meaningful in every period. In the struggle to improve man's condition there have been times in which it is of no special practical importance that theory pays heed to all these relationships in only a summary fashion at best. Such are the moments when the economic decline of a specific mode of production has so undermined all the cultural forms which go with it, that the needs of the greater part of society easily turn into rebellion and it takes only the resolute will of progressive groups to win the victory over the naked force of arms on which the whole system at this point essentially rests. But such moments are rare and brief: the decaying order is quickly improved where necessary and is apparently renewed; the periods of restoration last a long time, and during them the outmoded cultural apparatus as well

as the psychic make-up of men and the body of interconnected institutions acquire new power. Then there is need to investigate the culture thoroughly.

How these cultural relationships have their effects which have developed along with the social life-forms and then occupy the scene as a series of routines and as definite characteristics of men, can be studied for very varied times and peoples. We spoke earlier of how the great Asiatic societies, China and India, have managed to resist the invasion of Western European ways of life. This should in no way be taken to mean that no very real conflicts of interest are involved, which must end with the victorious penetration of the superior capitalist mode of production or of some still more progressive economic principle. But the capacity of these cultures for resistance does not find its real expression in their members' belief (a distorted belief for the great majority) that the specifically Chinese or Indian form of production is the most advantageous. Rather, when great masses of people have, against their interests, held fast to their modes of production, a great role has been played by a crippling fear of moving out of the old world of beliefs and ideas which had taken such deep hold on the individual psyche. The culture's specific way of experiencing the world had been built up through simple and recurring tasks and over the centuries had become a necessary element in the life of a society. Without it we could not only not speak of the capacity for resistance of society as a whole; we could not even speak of the peaceful carrying out of indispensable daily arrangements.

In China belief in ancestors is such a cultural factor. Sinologists agree that it has molded the features of Chinese society for centuries. "As a factor in molding Chinese life and thought, it can hardly be exaggerated."<sup>8</sup> That it could become so stable and strong is due to characteristics of the Chinese mode of production. A single reference will clarify what is meant. Horticulture, which is typical of economic life even in rice-growing

8. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: Macmillan, 1947<sup>3</sup>), p. 633.

areas,<sup>9</sup> demands an accumulation of knowledge which in the given circumstances could only be gained from long experience. Among other things, an intensive agricultural economy is distinguished from an extensive one by the fact that intensive cultivation of the soil requires very precise and nuanced knowledge for each area, almost for each acre with its special conditions. The elder who through a lifetime has observed the weather, the peculiar traits of each type of plant, their diseases, and so on, becomes for the young man a source of indispensable knowledge. With his accumulated experience the elder is the natural leader in production. Here perhaps we may discern one root of reverence for ancestors. The superiority of living elders over the young as a principle for conceiving the relationship between generations inevitably meant that the ancestors of the living family-head must have been as superior to him in power and wisdom as he now was to his family; the same result followed for the child, in addition, from his veneration for his own father and grandfather. The greatness and holiness of ancestors must have increased rather than decreased with their distance from the present; each must have seemed the more divine, the further back he stood in the long line of ancestors. The reverence and gratitude which the individual thinks he owes his ancestors becomes finally a fundamental trait in his psychic make-up.

Although such a trait emerges from real circumstances and is continually renewed by them, only a rationalistic psychology could believe that, in the history of the society's and the individual's development, there originally existed a clear consciousness of the real reason behind ancestor worship and that later on there was an intentional or unintentional obscuring and falsifying of that reason. On the contrary, the relationships involved in production were originally experienced in religious forms, and these acquired their own meaning and history. The cult of ancestors, which is a living social force affecting each

9. Cf. K. A. Wittfogel, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* (Stuttgart, 1931), pp. 337ff.

person from birth through his education, moral code, and religion, receives its continually renewed motivation not only through the experiences of the child and young man with his own parents and grandparents but also through the extremely varied psychic movements which arise in individuals out of the existing situation and take this particular cultural shape. For example, the idea that the ancestors are powerful people in the other world, too, and can effectively bless, provides men with the possibility of influencing destiny, incalculable though it be. It offers, further, a means of escaping from devastating uncertainty in important decisions: one asks advice of the ancestors by drawing lots before the symbols of their presence. Belief in ancestors allows troubled men to preserve and renew their inner peace. Such a belief, consequently, will in certain circumstances be maintained by individuals and whole social groups for a good time after it has become a hindrance to their material interests. Even after a religion has lost its significance for production, men bear hardships and make sacrifices for it. In China reverence for ancestors is a special hindrance to social progress; it must finally fall victim to modern economic development, but for the time being it complicates the situation. Edward Thomas Williams observes: "This reverence has been an obstacle to all progress. It has not only opposed religious propaganda, but sanitation, plague prevention, and all educational and political reform. Happily now this conservatism is breaking down because family solidarity is being given up."<sup>10</sup>

When we turn to the preservation of the caste system in India, the fact that culture has its own role to play in the dynamism of society emerges with special force. It may indeed be that in the historical origins of the castes a relatively natural division of labor or subjection to a foreign conqueror was the most important factor. In any case, however, the organization of parts, which ultimately decided the basic structure of the whole life-process of Indian society, was mirrored in a system of ideas, which exercised a special power not only in the con-

10. Edward Thomas Williams, *China Yesterday and Today* (New York: Crowell, 1923), p. 66.



scious concerns of the upper strata but also in the character of the subordinate lower castes. To illustrate how a cultural form, once widespread, finds ever new resources for resisting change, a brief reference will suffice. "What really raises one's indignation against suffering is not suffering intrinsically, but the senselessness of suffering."<sup>11</sup> This circumstance leads, according to Nietzsche, to the rise of religion. The terrible differentiation in ways of work and life, which enables the Indian life-process to succeed, was rendered intelligible by the idea of the transmigration of souls, according to which birth into an upper or lower caste is the consequence of actions in an earlier life. The lowest classes find in this idea a special reason for not wanting any change in the system. In so far as a Pariah can say that he is faithful to the prescriptions for his caste, he hopes that in his next birth he will rise into the Brahman caste and enjoy its privileges. Max Weber writes:

An orthodox Hindu confronted with the deplorable situation of a member of an impure caste would only think that he has a great many sins to redeem from his prior existence . . . The reverse of this is that a member of an impure caste thinks primarily of how to better his future social opportunities at rebirth by leading an exemplary life according to caste ritual.<sup>12</sup>

The fact that the caste system characteristic of Indian economy is experienced as a religious matter not only leads thus to a frictionless integration of the pariahs into the existing process of production. It also motivates the adherence of these individuals to the cruel system as a whole. The continuance, even the eternal duration, of the system gives meaning to their whole existence. If it were to be dismantled in the future, just when they had the prospect of enjoying its advantages, all their merits and sacrifices would have been in vain. This is one of the many reasons why even the lower strata of society can react with fanatical rage to attempts at forcible change and can be easily

11. Nietzsche, *op. cit.*, section 12, p. 55.

12. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, tr. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), p. 121.

roused to react in this way. The ancient religious ideas do an immense amount for them, and the loss of such ideas would mean that the lives of whole generations were a failure and meaningless. Theoretical enlightenment is almost powerless here. Only through daily experience of modern consumer goods and, ultimately, of a more advanced way of life generally will the old ideas gradually change and new concepts of earth and world, birth and death, body and soul win a place.

It would be a mistake to see in religious ideas anything but mediated images of the earthly relationships which are imposed on men by their work. But it is also true, nonetheless, that these ideas have a definite social effect on the psychic development of each individual. Bouglé, in his fundamental studies of the caste system, judges that we may not attribute the establishment of the system to priestly fraud alone, and goes on to say: "It was the practice of worship by small groups in the early familial communities that now prevents the castes from mingling; it is reverence before the mysterious effects of sacrifice that in the last analysis subordinates the other castes to the priestly caste."<sup>13</sup> But this fact does not militate against the economic interpretation of history, as he thinks. It rather points to a basic feature which dominates Indian history. Bouglé himself saw that the caste system was originally a social principle of extraordinary importance for Indian life and only with the passage of time became a dead weight: "The caste system undoubtedly had the advantage of freeing society from barbarism through the order thus imposed on it. But the system also threatens very quickly to slow down society's progress, and that for a long period, on the path of civilization."<sup>14</sup>

The opposition which the caste system, because of its religious backing, offers to the spread of new social forms does not mean that religion is independent of the material life of society. It means only that religion can, like other cultural institutions which have finally achieved stability and strength, either bind society to a given form or disrupt it, that it exercises productive

13. Charles Bouglé, *Sur le régime des castes* (Paris, 1908), p. 82.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

or obstructive functions. The idea of "cultural lag" has its basis here. "Cultural lag" means that at the present time social life depends on material factors and that change occurs more quickly in areas immediately related to the economy than in other cultural spheres. The contemporary situation in China and India, of which we have spoken, does not prove, however, as Ogburn seems to think,<sup>15</sup> that the dependence is occasionally in the other direction. It proves only that the introduction of a new mode of production tends to be hindered initially by cultural factors connected with the old mode, so that conflicts at the intellectual level precede the victory of the new.

As these examples show, a particular culture exercises its power of resistance through the reactions of the men who make it up, and these reactions are characteristic for that culture. As elements in the historical context, these traits belong to the culture; as human characteristics with a relative stability they have become natural. To the extent that they consist not of customs and interests more or less closely connected with material existence but of so-called spiritual ideas, they have no independent reality. Their tenaciousness is due rather to the fact that because of their situation within society as a whole, members of a particular social group have developed a psychic make-up in the dynamics of which certain attitudes play an important role. In other words, the tenacity of these attitudes is due to the fact that men cling to them passionately. A whole system of institutions, itself belonging to the structure of society, interacts with this psychic make-up in so far as it continually strengthens it and helps it spread and, on the other hand, is in turn maintained and promoted by it.

It is therefore understandable that in philosophical and sociological theories cultural institutions are sometimes regarded as expressions of the human psyche, while at other times the shape of the psyche is considered a function of cultural forces. Both viewpoints, the subjectivist-anthropological and the objec-

15. Cf. William F. Ogburn, "Change, Social," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson (New York: Macmillan, 1930), volume 3, pp. 330-34, and other writings.

tivist, have their justification, since at particular periods of history the one or the other element is more strongly to the fore and the interaction of the two is diversely structured. In any case, the preservation of outmoded forms of society, for example, cannot be immediately ascribed to an exercise of naked power or to a deception of the masses concerning their material interests. The fact that both of these occur, as well as the manner in which they occur, are themselves conditioned by the dispositions of men at any given point in history. Thus the preservation of outmoded structures, too, has its source in "human nature."

The term "human nature" here does not refer to an original or an eternal or a uniform essence. Every philosophical doctrine which sees the movement of society or the life of the individual as emerging out of a fundamental, ahistorical unity is open to justified criticism. Such theories with their undialectical method have special difficulty in coming to grips with the fact that new individual and social qualities arise in the historical process. Their reaction to this fact either takes the form of mechanical evolution: all human characteristics which arise at a later point were originally present in germ; or it takes the form of some variety of philosophical anthropology: these characteristics emerge from a metaphysical "ground" of being. These mutually opposed theories fail to do justice to the methodological principle that vital processes are marked by structural change no less than by continuous development. For example, in many social groups, as today among the lower classes and the peasants in many parts of Europe, everything that seems to be human nature or character is so compounded of intimidation, powerless desires, distorted ideas, and oppressive conditions, that radical changes in the economic and social spheres could extinguish and transform within a few years what had previously been regarded as an eternal essence. This does not mean, however, that previous conditions had militated against a supposed "true human nature" which now would come into its own. It means rather that the relationship between the powers and needs of such men, on the one hand, and their way of life, on

the other hand, had become so strained in the course of time that outward change must bring a sudden psychic change in its wake.

The relatively stable system of long-practiced, effortless behavior which men of a particular period and class manifest, the manner in which they accept their situation with the help of conscious and unconscious psychic practices, the infinitely differentiated and continuously revised structure of preferences, acts of faith, evaluations, and fantasies by which men in a particular social stratum come to terms with their material circumstances and with the limitations imposed on their real satisfactions, the set of internal contrivances which despite its complexity is for the most part the daughter of necessity—all this is preserved in many instances only because to leave the old way of life and to adopt a new one, especially if the latter demands increased rational activity, requires strength and courage; in brief, it requires an immense psychic effort. This is also one reason why changes of world-wide historical importance cannot be expected to occur if men must first change themselves. They are usually accomplished by the action of groups in which an established psychic make-up does not play the decisive role and in which knowledge itself has become a vital force. In so far as the continuance of all social forms goes, the dominant force is not insight but human patterns of reaction which have become stabilized in interaction with a system of cultural formations on the basis of the social life-process. Among these patterns of reaction is the conscious and unconscious capacity, which conditions the individual at every step, to conform and to subordinate himself; the ability to accept existing conditions in one's thought and action, to live in dependence on a pre-given order of things and on an alien will; in brief, the existence of authority as an essential factor throughout the whole of human existence. One function of the entire cultural apparatus at any given period has been to internalize in men of subordinate position the idea of a necessary domination of some men over others, as determined by the course of history down to the present time. As a result and as a continually renewed condition of this cultural appa-

ratus, the belief in authority is one of the driving forces, sometimes productive, sometimes obstructive, of human history.

## 2. AUTHORITY

The simple collection and narration of events is being more and more regarded today as a preparation rather than as the goal in dealing with history. In opposition to the positivist conception of science, there is an ever more decisive acceptance of the demand that the presentation of history should not be a stringing together of isolated facts which represent essentially the subjective capabilities, the taste, and the "outlook" of the historian, but the application of consciously methodical work which rests on theoretical knowledge. To the extent that both these changes have taken place, authority proves ever more clearly to be a dominant category in the historian's apparatus of concepts. It has, in fact, as Hegel says, "much greater weight in determining men's opinions than people are inclined to believe."<sup>16</sup> The great attention presently being given to authority may be conditioned by the special historical circumstances of our time and especially by the rise of the so-called authoritarian forms of the State. But in this historical situation we are nonetheless confronted with a reality that has been decisive in the whole of past history as well.

In all the forms of society which have developed out of the undifferentiated primitive communities of prehistory, either a few men dominate, as in relatively early and simple situations, or certain groups of men rule over the rest of the people, as in more developed forms of society. In other words, all these forms of society are marked by the superordination or subordination of classes. The majority of men have always worked under the leadership and command of a minority, and this dependence has always found expression in a more wretched kind of material existence for them. We have already pointed out that

16. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, tr. by J. Sibree (London: Bell, 1894), p. 437.

simple coercion alone does not maintain such a state of affairs and that men have learned to approve of it. Amid all the radical differences between human types from different periods of history, all have in common that their essential characteristics are determined by the power-relationships proper to society at any given time. People have for more than a hundred years abandoned the view that character is to be explained in terms of the completely isolated individual, and they now regard man as at every point a socialized being. But this also means that men's drives and passions, their characteristic dispositions and reaction-patterns are stamped by the power-relationships under which the social life-process unfolds at any time. The class system within which the individual's outward life runs its course is reflected not only in his mind, his ideas, his basic concepts and judgments, but also in his inmost life, in his preferences and desires. Authority is therefore a central category for history. The fact that it plays so decisive a part in the life of groups and individuals at all periods and in the most diverse areas of the world is due to the structure of human society up to the present time. Over the whole time-span embraced by historical writing, men have worked in more or less willing obedience to command and direction (apart from the marginal instances in which slaves in chains have been whipped into field and mine). Because the activity which kept society alive and in the accomplishment of which men were therefore molded occurred in submission to an external power, all relationships and patterns of reaction stood under the sign of authority.

A general definition of authority would necessarily be almost empty of content, but this is true of all definitions which attempt to capture elements of social life in a way that would be valid for all of history. Such a definition may be more or less apt; it remains, however, not only abstract but distorted and untrue until it is related to all other definitions of social realities. The general concepts which provide a basis for a theory of society can be correctly understood only in connection with all the other general and special concepts in the theory; that is, they can be understood only as elements in a given theoretical struc-

ture. In addition, the interrelationships of all these concepts are continually changing, as are those of the whole logical structure itself to reality. It follows that the concrete (that is, true) definition of such a category is, in the last analysis, the developed theory of society as it operates, at a historical moment, in connection with particular practico-historical tasks. Abstract definitions contain, in unmediated juxtaposition, the opposed elements of meaning which the concept has accumulated due to historical changes. Thus, for example, the nonhistorical and theoretically unelaborated concept of religion embraces both knowledge and superstition. The same holds for "authority."

If we provisionally regard as showing forth authority those internal and external behaviors in which men submit to an external source of command, we can see immediately the contradictory character of this category. Authority-behavior may be in the true and conscious interests of individuals and groups. The citizens of a city in antiquity, defending themselves against a foreign invader's attack, or any community acting according to a plan, act under the sign of authority in as much as the individuals do not at each moment make their own judgment but depend on a superordinate plan (which, of course, may have come into existence through their cooperation). Through whole ages of history, subordination was in the interests of those who were ruled, as is the subordination of a child who receives a good education. It was a condition for the development of mankind's capabilities. But even at such times as dependence was doubtless suitable in view of the state of human powers and of the instruments at men's disposal, it has up to now brought renunciations with it for those who were dependent. In periods of stagnation and retrogression, the acceptance of existing forms of dependence, necessary for the survival of society in its given form, meant for subordinates the continuation of their intellectual and material powerlessness and became a drag on human development generally.

Authority as accepted dependence can thus imply a relationship which fosters progress, is in the interests of all parties, and favors the development of human powers. But it can also sum



up in one word all those social relationships and ideas which have long since lost their validity, are now artificially maintained, and are contrary to the true interests of the majority. Authority is the ground for a blind and slavish submission which originates subjectively in psychic inertia and inability to make one's own decisions and which contributes objectively to the continuation of constraining and unworthy conditions of life. But authority is also the ground for consciously accepted and disciplined toil in a flourishing society. Yet these two kinds of existence differ as sleeping and waking, imprisonment and freedom. Only an analysis of the social situation in its totality can provide an answer to certain questions. For example, does the acceptance of an existing relationship of dependence both in principle and in a submission in daily life, even in one's innermost feelings, really correspond to the state of development of human powers at the time in question? Do men, in accepting a dependent life either instinctively or with full awareness, deceive themselves about the measure of self-development and happiness they can achieve, or do they help to further these goals for themselves and for mankind? Does unconditional submission to a political leader or a party point historically forwards or backwards? The acceptance of rank which was characteristic of absolutism and the subordination of the middle classes to a princely aristocracy were, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even to some degree in the eighteenth centuries, a productive factor in historical development, depending on the situation in various countries. In the nineteenth century, however, such behavior became the mark of reactionary groups.

According as the acknowledged dependence is justified by the objective role of the dominant class or, on the contrary, has lost its reasonable necessity, those who practice it will seem, in comparison with other men of the age, either alert, active, productive, free, and farsighted, or slavish, interiorly dulled, embittered, and treacherous. But even this correlation cannot be applied mechanically. The psychic significance of the acceptance of authority depends on the role of the authority-relationship in its time, on its specific content, and on the degree of

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differentiation among the individuals it embraces. Furthermore, conscious acceptance or rejection really does not say much about the effects of the relationship on the interior life of the individual. Some categories of Roman slaves could accept their slavery without their thinking thereby becoming slavish. On the other hand, when the majority of their masters in the time of the Caesars took refuge in a system of military tyrants and submitted to them in cowardly fashion even when they turned out bad, they were already serving notice of their powerlessness on the stage of world history. In any case, the strengthening or weakening of authorities is one of those characteristics which make culture a dynamic factor in the historical process. The weakening of relationships of dependence which are deeply rooted in the conscious and unconscious life of the masses is among the greatest dangers that can threaten a societal structure and indicates that the structure has become brittle. Conscious exaltation of the status quo is evidence that a society is in a critical period and even becomes a "main source of danger."<sup>17</sup> Convulsive efforts to renew and strengthen society, such as the crosses in the Roman arena or the pyres of the Inquisition, signal either the collapse of a social order or a period of stagnation in human development.

Bourgeois thought begins as a struggle against the authority of tradition and replaces it with reason as the legitimate source of right and truth. It ends with the deification of naked authority as such (a conception no less empty of determinate content than the concept of reason), since justice, happiness, and freedom for mankind have been eliminated as historically possible solutions. If we look not so much to Descartes' subjective intention as to his historical effect, this thinker, regarded as creator of the first system of bourgeois philosophy, proves to be a champion in the fight against the principle of authority in any kind of thinking. Buckle, a very perceptive and typical historian of bourgeois society, writes of Descartes:

17. Harold J. Laski, *Authority in the Modern State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 387.

He deserves the gratitude of posterity, not so much on account of what he built up, as on account of what he pulled down. His life was one great and successful warfare against the prejudices and traditions of men. He was great as a creator, but he was far greater as a destroyer. In this respect he was the true successor of Luther, to whose labors his own were the fitting supplement. He completed what the great German reformer had left undone. He bore to the old systems of philosophy precisely the same relation that Luther bore to the old systems of religion. He was the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect.<sup>18</sup>

This liberation refers especially to the fight against belief in authority. The mainstream of bourgeois philosophy down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite all its internal contradictions, is marked by a recurring rejection of authority-motivated behavior. The attack of the English and French Enlightenment on theology is not directed, in its greatest representatives, against the acceptance of God's existence as such. Voltaire's deism, for instance, was certainly not insincere. But he could not comprehend the monstrous idea that men ought to acquiesce in earthly injustice; his kindness of heart played tricks on the most acute mind of the century. The Enlightenment was not attacking the claim that God exists, but the acceptance of God on pure authority. Locke, instructor in philosophy to the Enlightenment, wrote: "Revelation must be judged by reason . . . Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything . . . Belief [is] no proof of revelation."<sup>19</sup> In the last analysis a man must apply his own intellectual powers and not be dependent on authority.

In this sense Kant, too, belonged to the Enlightenment. "*Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own reason," is its device, according to him. "Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why, long after nature has freed men from alien guidance

18. Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* (3 vols. London: Longmans Green, new edition, 1894), volume 2, chapter 1, p. 82.

19. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 4, chapter 19, nos. 14–15, in *The Works of John Locke* (London, 1823; reprinted, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1963), volume 3, pp. 156–57.

(*naturaliter maiorennnes*), so many are content to live out their lives as minors and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians."<sup>20</sup> For Kant the moral law expresses "nothing else than the autonomy of the pure, practical reason, i.e., freedom."<sup>21</sup> The whole content of Fichte's philosophy, if we are to take him at his word, consists in a call to be interiorly independent, to put aside all views and behaviors that are based solely on authority. For all bourgeois writers the most contemptuous description of a man is "slave," and this holds especially for Fichte. His stress on interior freedom (still linked with a vehement and rather utopian will to change the world) corresponds to the attitude, especially widespread in Germany, which comes to terms with external oppression by affirming the freedom within one's own heart and by stressing more strongly the independence of the spiritual person, the more the real person is enslaved. When one became too painfully aware of the contradiction between inward and outward, one could effect a reconciliation by bringing the interior self into harmony with outside reality rather than subjecting intractable reality to one's own will. If freedom consists in the formal agreement of outward reality and inward decision, then it has nothing to fear; all that is needed is for each person to accept the historical process and his own place in it. For contemporary philosophy such is, in fact, true freedom: "To accept whatever happens."<sup>22</sup>

For Fichte, however, the refusal of authority-based thinking is not converted into an acceptance of reality as given. He defines reason as essentially the contrary of authority. His message that one must be unwilling to submit sounds, admittedly, like mere phrasemaking in comparison with Kant and the French, and his opposition to the existing order of things is already too much a matter of principle to be wholly irreconcilable. All the more clearly, then, at least in his early writings, does the ideal

20. Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in *Werke* (Akademie-Ausgabe), vol. 8, p. 35.

21. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by Lewis White Beck (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), Part 1, Book 1, Chapter 1, no. 8, pp. 33-34.

22. Arnold Gehlen, *Theorie der Willensfreiheit* (Berlin, 1933), p. 133.

of bourgeois thought emerge. "Anyone who acts on authority, necessarily acts without principle." That is "a very important proposition, and it is urgently necessary to present it in its full rigor."<sup>23</sup> The circle of people whom the cultivated man addresses has reached "an absolute unbelief in the authority of the social convictions of their time."

The characteristic mark of a cultivated public is absolute freedom and independence of thought; its outlook is formed by the determination to submit to no authority whatsoever, and in all matters to rely on its own reflection while rejecting without qualification anything which it cannot thus confirm. The cultivated man is distinguished from the uncultivated in this way: the latter thinks, of course, that he has reached his convictions through his own reflection, and so he has; but if you can see further than he, you discover that his ideas on State and Church follow the opinions most current at the time . . . As well-informed inquiry is unqualifiedly free, so must access to such inquiry be open to everyone. If a man can no longer give internal credence to authority, it is against his conscience to believe in it further, and it is his moral duty to join the cultivated public . . . State and Church must allow such cultivated people to go their way; otherwise they would be forcing consciences, and no one could live with a good conscience in such a State or such a Church; for, should he begin to have doubts about authority, he would be helpless to act . . . Both institutions must accept cultivated people, that is, accept what constitutes their very being: absolute and unlimited communication of ideas. Anything that anyone thinks he is convinced of, he must be able to speak of, however dangerous and profligate it may seem.<sup>24</sup>

Fichte made the relation between reason and authority his criterion for determining the stages of development of mankind. In his *The Characteristics of the Present Age*, he claims that "it is the end of the earthly life of the human race to order all its relations with freedom according to reason."<sup>25</sup> He also ac-

23. Fichte, *Das System der Sittenlehre von 1798*, Chapter 3, no. 15, in *Werke* (Medicus-Ausgabe), volume, 2, p. 179.

24. Fichte, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3, no. 18, p. 253.

25. Fichte, *The Characteristics of the Present Age*, tr. by William Smith (London: John Chapman, 1847), p. 44.

knowledges, in this book, that his own principle prevails in the bourgeois world, but maintains that it is distorted in the process. The absence of authority, as found among the bourgeoisie, seems to him a yielding to the popular opinion of the day and thus takes on a two-sided character in his terminology. The initially sharp opposition between reason and authority is increasingly softened by the desire to ground authority in reason. The age of romanticism is beginning, and Fichte's thinking affords room for the polarities or unreconciled contradictions of the bourgeois mind and becomes more and more contemplative. Yet as late as 1815 he defines the "progress of history" thus:

Reason captures more and more ground from faith, until it has wholly annihilated it and taken up its content into the nobler form of clear insight; reason increasingly batters down the outworks of faith and forces it to withdraw into its stronghold in a determined direction and according to a determined pattern . . . We understand a historical age when we can estimate how much the age is shaped by reason and how much by faith, and at what precise points the two principles are in opposition . . . The struggle can only be ended when reason emerges in a fully purified form, that is, eliminates all vestiges of faith . . . Such a development is the very reality of history, which therefore consists of faith and reason, the conflict between the two, and the victory of reason over faith.<sup>26</sup>

That the struggle against dependence on authority should in modern times change directly into a deification of authority as such is a development rooted in the origins of the struggle. Authority was the basis, in Protestantism, for liberation from papal power and a return to the word. According to Calvinism,

the one great offence of man is self-will. All the good of which humanity is capable is comprised in obedience. You have no choice; thus you must do, and no otherwise: "whatever is not a duty, is a sin." . . . To one holding this theory of life, crushing out any of the human faculties, capacities, and susceptibilities, is no evil.<sup>27</sup>

26. Fichte, *Die Staatslehre, oder über das Verhältnis des Urstaates zum Vernunftreich*, in *Werke* (Medicus-Ausgabe), volume 6, pp. 539ff.

27. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government* (New York: Dutton, 1910), pp. 119-20.

The independence urged upon men was conceived in an essentially negative way even in secular literature: as a general independence in thought and action from a tradition that had become a straitjacket. The untenableness of medieval systems of property and law became evident in the increasing disproportion between the inadequate results of the feudal mode of production and the growing needs of the masses of people in city and countryside, as well as in the related incapacity of civil and ecclesiastical bureaucracies which had become demoralized as their concerns failed to match the needs of an ever more complicated society. The principle which held sway in this world in decline was that worth depended on pure tradition, that is, birth, custom, and age. That principle was now contested by the rising bourgeois mentality, which instead preached individual accomplishment through theoretical and practical work as a social criterion. But the conditions needed for such accomplishment were not everywhere to be found in the same degree, and so life under the new principle was hard and oppressive despite an enormous growth in the productivity of work. The wretchedness of the masses in the periods of absolutism and liberalism, as well as the hunger that persisted despite a strikingly increased social wealth in the form of raw materials and methods of production, show that the liberation from tradition was in fact limited to a few.

In philosophy this state of affairs finds expression in the abstractness of the concept of the individual, that basic concept of modern thought. The abstractness emerges clearly in Leibniz especially: the individual is a self-enclosed, metaphysical center of power, separated from the rest of the world, an absolutely isolated monad which is made self-dependent by God. Its destiny, according to Leibniz, lies within its own determination, and its stages of development, its happiness or unhappiness, depend on its own internal dynamism. It is responsible for itself; what it is and what befalls it depend on its own will and God's decree. Such a separation of individual from society and nature (closely connected with the other philosophical dualisms of thought and being, substance and appearance, body and spirit,

sense and understanding) turns the concept of the free individual, which is the bourgeois answer to the Middle Ages, into an almost metaphysical essence. The individual is to be handed over to himself. His dependence on the social conditions of real existence is forgotten and he is regarded, even in the days of absolutism but especially after its collapse, as sovereign.

Because the individual was regarded as wholly isolated and complete in himself, it could seem that the dismantling of the old authorities was the only thing required if he was to exercise his full potential. In reality, the liberation meant, before all else, that the majority of people were delivered up to the fearful exploitation of the factory system. The self-dependent individual found himself confronted with an external power to which he must accommodate himself. According to the theory, the individual was not to acknowledge the judgment of any human authority as binding upon him without first subjecting it to the test of reason. In fact, he now stood alone in the world and must adapt himself or perish. The network of relationships itself became authoritative. The Middle Ages had connected the earthly order of things with God's decree and to that extent regarded it as meaningful. In the modern period, on the contrary, all real situations are brute facts which do not embody any meaning but are simply to be accepted. It is evident that class distinctions were not from God; it is not yet recognized that they did arise out of the human process of work. These distinctions and the relations connected with them appear to the sovereign individual, the metaphysical substance of bourgeois thought, to be something alien; they appear to be a self-contained reality, another principle confronting the knowing and acting subject. Bourgeois philosophy is dualist by its very nature, even when it takes the form of pantheism. When it attempts to bridge the gap between self and world by means of thought and to present nature and history as the expression, embodiment, or symbol of the human essence, it is already acknowledging reality as a principle which has its own rights and is not to be regarded as dependent on man and changeable at his will but as meaningful being that must be interpreted and



read like a "cryptogram."<sup>28</sup> Authorities are allegedly done away with and then reappear philosophically in the form of metaphysical concepts. Philosophy at this point is only a reflection of what has happened in society. Men have been freed from the limitations of the old, divinely sanctioned property system. The new one is regarded as natural, as the manifestation of a thing-in-itself which is beyond discussion and eludes human influence. Here, then, is a philosophical system in which the individual is conceived, not in his involvement with society and nature, but abstractly and as a purely intellectual essence, a being which must now think of the world and acknowledge it as an eternal principle and perhaps as the expression of his own true being. Precisely in such a system is the imperfection of the individual's freedom mirrored, his powerlessness amid an anarchic inhuman reality which is rent by contradictions.

The proud claim that no authority is to be recognized unless it can justify itself to reason proves to be a flimsy one when the categories of such awareness are subjected to internal analysis. The seeming validity of the claim can be shown to derive in two ways from the underlying social reality. It springs in every case out of the obscurity of the production process in a bourgeois society, but acquires a different meaning in the life of each of the two social classes involved. The independent entrepreneur is regarded in a free-trade economy as independent in his decisions. What wares he produces, what kind of machines he uses, how he combines the talents of men and machines, where he decides to build his factory: all this seems to depend on his free decision, on his breadth of vision and creative energy. The importance assigned to genius and to qualities of leadership in modern economic and philosophical literature derives from the situation just described. "I insist . . . emphatically on the importance of genius, and the necessity of allowing it to unfold itself freely both in thought and practice," says John Stuart Mill,<sup>29</sup> and he adds the widespread complaint that society does

28. Cf. Karl Jasper, *Philosophy*, vol. III, tr. by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), ch. 4, pp. 113-208.

29. Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

not allow genius enough free play. This enthusiasm for genius, which has since become a characteristic of the average man's consciousness, could help increase the influence of the great economic leaders because in the present system economic projects are largely a matter of divination, that is, of hunches. For the small-scale businessman the situation today is still what it was for the whole class of businessmen during the liberal period. In his planning he may indeed draw on earlier experience and find assistance in his own psychological sensitivity and his knowledge of the economic and political scene. But when all is said and done, the real decision on the value of his product and thus of his own activity depends on the market and necessarily has an irrational element, since the market in turn depends on the working of conflicting and uncontrollable forces. The manufacturer in his planning is as dependent as any medieval artisan on the needs of society; in that respect he is no freer, but the lack of freedom is not brought home to him, as it was to the artisan, by the wishes of a limited and set body of customers or in the form of a demand for service by a lord of the manor. The manufacturer's dependence is expressed, instead, in the salableness of his wares and the profit he seeks, and shows its power over him when he balances his accounts at the end of the business year. The exchange value of the product also determines its practical value to the user, inasmuch as the material composition of the goods being sold is in a measure predetermined by the raw materials needed, the machinery of production which must be kept in repair, and the men required to run the machines. In other words, the value of the wares expresses ascertainable relations between material realities. But in the present order this connection between value and society's needs is mediated not only by calculable psychic and political factors but also by a sum-total of countless uncontrollable events.

The classical period of this state of affairs passed with liberalism. In the present age, marked as it is by the struggles of great monopolies rather than, as formerly, by the competition of countless individuals, the individual capacity to make correct guesses about the market, to calculate and speculate, has been

replaced by the extensive mobilization of whole nations for violent confrontations. But the small businessman passes on his own difficulties, in intensified form, to the leaders of the industrial trusts. And if he himself must continue to maneuver amid oppressive circumstances in order not to go under, then such leaders, he thinks, must be geniuses to stay on top of the heap. They may learn from personal experience that what they must develop in themselves is not the spiritual qualities of their predecessors but the ruthless steadfastness required if an economic and political oligarchy is to rule the modern masses. In any event, these leaders do not consider social reality to be clear and comprehensible. On the one hand, the population of their own country and all the hostile power-groups make their presence felt as dangerous natural forces which must be restrained or cleverly manipulated. On the other, the mechanisms of the world market are no less perplexing than more limited forms of competition are, and the leaders accept and even promote the belief of their class that to be a master of the economy takes the instincts of genius. They too experience society as a self-contained and alien principle, and freedom for them essentially means that they can adapt themselves to this reality by active or passive means, instead of having to deal with it according to a uniform plan. In the present economic system society appears to be as blind as subrational nature. For men do not use communal reflection and decision to regulate the process by which they earn their living in association with others. Instead, the production and distribution of all the goods needed for life take place amid countless uncoordinated actions and interactions of individuals and groups.

In the totalitarian state the heightening of external oppositions has only seemingly relaxed those within. In fact, the latter are simply covered up in all sorts of ways. Now as formerly, though now awareness of it is suppressed, the war-and-peace politics of Europe is still dominant, even if when dealing with economic problems concern for the system as such takes precedence over economic motives in the narrower sense and lends politics for the moment the air of greater consistency and unity.

History in the modern era is not like a planned struggle of mankind with nature and the uninterrupted development of all its aptitudes and powers, but like a meaningless ebb and flow to which the individual, according to his class situation, can respond more or less shrewdly. At the heart of the freedom and seeming originality of the entrepreneur, whose calling contributes to the heightening of his authority, there is adaptation to a social situation in which mankind does not control its own destiny, subjection to a purposeless process instead of rational regulation of it, dependence on an irrational condition of society which one must try to profit by instead of shaping it in its totality. In brief, within this freedom there lurks an originally inevitable and now retrogressive surrender of freedom, an acceptance of the blind power of chance, a long since discredited authority-relationship. This dependence of the entrepreneur, arising out of the irrational character of the economic process, is manifested in a helplessness before deepening crises and a universal perplexity even among the leaders of the economy. Bankers, manufacturers, and merchants, as the characteristic literature of recent centuries shows, have completely divested themselves of humility. But simultaneously they have come to experience social reality as a superordinate but blind power and, contrary to medieval practice, have allowed their relationships to other men to be ruled by a faceless economic necessity. Thus a new and powerful authority has come into being. In decisions on the fate of men, the hiring and firing of the laboring masses, the ruin of farmers over whole sectors of the world, the unleashing of wars, and so on, caprice has been replaced not by freedom but by blind economic necessity, an anonymous god who enslaves men and is invoked by those who have no power over him but have received advantages from him. Men in power have ceased to act as representatives of heavenly and earthly authority and consequently have become mere functions of the laws inherent in their power. It is not their boasted inner decision that motivates the apparently free entrepreneurs but a soulless economic dynamism, and they have no way of opposing this state of affairs except by surrendering their very existence.

The fullest possible adaptation of the subject to the reified authority of the economy is the form which reason really takes in bourgeois society.

As the role of the entrepreneur in the process of production shows how illusory the philosophical rejection of authority was, so too does the life of the worker. It is well known that the worker became acquainted only late in history with the idea of external freedom in the sense of a free choice of calling, and even then under severe restrictions due to poverty. In the first half of the fifteenth century, when the economy was shifting to cattle-raising, the landowners drove their tenants from the land by force and trickery. Thus, they liberated the workers in a negative way, that is, they stripped them of every means of earning a living. But in the circumstances of European history such a liberation did not mean that the worker could now choose his own place and type of work. The mass executions of tramps in this period introduce the long history of the free worker's wretchedness. From the end of the seventeenth century on, when factories, which had existed in Italy as early as the thirteenth century, gradually acquired importance alongside home industries, they were places of horror. Their usual connection with orphanages, asylums, and hospitals did not mean that the place of work was simultaneously a hospital but rather that the hospital became a workplace and that men died of toil rather than of illness. The doctrine that the isolated individual determines his own destiny showed its full social implications only in the 1830s in liberal England, but it had already found clear enough expression in previous centuries in the mercilessness with which men were forced to labor in mines and factories. Antiquity and the early Middle Ages were periods of cruelty, but with the increasing need for workers in the growing economy of free exchange, the compulsion upon the masses to submit to killing labor was rationalized into a moral imperative. Correspondingly, measures were taken not only against the poor but against all helpless people: children, the aged, the ill. The 1618 edict of the Great Elector on the establishment of houses of correction, spinning rooms, and factories in which all men

without work, along with their children, should be gathered, by force if necessary, was aimed not only at strengthening the textile industry but also at habituating shrinkers to work.<sup>30</sup>

Such a move is typical of the mentality of the time, but the mentality persisted through the eighteenth century. "Frederick the Great regarded it as so important for children to be kept busy, that during a stay at Hirschberg in Silesia in 1766 he offered to send the merchants a thousand children, ten to twelve years old, to be used for spinning. The refusal of the offer aroused his deep displeasure."<sup>31</sup> He sent orphans to a businessman who complained of the quality of workers imported from Holland and Denmark. In 1788 children from the Potsdam orphanage were transferred to another manufacturer. France, England, and Holland regarded it as thoroughly permissible to use children from the age of four on as workers in home industries and factories generally, and, obviously, to use the elderly and the ill in the same way. Rarely do we come across a law protecting children from the mines. The work day was never less than thirteen hours and was frequently even longer. There was no question of the worker's free choice: workers in the home industries could not work for foreign employers, nor could those in the factories leave their place of work without the employer's permission. When children ran away after being forced into the various workshops, with or without their families' consent, they were recaptured with the help of the authorities. Strikes were severely punished and wages were deliberately kept low, with the approval or even at the express orders of the government. Spinoza's friend and patron, de Witt, demanded an official lowering of wages. The conviction was widespread that as long as a worker had money in his pocket or the smallest credit, he would fall into the vice of idleness, that is, in more realistic terms, he would absolutely refuse to submit to murderous working conditions. Such was the typical

30. Cf. Josef Kulischer, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, volume 2 (Berlin, 1929), p. 151.

31. Kulischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-88; cf. also pp. 115-97 and other economic histories such as those of Herkner, Gothein, and Cunow.

economic thinking of the eighteenth century that it took the progressiveness of a Turgot to criticize seriously the practice of keeping workers in factories against their will, and the whole life experience of a Voltaire to establish the fact that labor can turn from necessity to scourge. "Man is born for action," Voltaire wrote in 1720, "as fire rises and stone falls. To be inactive and not to exist are the same thing for him. The only difference is between peaceful or troubled, dangerous or useful occupations." Fifty years later, he added another sentence to the passage: "Job said rightly: Man is born for sorrow as the bird for flight, but the flying bird can be taken in the snare."<sup>32</sup>

Our concern here, however, is not the contradiction between the existence of the masses, who were not indeed serfs but were exploited in the most terrible way, and that doctrine of man's freedom and dignity which was dominant in philosophy ever since Pico della Mirandola's time. We are concerned rather with one element of the work relationship in modern times, namely, the camouflaging of authority as it actually operates for the worker. In the work system which was set up almost everywhere in nineteenth-century Europe, the relation between employer and workers was based on the so-called free contract. Even when workers banded together in trade unions and partially surrendered their own freedom of movement by commissioning their officers to negotiate contracts, the contracts were ultimately the decision of the workers. "The establishment of relations between the independent manufacturers and the industrial workers is, within the limits set by imperial law, the object of free agreement," said the *Trade Regulations of the German Empire* (Para. 105). But the freedom had other and more important limits than those set by imperial law, limits arising not out of nature or the low level of development of human powers but out of the particular character of the dominant form of society, and yet seeming to be unchangeable limits which men could only accept. When both parties in the work relationship passed as free, there was an unwitting abstrac-

32. Voltaire, *Remarques sur les Pensées de M. Pascal*, in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Garnier), volume 22 (1883-85), pp. 41-42.

tion from the fact that pressure to enter into the relationship operated differently on each side. The worker was poor and was competing against his whole class at the national and international levels. Behind each worker waited hunger and misery. His contracting partner, on the contrary, had on his side not only the means of production, a broader horizon, influence on the power of the State, and the whole range of propaganda possibilities, but credit as well.

This distinction between rich and poor was socially conditioned, established and maintained by men, and yet it pretended to be a necessity of nature, as though men could do nothing to modify it. The individual worker was more deeply dependent on the settlement of a contract than his partner and, for the most part, found the conditions already established to which he must adapt himself. The conditions were not by any means arbitrarily devised and dictated by the businessman. On the contrary, the latter could easily point out the limitations he was under to the union officials who sought certain improvements: his ability to compete with other businessmen at home and abroad. This very reference, which the unions had to acknowledge as valid, manifested the essential trait of the dominant system, namely, that the kind and context of work was determined not by the conscious will of society but by the blind interaction of unintegrated forces. This was the trait which determined the businessman's lack of freedom. The distinction between employer and worker lay in the fact that this impersonal necessity (in which, of course, the whole conscious effort of individuals and peoples, along with the political and cultural system, played an important part) represented for the employer the condition for his control and for the worker a pitiless fate. Submission to economic circumstances, which the worker accepted in a free contract, was also a submission to the private will of the employer. In acknowledging the authority of economic facts the worker was in practice acknowledging the power and authority of the employer. To the extent that he accepted the kind of idealistic doctrines of freedom, equality, and the absolute sovereignty of reason which were widely held in the



last century, and to the extent that he felt himself to be free even amid the real conditions that prevailed, his consciousness was in fact the outcome of ideology. For the reigning authorities were not cast down from their place, but had simply hidden themselves behind the anonymous power of economic necessity or, as the phrase was, behind the voice of the facts.

The effort to ground in apparently natural circumstances and to present as inescapable the dependence which men experienced even within a bourgeois society which, until the beginning of its most recent phase, rejected the irrational authority of persons and other forces, provides the conscious and unconscious motivation for part of the literature on cultural history. Submission to an external will is justified, not by a simple acceptance of tradition, but by supposed insight into eternal matters of fact. A typical textbook on national economy has this to say:

In so far as the objective nature of work for an employer has effects that are regarded as or are in fact unfavorable, this is inescapable. As we pointed out earlier, work for another demands in all circumstances a personal subordination, a submission of one's own will to that of a leader or director, and therefore brings with it a distinction of social position that will always be unavoidable. In so far as a large part of such work involves danger to life and health and a greater loss of comfort and well being than other kinds of work do, we are faced with evils (assuming the necessity of work to supply the goods men need) that are unavoidable and must ever be endured by one or other sector of society. There is no work system that can eliminate them.<sup>33</sup>

If books like the one quoted show some friendliness to workers, it usually takes the form of insisting that improvement is surely possible in "many factors which make the work relationship disadvantageous to the worker (external working conditions, place and time of work, wages)." But there is also the presupposition that the connection of leadership with a pleasant

33. E. von Philippovich, *Grundriss der politischen Ökonomie*, volume 1 (Tübingen, 1919), p. 155.

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life and work for others with a difficult life, as well as the assignment of the two ways of life to particular social groups, are unchangeable.

In fact, however, this view turns an historical situation into a suprahistorical one. For such a distribution of work and of participation in the gifts of fortune corresponds to a particular stage in the development of human powers and their instrumentalities, and, as history moves on, it loses its productive value. The bourgeois conception of work, according to which subordination is determined no longer by birth but by free contract between private persons and it is not the employer but the economic situation that imperiously pressures men into subordinate roles, had in fact an extremely productive and beneficial outcome. There was objective justification for dependence on an employer and on the social forces behind him, in the form of adaptation to a seemingly purely natural necessity, and for obedience to the person whose wealth made him a leader of production. This state of affairs corresponded to the difference between the capabilities of the undeveloped masses and those of the educated upper stratum, as well as to the fact that techniques for guiding and ordering industry were as yet insufficiently rationalized due to inadequate machinery and an undeveloped system of communication. That men should learn to adapt to a hierarchy was a condition for the immediate growth in productivity that has since ensued and, in addition, for the evolution of individual self-awareness. Consequently the hidden and mediated authority, though for a long time merciless, was yet reasonable in terms of historical development. The irrational shape it took, however, means that it arose not from the historical situation, that is, from the relationship between human capabilities and functions determined in advance by the mode of production, but from objectified anonymous necessity. Such necessity seems to persist when leadership of production by private and competing interests and groups of interests, once a condition of cultural progress, has long since become problematic.

The attitude of the modern period to authority thus turns

out to be less simple than it appears to be in the clear and decisive propositions of many thinkers. The freedom claimed in philosophy is an ideology, that is, a condition that seems necessary because of a specific form of the social life-process. Both the social groups of which we have been speaking could therefore fall victim to it, for each of them, in characteristic ways according to its place in the process of production, was blind to its own unfreedom and to that of the other group. Unfreedom here means a dependence, not grounded in reason, on the ideas, decisions, and actions of other men; that is, it means precisely what bourgeois thinkers objected to about the Middle Ages. One bends to circumstances, adapts to reality. Acceptance of the authority relationship between classes does not take the direct form of acknowledging an inherited claim of the upper classes, but consists in the fact that men regard economic data (for example, the subjective valuations of goods, prices, legal forms, property relationships, and so forth) as immediate or natural facts, and think they are adapting themselves to such facts when they submit to the authority relationship.

This complicated structure of authority had its great flowering under liberalism. But in the period of the totalitarian state, too, it offers a key to the understanding of men's patterns of reaction. Relations of dependence in the economy, which are fundamental for social life, may be fully derived in theory from the State. But that the State itself should be unconditionally accepted by the masses is possible only because such relationships of dependence have not really become a problem for them as yet. Consequently, it is a mistake to try to identify the authority structure of the present period with the relations between leaders and followers and to regard the acceptance of such hierarchies as fundamental. On the contrary, the new authority relationship which is in the foreground of thought and feeling today is itself possible only because that other authority relationship, a more everyday but also a deeper reality, has not yet lost its power. The political leadership is effective because great masses of men consciously and uncon-

sciously accept their economic dependence as necessary or at least do not yet fully realize it, and this situation is in turn consolidated by the political relationship. Once men refuse the de facto relationship of dependence in the economy, once theoretical understanding breaks down the seemingly unconditional economic necessity, once authority in the bourgeois sense collapses, the new authority, too, loses its strongest ideological basis. Therefore an indiscriminate condemnation of authoritarian regimes without regard for the underlying economic structure misses the essential point.

The formation and continuance of irrational authority relationships in undisguised forms is among the factors which strengthen the deeper economic relationship, and the two influence each other. This is already obvious from the spread of Protestantism. The whole political, religious, and philosophical literature of the modern period is filled with praise of authority, obedience, self-sacrifice, and the hard fulfillment of duty. These exhortations, which take on a more austere quality as their addressees' ability to respond to them lessens, are more or less artificially and ingeniously linked with rallying words like reason, freedom, happiness for the largest possible number, and justice for all. Yet in such exhortations the dark side of the reigning state of affairs is manifested. Since the modern mode of production began, it has been found necessary to heighten the already forcible language of economic facts, not only by pressure from politics, religion, and morality, but also by the reverent or ecstatic or masochistic awe men feel before holy and demonic persons and powers. Thus, when philosophy after the First World War was helping prepare the way for the victory of authoritarian regimes, it could appeal to a long tradition. Max Scheler criticized even bourgeois thinkers like Hobbes for trying "to ground the content and essence of 'good' and 'evil' themselves in the norms and commands issuing from authority."<sup>34</sup> He himself takes precautions against helping the

34. Max Scheler, "Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 2 (1916), p. 197.

cause of this "so-called ethics of authority" and, instead, directly deifies "the intrinsic moral value of authority." He claims indeed that "in problems of theoretical knowledge there is no 'authority' and any claims to such are rightly to be met by the principle of 'freedom of research.'" But he also maintains that we can gain insight into "moral values and the claims that spring from them" only on the basis of genuine authority, "by *first* accepting such values in practice, without insight and in response to orders from authority."<sup>35</sup> Scheler's thinking belongs to the transition from the liberal to the totalitarian form of State. Content and structure of the basic forms of authority is not a theme in the typical philosophers of either period.

Yet the authority relationship shapes the features of the age and the nature of the human types which prevail in it. The present-day form of society, like earlier ones, rests upon its own characteristic relation of dependence. Even the apparently independent vocational and private relationships of men are determined by the dependence which is grounded in the mode of production and finds expression in the existence of social classes. The product of this dependence is the individual who feels himself to be free but acknowledges socially conditioned facts as unchangeable and pursues his own interests in the context of reality as given. Before the bourgeoisie won a share in political power, its outlook stressed freedom and trust in individual reason, out of which morality and the essence of the State could be constructed after the fashion of mathematical projections. In the period of bourgeois dominance, under liberalism, this rationalistic temper gave way to the empiricist. But in the public life of the whole age and in its ideological products, both elements stood more or less unconnectedly together: spontaneity of reason and heteronomy, freedom and blind obedience, independence and sense of weakness, lack of respect and uncritical admiration, intransigence in principle and perplexity in practice, formalistic theory

35. Scheler, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

and mindless accumulation of data. Cultural institutions and activities, church, school, literature, etc., keep such contradictions alive in the character of men. The impossibility of overcoming the contradictions in the given circumstances follows from the fact that individuals think they are acting freely, whereas in fact the basic traits of the social order remain uninfluenced by such isolated beings. Men therefore continue simply to accept and confirm where they might be shapers, and to do without the freedom they need ever more urgently, namely, to regulate and direct the social work process and thereby human relations generally in a reasonable way, that is, according to a unified plan in the interests of the generality.

A good instance of the liberal, as he still exists in a relatively strong bourgeois community, presents a picture of freedom, openness, and good will. He knows himself to be the very opposite of a slave. Yet his sense of justice and his clarity of purpose operate within definite limits set by the economic mechanism and do not find expression in an ordering of social reality as a whole. These limits, which he accepts, may change for him and everyone else at a moment's notice, so that he and his might become beggars through no fault of their own. Even in his freedom, kindness, and friendliness, the limits make their presence felt. He is less his own master than he first appears. His sense of personal independence and his corresponding respect for the freedom and dignity of his fellows are noble but abstract and naïve as well.

There is one social fact the acceptance of which as natural most immediately sanctions the existing relations of dependence, and that is the distinction of property. The poor man must work hard to live. As the structural reserve army of industry swells, he must even regard his work as a great benefit and privilege, and he does so to the extent that he belongs to the bourgeois, authority-oriented type. The free sale of his powers of work is the condition for the growth in power of the overlords, yet the discrepancy between merit and power in both cases grows beyond all belief. With the increasing irrationality of the system, the special isolated talents which earlier offered

some chance of greater success and justified the Horatio Alger stories of the proper proportion between merit and reward, become ever more indifferent as compared with extrinsic factors in a person's destiny, and the disproportion between the good life and the hierarchy of human qualities becomes ever clearer. In the portrait of a just society, principles of reason determine each person's share in what society wrests from nature; in society as it is, however, the sharing depends on chance. Acceptance of such a situation is the same as worship of success, that god of the modern world. Success is not meaningfully related to effort, which may surpass that of others in power, intelligence, and progressiveness. The brute fact that a man has reached success and has power, money, and connections is what lifts him above others and forces others into his service. The consciously cultivated reign of social justice has withdrawn into the courtroom and, apart from political issues, seems there to be busied essentially with theft and murder. The blind sentence passed by the economy, that mightier social power which condemns the greater part of mankind to senseless wretchedness and crushes countless human talents, is accepted as inevitable and recognized in practice in the conduct of men. Universal injustice is thus surrounded by the halo of necessity and is, according to modern philosophically oriented piety, not to be compensated for even by a real hell and by the heaven of the blessed. Such an outlook reacts, of course, on the justice of the law-court and devalues its good efforts, not only because those who are its objects have usually already been condemned at the economic judgment seat before they ever committed their crimes, but even in the thoughts and feelings of the judges themselves. In the period when this order of things was flourishing, reason seemed operative in the distribution of happiness and prestige; today that order is bereft of every meaningful necessity, since the equalization of functions in work and the comprehensibility of the apparatus of production are so far advanced, while human capabilities and social wealth have grown as well.

Yet no one is responsible, for limitations on freedom are

also limitations on conscience. Everyone must look out for himself. "Every man for himself," the watchword of the ruthless anarchic masses in the face of destruction, underlies the whole of bourgeois culture. If world history in general is the judgment passed on the world, its particular verdicts take the form of the selection of parents, the state of the labor market, and the rates of exchange. The order of precedence in this society is not expressly accepted as justified, but it is accepted as necessary and thus, after all, as justified. Authority is soulless yet seemingly rational. Man's naïve faith in it finds expression in the idea of a wise God whose ways are marvelous and obscure. The doctrine of predestination, according to which no man knows whether he has been chosen for eternal life or been rejected, reflects the same naïve faith.

Such authority, in the sense of accepted dependence, is not manifested in religion alone, however, but in all of man's artistic and everyday ideas. Even purely objective authority, such as the knowledge a doctor has, is affected by it. He has the good fortune, due to a series of accidental configurations of circumstances, to get an education and to win influence. But this good fortune then appears to him and his patients to be the result rather of greater talent and superior human worth; in other words, an inborn quality rather than a socially conditioned one. This kind of awareness finds stronger expression, the less the patient has to offer the doctor in terms of position, wealth, or at least an interesting illness.

The essential characteristic of this order of things is that work is done under the guidance of authorities who are such because of possessions or other accidents of fortune and are increasingly unable to appeal to any other ground for their authority than that this is the way things are. This trait colors everything that passes today for reason, morality, honor, and greatness. Even real merit, surpassing knowledge, and practical ability are affected and distorted by it. They are regarded less as a widely distributed blessing than a legal title for power and exploitation. The respect given them is given to a bank account, too, and elevates the monied man still higher by



clothing him and the "genius" alike in the same aura of splendor.

Nietzsche, more clearly than any one else, saw the connection between idealism and the state of affairs we have been describing. Hegel, he says,

implanted in a generation leavened throughout by him the worship of the "power of history," that practically turns every moment into a sheer gaping at success, into an idolatry of the actual: for which we have now discovered the characteristic phrase "to adapt ourselves to circumstances." But the man who has once learnt to crook the knee and bow the head before the power of history, nods "yes" at last, like a Chinese doll, to every power, whether it be a government or a public opinion or a numerical majority; and his limbs move correctly as the power pulls the string. If each success have come by a "rational necessity," and every event show the victory of logic or the "Idea," then—down on your knees quickly, and let every step in the ladder of success have its reverence! There are no more living mythologies, you say? Religions are at their last gasp? Look at the religion of the power of history, and the priests of the mythology of Ideas, with their scarred knees! Do not all the virtues follow in the train of the new faith? And shall we not call it unselfishness, when the historical man lets himself be turned into an "objective" mirror of all that is? Is it not magnanimity to renounce all power in heaven and earth in order to adore the mere fact of power? Is it not justice, always to hold the balance of forces in your hand and observe which is the stronger and heavier?<sup>36</sup>

The simple fact that in modern times the external circumstance of having property gives a man power to dispose of others, reduces to secondary rank all the other valuational norms which currently play a role in public life. Social groups which must achieve stability within the existing order and which hope to better their position in it, will maintain a faith in the inevitability of the basic situation, even though it has long since become a ball and chain. There has to be "some"

36. Nietzsche, *Thoughts out of Season, Part II*, tr. by Adrien Collins, in *The Complete Works of Nietzsche*, ed. by Oscar Levy (New York, 1909–11; reissued: New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), volume 5, p. 72.

authority. By this they mean not so much the really effective authority, the one based on private property, as the authority of the State which forces them to submit to the real authority and takes all decisions out of their hands. The effort to sustain this frame of mind and to propagate it as widely as possible among the population as a whole, is at work in all areas of intellectual life. The resultant affirmation of the given social hierarchy and of the mode of production on which it rests, as well as all the psychic impulses and forms of consciousness connected with this affirmation, form one of the intellectual elements by which culture proves to be the cement holding together a society with deep cracks in its walls.

The great psychic energy needed if one is to escape the prevailing outlook is not to be identified with an anarchistic rejection of authority nor with the trained judgment of the expert who can distinguish genuine ability from charlatanry. To the extent that expert judgment concentrates on its object in isolation, it does not do the object justice, for it does not show how genuine accomplishments in art and science are in opposition to the prevailing trend. On the other hand, the radically anti-authority attitude of the anarchist is but an exaggeration of the bourgeois awareness of personal freedom as something to be always and everywhere realized if one but will it so. In other words, the anarchist's attitude flows from the idealist view that material conditions play no real role. But, in fact, the work process as found in human history requires very diverse kinds of knowledge for its effectiveness, and to reject the distinction between the management and execution functions in work is not only utopian but would mean retrogression to the primitive ages of man. The genuine alternative to the bourgeois concept of authority takes the form of detaching authority from egoistic interests and exploitation.

Such an alternative is bound up with the idea of a higher form of society as possible today. Only if the management and execution functions of work are not connected with a well-off and poor life respectively nor divided between set social classes, can the category of authority acquire a new significance. In an

individualistic society capabilities too are a possession which one converts into capital, and generally they derive partly from capital, that is, from a good education and from the encouragement which success brings. If the goods men need in order to live no longer originate in an economy of seemingly free producers, of whom some because of poverty must hire themselves out to others, while the latter manufacture goods not according to human needs but according to what their own solvency requires, and if, instead, such goods originate in the rationally guided efforts of mankind, then the freedom of the abstract individual, who proves really to be in chains, will become the collaborative work of concrete men whose genuine freedom will be limited only by nature and its necessities. In disciplined work men will take their place under an authority, but the authority will only be carrying out the plans that men have made and have decided to implement. The plans themselves will no longer be the result of divergent class interests, for the latter will have lost their foundation and been converted into communal effort. The command of another will express his personal interests only because it also expresses the interests of the generality.

The disciplined obedience of men who strive to bring this state of affairs to pass already reflects another conception of authority. The simple fact of unconditional subordination, then, is not an essential structural element in every authority relationship. The formalism which sets up reason and authority as alternatives and asks us to confess to the one and to despise the other, along with anarchism and the authoritarian view of the State—all these are expressions of one and the same cultural epoch.

### 3. FAMILY

The relation of individuals to authority is determined by the special character of the work process in modern times and gives rise, in turn, to a lasting collaboration of social institutions in producing and consolidating the character types which cor-

respond to the relationship. Institutional activity is not limited to express measures taken by church, school, sporting associations, political parties, theatre, the press, and so on. Even more than through actions deliberately aimed at forming men, this social function is exercised through the continuous influence of the prevailing situation itself, through the formative power of public and private life, through the example of persons who play a role in the individual's life; in short, through processes not consciously directed. Helvétius says that man is "educated by all the objects which surround him, all the situations in which chance places him, and, finally, all the events in which he is caught up."<sup>37</sup> Even though hunger and the fear of greater wretchedness force men to labor, all the economic and cultural forces must perform their work anew for the men of each generation if the latter are to be qualified to do this work in the forms it takes at any given time. "Intelligence and aptitude among men are always the product of their wishes and their particular situation."<sup>38</sup> Even man's wishes are shaped along determined lines by the social situation and the various educational forces active in it. The family has a very special place among the relationships which through conscious and unconscious mechanisms influence the psychic character of the vast majority of men. The processes that go on within the family shape the child from his tenderest years and play a decisive role in the development of his capabilities. The growing child experiences the influence of reality according as the latter is reflected in the mirror of the family circle. The family, as one of the most important formative agencies, sees to it that the kind of human character emerges which social life requires, and gives this human being in great measure the indispensable adaptability for a specific authority-oriented conduct on which the existence of the bourgeois order largely depends.

The periods of the Reformation and of absolutism, especially, insisted that this function of the family was an activity to be

37. Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l'homme*, in *Oeuvres complètes* (London, 1778) volume 5, p. 188.

38. Helvétius, *op. cit.*, volume 3, p. 137.

consciously exercised. If the individual were to be habituated not to despair in the hard world in which the new discipline of work was being spread abroad, but to face it courageously, a pitiless lack of consideration for himself and others must become second nature to him. Christianity had, of course, recognized long ago the family's task of educating men to live under authority in society. Augustine taught

that domestic peace has a relation to civic peace—in other words, that the well-ordered concord of domestic obedience and domestic rule has a relation to the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and civic rule. And therefore it follows, further, that the father of the family ought to frame his domestic rule in accordance with the law of the city, so that the household may be in harmony with the civic order.<sup>39</sup>

But Augustine's recommendation here refers to something more than the strictness which later on came to be regarded as a father's duty. Augustine wanted the Christian raised to be a good citizen and was trying to establish a harmony between State and Church. Protestantism helped the evolving social system in introducing the frame of mind which regards work, profit, and power to dispose of capital as ends in themselves, substitutes for a life centered on earthly or even heavenly happiness. A man is not to bow before the Church, as happened in Catholicism; but he must learn simply to bow, to obey, and to work. Even obedience is no longer valued essentially as a means to reaching beatitude, nor does it have limits placed on its exercise by the laws of God and men; instead, under absolutism, it becomes increasingly a virtue valued for its own sake. The child's self-will is to be broken, and the innate desire for the free development of his drives and potentialities is to be replaced by an internalized compulsion towards the unconditional fulfillment of duty. Submission to the categorical imperative of duty has been from the beginning a conscious goal of the bourgeois family. In the Renaissance, humanistic education was

39. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 19, Chapter 16, tr. by Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 695.

a benefit which seemed a happy beginning of a new age, even if with few exceptions such an education extended only to the children of Italian princes.<sup>40</sup> But in the countries which assumed economic leadership once the sea route to East India was discovered, childhood became increasingly grim and oppressive.

In the developmental history of the family from the absolutist to the liberalist period, a new factor in habituation to authority emerges even more strongly. No longer is it obedience that is immediately demanded, but, on the contrary, the application of reason. Anyone who looks at the world soberly will see that the individual must adapt and subordinate himself. Such education to realism, too, the goal of every good pedagogy in the more developed phases of bourgeois society, was anticipated in the Protestant conception of the family. It is present in

the very essence of Lutheranism, which looks upon the physical superiority of man as the expression of a superior relationship willed by God, and a stable order as the chief end of all social organizations. The house-father represents the law, and possesses unlimited power over others; he is the breadwinner, the pastor, and the priest of his household.<sup>41</sup>

The naturally given fact of the father's physical strength is regarded in Protestantism as also a moral fact to be respected. Because the father is *de facto* stronger, he is also *de jure* stronger. The child is not only to take the father's superiority into account; he is also to have esteem for it. In this kind of familial situation, with its determinative influence on the child's education, we find anticipated in large measure the structure of authority as it existed outside the family. According to the latter, the prevailing differences in conditions of life, which the individual finds in the world, are simply to be accepted; he must make his way within that framework and not rebel against it. To

40. Such an exception was, for example, the activity of the great Vittorino Rambaldoni in behalf of poor children; cf. *Handbuch für Pädagogik* 1 (Langensalza, 1928), p. 190.

41. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, tr. by Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 546.

recognize facts means to accept them. Distinctions established by nature are willed by God, and, in bourgeois society, wealth and poverty seem naturally determined. When the child respects in his father's strength a moral relationship and thus learns to love what his reason recognizes to be a fact, he is experiencing his first training for the bourgeois authority relationship.

The father thus has a moral claim upon submission to his strength, but not because he proves himself worthy of respect; rather he proves himself worthy by the very fact that he is stronger. At the beginning of the bourgeois age the father's control of his household was doubtless an indispensable condition of progress. The self-control of the individual, the disposition for work and discipline, the ability to hold firmly to certain ideas, consistency in practical life, application of reason, perseverance and pleasure in constructive activity could all be developed, in the circumstances, only under the dictation and guidance of the father whose own education had been won in the school of life. But if the suitability of such a course of action is not seen against the background of its real social causes and, instead, is dressed in religious or metaphysical ideology so that its real meaning is necessarily obscured, it can continue to seem a valid ideal even in an age when the small family in most cases offers very inadequate conditions for human education as compared with the pedagogical possibilities present in society at large.

The same is true of other functions of the family. In the course of history the family has had extremely diverse and numerous roles to play. As compared with periods in which it was the predominant productive community, not only has the family completely lost many of its former functions but even the ones left to it have been affected by changes in society as a whole. In 1911 Müller-Lyer listed as functions of the family the management of the household, the reproduction, rearing, and education of children, the control of population growth and of genetic lines, the development of sociableness, the care of the sick and elderly, the accumulation and hereditary transmission

of capital and other property, as well as the determination of choice of occupation.<sup>42</sup> But sociological literature is now full of evidence that the family has already become a problematic form for carrying out the functions listed. The possibility of adaptation of the family is, however, usually stated as obvious and, indeed, must be, since the essential traits of the family, too, are inescapably connected with the continuance of the social system. "There appears to be a growing feeling that the family as a social unit or event may change considerably but that the fundamental basis of family life, namely, its place in the ongoing evolutionary process, is not likely to change greatly either in degree or extent."<sup>43</sup> As a matter of fact, the family is one of those social forms which, as elements of the present cultural structure, are exercising necessary functions in an ever more inadequate way due to increasing contradictions and crises, yet cannot be changed without change in the total social framework. Every effort to improve the whole beginning with the family, necessarily betrays, at least at present, a parochial and utopian outlook and simply distracts men from urgent historical tasks. Success, however, in more central social areas, as well as every widespread movement, reacts back upon life within the family; for, despite its relative autonomy and capacity for resistance, the latter is at all points dependent on the dynamics of society as a whole. Brutal oppression in social life makes for strictness in the exercise of educational authority, and restrictions on power and domination in public life are reflected in a more tolerable discipline within the home. Yet the bourgeois child of recent centuries regarded his socially conditioned dependence on his father as the consequence of a religious or natural state of affairs. The experience that parental power was

42. Franz Carl Müller-Lyer, *The Family*, tr. by F. W. Stella Browne (New York: Knopf, 1931), pp. 325-26.

43. Eduard C. Lindemann, "Newer Currents of Thought on Parent Education," in Edward B. Reuter and Jessie R. Runner (eds.), *The Family: Source Materials for the Study of Family and Personality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), p. 27.



not underived occurred to him usually only in case of extreme conflict with his parents, namely, when civic authority was enlisted on the father's side to bend a rebellious will and break a child's obstinacy.

In the Protestant concept of God the reification of authority finds direct expression. It is not because God is wise and good that men owe him reverence and obedience. If that were the case, authority would be a relationship in which one party with good reason subordinates himself to the other because of the latter's objective superiority; it would tend to eliminate itself because obedience ultimately frees the inferior from his inferiority. But such a view contradicts the prevailing social practice, in which the acceptance of dependence leads rather to its own continuation and intensification. In the consciousness of the present age, authority is not even a relationship but an inalienable property of the superior being, a qualitative difference. Just as the bourgeois outlook does not regard the value of the material or spiritual goods which men daily use as a form of social relations but withdraws it from rational analysis as being either a natural property of things or, on the contrary, as a purely arbitrary appraisal, so it likewise conceives of authority as a stable quality (provided it does not, in anarchistic fashion, deny it entirely). Reflecting on the principles of authority, Kierkegaard says:

A king is indeed assumed to have authority. Why is it then that one is almost offended at learning that a king is clever, is an artist, etc.? Surely it is because in his case one essentially accentuates the royal authority, and in comparison with this the commoner qualification of human difference is a vanishing factor, is unessential, a disturbing accident. A government board is assumed to have authority in a determinate sphere. Why is it then that one would be offended if such a board in its decrees, etc., were really clever, witty, profound? Because one quite rightly accentuates its authority. To ask whether the king is a genius, with the implication that in such case he is to be obeyed, is really *lèse majesté*, for the question contains a doubt concerning subjection to authority. To be willing to obey a board

in case it is able to say witty things is at bottom to make a fool of the board. To honor one's father because he is a distinguished pate is impiety.<sup>44</sup>

Kierkegaard does expressly say that earthly authority is only "a vanishing factor" and will be eliminated by eternity. But his idea and ideal of authority finds all the clearer expression in his conception of God.

When the man who has authority to say it says, "Go!" and when he who has not authority says, "Go!"—then indeed the saying "Go" along with its content is identical; appraised aesthetically, if you will, they are both equally well said, but the authority makes the difference. In case authority is not "the other" (τὸ ἕτερον), in case it might in any way indicate a higher power within the identity, then precisely there is no authority . . . When Christ says, "There is an eternal life," and when Theological Candidate Petersen says, "There is an eternal life"—they both say the same thing; in the first statement there is contained no more deduction, development, profundity, thoughtfulness, than in the latter; both statements, aesthetically appraised, are equally good. And yet there is an eternal qualitative difference! Christ as the God-Man is in possession of a specific quality of authority which no eternity can mediate and put Christ on the same plane with the essential human equality. Christ therefore taught with authority. To ask whether Christ is profound is blasphemy and an attempt (whether consciously or unconsciously) to annihilate him; for in the question is contained a doubt about his authority and an attempt is made with impertinent simplicity to appraise and judge him as though he were up for examination and should be catechized—whereas instead of that he is the one to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth.<sup>45</sup>

It is precisely this reified concept of authority that is applied to the supreme political leader in the modern theory of the authoritarian state. The fact that in Protestantism such authority belongs only to a transcendent being is of decisive importance

44. Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation: The Book on Adler, or A Cycle of Ethico-Religious Essays*, tr. by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955; Harper & Row, 1966, Torchbook edition), p. 113 (in Torchbook edition).

45. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 113–14.

religiously. This does not, however, affect the truth that the concept, whether as religious or as political, springs from the same social experience and that the opportunity for it to become in either form a basic category for understanding the world was inevitably created by the situation in the limited family of the patriarchal type.

The unmediated identification of natural strength with estimability in the bourgeois family operates as an educational factor with reference to the authority-structure characteristic of this society. But another, likewise seemingly natural characteristic of the father operates in the same way. He is master of the house because he earns or at least possesses the money. Oppenheimer has pointed out the equivocation of the word "family" as it occurs in theory of the State. He wanted to counteract the mistaken idea that the emergence of the State from the family was a peaceful process of differentiation. In such a view the ancient and the modern family were being abusively equated, thus concealing the fact that the family out of which, according to Aristotle, the State emerged "presupposes the distinction of classes in its most brutal form, slavery." The "complete household consisted of slaves and free men, and even the latter were anything but free in comparison to the head."<sup>46</sup> Oppenheimer stressed the distinction between the two types of family, not their identity. The "free persons" in the modern family can indeed no longer be sold by the father, and the grown-up son and his children are not now subject to the supreme authority of the grandfather.<sup>47</sup> But the fact that in the average bourgeois family the husband possesses the money, which is power in the form of substance, and determines how it is to be spent, makes wife, sons, and daughters even in modern times "his," puts their lives in large measure into his hands, and forces them to submit to his orders and guidance. As in the

46. Cf. Franz Oppenheimer, *System der Soziologie* 2 (Jena, 1926) 89ff.

47. On the subjection of children in Rome, cf. Edward Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas* (London: Macmillan, 1912<sup>2</sup>) 1. 610-11.

economy of recent centuries direct force has played an increasingly smaller role in coercing men into accepting a work situation, so too in the family rational considerations and free obedience have replaced slavery and subjection. But the relationship in question is that of the isolated and helpless individual who must bow to circumstances whether they be corrupt or reasonable. The despair of women and children, the deprivation of any happiness in life, the material and psychic exploitation consequent upon the economically based hegemony of the father have weighed mankind down no less in recent centuries than in antiquity, except for very limited periods, regions, and social strata.

The spiritual world into which the child grows in consequence of such dependence, as well as the fantasies with which he peoples the real world, his dreams and wishes, his ideas and judgments, are all dominated by the thought of man's power over man, of above and below, of command and obedience. This scheme is one of the forms understanding takes in this period, one of its transcendental functions. The necessity of a division and hierarchy of mankind, resting on natural, accidental, and irrational principles, is so familiar and obvious to the child that he can experience the earth and universe, too, and even the other world, only under this aspect; it is the pre-given mold into which every new impression is poured. The ideologies of merit and accomplishment, harmony and justice, can continue to have a place in this picture of the world because the fact that the reification of social categories contradicts them does not emerge into consciousness. According to the structure, property relationships are stable and eternal; they do not manifest the fact that they are in truth the objects of social activity and revolution, and therefore they are not prejudicial to the appropriateness claimed by the social structure. Yet because of these contradictions the bourgeois child, unlike the child of ancient society, develops an authority-oriented character which, according to his social class and individual lot in life, has in greater or lesser degree a calculating, fawning, and moralizing or rationalizing aspect. To yield to his father because the latter

has the money is, in his eyes, the only reasonable thing to do, independently of any consideration of the father's human qualities. Such a consideration even proves to be fruitless, at least in the later stages of bourgeois society.

In consequence of the seeming naturalness of paternal power with its twofold foundation in the father's economic position and his physical strength with its legal backing, growing up in the restricted family is a first-rate schooling in the authority behavior specific to this society. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the idea of freedom and justice had not yet been relativized in a way perceptible even to a child, nor were they obviously regarded as secondary by parents. Even so, despite all the talk of such ideals which they received and made their own, the sons and daughters of bourgeois families learned that the fulfillment of all wishes depends in reality on money and position. Helvétius asks:

When from childhood on I remember people always linking happiness with wealth, what means can there be of separating the two in my later years? Are people now aware of the power which connected ideas exercise? If experience of a certain kind of government leads me to fear the great, shall I not automatically respect greatness in a foreign lord who has absolutely no power over me?<sup>48</sup>

One travels the paths to power in the bourgeois world not by putting into practice judgments of moral value but by clever adaptation to actual conditions. A son has this impressed on him by circumstances in his own family. He may think what he will of his father, but if he is to avoid conflicts and costly refusals he must submit to his father and satisfy him. The father is, in the last analysis, always right where his son is concerned. The father represents power and success, and the only way the son can preserve in his own mind a harmony between effective action and the ideal, a harmony often shattered in the years before puberty's end, is to endow his father, the strong and powerful one, with all the other qualities the son considers estimable. As a matter of fact, in the present circumstances the father's

48. Helvétius, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 215-16.

economic and educational service to his children is indispensable; in his educational and governing function, even in his strictness which can be carried far enough to affect society as a whole, he is meeting a genuine social need, even if in a problematic fashion. It is consequently impossible to separate rational and irrational elements in the respect given him by his children. Consequently, too, childhood in a limited family becomes an habituation to an authority which in an obscure way unites a necessary social function with power over men.

Conscious educational measures which demand the spirit of respect for the status quo and the ability to adapt oneself to it are thus supplemented by the suggestive power of the situation in the limited family.<sup>49</sup> Where the family is still a productive community, the head of the family is immediately seen in his productive social achievement. But in the family which has shrunk to being a consumer community, his position is acquired essentially by the money he brings in and involves all the more momentous consequences for his family. Because of this separation in space and time between professional and familial life, every bourgeois father may in social life have a very modest position and have to bend the knee to others, yet at home will be the master and exercise the highly important function of accustoming his children to discretion and obedience. This is why not only the upper middle classes but many groups of workers and employees yield ever new generations of people who do not question the structure of the economic and social system but accept it as natural and permanent and allow even their dissatisfaction and rebellion to be turned into effective forces for the prevailing order.

The individual mechanisms which operate in shaping the authority-oriented character within the family have been the object of investigation, especially by modern depth-psychology. The latter has shown how the lack of independence, the deep sense of inferiority that afflicts most men, the centering of their

49. For the conception of social suggestion in general, cf. Ludwig Gumplowicz, *Die soziologische Staatsidee* (Innsbruck, 1902), pp. 205ff.

whole psychic life around the ideas of order and subordination, but also their cultural achievements are all conditioned by the relations of child to parents or their substitutes and to brothers and sisters. The concepts of repression and sublimation as the outcomes of conflict with social reality have greatly advanced our understanding of the phenomena mentioned. For the formation of the authority-oriented character it is especially decisive that the children should learn, under pressure from the father, not to trace every failure back to its social causes but to remain at the level of the individual and to hypostatize the failure in religious terms as sin or in naturalistic terms as deficient natural endowment. The bad conscience that is developed in the family absorbs more energies than can be counted, which might otherwise be directed against the social circumstances that play a role in the individual's failure. The outcome of such paternal education is men who without ado seek the fault in themselves. At times this has been a productive trait, namely, as long as the fate of the individual and the common good both depended, at least in part, on the efficiency of the individual. In the present age, however, a compulsive sense of guilt, taking the form of a continual readiness to be sacrificed, renders fruitless any criticism of the real causes of trouble. The principle of self-blame will show essentially its negative side as long as it does not take on, in the majority of men, its more valid form: a living awareness in each member of a self-determining human society that all happiness flows from work in common. The human types which prevail today are not educated to get to the roots of things, and they mistake appearance for substance. They are unable to think theoretically and to move independently beyond the simple registering of facts, that is, beyond the habit of applying conventional concepts to reality. The religious and other categories, with the help of which they are confident they can rise above circumstance, are ready to hand, and they have learned to use them uncritically. Cruelty, which Nietzsche calls the "salve for wounded pride,"<sup>50</sup> finds other outlets than work

50. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Musarion-Ausgabe), volume 11, p. 251.

and knowledge, though a rational education could channel it into the latter.

Under the present mode of production, the realization of every project depends upon a thousand chances, and free decision is degraded into a matter of mere guessing among obscure possibilities. To live in this way is enough by itself to kill any joy in activity. If it were not, education in the limited family is doubtless the most effective preparation for such a surrender of individual volition. In members of the upper classes, the results of this education for living under authority show more in an objectivity, an openness to all things, even to the mutually contradictory views and events in art and history, an enthusiasm for greatness as such; it shows, in brief, in the empiricism and relativism of the liberal period. Among the lower classes, on the contrary, where pressure on the father is transmuted into pressure on his children, the result has been directly to increase, along with cruelty, the masochistic inclination to surrender one's will to any leader whatsoever, provided only he could be described as powerful. Comte, the founder of modern sociology, knew this from his own experience:

The widespread desire for leadership is certainly quite unrestrained today, in consequence of our intellectual anarchy. Yet there is surely no one who in a secret personal testing of conscience has not felt more or less deeply how sweet it would be to obey, if only we could in our day and age have the almost impossible good luck of being freed from the oppressive burden of responsibility by wise and worthy leaders. Such a feeling they especially may have experienced who could themselves do the best job of leading.<sup>51</sup>

McDougall notes that blame and disapproval check the impulse of self-assertion and arouse "the impulse of submission":

the resulting state ranges, according as one or other of these affects predominates, from an angry resentment, in which negative self-feeling is lacking, through shame and bashfulness of many shades, to a state of repentance in which the principal element is negative

51. Auguste Comte, *Système du politique positive ou Traité de sociologie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1851-54), volume 1.



self-feeling, and which may derive a certain sweetness from the completeness of submission to the power that rebukes us, a sweetness which is due to the satisfaction of the impulse of submission.<sup>52</sup>

Even involvement with science is often motivated by the need of a firmly marked goal and way to it, of a meaning and purpose for action. "You think you're looking for the 'truth'?" says Nietzsche. "You're looking for a leader and prefer to be given orders!"<sup>53</sup>

The impulse of submission, however, is not a timeless drive, but a phenomenon emerging essentially from the limited bourgeois family. The decisive thing here is not whether coercion or kindness marked the child's education, since the child's character is formed far more by the very structure of the family than by the conscious intentions and methods of the father. In view of the power at his disposal, even his very friendliness seems less a behavior elicited by the situation than a magnanimity adopted out of a sense of duty; and this impression of the child does not arise only when children relate their experiences to each other, but is caused by the very situation within his own family. However rationally the father may be acting by his own lights, his social position in relation to the child means that every educational measure he takes, however reasonable, must carry overtones of reward and punishment. It is true, of course, that no education conceivable today can absolutely do away with these alternatives, since the development of every human being from self-centered infant to member of society is, despite all modifications, essentially an abbreviated repetition of a thousand-year-long civilizing process which is unthinkable without an element of coercion. But it makes a difference whether this coercion is the spontaneous reflection in the father-son relationship of the prevailing social contradictions or proves rather to be a provisional relationship which is eliminated as the individual grows and moves out into the larger society.

52. William McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1936<sup>23</sup>), p. 171.

53. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Muscari-Ausgabe), volume 14, p. 95.

As long as there is no decisive change in the basic structure of social life and in the modern culture which rests on that structure, the family will continue to exercise its indispensable function of producing specific, authority-oriented types of character. The family is an important element in the patterned unity which marks the present period of history. All the self-consistent political, moral, and religious movements which have aimed at strengthening and renewing this unity, have been quite aware of the fundamental role of the family as creator of the authority-oriented cast of mind and have regarded it as a prime duty to strengthen the family and all its social presuppositions, such as the outlawing of extra-marital sexual relations, propaganda for having and rearing children, and the restricting of women to the domestic sphere. Furthermore, the conceptions men had of social policy have also been essentially conditioned by insight into the family and its irreplaceable function. Le Play, more than any other writer perhaps, has thrown light on the social significance of obedience in the patriarchal family. The last volumes of his great book on the European workers show on the title-page itself that this sociologist and social thinker who was wholly oriented to the past makes the decline of paternal authority responsible for all the social ills of modern times. The social groups with which Le Play deals are categorized from the start according as they are faithful or not to "the decalogue and paternal authority." Faith in a single God and submission to paternal authority are for Le Play "the two eternal principles of every society."<sup>54</sup> The spirit of obedience he considers to be in a way "the material element in social peace,"<sup>55</sup> and he regards paternal authority, the origins of this obedience, as so important that education and schooling, the child's learning to read and write, are of questionable value in some circumstances.

In all uneducated societies the fathers of families have an instinct for this danger, and it leads them to reject the benefit of an elementary instruction for the upcoming generation. They do not fail

54. Frédéric Le Play, *Les ouvriers européens* (Paris, 1877-79<sup>2</sup>), volume 6, p. xii.

55. Le Play, *op. cit.*, p. xli.

to see the value of such instruction, but they are afraid that under the influence of its novelty they will lose the respect and obedience of their children. . . . Such a means [schooling] is not to be taken lightly when its hasty introduction into backward societies means a loss of paternal authority. It is decidedly dangerous when it give people the opportunity to foster hostility towards the traditional ways of mankind. In every nation where this impulse is given to the minds of the younger generation and coexists with a weakening of religious belief and paternal authority, there is a disruption of the social structure.<sup>56</sup>

Le Play saw the real situation quite clearly, even if he evaluated it from an antiliberalist viewpoint. The same is true of the present-day totalitarian states. Superficial critics tend to be overimpressed by the integration of fathers and sons into the national organizations. The trend is there, of course, and has profound and cogent reasons behind it. But family life has for a long time been progressively breaking up over the greatest part of the Western world, ever since the growth of large-scale manufacturing and increasing unemployment, and the break-up has affected even large sectors of the bourgeoisie. In view of this, the increased takeover of educational functions by a state that is, from its own point of view, very much on the side of the family, certainly carries no especially great threat of dissolution of the family. In addition to fostering a general rigidification of those social relationships which sustain the family in its functions and are in turn sustained by it, these states also attempt directly to regulate the antifamilial tendencies mentioned and to limit them in the degree required for maintaining the present system with its national and international play of forces.<sup>57</sup>

The family is related to every other factor in the cultural

56. Le Play, *op. cit.*, volume 4, pp. 361–62.

57. How highly esteemed the family is in contemporary Germany, for example, for its irreplaceable role in character formation may be seen in the Report of the Fourteenth Congress of the German Psychological Society (*Psychologie des Gemeinschaftslebens*, ed. by Otto Klemm [Jena, 1935]; cf. especially the pages on "Die Struktur der Familie in ihrer Bedeutung für die Erwachsenen" by Oskar Kutzner [pp. 254ff.], as well as a number of other contributions to the volume).

complex, as it is to the complex as a whole, in an antagonistic no less than in a promotive way. Even in the golden age of the bourgeois order, it must be remembered, there was a renewal of social life, but it was achieved at the cost of great sacrifice for most individuals. In that situation, the family was a place where the suffering could be given free expression and the injured individual found a retreat within which he could put up some resistance. In the economy man was being reduced to a mere function of one or other economic factor: wealth or technically demanding physical or mental work. The same process of reduction to subpersonal status was going on within the family in so far as the father was becoming the money-earner, the woman a sexual object or a domestic servant, and the children either heirs of the family possessions or living forms of social security who would later make up with interest for all the effort expended on them. Within the family, however, unlike public life, relationships were not mediated through the market and the individual members were not competing with each other. Consequently the individual always had the possibility there of living not as a mere function but as a human being. In civic life, even when common concerns were not mediated by a contract, as in the case of natural catastrophes, wars, or the suppression of revolutions, they always had an essentially negative character, being mainly concerned with the warding off of dangers. But common concerns took a positive form in sexual love and especially in maternal care. The growth and happiness of the other are willed in such unions. A felt opposition therefore arises between them and hostile reality outside. To this extent, the family not only educates for authority in bourgeois society; it also cultivates the dream of a better condition for mankind. In the yearning of many adults for the paradise of their childhood, in the way a mother can speak of her son even though he has come into conflict with the world, in the protective love of a wife for her husband, there are ideas and forces at work which admittedly are not dependent on the existence of the family in its present form and, in fact, are even in danger of shrivelling up in such a milieu, but which, nevertheless, in the

bourgeois system of life rarely have any place but the family where they can survive at all.

Hegel recognized and wrote of this opposition between the family and the larger community. He regarded it as "the supreme opposition in ethics and therefore in tragedy."<sup>58</sup> Over against human law which is "open to the light of day," that is, the law prevailing in society and state, according to which men compete with one another "in the segregation and isolation of [their] systems,"<sup>59</sup> there is "the eternal law" under which individuals are valued for their own sakes.

The procuring and maintaining of power and wealth turn, in part, merely on needs and wants, and are a matter that has to do with desire; in part, they become in their higher object something which is merely of mediate significance. This object does not fall within the family itself, but concerns what is truly universal, the community; it acts rather in a negative way on the family, and consists in setting the individual outside the family, in subduing his merely natural existence and his mere particularity and so drawing him on towards virtue, towards living in and for the universal. The positive purpose peculiar to the family is the individual as such.<sup>60</sup>

Since Hegel absolutizes bourgeois society, he is not able really to develop the dialectic inherent in this opposition, even if as a very great philosophical realist he does not seek a hasty resolution of the conflict by softening its contours. He links the knowledge that only as a socialized being is man real with a hypostatization of contemporary society, but at least he recognizes that the individual's lot in this society is "the long sequence of his broken and diversified existence" and "the unrest of a life of chance,"<sup>61</sup> whereas the family embraces "the whole individual." However, Hegel was unable to think the possibility of a truly united and rational society in which "the individual as such," as understood and cherished within the family, could

58. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, no. 166, tr. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 115.

59. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. by J. B. Baillie (New York: Macmillan, 1931<sup>2</sup>), pp. 473-74.

60. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

61. Hegel. *op. cit.*, p. 470.

come into his own. He is forced, therefore, to regard this concrete individual entity, man in his totality, as being, even within the family, a "merely unreal insubstantial shadow,"<sup>62</sup> and to say that

the act . . . which embraces the entire existence of the blood relation . . . has as its object and content this specific individual . . . as a universal being, divested of his sensuous, or particular reality. The act no longer concerns the living but the dead.<sup>63</sup>

If justice is in fact embodied in the society and state of the day, even though these do not respect the individual's uniqueness but are absolutely indifferent to it, then the reduction of the individual to nothing but the representative of an economic function is philosophically canonized and made permanent. The individual as he really lives and suffers, that is, "the specific particularity of a given nature, which becomes purpose and content," is looked upon not only as the limited being he presently is, but even as "something powerless and unreal."<sup>64</sup> Consequently the satisfaction of the unique, natural, i.e. really existing man is not the goal of politics but the purely spiritual task of the absolute Spirit, the achievement of art, religion, and metaphysics. If individuals, supported by these spiritual forces, do not bear up under pressures and make the necessary sacrifices, then

government has from time to time to shake [them] to the very centre by War. By this means it confounds the order that has been established and arranged, and violates their right to independence, while the individuals (who . . . get adrift from the whole, striving after inviolable self-existence . . . and personal security) are made, by the task thus imposed on them by government, to feel the power of their lord and master, death.<sup>65</sup>

Any transition to a higher form of society is thus excluded. But in the society which Hegel regards as definitive, individuals

62. Hegel, *ibid.*

63. Hegel, *ibid.*

64. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

65. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

at any rate are only replaceable representatives of economic functions, exchangeable cases and instances, and correspond wholly to examples of a concept as found in discursive logic which even Hegel, the objective idealist, cannot escape from here. The individual in this philosophy, as in the society which corresponds to it, is "not . . . this particular husband, this particular child, but . . . a husband, children *in general*,"<sup>66</sup> and against the tensions and disruptive tendencies which arise out of the disregarded claims of particular men, war becomes a final, even if dangerous, act of wisdom. The only thing left for the despairing family when the beloved husband or wife or child is annihilated in this inhuman political solution is their "positive ethical act towards the given individual,"<sup>67</sup> and this they accomplish by funeral rites and burial, not, for example, by working to better the evil situation. When the family "weds the relative to the bosom of the earth,"<sup>68</sup> it resolves the injustice "in such a way that what has happened becomes rather a work of their own doing, and hence bare existence, the last state, gets also to be something willed, and thus an object of gratification."<sup>69</sup> Hegel saw the conflict between family and public authority in the light of Antigone who struggles to recover her brother's corpse. He regarded the relation between brother and sister as the most unalloyed one within the family. Had he discovered that this human relationship, in which "the moment of *individual selfhood*, recognizing and being recognized, can . . . assert its right,"<sup>70</sup> need not simply accept the present in the form of mourning for the dead but can take a more active form in the future, his dialectic with its closed, idealistic form would have broken through its socially conditioned limitations.

Hegel identified the principle of love for the whole person, such as it exists in the marital community, with "womanliness" and the principle of civic subordination with "manliness." In so

66. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

67. Hegel, *op. cit.* p. 472.

68. Hegel, *ibid.*

69. Hegel, *op. cit.* p. 481.

70. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

doing he to some extent simulated interest in the problem of matriarchy which is associated with the names of Bachofen and Morgan. Morgan describes the coming age of civilization as "a renewal, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the ancient gentes."<sup>71</sup> In similar fashion, Engels saw matriarchy, which was characteristic of ancient society with its basis in sexual unions, as a society (admittedly undeveloped) in which there were no class conflicts and no reduction of man to an object.<sup>72</sup> He calls the transition to father-right a revolution, "one of the most decisive ever experienced by humanity."<sup>73</sup> The patriarchal system introduced mankind to class conflict and to the rupture between public and familial life, while within the family the principle of naked authority came to be applied. "The overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex."<sup>74</sup> To the extent that any principle besides that of subordination prevails in the modern family, the woman's maternal and sisterly love is keeping alive a social principle dating from before historical antiquity, a principle which Hegel conceives "as the law of the ancient gods, 'the gods of the underworld,' "<sup>75</sup> that is, of prehistory.

Because it still fosters human relations which are determined by the woman, the present-day family is a source of strength to resist the total dehumanization of the world and contains an element of antiauthoritarianism. But it must also be recognized that because of her dependence woman herself has been changed. She is, in large measure, socially and legally under the authority of the male and is seen in relation to him, thus experiencing in her person the law that prevails in this anarchic

71. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, ed. by Leslie A. White (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 467.

72. Cf. Erich Fromm, "The Theory of Mother Right and Its Relevance for Social Psychology," in his *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), pp. 84-109.

73. Friedrich Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*, tr. Ernest Untermann (reprinted: New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 49.

74. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

75. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, no. 166, p. 115.



society. In the process her own development is lastingly restricted. The male and, concretely, the male as formed by existing circumstances dominates her in a double way: societal life is essentially managed by men, and the man is at the head of the family. Since that original revolution in which mother-right was overthrown, women's dependence on man has been uninterrupted in civilized lands. Even the age of knights and troubadours is no exception. "The noble ladies, married and unmarried, who were the bright jewels of festivals and tourneys, were wholly subject to the domestic power of father and husband, were not infrequently physically ill-treated, and were jealously watched as though they were ladies of the harem."<sup>76</sup> The Protestant church sees in woman's subjection to man the penalty for Eve's sin,<sup>77</sup> but on this point it is only following the views of the medieval church. For the latter, too, "woman [is] primarily the partner who wittingly and unwittingly seduces to sin; the attraction she awakens in the male is regarded as moral fault on her part."<sup>78</sup> Even belief in witches, which was the rationalization for the most frightful terrorism ever exercised against a sexual group, was regarded as justified by the corruption of woman's nature. In the modern period woman's dependence has, indeed, taken other forms due to the new mode of production, but the principle itself remains unchanged as do its profound effects on the female psyche. Even in North America where women receive a respect which recalls the medieval love service, the principle is entirely preserved. Of the two great dramatic critics of modern society Ibsen has portrayed the fact of woman's subjection and exploitation, while Strindberg has shown its result: the wife in a bourgeois marriage, restricted in her development, unsatisfied, spiritless.

The familial role of the woman strengthens the authority of the status quo in two ways. Being dependent on her husband's position and earnings, she is also circumscribed by the fact that

76. J. Bühler, *Die Kultur des Mittelalters* (Leipzig: A. Kröner, 1930), pp. 305-6.

77. Cf. Troeltsch, *ibid.*

78. Bühler, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

the head of the family adapts himself to the situations he meets and under no circumstances rebels against the powers that be but does his utmost to better his position. Profound economic and even physiological interests link the woman to her husband's ambition. Before all else, however, her concern is with her own and her children's economic security. The introduction of the franchise for women was a gain for conservative forces even in states where a strengthening of labor groups had been expected.

The sense of economic and social responsibility for wife and child, which necessarily becomes an essential trait of the male in the bourgeois world, is one of the most important elements in the functioning of the family as a conservative force in that society. When accommodation to existing authority relationships becomes advisable for husband and father out of love for his family, then the very thought of rebellion causes him the most agonizing conflicts of conscience. The struggle against certain historical conditions ceases to be a matter simply of personal courage and becomes the sacrifice of persons dear to him. The existence of many states in the modern period is closely bound up with such inhibitions and their continuance. If these restraints ceased or even lessened in intensity, such states would immediately be endangered. Furthermore, it is not only concern for his family but also the constant spoken or tacit urging of his wife that chains the husband to the status quo. In their upbringing by the mother the children, too, experience directly the influence of a mind dedicated to the prevailing order of things, although, on the other hand, love for a mother who is dominated by the father can also sow in the children the seeds of a lasting spirit of rebellion.

It is not only in this direct way, however, that the woman exercises her function of strengthening authority. Her whole position in the family results in an inhibiting of important psychic energies which might have been effective in shaping the world. Monogamy as practiced in bourgeois male-dominated society presupposes the devaluation of purely sensuous pleasure. As a result, not only is the sexual life of the spouses surrounded with mystery as far as the children are concerned,

but every sensuous element is strictly banished from the son's tenderness for his mother. She and his sisters have the right to pure feelings and unsullied reverence and esteem from him. The forced separation, expressly represented by the mother and especially by the father, of idealistic dedication and sexual desire, tender mindfulness and simple self-interest, heavenly interiority and earthly passion forms one psychic root of an existence rent by contradictions. Under the pressure of such a family situation the individual does not learn to understand and respect his mother in her concrete existence, that is, as this particular social and sexual being. Consequently he is not only educated to repress his socially harmful impulses (a feat of immense cultural significance), but, because this education takes the problematic form of camouflaging reality, the individual also loses for good the disposition of part of his psychic energies. Reason and joy in its exercise are restricted; the suppressed inclination towards the mother reappears as a fanciful and sentimental susceptibility to all symbols of the dark, maternal, and protective powers.<sup>79</sup> Because the woman bows to the law of the patriarchal family, she becomes an instrument for maintaining authority in this society. Hegel refers with enthusiasm to Antigone's final words in Sophocles' play: "If this seems good to the gods, / Suffering, we may be made to know our error."<sup>80</sup> When she thus renounces all opposition, she simultaneously accepts the principle of male-dominated bourgeois society: bad luck is your own fault.

The role of cultural institutions in keeping a society going is usually well known, instinctively at first, conceptually later on, by those whose lives are especially closely bound up with it. They cling passionately to ways of life which seem essential to a world order that favors them. But the powers of self-preserva-

79. Cf. the work of modern depth psychology, especially Freud's essay, "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," in *Collected Papers*, tr. by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth, 1925), volume 4, pp. 203-16.

80. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, tr. by Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: K. Paul, 1892-96), volume 1, p. 441.

tion which these institutions possess comes only in small part from deliberative promotive efforts from above. They draw ever new life from the fundamental structure of society (which they in turn confirm) and, in the process, directly strengthen their own self-preservation energies. Religious ideas, for example, draw their continued existence, in a seemingly almost natural way, from the life experience of men in present-day society. But religion in turn strengthens the tendency to give a religious interpretation of personal experience, for it predisposes the individual from childhood on to react thus and it has at hand methods suitable to the needs of any given moment.

Similarly, the authority-promoting function of the family affects the family itself in two ways: the economic structure of society, for which the family is one condition, makes the father the master and directly creates in his offspring the disposition to start their own household in turn. The man was, until very recently, the entrepreneur and wage-earner in the bourgeois family. Within such a framework the emancipation of woman (a long-delayed and gradual process at best) and her business activity were regarded from the beginning as merely substitutational. Woman's "vocation," for which she is prepared in mind and feeling by her bourgeois education and character formation, drives her not behind the counter of a store nor to a typewriter, but towards a happy marriage in which she will be cared for and will be able to worry about her children. Furthermore, the emancipation has come too late, for it has come at a period when unemployment has become a structural part of our present society. In this situation the woman is unwelcome, and the laws of many states, limiting the professional activity of women as they do, show that her prospects in this area are poor. The authority-promoting effects of the family depend essentially on the man having the decisive role he does, and his domestic power depends in turn on his being the provider. If he ceases to earn or possess money, if he loses his social position, his prestige within the family is endangered. Then he experiences in his own life the working out of the law of the bourgeois world, not simply because respect and love usually attend upon suc-

cess, but also because the family falls into despair and decline and becomes incapable of such positive emotions.

The authority structure of a particular family, however, can be strong enough for the father to maintain his position even after its material basis has disappeared, just as in the larger society particular groups can continue to prevail even when they have but little to contribute to society as a whole. Psychic and physical power, which grew out of economic power, thus shows its capacity for resistance. The power sprang originally from the material basis of society and the man's place in this mode of production, but the consequences of this dependence can in individual cases continue long after the father has lost his job. The reason for this may be that he impressed his power very deeply on the souls of his family during the time when he was provider, or it may be that the widespread and deeply rooted conviction of the father's role continue to keep wife and children in line. Such continuing dependence is not artificially produced but is mediated through the whole set of circumstances, the complex interaction of tensions and contrasts. The rhythms and forms in which the economic factor makes its influence felt in particular types of family are numerous and diverse; and the factors which militate against this influence are a chief subject of contemporary research.<sup>81</sup> The cultural forces which mediate between economy and family determine the family type, as well as how the general rule is applied to particular cases and what inhibiting forces it encounters; but they do not lessen the rule's universal historical validity. The idealization of paternal authority, the pretense that it comes from a divine decision or the nature of things or reason proves on closer examination to be the glorification of an economically conditioned institution.

There is a diversity within social groups which depends on level of income, and it influences family structure. Especially in times when conditions in the labor market were more or less

81. Cf. the volume in which the present essay originally appeared: *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, ed. by Max Horkheimer (Paris, 1936), pp. 231ff.

tolerable, the great mass of proletarian families took the bourgeois family as its model. But when, especially in the early capitalist period, there was a need to put children to work and when, consequently, authority began to be exercised in crueler ways, these proletarian families took on a new shape. The demands of extensive industrialization do away with the pleasant home and force husband, and often wife as well, into a difficult life outside the house. There can no longer be any question of a private existence with its own satisfactions and values. In the extreme case, the family becomes the available form of sexual satisfaction and, for the rest, a source of multiplied anxieties.

Yet this last state of the family, when the original orientation to the family has largely disappeared, can be the basis for cultivating the same sense of community as binds such men to their fellows outside the family. That is, the conception of a proximately possible society without poverty and justice, and the consequent efforts to improve conditions and to make such a society a reality, replace the individualistic motive as the dominant bond in relationships. Out of the suffering caused by the oppressive conditions that prevail under the sign of bourgeois authority, there can arise a new community of spouses and children, and it will not, in bourgeois fashion, form a closed community over against other families of the same type or against individuals in the same group. Children will not be raised as future heirs and will therefore not be regarded, in the old way, as "one's own." In so far as the work of such children, if work for them is still possible, is not limited to securing their daily food, it will contribute to the fulfillment of the historical task of creating a world in which they and others will have it better. When education is shaped by such a familial mentality, children will learn, less perhaps through explicit instruction than through spontaneous behavior and tone of voice, that the knowledge of facts is to be clearly distinguished from the acceptance of facts.

Of course, as unemployment grows and free work becomes not only uncertain but ultimately the privilege of relatively limited and carefully chosen segments of the population, the kind of future-oriented family we have been describing will be-

come rare. Complete demoralization, submission in utter hopelessness to every master, lays hold upon the family as well as the individual. Impotence and lack of opportunity for productive work have already in good measure crushed out the beginnings of new types of education. "Authority is the more treasured as creative powers wane."<sup>82</sup>

The continuance of the bourgeois family by economic forces is supplemented by the mechanism of self-renewal which the family contains within itself. The working of the mechanism shows above all in the influence of parents on their children's marriages. When the purely material concern for a financially and socially advantageous marriage conflicts with the erotic desires of the young, the parents and especially the father usually bring to bear all the power they have. In the past, bourgeois and feudal circles had the weapon of disinheritance as well as moral and physical means of imposing the parental will. In addition, in the struggle against the unfettered impulses of love, the family had public opinion and civil law on its side.

The most cowardly and spineless men become implacable as soon as they are able to make their absolute parental authority prevail. The misuse of this authority is a sort of crude revenge for all the submissiveness and dependence they have had to show, willingly or not, in bourgeois society.<sup>83</sup>

When people in progressive seventeenth-century Holland were initially reluctant to persecute Adrian Koerbagh, the fearless precursor and martyr of the Enlightenment, for his theoretical views, his enemies changed their tactics and focused on his living outside marriage with a woman and their child. The novels and plays of the bourgeois age, which were the literature of social criticism for the period, were filled with the struggles of love against being reduced to its familial form. In fact we may say that at the historical moment when enchained human powers no longer experienced their opposition to the status quo as es-

82. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Munich-Ausgabe), volume 21, p. 247.

83. Karl Marx, in a review of Peuchet, *Vom Selbstmord*, in Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Part I, volume 3 (Berlin, 1932), p. 396.

essentially a conflict with particular institutions such as church and family, but attacked this whole way of life at its roots, specifically bourgeois literature came to an end. The tension between the family and the individual who resists its authority found expression not only in coercion against sons and daughters but also in the problem of adultery and of the murderess of her child. Treatment of this subject ranges from *Kabbala and Love* and *The Awakening of Spring* to the tragedy of Gretchen and *Elective Affinities*. In this area the classical and romantic periods, impressionism and expressionism, all voice one and the same complaint: the incongruity of love and its bourgeois form.

However decisive a force in human development monogamous marriage has been in its millennial history, and however long and significant a future it may still have in a higher form of society, it has at any rate served to make very clear the contradiction between life as it unfolds and the circumstances in which it unfolds. In the Renaissance there were two legends which both found immortal expression in works of art: Romeo and Juliet, and Don Juan. Both glorify the rebellion of eros against authority: Don Juan in rejection of the constricting morality of fidelity and exclusive love, Romeo and Juliet in the name of this same morality. The same relationships are made manifest in these figures despite their differences; they are caught in the same situation. Romeo's embrace brings Juliet the happiness which only Don Juan can give a woman, while Don Juan sees a Juliet in every girl. Both would have to divert their own creative powers, which are both bodily and psychic, and to deny all the principles of masculinity, if they were to submit to the bourgeois moral code. Such legendary figures manifest the gulf that lies between the individual's claim to happiness and the claim of the family to priority. These artistic creations reflect one of the antagonisms that exist between social forms and vital forces. But in the very exceptions the rule is confirmed. In general, the authority of the bourgeois male prevails even in love and determines its course. In his concern for his partner's dowry, social position, and capacity for work, in his expectation of advantage and honor from his chil-



dren, in his respect for his neighbor's opinion, and, above all, in his internal dependence on deeply rooted concepts, custom, and convention—in this male empiricism of modern times, an empiricism which has been learned but which has also become a second nature, there is an imperious urge to respect the form of the family and to affirm it in the individual's existence.

The family in the bourgeois era is no more a single and uniform reality than is, for example, man or the state. From one period to another, and even from one social group to another, the family's function and structure alter. Especially under the influence of the development of industrialism it has undergone decisive change. The consequences of domestic technology for the relations between members of the family has been discussed in detail in the sociological literature. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern traits and tendencies of the bourgeois family which are inseparable from the foundation on which bourgeois society is built.

The educating of authority-oriented personalities, for example, for which the family is suited because of its own authority structure, is not a passing phenomenon but part of a relatively permanent state of affairs. Of course, the more this society enters a critical stage due to its own immanent laws, the less will the family be able to exercise its educational function. The resultant need for the state to concern itself in greater measure than before with education for authority relationships and to lessen at least the time allowed the family and the church, has been indicated above. This new situation, however, like the type of authoritarian state which introduces it, is part of a more fundamental and irresistible movement. We refer to the tendency, arising out of the economy itself, to dissolve all cultural values and institutions, the very tendency which created the bourgeois age and has kept it in existence. The means of protecting the cultural totality and developing it further have increasingly come into conflict with the cultural content itself. Even if the form of the family should finally be stabilized by the new measures, yet, as the importance of the whole bourgeois middle class decreases, this form will lose its active power

which is grounded in the free vocational activity of the male. In the end everything about the family as we have known it in this age will have to be supported and held together in an ever more artificial fashion. In the face of this will to preserve, cultural forces themselves will come more and more to seem like counterforces which need regulation.

In the bourgeois golden age there was a fruitful interaction between family and society, because the authority of the father was based on his role in society, while society was renewed by the education for authority which went on in the patriarchal family. Now, however, the admittedly indispensable family is becoming a simple problem of technological manipulation by government. The totality of relationships in the present age, the universal web of things, was strengthened and stabilized by one particular element, namely, authority, and the process of strengthening and stabilization went on essentially at the particular, concrete level of the family. The family was the "germ cell" of bourgeois culture and it was, like the authority in it, a living reality. This dialectical totality of universality, particularity, and individuality<sup>85</sup> proves now to be a unity of antagonistic forces, and the disruptive element in the culture is making itself more strongly felt than the unitive.

*Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell*

84. Cf. Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande* (4 vols.; Stuttgart-Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1920-23), volume 2, pp. 342ff.

85. Cf. *The Logic of Hegel*, no. 164, p. 294.