POLITICS THROUGH THE NOVEL

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF POLITICS THROUGH THE NOVEL.

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PREFACE

The object of this dissertation has been to attempt to illustrate, with the help of the novel, certain fundamental concepts in political studies, and to link these concepts coherently.

The link that is established is not proposed as final. It is more a way in which one seeming coherence can be established. It is part of this dissertation to assert that the very nature of politics is such that any final linking of concepts is impossible for the single reason that politics, being normative essentially, cannot be static.

The author would like to thank the staffs of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, and of McMaster University for help during the preparation of this work, and, in particular, his Supervisor, Mr. Derry Novak, who was, among all other things, consistently courteous. He would also like to thank Dean Melling for what he has found to be most searching and pregnant suggestions, comments, and understanding. And, lastly, he must thank Dr. Norman Shrive for final help and advice, and for minor suggestions concerning footnotes.

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CHAPTER I

OUTLOOK AND METHODS

> 'The word politics, sir,' Mr. Pickwick observed to Count Smorltork, 'comprises in itself a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude.'
>
> - Pickwick Papers, Charles Dickens

The aim of this dissertation is to show that the literary form known as the novel can profitably illuminate certain traditional concerns of political studies. This aim may be clarified by considering first what is meant by political studies, and what certain traditional concerns may be said to be; and secondly, by considering why the novel may aid illumination. This chapter, therefore, will deal principally with this twofold clarification. It has, however, been pointed out that some sort of explanation of method ought to appear; consequently, a section, dealing with method, has been added.

What is meant here by political studies is not what is sometimes meant by the terms, "political theory" or theories of political behaviour. By "political theory" is sometimes meant the findings of what has been called "the new political science,"[1] that is, the ideas and methods of this discipline. In this dissertation, political studies means rather that area of human enquiry sometimes entitled "political philosophy." This distinction must be borne in mind, for it will be

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[1]Strauss, "An Epilogue", in Herbert J. Storing, ed. Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics, pp. 307-327.

no part of this dissertation to exemplify or otherwise discuss such interests as "voting behaviour" or "the sociology of politics" or "political psychology" or the like. Rather we will consider certain concepts that have, in one way or another, preoccupied political philosophers from the Greeks to the present day.

The concepts that have been chosen are those which are considered the most important. They are, partly in order of importance, but mostly in order of proposed treatment, the concepts of morality, authority, and liberty. The concept of morality, for purposes of explanation, will be subdivided into three parts comprising of the idea of purpose, the idea of obligation, and the idea of personal choice. The concept of authority will be not so much divided as used to introduce other ideas, namely, those of power, equality, and justice. The idea of liberty, lastly, will be examined against certain views of history which raise into focus a specific problem about liberty.

Against the charge that the choice of these concepts, their order of treatment and subdivision is arbitrary, some defence must be made.

The choice of the concepts needs little justification. There are few traditional texts on the history of political thought that do not treat these concepts.

The order of presentation, perhaps, requires a little more justification. Morality is placed first among the list, partly because the author believes that politics, explained in terms that leave out morality, is explanation that is deficient and even dangerous. Politics,

therefore, is viewed, primarily, as a normative activity, and hence, any discussion of it that either excludes, or places insufficient stress upon, this normative feature must also be deficient. The case for this belief is more fully argued in the next chapter. Morality has also been placed first, because the author believes that it provides a key to the proper understanding of authority and liberty. But ultimately the giving of morality precedence over authority and liberty is grounded on convenience. It is the author's view that all these concepts share a considerable degree of overlap. It is his argument that both authority and liberty presume morality, and vice versa. The case then must rest, finally, upon the fact that writing does not permit overlapping, mutually related concepts to be presented at the same time. Just as the novelist, E. M. Forster, starts Howard's End with the assertion, "One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister[2]," so the author believes he may as well begin with morality.

The subdivision of morality into purpose, obligation, and personal choice is based on the belief not that together these ideas comprehensively explain morality or make up an adequate definition of morality, but that any account of morality that excludes these ideas must be defective. Here again the ideas are considered related, not distinct; consequently, the order of treatment is simply a matter of convenience.

It might be asked whether there is any further rationale for treating politics in this way, and the answer here is the same as that

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[2] p.5

which might be given to the question, why is there not, in the present chapter, any attempt to define politics? The belief that politics may be defined rests on the assumption that the materials that make up politics are in some sense "static", that is to say, that politics has quantifiable contents so that its essential outlines can be firmly mapped. The author holds quite a contrary belief, namely, that because politics is more essentially a normative activity, clear description of its contents is not merely impossible (because the contents must vary) but that whenever descriptions or definitions are offered they tend either to turn into formal tautologies or a confusion of blending, overlapping terms.

For example, if we begin with the definition of politics as, "The science or art of government; the science dealing with the form, organisation and administration of the state or part of one, and with the regulation of its relations with other states," the description offered by The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, we merely recover the term, politics, under the crucial words of the definition - i.e., government and state. If, on the other hand, we present some of the ways, historically, in which politics have been defined, we find that, whereas the Greeks conceived politics as essentially a public affair, and distinguished the public sharply from the private realm, we, nowadays, acknowledge as part of political activity many activities that the Greeks would have claimed to be distinctly private.

There is also another problem about definitions, namely the dilemma posed by Existentialism in the assertion that existence precedes essence:

> The search for essence is both a rational and definitional exercise. Existence does not need to be - indeed cannot be - defined, analysed, plotted out, or reduced to abstractions; it is simply there.[3]

This problem is made clearer when we consider several modern definitions offered to account for what is essentially political.

Max Weber, for example, postulated that political association occurs "if and in so far as the enforcement of its order is carried out continually within a given territorial area by the application and threat of physical force on the part of the administrative staff."[4] For Mr. Harold Lasswell "a political act (is) one performed in power perspectives."[5] For Professor Robert A. Dahl, again, politics has a wider content: "A political system is any persistent pattern of human relations that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority."[6] These are but a few examples of the possible definitions that can be given to political activity, and the important point to note is not that they differ, but what might be the cause of their differences: the possibility that the human relationships informing politics may not be "phenomenal", i.e. like objects - e.g. tables, men, houses, etc., - with fairly clear outlines. It is for this reason, partly, that no definition of politics is offered; it is for this reason, too, that the particular approach adopted in this dissertation has been thought justified.

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[3] L. C. McDonald, Western Political Theory: the Modern Age, p.403.

[4] The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, trans. by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, p.154.

[5] Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, p.240.

[6] Modern Political Analysis, p.6.

There is, however, another justification for the adopted approach. Mr. Irving Howe, faced by a similar problem of definition, feels bound to assert:

> Labels, categories, definitions . . . do not here concern me very much. Whether a novel may be called a political or a psychological novel - and it is very seldom anything more than a matter of convenience - seems rather trivial beside the question, why does a particular critic, bringing to bear his own accumulation of experience, propose to use one or the other of these labels?

And he adds:

> When I speak . . . of the political novel, I have no ambition of setting up still another rigid category. I am concerned with perspectives of observation, not categories of classification.

And further:

> I stress this empirical approach - this commitment to practical criticism - because it has been my experience that a certain kind of mind, called, perhaps too easily, the academic mind, insists upon exhaustive rites of classification.[7]

Mr. Howe's attitude is salutary, for it has been the experience of this writer that preoccupation with definition and even "methodology" is often sterile formality which, like so much formality, can lead to that kind of mental sclerosis that not merely distorts but also deadens any live kind of thought.

It is the opinion, moreover, of this writer, because he is attempting to survey a field that has much in common with Mr. Howe's, namely, the possible relations between literature and politics, that Mr. Howe's attitude is both necessary and justifiable, for not merely is the field fresh (and therefore not weighted by traditional methodology), but it is also rendered ambiguous by the very nature of both literature

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[7] Politics and the Novel, pp.15f.

and politics as long as these two concerns are viewed as being essentially "open-textured."

It is the author's belief, moreover, that preoccupation with definitions is not merely a sterile way of thinking, but frequently an excuse for not thinking at all. A definition is an attempt to set limits or boundaries to things, not to activities: etymologically, the word, definition, comes from the idea of stating the fines or limits of a town, that is to say, of geographical space: the essence of action, or activity, as Miss Hanna Arendt has so persuasively pointed out in The Human Condition[8], is that it goes beyond limit, that it is unlimited. Hence the idea of limiting politics, if it is considered an activity, is a nonsense idea. It derives, perhaps, from the importation of a technique of the natural sciences, particularly of physics - the art of measurement - into an area which is essentially humanistic; and the essence of the humanistic studies, in contrast to the scientific, is that they are not, ultimately, concerned with technique. Professor William Arrowsmith pointedly clarifies this distinction:

> "For most of a century now academic humanists have been greedily domesticating and assimilating scientific procedures; and they still insensibly pattern their research after scientific research, as though imitation were a kind of sympathetic magic which would win them the tangible success of science or at least confer scientific respectability on their efforts.
>
> Professionalization is not in itself a curse. What is fatal to the humanities is that they have been professionalized as if their end and purpose were the same as that of the sciences. The sciences aim at knowledge, and the student in the sciences is appropriately an apprentice, his professor a craftsman or technician. Method is of the essence; the professor teaches a skill, and the typical instruments of graduate education - the seminar, the supervision

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[8] Chapter V, pp. 155-223.

> of the small group working on a problem, the research paper which culminates in the probatory essay, the dissertation, the emphasis on thoroughness, precision, and accuracy - are all beautifully adapted to the purposes of scientific education. In his well-known lectures at MIT in 1953 Dr. J. Bronowski spoke of science and the human values it created, but the values he claimed were taught by science are without exception the values of the master craftsman. They are impressive values, but they cannot help a man to live or die well. Only the humanities can do that.
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> In every humanistic field today one still finds the same vogue of objectivity and the same hatred of the subjective; the cult of the fact and the naive faith in the accumulation of data; an obsession with methodology and classification (my italics); a profound unwillingness to make normative judgments; a preoccupation with 'problems' and the purely informational definition of knowledge."[9]

Elsewhere, in the same article, Professor Arrowsmith points out that it is possible and even salutary that there should be another kind of "knowledge", what Professor Strauss has called, commonsense, the knowledge that ultimately tests the validity of technical information.[10] This point was made recently clear to the present author when he considered a personal experience. The author has an aunt whom he has not seen for twenty years: before seeing a photograph of her, had he been asked to supply a "definition" of her appearance, he would have offered the vaguest generalisations of dimly remembered characteristics, yet presented with the actual photograph of his aunt he had no difficulty in identifying her at once. It is the author's view, therefore, that to expect personality or an activity to fit neatly into definition is to ignore the possibility that qualities can, like ordinary sights, be "known" without having to pass through a tedious sieve of technical definition.

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[9] "The Shame of the Graduate Schools," Harper's Magazine, March, 1966, p. 32.

[10] "An Epilogue", pp. 315-317.

The point can be made with even greater force by considering a passage in Charles Dicken's Hard Times. The school teacher, Mr. Gradgrind, asks Sissy Jupe, whose childhood has been spent among horses, her father being a horse-breaker, to define a horse, and Sissy is "thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand." To show her up, Gradgrind calls upon his prize "pupil", Bitzer, who at once trots out the vapid, but required, book knowledge:

> "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the Spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth. (Thus and much more) Bitzer."[11]

And Dickens underlines the absurdity by telling Sissy:

"Now girl number twenty, you know what a horse is."

We see here, then, that not merely are activities difficult to define, but that phenomena - if it is granted that horses are phenomena - too, are greeted with absurdity when pressed into tight definition.

But if the possible reasons why definitions of politics are inadequate are insufficiently compelling, we might consider the definitions themselves, and show how inadequate, when analysed, they can become.

Let us start, for example, with the definition offered by Weber. Political association occurs "if and in so far as the enforcement of its order is carried out continually within a given territorial area by the application and threat of physical force on the part of the administrative staff." The key words here are order within a territory, applied by a coercive administration. The definition leaves out several possibilities. It is possible to conceive of political association occurring

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[11] p. 5

outside a territorial area, for example, the formation of émigré political parties with the aim of overthrowing a coercive state. Is one to conclude that such associations are un-political? Again, the notion of coercion being the instrument ("the threat of physical force") through which order is achieved leaves out the fact that much of political life, as Locke and Hume so well understood, is held together by consent and opinion. Lastly, why should the executive occupy such an important rôle in definition? It is commonplace, for example, that members of the British Civil Service hold office so long as they refrain from political activity, and yet paradoxically when we study British politics we cannot leave out the activities of the Civil Service. What has been done here with Weber's definition can be done, with equal force, to the other definitions provided by Dahl and Lasswell. Dahl's definition, if anything, is rather more inadequate.

> "A political system is any persistent pattern of human relations that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority."

What possibly can he mean by a persistent pattern? Surely an essence of politics is that it is conflict and movement: Professor Miller, for example, argues in The Nature of Politics, that politics is essentially interests in conflict, and if this is so, where does persistence, with its suggestions of permanence and stability come in? Again, we can speak, without absurdity, of political movements, that is, of political groups bent on change, or on the preservation of a system from change. And if we were to consider Mr. Lasswell's definition - "a political act is one performed in power perspectives" - then a boxing match, or the

turning on of an electric light would be a political act. The fact is that the attempt to define politics is open to far too many objections.

This does not mean that politics cannot be characterised. Definitions are final and, by definition, limiting. Characteristics are more flexible. In point of fact, all the above attempts have not been definitions at all, but distinguished attempts to set forth characteristics, and if we accept this view, then Dahl's characterisation, if deficient, is at least the most promising. In place of the debatable phrase "any persistent pattern of human relations", we can substitute the word, society, and thereby offer a first minimum characteristic, though even here there might be difficulty, for if a man, like Aristotle, is thinking, outside society and in the solitude of a room, about politics, though he will have to think about society, his act of thinking is personal, i.e. non-social, and consequently only indirectly political. We must agree, too, that other characteristics must be "power, rule or authority" though what is meant by "to a significant extent" is not clear. Significant to whom, and by what standards? In the next chapter we point out that signification implies purpose, but if politics is seen by many in the so-called "mass" societies as pointless, how can it be significant to any extent? The question of standards raises the issue of morality which Dahl, with his preoccupation with power, leaves out. In chapter three we argue that authority implies morality, i.e., on one level, grounds for choice; so that for characterisation to be improved, we must throw in notions of morality and of liberty (on this level, free choice.) To summarise, then, some of the salient, though by no means

final and exclusive, characteristics of politics are activities in which order, society, rule, morality, liberty, authority, movement, equality, and power are or may be present. Again comprehensiveness cannot be claimed. It is quite possible to conceive of political action without power being involved, or equality. For example, if by power is meant the ability to force decisions upon others by the threat of force, the ability of a gangster to make a bank clerk hand over the luggage in a till, must be political, and yet we would prefer to call the act, more simply, an armed robbery. No doubt many states commit armed robberies, and we would call such activities, e.g., Imperialism, or American foreign policy in Vietnam, political, but there <u>are</u> cases of armed robbery which are non-political. The case, then, even for characterisation can be made, by analysis, slender; nonetheless some sop to rationality must be offered; yet it is offered not without misgiving. The attempt to offer permanent forms, concepts, characterisations to activities is essentially a traffic in abstractions, and cannot claim finality as long as human life does not stand still.

So far we have frequently used the term, convenience. The order of treatment of certain concepts - morality, authority, etc. - it was argued, was governed by convenience. The term is implied again in the method of selection: a matter to be raised later. Let it be said here, at once, that before planning this dissertation, certain conventional procedures were considered. A bibliography of major novels was drawn up; an attempt to separate, by classification, political from non-political novels was made. But it was found that such classification was governed more by a conventional valuation of what was thought

political than by what the author wished to demonstrate. Next a bibliography of other work in the field was collected, but the field was found to be narrow[12], and with the exception of Mr. Howe's Politics and the Novel, for the most part, useless. This material was gathered from the libraries of McMaster University and the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus; some works were consulted through inter-library loan. Bibliographies of bibliographies were also examined. When, after several months, much of this collected information was found, against the nature of the undertaking, to be unpromising, a fresh approach was launched. The author had read widely, over about twenty-five years, a vast number of novels of various national literatures, in each instance concentrating upon what had been considered, rightly or wrongly, the major works in the genre, and he now thought it fit, whenever considering a particular concept - e.g. morality - to draw upon this store for best suitable illustration. In this way he believed he was following a usual human practice of drawing from general experience compelling examples to illustrate his different concerns. He is aware that more compelling illustrations can be submitted, but he feels that those that have been offered do, and frequently cogently, serve; in many instances, he has had difficulty deciding whether one passage is more compelling than another, and here - in cases of doubt - his final choice has been "subjective". This, then, generally, is what he has meant by convenience.

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[12] See footnote 10, Ch. II.

The justification, now, of using the novel as a vehicle for explanation of politics needs presentation. Philosophical explanation necessarily deals with abstractions and the relations between abstractions, and it is both a traditional theological and philosophical method to give body to abstractions and their relations: in this way, ideas are given flesh. There are very few of us who can deal totally in abstractions; most of us share the universal wish, when trying to understand an idea to see how it applies "in reality." Anyone who has attempted to present the ideas of, say, Hegel or mathematics, will have faced this issue; moreover, if we remember that philosophy is philosophising from experience, the justification of philosophy must ultimately rest not merely on logic but on whether the philosophical ideas square with experience. To explain, for example, the claims of laws higher than those of convention, or, as Hegel would put it, the antithesis between the customs of the city and the customs of the family, or human and divine law, it has been an explanatory tradition to represent these alternative claims by the story of Antigone. And if Antigone serves as a valuable vehicle for explanation, why not the novel, for does not the novel join, as Antigone does, abstraction to the stuff of actual human relations? Moreover, there is a sense in which the novel, being less concerned than the play, with immediacy of presentation, offers a more thoughtful set of connections of the vastly complex interrelations between facts, characters, events, purposes and atmospheres, and here, it becomes a useful illustrative vehicle for political concepts. But here, ultimately, "the proof of the pudding must be in the eating": if the understanding of some of the

main concepts of political philosophy is advanced by illustrations from the novel, then the attempt to do so will have been justified.

Why certain novels have been chosen for illustrative purposes then - i.e. the method of selection - has been dictated largely by the nature of the enquiry. Some novels more usefully exemplify concepts than others. But to know which novels are more useful requires a fairly wide acquaintance with the field. This point is worth stressing, because it might be asked, for example, why a certain novel by Melville has been selected and another novel by, say, Camus or Hemingway or Turgeniev has appeared in the bibliography and yet been left out of the text. The rules governing Mr. Howe's selection of novels were largely historical. Consequently he surveyed the field and chose only those novels which most pertinently illustrated claims. In the present dissertation, the aim has not been to present a history of the novel, or the changes which the novel has undergone in various national literatures; it has been, rather, to illustrate certain political concepts. Moreover, there is a sense - and a justifiable one - in which, whatever changes occur, human relations, and, therefore, political relations are permanent, else it would be impossible for those of us alive today to have even the slightest inkling of the affairs of the Greek polis. It is, probably, this sense that Mr. E. M. Forster is pointing to when he suggests that all "novelists are at work in a circular room."[13] "They all," he suggests "come from different ages and ranks, they have different temperaments and aims, but they all hold pens in their

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[13] Aspects of the Novel, p.29.

hands, and are all in the process of creation."[14]

It might be argued, too, that political philosophers are in the same room, whatever their ages and ranks, temperaments and aims, for unless they were, we would have as much difficulty understanding their ideas as we would have imagining the political life of the men on the moon. We can give our own interpretation to Ockham's razor, that Bertrand Russell so frequently uses: "Whenever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for inferences to unknown entities."[15] Instead of using the maxim to halt flights of fantasy, as Russell does, we can assert that whatever is still just beyond the borders of knowledge, can be known only in terms of what is already known. To understand Greek thought we must ourselves be capable of thought.

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[14] Ibid, pp. 28f.

[15] "The Relation of Sense Data to Physics", in Mysticism and Logic, p. 150.

CHAPTER II

POLITICS AND MORALS

Morality has been widely, but not sufficiently, canvassed as a central ingredient in political behaviour. The belief that ethics and politics can be separated is a view that is distinctively modern, and may owe part of its origin to the birth of the secular state with its cognates of Realpolitik, materialism, and the decline of theories of Natural Law. Certainly, to Greek political thinking, the view is quite alien. Zeller remarks: "For the Greek ethics and politics were closely bound up with each other."[1]

The claim shows restraint; others have viewed the equation as, if not identical, at least intimate. A. E. Taylor, for example, says of Aristotle: "He never contemplates a study of the individual's good apart from politics, the study of the good of the society."[2]

If, by contrast, Professor Lasswell's now famous tract, Politics: Who Gets What, When, How, were considered an illegitimate representative of the modern view, then a less eccentric proponent might be found in Professor J. D. B. Miller, who, while connecting politics with morality, denies to the former - and therefore to both - any shared constitution:

> Politics is, in fact, non-moral, in that it can be made to serve as the means of carrying through a moral obligation

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[1] Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, p. 140.

[2] Aristotle, p. 90.

> derived from some social situation, but does not constitute a moral obligation in itself. Politics is a means of getting things done, often with a strong sense of moral urgency; but it does not provide this urgency from its own processes. The sense of urgency must come from the social conditions which generated political action.[3]

This statement may be variously viewed: it may serve as an ominous reminder of the fragmentation of modern thinking; it may foster our very modern preoccupation with MEANS, i.e., techniques, not goals; it may prove the effect of positivism on language; it may do these, and several other things; but not the least that it may do - blatantly - is to asseverate a divorce. Politics may share origins with morals, but the concerns of each are different; this is distinctively modern.

To maintain a union via eclecticism, by seeking, for example, a middle way between extremes, would have as little true binding strength as a shot-gun marriage. No simple definition of what constitutes politics and what morality, followed with statements of common properties - the use of comparative method - will do. We have to go deeper.

When we read Orwell's nightmare, 1984, we cannot fail to remark a quality particular both to characters and over-all vision. What Dr. F. R. Leavis calls "awareness of the possibilities of life,"[4] is impressively absent in this novel. A substantial argument could be made that 1984 is, like so many other modern works, not a novel at all. E. M. Forster, in Aspects of the Novel, speaks of "round" and "flat"

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[3] The Nature of Politics, p.23.

[4] The Great Tradition, p.2.

characters.[5] "Round" characters have possibilities of development, they resemble real people, they grow. "Flat" characters, by contrast, are static and possess only marionette reality: a few phrases summarise their existences and behaviour - they are as predictable as machines. The word "machines" is particularly appropriate: 1984 is mechanical. The characters are "flat" in Mr. Forster's sense, but why they are so is worth examination.

Among the many possible explanations of "flat" characterisation, one in particular deserves attention. When an author, wilfully or inadvertently, conceives his characters more as ideas or concepts than as live, real people, "flatness" is inevitable. If, too, we say they are predictable, it is because they lack moral qualities: they cannot grow because their purposes are their author's, not their own. (The point here is one that will become plainer later on, namely that the essence of moral behaviour is that it evaluates experience; consequently, a moral man cannot know in advance how his principles will fit particular situations; hence his behaviour cannot be predicted.) It could be argued that in 1984, the hero, Winston Smith, and his mistress, Julia do begin to grow "awareness of the possibilities of life," that they re-discover, as Mr. Irving Howe expresses it, "what it means to be human . . . But this experiment cannot go very far . . . it is inevitable that they be caught and destroyed."[6]

In 1984, Mr. Howe further argues:

> Everything has hardened into politics, the leviathan has swallowed man . . . . Orwell's profoundest insight is that in

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[5] pp. 67-78.

[6] Politics and the Novel, p.238.

> a totalitarian world man's life is shorn of dynamic possibilities. The end of life is completely predictable in its beginning, the beginning merely a manipulated preparation for the end. There is no opening for surprise, for that spontaneous animation which is the token of and justification for freedom.[7]

Elsewhere, Mr. Howe adds:

> Finally, there is Orwell's extremely interesting though questionable view of the dynamics of power in a totalitarian state. As he portrays the party oligarchy in Oceania, it is the first ruling class of modern times to dispense with ideology. It makes no claim to be ruling in behalf of humanity, the workers, the nation or anyone but itself.[8]

Mr. Howe now quotes directly from the text: "'The Party' (says O'Brien, the representative of the Inner Party), 'seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power.'"[9]

Mr. Howe is not a trained political philosopher; his use of terms is not always precise. When he says, "Everything has hardened into politics," he presumably means by politics "power entirely for its own sake." Nevertheless, his discussion of the relations between politics and the novel is full of sharp and fertile insight, and certainly far more discerning than other work in this field (e.g., Mr. Blotner's Political Novel).[10] We must also sympathise profoundly with his difficulty of trying to use the traditional language of liberal humanism to

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[7] Ibid., pp. 238, 240. My italics.

[8] Ibid., p. 248

[9] Ibid., p. 248

[10] The field is narrow. The only title, besides Mr. Blotner's, which expresses a direct relation between politics and the novel, is not a particularly revealing work by Speare, called also The Political Novel. For details see bibliography.

describe totalitarianism. (How, for example, can one properly speak of totalitarianism as a society, if under totalitarian rule, society, as we know it, and as the jargon would have it, has been "pulverised")? But most of all, we must be grateful for the beginning he provides for serious discussion of the relations between politics and morality.

Morality, like politics, is a word that has "considerable area of vagueness or 'open texture.'"[11] Again, we face the existentialist dilemma, of having to talk ex post facto, that is, of having, if we wish to be meaningful, to select among all the aspects of possible meaning those aspects which are central, "essential", and necessary. And of these aspects, I suggest there are three: firstly, the notion of purpose or τέλος; secondly, the notion of obligation; and lastly, the notion of personal choice, which is frequently neglected in those discussions that see morality primarily in social terms.

Once the idea of purpose is grasped, the point of starting with George Orwell's 1984 will become plain. Meanwhile, a few preliminary remarks are necessary.

In the opening chapter of The Great Gatsby, the narrator, Nick Carraway, says that while he was at college, he was "unjustly accused of being a politician."[12] This particular usage is nowadays rather common. People say, "I wouldn't bother too much about what they say, they're just playing politics." A friend of mine, asked the difference between national parties in the recent Canadian General Elections, promptly answered, "they all say the same thing . . . all

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[11] H. L. A. Hart, The Concept of Law, p. 164.

[12] p. 2.

they want is power, get me?" These views sum up well not merely one very modern view of politics, namely, that it is just a matter of power, but another one also - the belief that somehow politics, like business and so much else in this world, is simply a game and that, therefore, really, "it doesn't matter." Implied here is the belief that there are some affairs that do matter, and that politics, alas, is not one of them.

Now, if an affair is to matter, then it must, in some way, mean or signify something to a man: it must impinge crucially upon his living; it must arrest his attention - he must see a point in the affair and perhaps wish to be part of it. All these italicised words - meaning, significance, impinge, point - are either direct synonymous for, or at very least connotations of, the word "purpose." In place of the sentence, "that does not signify or mean much, or it has no point or does not affect (impinge upon) me," I can substitute, "I see no purpose in that matter," without distorting language. Moreover, mere meaning is not enough; meaning must have human meaning. In far too many sociological studies, it is considered quite enough to establish the meaning of sets of facts; deeper purposes are forgotten.[13]

Whether this concern with purpose is natural, as the Greeks believed, or contingent, as Professor Hart[14] believes, is not immediately important. More important is that it exists, and that its existence

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[13] Interviewing and later tabulating results in a social survey on South Wales, I kept being asked a question I had often asked myself: what is all this information for? That it might be used in other scholarly works, that it might persuade the government, faced with strong evidence, to do something about housing, that knowledge is an end in itself - all these seem answers that are too 'pat,' and merely show how strong human concern is to look beyond immediate meanings and to seek purpose in activities.

[14] Hart, p. 188

sends crucial meaning into the relation between politics and morality.

In political studies we frequently refer to notions of means and ends. Even Professor Miller, in the extract quoted above, acknowledges something of this sort, although he terms his ends "interests" and thus implies that any end, however immoral, can be valid. This is one point: that in politics the test of ends is not merely that they exist or are powerful and have to be reckoned with, but that they are good. Secondly, even if politics is to become entirely a matter of power, concern with the end of the end, or with ideology as Mr. Howe would put it, remains. Ends, in other words, are not purposes; purpose implies ends justified by ideology or by some notion of goodness.

Questioning Orwell's view that a means, power, can be its own end, Mr. Howe says:

> At least in the West, no ruling class has yet been able to dispense with ideology. All have felt an overwhelming need to rationalise their power, to proclaim some admirable objective as a justification for detestable acts . . . They cling to ideology not merely to win and hold followers, but to give themselves psychological and moral assurance. [15]

The point now of the reference to Orwell should be clear. Politics, without purpose, is difficult both to understand and to sustain. In a novel it leads to "flat" characterisation; in everyday life it leads, if not to open hostility, at least to deliberate indifference - to that characteristic of anomie which sociologists associate with a breakdown of norms or values in "mass" societies.

To summarise then: to present politics without an accompanying notion of purpose is to reduce politics to a mere conflict of interests

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[15] Howe, p. 249.

for the attainment of power. Conflicting interests and power to be valid must include some notion of purpose, some notion, that is, not merely of ends, but of ends that incorporate some idea of goodness. Purpose, in this sense, is an aspect of morality: it is concerned with ends or goals, which may be conceived as natural (the Greek view), i.e., inherent in the nature of man, or as contingent (Professor Hart's view), i.e., deriving from circumstances attending the human condition, and these goals or ends must be considered, in some sense, good. On this level, then, politics is directly dependent on purpose, and since purpose is an aspect of morality, politics is directly dependent upon morality. Or, to put it another way, politics without morality is "pointless."

Yet, even if we can agree that politics and purpose are directly linked, what possible light on this link can the novel throw? The book examined was Orwell's 1984, and there was some doubt whether this book was, properly speaking, a novel at all. It is no part of this dissertation to present a history of the novel, but if we have to explain why 1984 is the revealing political work that it is, some digression into the field of history is necessary.

The place and time of the novel's origin, whether we find these in the late eighteenth century, in the novels of Richardson and Fielding, or elsewhere, is of little consequence. More to the point is that during the nineteenth century the novel comes into its own. Mr. Irving Howe calls Jane Austen a writer of "the ideal social novel . . a great artist who enjoyed the luxury of being able to take society for granted."[16] The comment is full of insight. The ideal novel requires

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[16] Ibid., p. 19.

certain social conditions, not the least among these being, as Mr. Howe elsewhere suggests, "a substantial amount of social stability."[17] If, for the moment, we leave aside the foreign novel and concentrate attention on the development of the English novel, we find some disturbing characteristics. After George Eliot and Anthony Trollope, "something goes wrong." Sticking to the major novelists, we find, reaching Conrad and Henry James, a certain ambiguity of moral outlook developing. Let us take Conrad's Lord Jim, for example.

Jim, when we start with him, is a straightforward clean-cut English youth, the product of a country vicarage, but at the testing point, at the moment when the Patna, the vessel in which he has been shipped, sinks, his courage deserts, and the rest of the plot is to present a man who drifts from place to place until he finally determines to stand his ground, to redeem lost honour and recover a sense of purpose. What is particularly interesting about this novel is not so much that the hero regains his sense of purpose, but that the circumstances in which he does so are peculiarly unreal. The latter part of the novel incorporates social and even topographical atmospheres that have none of the power and immediacy of "particularised" description of the first part. The same is true of so many other Conrad novels: Nostromo, for example, in which Nostromo ("One of Us") starts as a hero and ends as a water-front "bum", cadging drinks from anyone willing to attend his application for social approval; then, The Secret Agent, in which Mr. Verloc's comfortable life comes to a sudden halt once he is faced with having to be more than an informer;

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17 Ibid

and lastly, Under Western Eyes, in which Razumov, who seeks only a quiet career, finds his ambitions shattered by politics and is forced to spend his remaining life among the revolutionaries whom he detests. What Dr. F. R. Leavis says of Nostromo is true of so many other Conrad novels: ". . . for all the rich variety of interest and tightness of the patterns, the reverberations of Nostromo has something hollow about it."[18] The remark is perceptive; not merely do the characters lose their sense of purpose, but the atmospheres become increasingly unreal.

What is true of Conrad is true of Henry James. If we look, for example, at James' The Princess Casamassima we cannot fail to remark a sense of unreality; for all his sympathy with the London poor, James' descriptions of the slums are peculiarly rhetorical. Moreover, James' characterisations, for all his acute dialectic on personal relations, remain curiously thin. James is able to depict Paul Muniment, the anarchist, finely, but once he has - about halfway through the novel - to put Muniment into political action, he becomes vague and insubstantial. The fact is that both James and Conrad are having to face a social and political reality in which, in one respect, they are trying desperately hard to find purposes, and because the authors cannot find purposes, their heroes cannot.

In the early novels of D. H. Lawrence, notably in his masterpiece, Sons and Lovers, there is an intimate marvellous portrayal of the working class life that James so inadequately tried to depict.

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[18] The Great Tradition, p. 200

But as we move to the later novels we find a "falling off", a drift towards the abstract and the unreal so that when we arrive at the greatly overrated Lady Chatterley we have a mixture of rhetoric, obscurity, and social emptiness. The prophet, in Lawrence's own expression, has supplanted the poet. In Lady Chatterley, for example, we have this strange passage:

> In fact everything was a little ridiculous, or very ridiculous: certainly everything connected with authority, whether it were in the army or the government or the universities, was ridiculous to a degree. And as far as the governing class made pretensions to govern, they were ridiculous too.[19]

This passage is presented from the point of view of Clifford Chatterley, but should it be thought special, personal to a character and unrepresentative of Lawrence's view, we have the corroborating attitude of Hilda, Connie Chatterley's sister, of whom Lawrence says, "she lived with him (her husband) in a smallish house in Westminister, and moved in that good sort of society of people in the government who are not tip-toppers, but who are, or would be, the real intelligent power in the nation; people who know what they're talking about, or talk as if they did."[20] (my italics)

The phrase, "or talk as if they did", represents Lawrence's mature attitude to much of English social and political life - a life which he either satirises or vehemently condemns, seeking and announcing, as he does in Lady Chatterley's Lover, the only possible salvation of human life outside the bounds of social and political affairs, in the realm of the intimate. It is for this reason that Lady

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[19] D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover, p. 8.

[20] Ibid., p. 7.

Chatterley's Lover is an obscene book. Whether we approve of or oppose this obscenity is a matter of discrimination; the fact is that the book is anti-social, i.e., against society as it is at present constituted. Mr. Henry Miller, in an essay entitled "Shadowy Monomania" which seeks to acclaim Lady Chatterley's Lover, puts his finger on the violence that informs this obscenity. "It is a pity," he writes, "that Lawrence ever wrote anything about obscenity, because in doing so he nullified his creation. Lawrence was a frightfully sensitive and a frightfully timid man. He sought to justify his violence, to explain it away. But violence is its own justification, a pure thing. And obscenity is one of the many forms of violence."[21]

We may not agree with violence being, like a flower, "a pure thing", but Mr. Miller's association of obscenity with violence is acute, and if we ask why it is that Lawrence is so violent, we are forced also to ask what it is he feels so violent towards? Here we are led back to Orwell. The social and political world, which the early nineteenth-century English novelists could with such ease and assurance portray, which James and Conrad found increasingly difficult to cope with, and which, in the later work of Lawrence, has become unbearable anathema, has become, in the work of Orwell, a prophetic nightmare. Where, in such a world, which has turned into a meaningless theatre for contesting power blocs, can there be either social or personal purpose? It is in this respect that the novel can provide us with political insight. The novel is capable of providing us with a touchstone by which we can measure, on an intimate and social level, the strength of our purposes. Even in their antagonism to social and

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[21] Sunday After the War, p. 235.

political life, our novelists tell us about modern dilemmas - notably, about the anomie in which the individual feels dwarfed by the large impersonal governments that become increasingly bureaucratic, increasingly insensitive to the feelings of private citizens, and come eventually to control the private destinies of the individual citizen. As two students of politics aver:

> So much have we become accustomed to the idea of government as an active, positive agent in the direction of the affairs of our communities that we often fail to realise the significance of the change this idea represents. In the English-speaking countries particularly, the nineteenth century view was that government should restrict itself to the basic and somewhat negative, function of maintaining law and order, acting only, as the half-contemptuous phrase expresses it, as a "night watchman." The transformation of this concept of the state into the modern concept or social service state is indeed a revolution.[22]

With an increase in the rôle of government, then, there would seem to be a corresponding withdrawal from political affairs on the part of the private citizen, so much so that the private citizen has begun to think of government as "them", a body over which he has little or no control, and if he is to find any area in which he can express his purposes it cannot be in government. The private citizen thus grows increasingly sceptical of and indifferent to government and political affairs; he becomes, if not anti-political, at least a-political, and the novel reflects this attitude.

There is, however, another level on which the novel reflects human purpose. In its very form the novel is concerned with purpose. Professor A. W. Levi argues that one of the characteristics of imaginative writing is that it should be concerned with purpose.[23] Imaginative

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22 G. M. Carter and J. M. Herz, Government and Politics in the Twentieth Century, pp. 47f.

23 Literature, Philosophy and the Imagination, pp. 78-93.

writing is essentially teleological because it strives to construct coherent universes. In fact, one may go so far as to say that plot is purpose, and conversely, absence of plot usually represents absence of purpose. It is not for nothing, then, that so many acclaimed modern novels contain a disturbing plotnessness. We have only to think of the novels of Virginia Woolf and the "stream of consciousness" novels of James Joyce to see that the modern novel has become as fluid as reverie. In fact, in Finnegan's Wake, we reach a point of amorphous subjectivity that is beyond communication. But if these novels are thought out of date, we can turn with equal relevance to a novel published not more than a year ago, Mr. Saul Bellow's Herzog, a novel, in fact, whose very theme is the disintegration of a person.

The special relation that imagination bears to purpose can be emphatically brought out by considering Jean-Paul Sartre's La Nausée.

In La Nausée, the hero is a man without purpose. "He is dégagé or uncommitted."[24] A reason for the nausea he feels is that he has no part in life, he is part of no story, no plot. But near the end of the novel he has an illumination, a kind of epiphany:

> He has a favorite record, the American jazz song, Some of these Days, and the waitress in the Bouville cafe puts it on the juke-box for him. As he listens, pictures pass through his mind. He imagines a Jewish musician in a hot apartment in New York finding a reason for living by creating this simple song. And he asks himself: 'If him, why not I?' Why should he, Antoine Roquentin, not make a reason for living, give a meaning to life by doing something creative?[25]

Purpose, in other words, is created by the imagination, and since the novel is a form in which the imagination can find expression, the

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[24] Maurice Cranston, Sartre, p. 14.

[25] Ibid., p. 20.

novel provides insight into human purpose. Moreover, because purpose is, as we argued earlier, a necessity for political life, the novel can offer us useful insight into politics.

The idea of purpose, though essential, does not exhaust the notion of morality. We may now turn to another aspect - the idea of obligation.

If we ever doubted a relation between politics and purpose, we can have far less doubt about obligation: the notion has been in political studies a traditional theme. When we ask, for example, what are the grounds or limits of obedience to government, we ask about the preoccupation of a long line of distinguished political philosophers.

Perhaps the most illuminating illustration of the idea of obligation, because the most penetrating, in all literature, is to be found in Mark Twain's masterpiece, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

During his association with Jim, the runaway slave, Huck is faced by a choice that presents the meat of the notion of obligation. Ought he to rescue Jim, or should he, by disclosing Jim's whereabouts, initiate Jim's slavery? According to Southern code, Huck knows what he ought to do, and once he accepts the code, his emotional reaction is one of high elation:

> Why, it was astonishing, the way I felt as light as a feather right straight off, and my troubles all gone . . . I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life, and I knowed I could pray now.[26]

But this consciousness of virtue is short-lived. Huck has the moral sensibility of a social outcast; it is, being less grounded in fear and unreflecting habit, rather finer, rather more truly moral than

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[26] Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, p. 237.

that of the conventionally virtuous. Having written a note disclosing Jim's whereabouts, he cannot decide to send it:

> And I got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me, all the time, in the day, and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a floating along, talking, and singing, and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch on top of his'n, stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such like times; and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had smallpox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world; and the only one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper. It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was trembling, because I'd got to decide, for ever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: 'All right, then I'll go to hell' - and tore it up.
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> It was awful thoughts, and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head; and said I would take up wickedness again, which was my line, being brought up to it, and the other warn't. And for a starter, I would go and steal Jim out of slavery again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too; because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the whole hog.[27]

Professor Hart's comment on the situation is interesting: "Mark Twain's novel is a profound study of the moral dilemma created by the existence of a social morality which runs counter to the sympathies of an individual and to humanitarianism. It is a valuable corrective of the identification of all morality with the latter."[28]

The comment is a note to the following passage in The Concept of Law:

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[27] Ibid., pp. 237 f.

[28] Hart, p. 254.

> In slave-owning societies the sense that the slaves are human beings, not mere objects to be used, may be lost by the dominant group, who may yet remain most sensitive to each other's claims and interests. Huckleberry Finn, when asked if the explosion of a steam-boat had hurt anyone, replied, 'No'm, killed a nigger.' Aunt Sally's comment 'Well it's lucky because sometimes people do get hurt' sums up a whole morality which has often prevailed among men. Where it does prevail, as Huck found to his cost, to extend to slaves the concern for others which is natural between members of the dominant group may well be looked on as a grave moral offence, bringing with it all the sequelae of moral guilt. Nazi Germany and South Africa offer parallels unpleasantly near us in time.[29]

Professor Hart's intention is to represent morality as a form of social control consisting of rules of obligation that may be distinguished from other rules by serious moral pressure for their support and by sacrifice of individual interest in compliance. He is concerned to refute the Austinian theory of law as "the command of the sovereign," and distinguishes sharply between the notions of <u>being obliged</u>, of <u>habit</u>, and of <u>having an obligation</u>. He sees morality largely as a set of social conventions, rather like traditions, which have certain formal characteristics:

(i) Importance (morality is maintained against strong personal interests; it exerts serious pressure to gain conformity, and believes this pressure is educative; unobserved, it threatens far-reaching consequences);

(ii) immunity from deliberate change;

(iii) voluntary character;

(iv) a form of pressure appealing to rules (e.g.,"that would be a lie") rather than punishment threats, and one that, if broken, is

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[29] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 196.

followed by guilt, shame, and remorse.

Professor Hart's case is comprehensive, tightly-argued, and telling. The Concept of Law has been justly acclaimed as one of the most important contributions to jurisprudence of our time, if not the most important contribution. Professor Hart's account, however, raises one question. While he acknowledges that "even within the morality of a particular society, there exist side by side with the structure of mandatory moral obligations and duties and relatively clear rules that define them, certain moral ideals,"[30] his account of the moral individual is limited to asserting that some individuals embrace these ideals. Such a view must leave the individual wholly ingrained in the social endoplasm of obligation, and surely there must be here some aspect of morality that has been omitted? While the view vastly illuminates our understanding, being so persuasively and so predominantly true, is there not a sense that man - the individual - is also free? Is there not another crucial element of morality that has been neglected? Surely, men do not simply accept social obligations; surely, they choose deliberately between them? The question raises the last theme of this chapter - the problem of deliberate personal choice, and for insight into this problem let us return to Huckleberry Finn via Scott Fitzgerald.

In the first chapter of Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, The Last Tycoon, Stahr, the hero, a Hollywood magnate, is flying home from a trip to the eastern seaboard of the United States. He asks to be allowed

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[30] Hart, p. 177.

to "sit up with" the pilots - a wish that shows the sort of man he is: a man whose authority depends less on wealth and fame than upon knowledge - and the following account is part of what took place in the cockpit:

> "Obviously Stahr had put the pilots right up on the throne with him and let them rule (my italics) with him for a while. Years later I travelled with one of those same pilots and he told me one thing Stahr had said.
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> He was looking down at the mountains. 'Suppose you were a railroad man,' he said, 'You have to send a train through there somewhere. Well, you get your surveyors' reports, and you find there's three or four or half a dozen gaps, and not one better than the other. You've got to decide - on what basis? You can't test the best way - except by doing it. So you just do it.' The pilot thought he had missed something. 'How do you mean?' 'You should choose some one way for no reason at all - because that mountain's pink or the blueprint is a better blue. You see?' The pilot considered that this was very valuable advice. But he doubted if he'd ever be in a position to apply it."[31]

There are several points that can be made about this passage; in fact, it is such a mine of interesting statement an entire literary thesis could be built on it. The pilot's doubt that he would ever be in a position to apply Stahr's "valuable advice" throws light on the notion of authority, which we must consider in the next chapter. But the real point, for present purposes, is Stahr's problem of decision. What is the basis for choice? Fitzgerald is sparing with language; he is careful to say that the choice must be the best one. In other words, when we choose, we try to do so against a range of values,

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[31] pp. 247.

and we try to find solid grounds, which may or may not be rational,[32] for one choice as opposed to others. We may be faced with the situation (but this is not always the case) where the grounds for decision are insufficiently cogent, or where decision may be dictated by mere whim. In this latter case the worth of decision may be tested only in application.

To summarise: moral activity also implies being confronted with alternative choices, an attempt to establish some basis for the making of the best choice, and the notion of decision leading directly to the prosecution of the course of action chosen.

It is important to note, too, that choice may not be exclusively concerned with means, as in the illustration above; it may involve ends themselves. The boundaries between means and ends are not nearly as clear as they are sometimes depicted. It makes sense to talk, for example, of a means being part of an end.

To illustrate this kind of problem, let us go again to Scott Fitzgerald, this time to another novel, Tender is the Night.

The main character, Dick Diver, an American, measures himself against his Swiss colleague Franz Gregorovius:

> Dick felt vaguely oppressed, not by the atmosphere of modest retrenchment, nor by Frau Gregorovius, who might have been prophesied, but by the sudden contracting of horizon, to which Franz seemed so reconciled. For him the boundaries of asceticism

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[32] The word "rational" has several meanings. It is used sometimes by political writers to suggest that if a person votes for a political party, without being aware of the party's current policy, then the vote is "irrational." This may not be true. A miner voting for labour may vote because he is aware that during the depression it was this party that stood for the miners. He is prejudiced in favour of labour, but his vote is nonetheless deliberate. Prejudice, though irrational, may have more solid grounds to it than logical reasoning, as Edmund Burke has persuasively shown.

> were differently marked - he could see it as a means to an end, even as a carrying on with a glory it would itself supply, but it was hard to think of deliberately cutting life down to the scale of an inherited suit.[33]

The passage emphatically underlines the intricate relations between means and ends. Asceticism is a means to an end which is a glory that is supplied in part by the means. It is, in fact, something like this that we mean when we describe the means for achieving democratic rule - the institutions, the procedures, etc. - as being part of the goal, i.e., democratic rule.

We are now in a position to reconsider Huckleberry Finn, for the situation quoted at length illustrates clearly the relations between purpose, obligation, and choice. Plot, we have said, is purpose; obligation is the rule or set of rules which society binds on individuals; choice is the best decision made between alternative lines of conduct. The summary is crude, but some simplification in the interests of clarity is justifiable.

Huck's purpose is not simple; generally, it is to find a way of life which blends freedom with happiness; the plot unwinds this purpose. After the previous book, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (to which Huckleberry Finn is a sequel), Huck is taken in by Widow Douglas who "allowed she would sivilise" him; but he finds it "rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular the widow" is in her ways; so he "lits out." He climbs back into his "old rags" and "sugar-hogshead," and is "free and satisfied again." Tom Sawyer, however, persuades him

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[33] p. 25.

to have another shot at respectability, ironically, by proposing that by doing so, he can then join the gang of robbers about to be formed. (Twain's ironical interplay is always neat). So Huck goes back, but soon the spirit of the free past assails, in the shape of his father who "shanghais" him back to barbarity. Huck, however, escapes by feigning death (a brilliant treat in symbolism) and is now free in the captivity of life outside organised society; in this captive state he meets Jim, who is also on the run, and at the dramatic "turning point" of the novel he is faced with the choice of deciding between two sets of obligation - obligation to the Southern code which he is fleeing, and obligation to Jim, who represents flight. He chooses, and at once the purpose of the novel becomes plain: to gain liberty and happiness a man must resolve his inner conflicts so that he retains moral integrity. This is a simplification, for the novel is not a morality or miracle play which follows and resolves only one abstract conflict. To be true to someone, one might have to lie to someone;[34] to live, one has to pretend to live.[35] These are just a couple of the many closely interwoven issues which the book ties together with all the rich, deep force of a fully imagined reality.

Purpose, obligation and choice - basic elements of morality - can be joined, therefore, in imaginative literature; and the bearing that this combination must have for those of us, concerned with politics is hard to escape. Surely, the issue that claims at present the politi-

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[34] Huck's inveterate lying saves Jim. See e.g. Twain, pp.106-108.

[35] What else are the meaning of the Duke and Dauphin episodes?

cal attention of the entire United States, and, for that matter, of the world, is the same issue that inhabits Huckleberry Finn, and so many of the novels of William Faulkner - the issue of the Negro Civil Rights?

The novel has an ability to join events to characters purposefully and concretely; many political texts somehow fail to achieve this rich texture; they deal in abstractions, definitions that distort. To neglect the novel, therefore - at least the good novel - is to neglect a way of perceiving the vastly complex interrelations of fact, event, character, purpose, society, etc., that compose reality. Such a neglect can only lead to the kind of social engineering which is so commonplace nowadays, which abandons processes for the appealing simplicities of abstractions and which leads frequently, for lack of imagination, to the treatment of people as if they were molecules or atoms that can be thrust at will into this or that new housing estate or whatever happens to be the cherished brand-new political panacea of the day.

The view, therefore, of a famous social reformer might help appropriately to conclude this chapter.

In her Diaries, Beatrice Webb had occasion to write: "What interests and disturbs in the output of writers like Aldous Huxley and L. S. Myers, D. H. Lawrence and hosts of others is the utter absence of any kind of ethical code and of any fixed scale of values."[36]

Elsewhere, she adds:

> . . . How can the human mind acclimatise itself to the insecurity and uncertainty of this terrible doctrine of relativ-

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[36] Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1924-1932, p. 80.

> ity, latent in all modern science - long before Einstein applied it to the astronomical universe? It is a most disconcerting conclusion, that there is no absolute truth; and that the thoughts of man are no more and no less valid than the analogous main activities of the dog and the bee! [37]

And of Virginia Woolf, she says:

> She is uninterested in politics - wholly literary - an accomplished critic of style and a clever artist in personal psychology - disliking the 'environmental' novel of late Victorian times - especially its latest exponent - Arnold Bennett. Like other work of the new school of novelists - I do not find her work interesting outside its craftsmanship which is excellent but precieuse. Her men and women do not interest me - they don't seem worth describing in such detail - the mental climate in which they live seems strangely lacking in light, heat, visibility and variety - it is a dank mist of insignificant and monotonous thoughts and feelings - no predominant aims, no powerful reactions from their mental environment - a curious impression of automatic existence when one state of mind follows another without particular reason. To the aged Victorian this soullessness is depressing - doubtless our insistence on a Purpose (my italics), whether for the individual or the universe, appears to them a delusion and a pernicious delusion.[38]

What these extracts show is another aspect of our problem: not merely may novels advance our understanding of morality, and therefore of politics, but the converse is also true, namely, that the absence of moral purpose, in particular, may be reflected in novels, thus indicating a change of moral outlook. The second extract from Mrs. Webb answers the absence that Mrs. Webb detected in the first; the third extract explicates this absence. Belonging to another generation, Mrs. Webb does not understand the moral code of post-Victorian writers and mistakenly accuses them of having no code at all. These writers did have codes, but they were different from Mrs. Webb's.

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[37] Ibid., p. 36.

[38] Ibid., p. 131.

Mrs. Webb failed to remark a change in code. Nevertheless, there is powerful sense in which she was acutely right. The code of the post-Victorian novelists lacked the certainty of purpose which had invested the code of their predecessors, and the world which they represented is the world which we have inherited - a world of "insignificant and monotonous thoughts and feelings," centrifugal on the political no less than on other levels, in which lack of unity and fragmentation are mirrored in "automatic existence(s) when one state of mind follows another without particular reason." Purpose has been excluded from novels, hence their plotlessness; morality has been evicted from politics, and life thus exhibits the "anomie" that sociologists so persistently unfold in their researches. Abstraction thus ousts the imagination from the councils of men; and yet it may be that this very preoccupation with abstractions is no more than a tragic, clinical awareness of the flight from our lives of a fuller, deeper reality, for, as Hegel says, "When philosophy paints its grey in grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings with the falling of dusk."[39]

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[39] The Philosophy of Right, p. 127.

CHAPTER III

AUTHORITY AND OTHER CONCEPTS

In The Brothers Karamazov there is a long scene in which Christ, returned to earth, is reprehended by the Grand Inquisitor - who represents the hierarchy of the Church - for having offered man, instead of bread, unendurable freedom of choice. Weak man requires for his happiness "miracle, mystery and authority," the three powers alone able to captivate rebellious conscience. By incorporating these powers, argues the Grand Inquisitor, the Church has thrown upon itself the agony of free decision. The principle of authority has thus secured man against the temptations of freedom.[1]

To have argued a justification for authority, Dostoyevsky need not have presented so extreme a case. The case is interesting for the grain of persuasion it bears in the contrast of authority with freedom; its confusion, however, is in the misunderstanding of the true nature of relation between freedom and authority. As we have already tried to show, choosing involves acting from reasons; it therefore presupposes rule-governed activities, i.e., activities in which obligations are a background; and rule-governed activities are inconceivable without authority. Authority is therefore not antithetical to freedom of choice. It is power rather than authority that is antithetical to free choice. Neither absolute authority nor absolute freedom exist; both terms are meaningful only in a context of social obligation. Choice

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[1] pp. 298-309.

occurs according to rules; to follow rules is to accept some authority on the correct way to behave.

Dostoyevsky's sweep is his strength and weakness; he is a conservative only from hard experience; temperamentally he is a radical and an extremist - hence connections between ideas attach his fancy all too readily: while he can be profound and sweep a reader from depths to heights of insight, his very extravagance makes him a far less judicious novelist than Jane Austen.

One of Jane Austen's persistent themes is the need for a balance between impetuous conduct and prudence. If we wish to explore the relation between authority and freedom in the necessary and particular context of social obligation, we can go to few better novelists than she. Part of her novel, Mansfield Park, treats this very issue strikingly.

Fanny Price is the niece of Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, the owners of Mansfield Park. Sir Thomas has two sons, Thomas and Edmund, and two daughters, Maria and Julia. While Sir Thomas, a stern but humane patriarch, has been called away from home by duties abroad, his elder daughter, Maria, through the offices of her aunt, the meddlesome Mrs. Norris, has become the match of a neighbour, a certain Mr. Rushworth, who is, incidentally, an exceedingly simple-headed but good-natured sort of man.

During Sir Thomas's absence, the young people of Mansfield Park form new friendships which include a brother and sister, a Mr. and Miss Crawford, and a Mr. Jack Yates, who has a passion for play-acting and who has little difficulty in persuading the others - all except Edmund and Fanny - to participate in a private theatrical. The proposal,

however, raises the delicate point of conduct which becomes the test of Fanny's character. The rule would seem to be that while Sir Thomas is away, and while Maria is on the point of getting married, any activity as self-indulgent as play-acting would amount to filial disobedience.

Fanny's position in the household is fine. She has been adopted because her own mother - Lady Bertram's sister - has married unwisely, borne more children than she can afford, and has appealed to wealthier relatives for help. Fanny is timid and self-effacing, well-aware (and often reminded by her spiteful Aunt Norris) that her position depends upon her uncle's considered philanthrophy. Her significance is so slight (she is fully acknowledged only by Edmund) that of all the household she is least likely to raise objections, let alone act on them; yet in the end it is she who is even more consistent than her protector, Edmund. Her obligation lies to her uncle, and not even ostracism and deep reproach will move her from this obligation; while she would herself like to see a play, she feels that "everything of higher consequence" is against it. For a while Edmund shares her stand and, therefore, unpopularity; but he weakens. He has a certain admiration for Miss Crawford; and Jane Austen, with her gift for suggestion, makes it clear that it is this interest which, disguised as moral principle, undermines Edmund's stand. When Miss Crawford accepts the part of Amelia in the play, there is no one to play her lover, Anhalt. It is suggested that an outsider be brought in, but Miss Crawford signifies that such an event would embarrass her. It is now that Edmund,much to Fanny's surprise, does a <u>volta face</u>. He offers to play Anhalt himself.

Pressure is brought to bear on Fanny to join, but she consistently desists. She is willing to be no more than "prompt" and a listener to the parts of the others.

The final upshot is that just before the play is to be presented Sir Thomas returns, and he at once puts a stop to the affair.

Jane Austen's intentions are manifold, and not the least of them is to show, by subtle presentation what happens when authority is removed. The new authority is weak, tempted easily by impulse, retaining just enough propriety to "act" rather than give way totally to licentious indulgences. It is not that any are unaware of obligation, of the correct behaviour, but that all, except Fanny, choose, mostly for selfish reasons, to ignore the rules. Fanny alone chooses not to join in, and her act is a free one. In this way Jane Austen consummately represents the relation which Dostoyevsky fails to penetrate - the relation between obligations, free choice, and authority. She shows the internal aspect of choice and authority with fine depth. Impulses must be governed, and yet government must not be in excess; she is careful to show that the very strictness of Sir Thomas is a factor leading to the misconduct of his eldest daughter, Maria, who, after marrying Rushworth, elopes with Crawford, to bring shame upon Mansfield Park. A balance between sense and sensibility must be struck: this is one of the messages in Jane Austen's novels; realism must curb romanticism; each has its order of illusion.

Inherent, then, in the notion of authority, no less than in the notion of free choice, is the idea of obligation, of rules, moral or legal, which act as a context. The relation is <u>internal</u>; and when some writers view authority by its <u>external</u> appearances, a confusion between authority

and power frequently results. Max Weber, for example, classifies authority as legal and as traditional, but errs when he identifies it with charisma. Charismatic leadership does not subsume enough rationality and obligation to be authoritative. And even legal and traditional authority, as Weber presents them, being formal, seem insufficiently internal.[2]

Authority implies voluntary acceptance by a man or a group of legitimate or rightful rules. The causes of this acceptance may be manifold;[3] but the essential feature must remain respect rather than force. The line dividing authority and power may be thin, but its clarity may be remarked in the following situation.

In Norman Mailer's novel, The Naked and the Dead, Lieutenant Hearn is reprimanded by General Cummings for having had the impudence to throw a cigarette butt on the General's floor. The confrontation turns into a test of authority; the General asks Hearn what he would do if he was ordered to pick up a cigarette butt which he (the General) might toss on the floor. Hearn replies that he would tell the General "to go to hell", and after some playful debate about the nature of authority, the General actually does toss a smoking cigarette on the floor.

"Alright, Robert," the General quietly says to Hearn, "suppose you pick it up."

Both men are tense, their pulses racing, but eventually Hearn submits. Afterwards he feels:

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[2] Max Weber, "Legitimate Order and Types of Authority", in Theories of Society, edited by Talcott Parsons and Others, Vol.I., p.235.

[3] Hart, The Concept of Law, pp. 198f.

> ". . . as if . . . all the things he had learned and unlearned in his life, and which were free now (were) sloshing about inside him with the vehemence and the agony of anything that has been suppressed for too long."[4]

The situation is curious in many respects. Power and authority are uncertainly mixed, and Mailer does not make quite clear why Hearn submits. It is pertinent here to note a statement by Hart:

> "The typical form of legal pressure may well consist in . . . threats. With morals, on the other hand, the typical pressure consists in appeals to the respect for rules . . . Of course sometimes such distinctly moral appeals are accompanied by threats of physical punishment, or by appeals to ordinary personal interest."[5]

Hart is writing about pressure used to support social morality, but his dictum helps to clarify the curious content of the Mailer situation. Hearn submits, it would seem, as a result of a threat, and a threat that appeals to the army court-martial rule.

But whatever the reason for obedience, Hearn does eventually submit; direct physical force is not used; it could be said that much of his obedience is voluntary, and yet how voluntary is this "voluntary"? The dividing line is tenuous but, nonetheless, it is <u>there</u>.

It is interesting to note that before Hearn leaves he asks the General: 'Short of bringing in every man in the outfit, all six thousand of them, and letting them pick up your cigarettes, how are you going to impress them?'

'I'll manage that, Lieutenant', replies his commanding officer. 'I think you'd better worry about your own concerns."[6]

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[4] p. 327.

[5] p. 175.

[6] p. 326.

Nevertheless, when Hearn has left, Cummings reflects: 'When there are little surges of resistance, it merely calls for more power to be directed downwards.'[7]

In sharp contrast to this situation is the one presented in Arturo Barea's The Forging of a Rebel, (more an autobiographical work than a novel). Lieutenant-Colonel Millan Astray, after delivering a vehement harangue to his assembled troops, a harangue which pitches the men into a frenzy of chivalry, is confronted by a mulatto soldier who answers him back. Astray at once attacks the man and knocks him bleeding, nearly unconscious, to be ground; when the man rises, he clicks his heels, salutes, and Astray claps him on the back, saying that men as brave as he will be needed the next day. The soldier's eyes, though bloodshot, are lit by a fanatical flame.[8]

Yet another variation of this relation between authority and power is provided by a work which we shall have occasion to examine less incidentally in the next chapter when another aspect of freedom is considered. When Napoleon, in Tolstoy's War and Peace, arrives in Moscow, he sends out edict after edict, yet gains no response from either his troops or the remnant population. The situation is such that neither coercion nor authority are feasible; none heed either his power or his authority, and he is forced by circumstances to begin the grand retreat.[9]

The situation underlines a feature of both authority and power that is frequently taken for granted, namely, that in the extreme circum-

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[7] p. 326.

[8] pp. 293f.

[9] pp. 89-96.

stances of war or revolution, when society is amorphous, all forms of pressure, moral and coercive, turn ineffectual. In such circumstances not even a gangster can exert power, for even in power there is assumed an element of stable relationship between the powerful and the obedient, rules cannot exist in a social chaos. If circumstances present the weak with opportunities of escape, power loses effectiveness.

There is another aspect to authority which deserves special attention, namely, the relation that it bears to equality, and the remainder of this chapter will be concerned to explore some of the implications of this relation.

Rousseau's ideal republic, unlike Plato's, has as one of its necessary conditions equality among citizens. Without equality, Rousseau argues, freedom cannot be meaningful, for as long as men are unequal, some will treat others as means, not as ends. Rousseau is willing to have some unequal distribution of property, and admits, too, that those who have special tasks to perform or who express special devotion to society should have the reward of special treatment, but these differences of rank and wealth must be such that men do not become so unequal as to be unable to express themselves freely. He attacks inequality, says Mr. Plamenatz, as fiercely as do the nineteenth-century socialists. Nonetheless, even in his society of equals, authority is still necessary: this is implied in the General Will which all men obey because they have a hand in its creation.[10]

In circumstances less ideal, where inequalities are far more

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[10] John Plamenatz, Man and Society, I, 418-433.

rife, authority is not merely necessary to maintain inequalities or to close the distances between the unequal, but it would look as if, at times, the very condition of authority is inequality, for as soon as you have the notion of voluntary acceptance of the rules, you assume, not necessarily, but in some sense, a distance between men, the differentiation that sociologists call "status."

Examples of distance between those in authority and those who obey are manifold in literature. Two examples will make the point clearly.

The distance between those with authority and those who obey may be said to be one of Melville's minor themes. White Jacket sets out the order according to rank aboard a man-of-war with meticulous care; and it is difficult to know whether to choose examples from this novel or from Moby Dick. Both of Melville's accounts are equally amusing, and if we opt for Moby Dick, it is out of deference to a masterpiece - one of the most profound works in any literature.

In Moby Dick, the steward, Dough-Boy, starts the luncheon call according to rank. He calls Captain Ahab first, then Mr. Starbuck, then Mr. Stubb, and lastly Mr. Flask. At table, "in his own proper turn, each officer waited to be served. They were as little children before Ahab; and yet in Ahab, there seemed not to lurk the smallest social arrogance."

When the officers have completed their repast, "their departure, taking place in inverted order to their arrival," the lesser ranks are summoned to luncheon and:

> In strange contrast to the hardly tolerable constraint and nameless invisible domineerings of the captain's table, was the entire care-free licence and ease, the almost frantic democracy of those

> inferior fellows the harpooneers: While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooneers chewed their food with such a relish that there was a report to it.[11]

In these passages, the effect of authority, i.e., differentiation into status, each with its own code of behaviour, is apparent. If we wish to underline the notion of distance we might consider a passage in Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, in which the Guermantes uniformly shake hands as if they were presenting arms, the effect being rather chilling - "a rapid twisting thrust that explored the most intimate secrets of your soul and laid bare your title to honour," that is, to the privilege of shaking the hand of someone as important socially as a Guermantes. Proust makes sharp, extravagant comedy of this notion of social superiority, with all its delicate and perverse nuances of behaviour, by contrasting the Courvoisiers with the Guermantes.[12] But for our purposes, it is important to note that in both Proust and Melville, the superiority, status, and codes of behaviour derive from authority, from those who, in Beatrice Webb's phrase, "habitually gave orders,"[13] and that this authority leads directly to all the vicious and puerile snobberies of inequality.

By contrast, where we have, as Kornhauser would put it, opportunities for social advancement, social mobility and open élites,[14] then those moving upwards do not accept social roles placidly: authority is

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[11] p. 153. (My italics)

[12] I, 1035f.

[13] Margaret Cole, Beatrice Webb, p. 7.

[14] The Politics of Mass Society - pp. 39-73.

parodied because the distance between unequals is no longer one that can't be bridged: inferiors are aware that they too, can become members of the élite. This point is well represented in John Braine's Room at the Top where the hero, Joe Lampton, sets up what might be called "a woman gradient" and naturally fixes as his own marriage partner a woman at the top.[15]

Discussion so far has been to attempt to establish connections between authority and other concepts traditional in political theory, and to use extracts from novels by way of elucidation. There is, however, a deeper level at which the novel itself, as a form, represents these relationships, and this is in the very attempt to unite the disparate, to impose order on the warring factions of the human mind - a characteristic that the novel shares with all true works of art.[16]

A claim of Edmund Wilson will help to explain this point. Writing of Proust, Mr. Wilson says:

> The real elements, of course, of any work of fiction, are the elements of the author's personality: his imagination embodies in the images of characters, situations and scenes the fundamental conflicts of his nature or the cycle of phases through which it habitually passes. His personages are personifications of the author's various impulses and emotions: and the relations between them in his stories are really the relations between these. One of the causes, in fact, of our feeling that certain works are more satisfactory than others is to be found in the superior thoroughness and candour with which the author has represented these relations. We feel his world to be real and complete, not merely in proportion to the variety of elements it includes, but also in proportion as we recognise these elements as making up an organic whole.[17]

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[15] pp. 36-38.

[16] This point will be discussed more fully in the last chapter.

[17] Axel's Castle (New York: Scribners, 1943), pp. 176f.

The claim is compelling, as anyone who has written a novel will know; it ought to serve as a preparatory text to courses in Literature. It is because of this concern on the part of a novelist, to integrate the warring factions in personality, that what novelists have to say is relevant to the relation between authority and other political concepts. The force of this point may be strengthened by recalling for a moment the Greek idea of justice.

Justice for Plato is harmony, balance, ἀναλογία. For Aristotle, too, it is unjust to treat unequals equally, and equals unequally. If, then, a novelist seeks to readjust unequals, his concern must be to recreate a balance, to impose a just order upon the warring, unequal factions of his own mind: he wants to be "an author," to authorise those parts of the mind with which he agrees and to show that when authority breaks down disorder must result. When we speak of the mad as "unbalanced", we mean exactly this: that they have lost authority over their minds.

One of the greatest novels ever written, though few critics acknowledge the fact, is Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights.[18] Emily Brontë's principal concern is to domesticate the mythic, to force civil-

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[18] F. R. Leavis, for example, sees this masterpiece as "a kind of sport." For him the criterion of greatness is achievement within a tradition. Wuthering Heights is great precisely because its author works with concerns far deeper than the traditional. If Miss Brontë cannot create a tradition, or can create only "a minor one," may it not be because her kind of achievement is inimitable? Wuthering Heights is not a game, it has a grandeur that has been experienced only once before in Literature - in the Greek Tragedy. See F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, p. 27.

isation upon passionately uncontrollable nature.[19] Her success is the result of intense stoicism; she manages, with a necessary symmetry of form, to control the unmanageable. Her quest for harmony may be illustrated on several levels, but for our own purposes, let us just consider one feature of this remarkable book. If we leave aside the opening of the narrator, Lockwood, the real opening of the novel is when Earnshaw brings Heathcliff into his household. At once a balance is upset, and the rest of the plot may be seen as a struggle to restore this balance. Lord David Cecil suggests this idea without drawing proper conclusions:

> The setting is a microcosm of the universal scheme as Emily Brontë conceived it. On the one hand, we have Wuthering Heights, the land of the storm; high on the barren moorland, naked to the shock of the elements, the natural home of the Earnshaw family, fiery, untamed children of the storm. On the other, sheltered in the leafy valley, stands Thrushcross Grange, the appropriate home of the children of calm, the gentle, passive, timid Lintons. Together each group, following its own nature in its own sphere, combines to compose a cosmic harmony. It is the destruction and re-establishment of this harmony which is the theme of the story. It opens with the arrival at Wuthering Heights of an extraneous element - Heathcliff. He, too, is a child of the storm; and the affinity between him and Catherine makes them fall in love with other. But since he is an extraneous element, he is a source of discord, inevitably disrupting the working of the natural order.[20]

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[19] There are other themes - e.g., the impossibility of loving oneself, of being both inside and outside oneself without destroying oneself (this is part of the point of the main love affair between Catherine and Heathcliffe); the irrecoverable nature of youth and the inevitability of death; the consequent desire of a strong nature for immortality, etc., but these themes are consequences of aspects of what I take to be the central concern.

[20] "Emily Brontë and Wuthering Heights," in Richard Lettis and William E. Morris, eds., A Wuthering Heights Handbook, pp. 30f.

Lord David Cecil goes on to show how one discord leads to another until the wheel has gone full circle and "the cosmic order has been established once more."[21] This analysis is acute but it misses the point, which is that in the final pair of lovers, in the young Cathy and Hareton, a synthesis is achieved, and it is in this blending of primeval nature with an educated sensibility that the lost harmony is recovered; the mésalliance between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights can take place only after the initial participants have fully worked out and known their antithetical destinies.

Another way of putting the same argument would be to consider the work as a working-out of inequalities. Consider Heathcliff, for example. He starts as an outcast; he is made aware of his barbarism; slighted, he goes abroad and makes his fortune; in revenge, he seeks to gain superiority over those who have misused him; he does this, but having gained this superiority, he still cannot be joined to Catherine - not merely has she married already, but his civilisation is only a veneer, so if he is to have her he can only do so illicitly; only in the next pair of lovers, Cathy and Hareton, is there a true equality and only in them can there exist a balanced, i.e., non-mad, and legitimate love.

Inequality, in other words, has promoted disorder, which can regain equilibrium only when the specious authority, i.e., the power of Heathcliffe, has been supplanted by the true authority of the next generation; or, to put the point another way, the novel may be looked upon as describing the chaos that results when true authority is overthrown,

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[21] Ibid., p. 32.

or when power - simple brute force - does not harbour respect born of law, which can regulate primitive excesses.

Emily Brontë has, therefore, by writing the antagonistic impulses in her own mind, given us a profound lesson in politics.[22] It is a lesson not merely because it represents so concisely some of the relations that can exist between certain essential concepts of political theory, but because, also, it answers sharply a central issue of Victorian society, i.e., how may man be "socialised?" We include in courses of politics the views in Rousseau's Émile; we wonder, with Rousseau, how childish innocence may be trained against corruptions of society? We have every reason, therefore, to turn some attention to a novel that exposes and answers so forcefully this very question.

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[22] It could be argued that this statement is a nonsequitur. To be given a profound lesson in politics, one would have to know it beforehand. This is the epistemological puzzle which Socrates poses in Plato's Meno. The problem is discussed in an essay by MacIntyre on "Existentialism" in A Critical History of Western Philosophy, p. 511. "How is it possible to come to know anything? For either one knows already what one is come to know or one does not. But if one already knows one cannot come to know; and if one does not already know, how can one possibly recognise what one comes across as being what one desires to know?" The Socratic solution was that we never know what we were before ignorant about. Truth is merely elicited from its dormant state within us. MacIntyre shows that Kierkegaard uses this paradox to prove that God appeared among men with higher knowledge, knowledge in revelation. But the paradox remains. There is a sense in which what we learn is what we have already known; yet it is also possible to argue that we do learn what we have not hitherto known.

CHAPTER IV

FREEDOM AND HISTORY

Scott Fitzgerald's first major triumph, The Great Gatsby, ends:

> And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.
>
> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us the, but that's no matter - tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther . . . And one fine morning -
>
> So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceasely into the past.[1]

The verbal music of these paragraphs has been commented on before.[2] But if we wish to know what it is, beyond a magic of elegiac cadence which is Fitzgerald's forte, that informs the tone with life and meaning, we will grasp what Fitzgerald is really talking about.

Glenway Wescott, in a rather self-conscious essay, remarks that Fitzgerald, "In the twenties, his hey-day, . . . was a kind of king of our American youth . . ."[3] The remark deserves addition;not merely was Fitzgerald "a kind of king," but, because of this,his heroes were kings, too.

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[1] p. 182.

[2] E.g., Maxwell Geismar, The Last of the Provincials, p. 321.

[3] "The Moral of Scott Fitzgerald," in Edmund Wilson, ed., The Crack-Up, p. 323.

Dick Diver, for example, the hero of Tender is the Night, is a waiting king:

> The foregoing has the ring of biography, without the satisfaction of knowing that the hero, like Grant, lolling in his general store in Galena, is ready to be called to an intricate destiny.[4]

And in The Last Tycoon, Monroe Stahr

> . . . had flown up very high to see, on strong wings, when he was young. And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun. Beating his wings tenaciously - finally frantically - and keeping on beating them, he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his great height of how things were, he had settled gradually to earth.

In fact, when he returns to earth, i.e., to Hollywood, Stahr, with his knowledge of "which way we were going, and how we looked doing it, and how much it mattered,"[5] has absorbed that very competence which, according to Dos Passos, Fitzgerald had acquired. According to Dos Passos, Fitzgerald had "gone and spent forty years in perfecting an elegant and complicated piece of machinery (tool I was going to say) . . ."[6] And instead of using this craft, Fitzgerald dissipated his high talents on what Dos Passos considered, mistakenly, to be fairly useless essays in Crack-Up, whereas Fitzgerald ought to use "the next forty years" harvesting these fruits of industry.

It is, in fact, with a similar destiny that Fitzgerald endows his hero, and this destiny, Fitzgerald is careful to remind us, is not a matter of chance:

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[4] p. 6.

[5] p. 25.

[6] Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up, p. 311.

> You could say that this was where an accidental wind blew him, but I don't think so. I would rather think that in a 'long shot' he saw a new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows and that he came here from choice to be with us to the end.[7]

Gatsby, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr share, therefore, if nothing else, one quality - they are more than ordinary. Each has "some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life,"[8] each is a kind of king, above all, a choosing king. Gatsby chooses Daisy, "the king's daughter, the golden girl,"[9] the "faerie" queen (her name is Daisy Fay) whose voice is "full of money;"[10] Dick Diver chooses Nicole Warren from among Chicago's "great feudal families;" Monroe Stahr, the last liberal, "the last of the princes,"[11] chooses Kathleen, his Cinderella.[12] Each man has his fate,[13] and each is carried under - by what? By A. C. Bradley's fatal flaw of character?[14] It is not so simple. Gatsby has

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[7] The Last Tycoon, pp. 25f. My italics.

[8] The Great Gatsby, p. 2.

[9] Ibid., p. 120.

[10] Ibid., p. 120.

[11] The Last Tycoon, p. 34.

[12] Ibid., p. 91. When Kathleen leaves the Hollywood party, the scriptwriter, Wylie White, comments, with malice: "There goes Cinderella. Simply bring the slipper to Regal Shoe Company, 812 South Broadway." See also Fitzgerald, The Crack-up, P. 180: "The two basic stories of all times are Cinderella and Jack the Giant Killer."

[13] "Fate" in the sense used by Robert Graves, The White Goddess, p. 143.

[14] Shakespearian Tragedy, pp. 20-23.

his flaws, and the narrator, Nick Carraway, makes sure that we know them;[15] Dick Diver arrives in Zurich "on less Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centipede, but with plenty - the illusions of eternal strength and health, and the essential goodness of people;"[16] and Monroe Stahr is dying from within;[17] but in each case, it is not a crack of character that is finally significant; the cracks exist, but more important, more tragically final, are the tides of history that seep into them, the gigantic waves that ultimately sweep entire characters away. Fitzgerald's heroes always choose and are always doomed by history. It is this, then, this inevitability that impresses majestical power and stature and the most tender peace upon the final haunting paragraphs of The Great Gatsby. As Fitzgerald himself was wont to say: there are no second acts in American lives.[18]

The idea that men can command their destinies reached an apotheosis in the Renaissance. From the nineteenth century onwards, we have come more and more to think of man as being unable to rise to heroic stature.[19] We think today of man as a conditioned cipher, a creature of group forces, a "social" or organisation man; ours is the age of sociol-

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[15] The Great Gatsby, p. 2.

[16] Tender is the Night, p. 6.

[17] The Last Tycoon, pp. 130f.

[18] Malcolm Cowley, "Third Act and Epilogue," in Arthur Mizener, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 64.

[19] In literature, for example, we have the formidable evidence collected by Maria Praz, The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction.

ogy, we study societies in the hope that by pausing awhile over the matrix a portrait of an individual will emerge.

Plehanov's problem, the role of the individual in history, is, for us, a sharply significant one. "Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters influential individuals can change the individual features of events and some of their particular consequences, but they cannot change their general trend, which is determined by other forces."[20]

Clearly reflecting our age, Mr. Plamenatz says this of Machiavelli:

> For all his caution, Machiavelli exaggerated the extent to which men can change their institutions to suit their ambitions and ideals . . . The social structure is more complicated than Machiavelli imagined it to be, and the political structure is only a part of it; our understanding of it is imperfect, and when we act upon it, we can never rely on getting from it precisely the reactions we want.[21]

What is particularly interesting here is that this belief, namely, that a complex social structure hamstrings successful political action, is a belief peculiar to our age. Writing of Gibbon, Whitehead makes a point which should invite reflection: " . . . Gibbon narrates the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and exemplifies the prelude to the

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[20] Russia After Stalin, Isaac Deutscher, p. 21.

[21] Man and Society, I, 21.

Decline and Fall of his own type of culture."[22]

And again: "His (Gibbon's) volumes . . . are at once a detailed history of the Roman Empire and a demonstration of the general ideas of the silver age of the modern European Renaissance."[23]

Is it not, therefore, possible that in believing that men have little charge over their destinies, we are reflecting only a view of the age? Certainly, in political studies, exceptions are rare. Even the Kremlinologists, perhaps the most outspoken exceptions, talk not of individual people, but of groups of leaders. Mr. Robert Conquest, for example, says:

> Still, there seems to be a definite feeling among sociologists that the actual events of politics and war are in some way superficial. They believe that deep social tides are more basic to all change in human characteristics and that battles and coups d'etat are somehow rather petty subjects. And it is true that to concentrate attention on them in such a way as to imply a denial of the existence of the deeper movements would be absolutely wrong. Just the same, it is a little unreal to deal only with the deeper movements and ignore the visible political and military climaxes. It is rather as if a man interested in race-horses should study only their pedigrees, their form and general condition, without concerning himself with the actual race.[24]

Mr. Conquest goes on to add that in Poland "The abortive putsch of the Natolin Group against Gomulka had a very good chance of succeeding."[25] The failure of the group arose because ". . . their plans were given in error to a member of the Polish Security Police wrongly thought to favour them."[26]

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[22] Adventures in Ideas, p. 13.

[23] Ibid., p. 13.

[24] Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R., pp. 6f.

[25] Ibid., p. 11.

[26] Ibid., p. 11. This view, Mr. Conquest admits, depends on slender evidence, and it is unlikely to be corroborated since only unavailable Soviet Sources could firmly establish it.

It is interesting to speculate not merely on whether Mr. Conquest's ideas are sound, but also on the implication of his view, namely, that man may have slightly more free choice than is generally admitted. How much, in other words, is the belief in an all-powerful society a fantasy? Is it not possible that we make society more complicated than it is? It is we, after all, who select the facts and arguments, which could be mere rationalisations for cowardice. And if we <u>are</u> so much creatures of conditioning, then is it not also possible that our view of conditioning is also conditioned? It is a wonder, therefore, that we can ever bring outselves to believe that <u>any</u> human act is free.

It is to issues like these that we must now direct attention.

The case for believing that the notion of freedom is crucial in political studies is strong. Not merely have wars and revolutions been fought in its name, but political constitutions pervasively, either implicitly or more explicitly, express profound concern over the conservation or attainment of freedom as a political ambition. But there is also another case. We have seen that in our notion of morality, recognition of choice is important; therefore, if morality can be admitted as an essential quality in politics, choice - and particularly, free choice - cannot be excluded. Moreover, if we are aware that notions of historical determinatism currently preponderate, a case for the consideration of freedom gathers special force. What we might, therefore, now inspect are two novels - perhaps two of the greatest - which present the issue of freedom in ways at once similar and contradictory. The first novel is Count Tolstoy's masterpiece, <u>War and Peace</u>; the second is Pasternak's <u>Doctor Zhivago</u>; and both novels have a common

major concern - the problem of freedom and history.

One of the most revealing and relevant studies of War and Peace is an essay by Sir Isaiah Berlin, entitled The Hedgehog and the Fox. But before we examine Sir Isaiah's view, a few preliminary observations must be made.

The problem to which Tolstoy in War and Peace addresses himself has in one way or another attracted the concern of thinkers of almost every phase of civilisation. When, for example, Heraclitus claims that everything is in a state of flux, that "Everything flows and nothing is permanent: one can never step twice into the same river,"[27] and claims at the same time, that nature must be conceived of as "a uniform whole," the essence of the world . . . (being) a spiritual principle - the Logos,"[28] he is doing no more than presenting, in another form, an aspect of the issue that Tolstoy confronted. The medieval disputes about free will and predestination can be seen in the same light: a form of the basic opposition between the One and the Many.

How does Tolstoy treat this problem? Sir Isaiah Berlin calls his essay The Hedgehog and the Fox, taking the title from a fragment of Archilochus, which runs: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."

Tolstoy, Sir Isaiah argues, is a fox that yearns to be a hedgehog. The following may explain partly what this means.

Men are of two kinds. On the one hand, there are those, the hedgehogs,

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[27] E. Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, pp. 45f.

[28] Ibid., p. 45.

> who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel - a single, universal organising principle in terms of which alone all they are and say has significance,

and, on the other hand, there are the foxes,

> who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some de facto way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no moral or aesthetic principle; these last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without, consciously or unconsciously, seeking to fit them into, or exclude them from, any one unchanging, all-embracing, sometimes self-contradictory and incomplete, at times fanatical, unitary inner vision.[29]

Sir Isaiah suggests that "Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Hegel, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Proust are, in varying degrees, hedgehogs; (while) Herodotus, Aristotle, Montaigne, Erasmus, Moliere, Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac, Joyce are foxes."[30] But he goes on to warn that, "Of course, like all over-simple classifications of this type, the dichotomy becomes, if pressed, artificial, and ultimately absurd."[31]

From this psychological dichotomy, with its rival views of experience on the one hand of a world of various multiplicity, and, on the other hand, of a world forming a consistent and single coherent whole, develops distinctive views of history and freedom. This is Sir Isaiah's unexpressed assumption, for in suggesting that Tolstoy is a fox by nature, who wishes to be a hedgehog, and in attempting to show

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[29] pp. 7f.

[30] Ibid., p. 8.

[31] Ibid., pp. 8f.

that Tolstoy's view of history derives from this paradox, Sir Isaiah implies that the rival views of experience result in rival views of history and freedom. Explicitly, this means that if you are monistic in temperament, then you will tend to believe in predestination or historical determinism; and conversely, if you are a pluralist, you will opt for freedom of choice, or a view that opposes determinism. Tolstoy's position is contradictory; on the one hand, he suggests that life is various, full of multiplicity, and he is in this sense a fox; but instead of producing a view of history that enshrines freedom of choice, he does quite the opposite: he argues that anyone who believes that men can rise above events and authoritatively control them is either a self-deluded charlatan or an ignorant fool, and most historians would seem to fall into one or the other of these categories.

Sir Isaiah's presentation of Tolstoy's view of history is complex and full of insight, and to summarise it may do some injustice to both Tolstoy and Berlin, nevertheless, the gist of it may be extracted by asserting that because Tolstoy believes that history is in reality made up of so much minutiae, a veritable panorama of infinite facts, any attempt by historians to explain it must lead to inevitable distortion.

> But what oppressed Tolstoy was not merely the unscientific nature of history - that no matter how scrupulous the technique of historical research might be, no dependable laws could be discovered of the kind required even by the most undeveloped natural sciences - but he further thought that he could not justify to himself the apparently arbitrary selection of material, and the no less arbitrary distribution of emphasis, to which all historical writing seemed to be doomed. He complains that while the factors which determine the life of mankind are very various historians select from them only some single aspect, say the political or the economic, and represent it as

> primary, as the efficient cause of social change; but then, what of religion, what of 'spiritual' factors, and many other aspects - a literally countless multiplicity - with which all events are endowed? How can we escape the conclusion that the histories which exist represent what Tolstoy declares to be perhaps only .001 per cent of the elements which actually constitute the real history of peoples? History, as it is normally written, usually represents 'political' - public - events as the most important, while spiritual - 'inner' - events are largely forgotten; yet primae facie it is they - the 'inner' events - that are the most real, the most immediate experience of human beings; they, and only they, are what life, in the last analysis, is made of; hence the routine political historians are talking shallow nonsense.[32]

Tolstoy's argument rests on two related positions. First, that historians supply history with arbitrary psychological proclivities - a position not far from Whitehead's, in the extract already quoted;[33] and secondly, as a reinforcing basis of this position, the view that while there is a reality or experience which is history, this reality is of such a complex, multifarious nature that any account of it which does not present all the rich minutiae must lead inevitably to distortion.

Because of this view, Tolstoy has grave doubts about the possibility of personal freedom. Neither heroes like Napoleon nor ordinary mortals are free.

> Freedom of the will is an illusion . . . it derives solely from ignorance of true causes. The more we know about the circumstances of an act, the farther away from us the act is in time, the more difficult it is to think away its consequences; the more solidly embedded a fact is in the actual world in which we live, the less we can imagine how things might have turned out if something different had happened. For by now it seems inevitable: to think otherwise would upset too much of our world order. The more closely we relate an act to its context, the less free the actor seems to be, the less res-

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[32] Ibid., pp. 27f.

[33] Vide supra, pp. 106f.

> ponsible for his act, and the less disposed we are to hold him accountable and blameworthy. The fact that we shall never identify all the causes, relate all human acts to the circumstances which condition them, does not imply they are free, only that we shall never know how they are necessitated.[34]

To recognise not merely the monism that underlies this view of history and freedom, but also the tradition to which it belongs,[35] goes some way towards answering it. Nonetheless, before we attempt to deal with the most important problem that it poses, it might be appropriate to consider the respects in which it resembles and differs from the view which Pasternak presents in his masterpiece Dr. Zhivago, for while there is one sense in which Pasternak's view reinforces Tolstoy's, there is another sense in which Pasternak, though a tragic writer, offers a far less pessimistic view of human freedom.

If Tolstoy's problem is how a man, by nature a fox, can become a hedgehog, Pasternak's is how a fox can live in a world dominated by hedgehogs. Yury Zhivago's problem is Pasternak's: how may a man of intelligence and fine sensibility, a man who refuses to accept the poisons of ideology, live in a world dominated by claptrap theories of the class struggle and Marxist economic determinism?

At first sight it would appear that Zhivago is an angel of despair, a ci-devant whom the new post-revolutionary order destroys, but against this portrait of a good, deeply compassionate man, a man so out of place in the society he has chosen, only in a moment of rash,

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[34] Ibid., pp. 43f.

[35] Berlin's essay shows clearly how Tolstoy's views develop from those of de Maistre. See Berlin, pp. 75-124.

generous enthusiasm,[36] is an optimism that spreads from the moment of his death - a scene full of echoes of Christ's resurrection - to the final paragraphs of the book.

> On a quiet summer evening in Moscow, five or ten years later, Gordon and Dudorov were again together, sitting by a window high above the immense city spreading away into the dusk. They were turning the pages of a book of Yury's writings which Yevgraf had compiled, a book they had read more than once and almost knew by heart. In the intervals of reading, they exchanged reflections and followed their own thoughts. It grew dark so that they could no longer make out the print and had to put on the light.
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> Moscow below them and reaching into the distance - Moscow, the author's native town and half of all that had befallen him - now appeared to them, not as the place where all these things had happened, but as the heroine of a long tale of which that evening, book in hand, they were reaching the end.
>
> Although the enlightenment and liberation which had been expected to come after the war had not come with victory, a presage of freedom was in the air throughout these post-war years, and it was their only historical meaning.
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> To the two ageing friends sitting by the window it seemed that this freedom of the spirit was there; that on that very evening the future had become almost tangible in the streets below, and that they had themselves entered that future and would, from now on, be a part of it. They felt a peaceful joy for this holy city and for the whole land and for the survivors among those who had played a part in this story and for their children, and the silent music of happiness filled them and enveloped them and spread far and wide. And it seemed that the book in their hands knew what they were feeling and gave them its support and confirmation.[37]

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[36] "Only once in his life had this uncompromising language and single-mindedness filled him with enthusiasm. Was it possible that he must pay for that one moment of rash enthusiasm all his life by never hearing, year after year, anything but these unchanging, shrill, crazy exclamations and demands, ever more lifeless, meaningless and unfulfillable as time went by? Was it possible that in one short moment of oversensitive generosity he had allowed himself to be enslaved for ever?" B. Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago, pp. 373f.

[37] Ibid., pp. 506f.

The message in these paragraphs is clear: the hero is dead, but his spirit, his work, lives on. Zhivago who joins symbolically so many traditions in Russian life - the bourgeois, the superfluous intellectual,[38] the common man, and more - cannot be "liquidated." As he preaches on one occasion himself:

> You in others are yourself, your soul. This is that you are. This is what your consciousness has breathed and lived on and enjoyed throughout life. Your soul, your immortality, your life in others. And what now? You have always been in others and you will remain in others. And what does it matter to you if later on it is called your memory? This will be you - the you that enters the future and becomes part of it.
>
> And now one last point. There is nothing to worry about. There is no death. Death is not our business . . .
>
> There will be no death, says St. John, and just look at the simplicity of his argument. There will be no death because the past is over; that's almost like saying there will be no death because death is already done with, it's old and we are tired of it. What we need is something new, and that new thing is life eternal.[39]

Yury Zhivago therefore lives on, after his death, in others. Yet, in spite of this streak of optimism, there is a balancing suggestion, throughout Pasternak's novel, of predestination. This may be shown not merely in the plot and narrative, but in the very presentation: in the form or style. It is in this quality that Pasternak resembles Tolstoy. It may even be said, paradoxically, that by carrying on the Tolstoyan problem, by showing awareness of the problem, and by expressing the problem more by implication than by outright explicit statement, Pasternak shakes himself free of its unbearable weight. While the pro-

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[38] See N. Berdyaev, The Origins of Russian Communism, pp. 24f.

[39] Pasternak, p. 74.

blem in Tolstoy, as Berlin puts it, "is never finally resolved,"[40] in Pasternak it is neutralised.

Let us for a moment reconsider the problem as Tolstoy sees it. History is made up of such an intricate multiplicity that any attempt on the part of man to claim an ability to determine events, any assertion of free will, is foredoomed. In public acts - for Tolstoy, "political" acts - man has no freedom of choice: history determines his choices; in private acts, man has only a limited freedom.

> Tolstoy vacillates; the individual is 'in some sense' free when he alone is involved: thus, in raising his arm, he is free within physical limits. But once he is involved in relationships with others, he is no longer free, he is part of the inexorable stream. Freedom is real, but it is confined to trivial acts.[41]

That Pasternak is aware of this dilemma may be shown by considering first his methods - the form of his novel; and secondly, his narrative and plot.

The resemblance between Pasternak and Tolstoy is strongest in the form or method of presentation. Tolstoy writes scenically, in the main. Both War and Peace and Anna Karenina are collections of scenes. In War and Peace, for example, we begin with Prince Basil in Anna Scherer's drawing-room; the scene expands with the arrival of more guests, and is followed, a few chapters later, by an interview between Pierre and Prince Andrew in Prince Andrew's own house; scene follows scene in this way, and each time we move forward in "chronological" time. The movement forward is slow, and it is as if Tolstoy takes a

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[40] The Hedgehog and the Fox, p. 48.

[41] Ibid., p. 49.

year and slices it, piece by piece, giving us one more scene each time he brings down the knife. All scenes, moreover, have a distinctive common characteristic. All are rich in minute "factual" - both physical and mental - description. The eye of the novelist passes nimbly from the way a woman wears her hair to what she says, to the furniture of the room, to the expressions in the faces of her listeners, and so on. There is meticulous attention to detail, and, at the same time, a tone of calm objectivity.

Tolstoy's presentation is quite in keeping with his view of history, i.e., that history is composed of minutiae, and he never takes his eyes off the"facts". "The celebrated life-likeness of every object and every person in his world derives from this astonishing capacity of presenting every ingredient of it in its fullest individual essence . . .[42] So asserts Professor Berlin, and later: "Yet what he believed in was the opposite. He advocates a single embracing vision . . ."[43]

Tolstoy's outlook is clearly paradoxical, and seems to suggest that those who are preoccupied with factual description in this way are also, by way of psychological balance, doomed to wish to escape the meshes of fact. There may be something in the Marquis de Vogüé's famous remark about Tolstoy (which Professor Berlin quotes) - "A queer combination of the brain of an English chemist with the soul of an Indian Buddhist."[44] Tolstoy is at once excessively abstract and

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[42] Ibid., p. 63.

[43] Ibid., p. 64.

[44] Ibid., p. 7.

excessively factual.

When we look at Pasternak, we find the same attention to detail, and this is more than an attachment to a tradition. For Pasternak, facts - actuality - are paramount. When Yury returns to Moscow after the October Revolution, he finds that "Food and logs had to be got in. But in those days of triumph of materialism, matter had become an abstract notion, and food and firewood were replaced by the 'problems of alimentation and fuel supply.'"[45]

The comment is better than anything in Orwell about the misuse of language, since it suggests the cause of the misuse. But for our purposes the comment has another relevance: why is Pasternak so concerned that facts should have their proper names? Could it be that he, too, is obsessed by the minutiae that constitute reality, and, like Tolstoy, seeks a central organising principle? And is there not much more than a touch of savage irony in the Pravda attack on his poem "The Wedding Party" - an outburst that accuses the poet of being subjective?[46]

Let us postpone an answer for a moment, and consider Pasternak's narrative technique.

At first sight, Pasternak's method of presentation is remarkably like Tolstoy's. There is, first of all, a breaking down of narrative into self-contained scenes. Each scene, moreover, shows a richness of detail, even, in fact, at first glance, a disarming diffusion.

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[45] Pasternak, p. 183.

[46] Edward Crankshaw, Krushchev's Russia, p. 122.

But this first glance is deceptive; the scenes are tightly written; superfluity is not in Pasternak's aesthetic canon. And here we have a clue to a feature of the entire novel that is, in so many respects, disturbing. Is there not, we constantly ask ourselves, despite this rigorous attention to facts - to the rich substance of immediacy - a certain air of contrivance? Why is the writing so controlled.

The issue crops up again when we consider the plot. Are there not too many coincidences? When Yury's father dies, Misha Gordon is in the same train as he, and when the train stops, it interrupts a conversation between Voskoboynikov and Yury's uncle - a conversation that is taking place not far away.[47] Moreover, after Yury's death, Lara appears in Moscow and arrives, quite by accident, at the very apartment in Kamberger Street[48] in which Yury is being laid out. Then there are the sudden appearances of Yury's brother, Yevgraf, always at the right moment. Is there not a connection between this kind of plotting and this kind of narrative technique?

The fact is that Pasternak, by choosing such a wide canvas, is faced, like Tolstoy, with a problem of organisation. Whereas Tolstoy's concern is to cut slices slowly in time, Pasternak's is to offer a kind of historical kaleidoscope. Though Tolstoy has been acclaimed a great epic writer,[49] the title is perhaps more appropriate to Pasternak, for an essence of the epic is that it is a tale recounting the

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[47] Pasternak, pp. 16-24.

[48] Ibid., p. 484.

[49] See, e.g., Berdyaev, p. 86: "Tolstoy was an artist of the stable and formed life. Dostoyevsky's novels are tragedies; Tolstoy's are epics."

meeting of two distinctive civilisations,[50] and it is precisely such a tale that Pasternak is attempting to narrate. Revolution separates the old Russia from the new, and it is the tension between the old and the new that gives Dr. Zhivago its significance and epic vitality. But to write such a tale poses a problem of form, and the problem is solved only by this kaleidoscoping of scenes with its concomitant character coincidences. Pasternak wants his world stable - hence the use of Tolstoy's"scenes" - but at the same time he wants to cover two periods of history; thus, the tension in his novel is given fresh relief. The time range poses the problem of organisation - how is such a long passage of history to be controlled, keeping an eye, at the same time, on a multiplicity of facts, the stuff of real experience? Pasternak, however, is not Tolstoy. Though he faces the contradiction between centralising principles and the facts of experience, he belongs to another generation; unlike the men of Tolstoy's generation, and of the generations of Plekhanov, Lenin, and Martov, he does not have to create an ideology; rather, he is faced with a world of ideology, the world of the hedgehogs, and it is in Dr. Zhivago that he proclaims his triumphant escape. Despite the dominating influences of ideology, which manifest themselves less in explicit declarations of an ideological point of view than in the inner pressures that psychologically act upon his aesthetic intentions, compelling him to adopt a form which is full of contrivances and narrative coincidences, he asserts an ideological

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[50] "It is in such ages which come between two cultures - when one Myth dissolves and another struggles to be born - that epic poems are created." N. Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, introd., p. xii.

alternative. Yet, even here, there is a contradiction, for it is not quite true that he takes up a firm "ideological stand." To the ideology of dialectical materialism, he replies with the ideology of Christianity, but it is open to some question whether the latter, even as he presents it, is, properly speaking, an "ideology" as we understand the term. The Christian "ideology" which Pasternak advances is far too negative, far too much an answering view of life, to bear the title of a fully-fledged political doxology. It may be made with historical claims, but surely the claims "of a free personality and of life regarded as sacrifice"[51] - the two concepts which Yury's uncle sees as joined in modern man - are not the same sort of thing as Marxism that puts man, straightforwardly, into the Procrustean bed of the class struggle and economic determinism, or the view propounded by Tolstoy that multiplicity of facts disables man from having any free charge over his destiny.

And here we reach the crux of the issue. Two points have to be made. In the last chapter, we argued that unless politics is shot through with a notion of <u>purpose</u>, it becomes meaningless - a rigmarole of interesting patterns. The same is true for history. Tolstoy's concern with history is a naturalistic one: he seeks <u>causality</u>, and is confronted by multiplicity, by an array of facts that deny this search for causality any firm or final order. Life, it is true, and experience, do present a vast panorama of facts, but the historian's function is not the naturalistic "slice of life" one; he has to select material

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[51] Pasternak, p. 18.

for relevance, and morality is that very notion that provides the standard for relevance.

The second point is equally important, and it brings together the discussion which has contrasted Tolstoy with Pasternak. Tolstoy's view of history treats man as if he were an object, a phenomenon in the natural science sense. Despite Tolstoy's superb ability to represent personality in rich and sharp contour, personality must be yoked into an ideological frame. Tolstoy looks down at man, objectively, like a scientist; he does not allow man integrity - the ability to experience a future. For Pasternak, by contrast, man is in an ideological frame, and he must be torn out of it. For Pasternak, too many external pressures bedevil man's integrity; he must be shown to be a thinking man,[52] not a mere embodiment of outside forces; he must embrace a "free personality" which, in its power to choose and deliberate, can extract him from that kind of unavoidable behaviour which historical determinists would wish to impose upon conduct; and it is in this sense, in presenting us with a deliberating, responsible, choosing person, that Pasternak answers the problem that drive his master almost to the point of madness.

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[52] Valuable discussion of this issue - the deliberative character of man - occurs in Chapter IX, "Freedom and Responsibility," in S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters, Social Principles and the Democratic State, pp. 196-210.

V

CONCLUSION

In chapters II, III, and IV we tried to show how the novel may relevantly illustrate certain concepts traditional to political studies. In this chapter we attempt to link these concepts and to show what relevance they might have for modern political thinking.

There is a statement in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics which may usefully introduce the main problem of this chapter. "Now some think that all justice is of this sort," [conventional] "because that which is by nature unchangeable and has everywhere the same force (as fire burns both here and in Persia), while they see change in the things recognised as just."[1] Aristotle formulates, here, a contrast that we had strong hints of in the last chapter when we compared monist with pluralist views of history. This contrast between an unchanging absolute and a changing conventional is one that has, in different ways, caught the interest of many political philosophers and must be, for us, of quite crucial significance, for though the theory of Natural Law has declined since Hume put it under rigorous logical assault, there are reasons to suspect that we have not heard the last of it.[2]

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[1]Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, V, F, 1135a 25.

[2]Some argue that scientific enquiry has quite banished the possibility of a revival of Natural Law. Others find its resurrection among political philosophers like Leo Strauss, in the new Church movements and even within science itself, e.g., in problems of methodology and primary substances.

It is worth quoting directly from Hume, since it is his view that has for so long been the prevailing one: "When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected" the few governing the many ,"we shall find that, as force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion."[3]

If we found political obligation on opinion, or on convention, we must assume a relative universe, for it is a characteristic of convention that it is not unchanging, whereas the dicta of Natural Law presume an unchanging and eternal order. It also follows that if we postulate a relative moral universe we postulate a condition in which the ends or purposes of men can be conceived of differently. In Natural Law the ends of man are not finally subject to the standards of convention whereas, in a relative moral universe, they are.

It is the contention of this chapter that if we, again, examine this notion of purpose we shall find a way of linking all the concepts of political studies hitherto discussed.

In Chapter II we mentioned, in passing, that it was possible to see purpose as natural or as contingent, and it might be worthwhile to represent these alternatives in more detail.

The view that purpose is natural is Greek, and derives its force from appeal to biology, from an organic metaphor. Just as an acorn ripens into an oak, so man has within himself the potential for ripening, for functional excellence, for growth, for ἀρετή , or perfection; and this potential may become actual only in the fertile soil

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[3] David Hume, "First Principles of Government," Essay IV, in Essays, Moral, Political and Literary, pp. 109f., 1875 ed.

of the πόλις, or, as Aristotle has it, in κοινωνία. This is the meaning of the expression so often and justifiably quoted, ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον[4] (Man is, by nature, a political animal). Man seeks his essence.

It is of interest that when the late William Faulkner accepted the Nobel Prize for literature, he remarked, "I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."[5]

If we strip away the rhetoric, we find that Faulkner, distinguishing man from other creatures, is saying, in one respect, very much the same as Aristotle, namely, that certain qualities are built into man as undeniably as sex is built into chromosomes - qualities at once declaring an essential nature and an ultimate direction. Man must be either "a beast or a God" if he refuses this destiny, this purpose. There is also a sense in which purpose implies goodness. Man may only achieve the good by being in society; society is, in this sense, a condition of goodness. Good and purpose are achieved in political life.

Such a view must necessarily entail a certain kind of society in which man can develop fully. Societies, like our own, go beyond the limits of size which would permit this kind of personal, natural self-fulfillment.[6] So Kitto argues, but there may be other grounds why, to-

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[4] Aristotle, Aristotle's Politics, I, 2, 1532a 2.

[5] William Faulkner, "The Writer's Duty," in Walter Blair and John Gerber, eds., The College Anthology, p. 249.

[6] H. D. F. Kitto, The Greeks, pp. 33-46

day, such a view of purpose may not be tenable.[7] It is not necessary, however, to our argument to develop these; it is necessary only to indicate what the Greek view implies.

But the Greek view is not the only view. As we have already said, it is possible to hold, as Professor Hart does, a contingent, less "metaphysical" view of purpose:

> . . . We can, in referring to survival, discard, as too metaphysical for modern minds, the notion that this (survival) is something antecedently fixed which men necessarily desire because it is their proper goal or end. Instead we may hold it to be a mere contingent fact which could be otherwise, that in general men do desire to live and that they may mean nothing more by calling survival a human goal or end than that men do desire it.[8]

Professor Hart now suggests that, given survival as a fundamental goal, there may be at least five reasons[9] for law and morals.

Human beings, not having exoskeletons, are vulnerable; men share limited equality - "no individual is so much more powerful than others, that he is able, without cooperation, to dominate and subdue them for more than a short period"; men are neither angels, never tempted to harm others, nor devils, unremittingly and recklessly destructive; because human resources of food, clothing and shelter are not available in limitless abundance, rules to protect property are necessary - e.g., for crops to grow, land must be secure against indis-

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[7] It is possible, for example, that social, political and moral traditions are so strong that any attempt to redistribute society so as to meet the requirements of Greek democracy would fail. It is likely, too, that to so reorganise political life would entail the use of means that would destroy the ends that are desired.

[8] The Concept of Law, pp. 187f.

[9] He distinguishes "reasons" sharply from mere "causality". Reasons, in this sense, are more like "grounds"for morals and laws. Ibid., see pp. 189f.

criminate trespass; moreover, men are not like plants which can extract nourishment directly from soil and atmosphere; and lastly, because men enjoy limited strength of will and understanding, they are not always willing to sacrifice immediate for long-range goals. These can be the five grounds for moral and legal rules, and it is important to note, here, that the rules derive from the notion of ultimate purposes, from the "minimum content of Natural Law."[10]

We have, here, then, a basis for political obligation, for there can be no point in having or promulating rules if no one is to obey them. If, again, the rules do not attract the respect of some sections of a community, the authority of the rules and rule-makers may be brought into question: these dissatisfied sections may wish to supplant the rules, or the authorities, or both, with others, consequently they may strive to secure for themselves greater liberty of choice, more satisfaction of their purposes, and may, thus, be said to seek political liberty. We see, here, therefore, how the notion of purpose can crucially link the other concepts dealt with in this dissertation, and this link may be illustrated by two well-known examples.

Consider, for example, the case of Socrates, as presented in Plato's Crito. Crito offers Socrates the means of escape, but Socrates has no wish to be either "a beast or a God." Socrates argues that his obligation is to the πόλις, and is, in this sense, fully political. He cannot achieve self-fulfillment outside the πόλις. He recognises the authority of the judges, chooses freely to accept his fate, and

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[10] Ibid., p. 189.

does not feel dwarfed by social or historical circumstances.

In sharp contrast to this view is the one which Lenin held during the 1917 "June days". Unlike Trotsky, and other Bolsheviks, Lenin does not await arrest. He does not recognise Tsarist authority; his obligation is to history, and therefore, to international socialism, a form of society which he deems better; he refuses to countenance inequality among men, arguing like a sound Marxist, that inequality necessarily promotes the class struggle; his purpose is, like George Bernard Shaw's, to abolish the working classes, to introduce a classless society in which social justice will reign forever, in which the coercive state, which is but an instrument of class rule, will have withered away; consequently, he freely chooses to go into hiding. Whether this act is considered cowardly, expedient, or realistic is beside the point. The real point is that the type of society, which Lenin confronts, is one that captures little or none of his political allegiance. When Lenin and Trotsky meet in London, Lenin is reported as having said that Westminister is "their" palace, that is, the palace of the ruling classes.[11] If ever there was a portrait of an alienated man, it is that of Lenin. Even a piece of architecture is given a social and political content.

Whether Lenin's attitude derives from a natural or a contingent view of purpose is unimportant. What <u>is</u> important is that the society which harbours him is one with purposes diametrically opposed to his own; he feels no sense of obligation to it; only a more rational society of the future is the kind of society that can give his life purpose.

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[11] Leon Trotsky, <u>My Life</u>, p. 143.

Lenin is, indeed, a "Man of Steel": he belongs to that special order of human beings who embody Scott Fitzgerald's maxim that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." "One should," Fitzgerald adds, "for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise."[12] And in the same group of essays, writing specifically of Lenin, Fitzgerald says, "Lenin did not willingly endure the sufferings of his proletariat, nor Washington of his troops, nor Dickens of his London poor."[13]

But all of us are not Lenins or Washingtons, and the history of the novel bears adequate testimony to this fact. Whether we find our first hints of the alienated man in Rousseau, in Hegel, or in Marx matters very little; what does matter is that if we examine the serious novel we cannot help noticing that feature which was touched upon in Chapter II, namely, the development, near the end of the nineteenth century, of the anti-hero, the man who, in one way or another, cannot find purpose in the political and social life of his day.

Some of the heroes are violent, or forced into violence - for example, the characters in Dostoyevski's The Possessed, and Conrad's Under Western Eyes. Some belong less to romantic terrorism and more to disciplined political parties, like the heroes in Silone's Fontamara and Bread and Wine, Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls, Koestler's Darkness at Noon, Jean Malaquais, World without Visa, Malraux's The

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[12] The Crack-Up, p. 69.

[13] Ibid., p. 81.

Conquerors and Man's Fate, and the pre-war novels of Sartre. Some, again, are reformers, like the heroes and heroines in the novels of Disraeli, Trollope, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Reade, H. G. Wells and Adams. An excellent recent example of the alienated man, as reformer, is in a novel by Robert Penn Warren, entitled All the King's Men, a novel based, incidentally, on the life of Huey Long and filled with all the unmistakeable premonitions of the perils of mass democracy, e.g., the dangers of excessive egalitarianism with its concomitant evils of unrestrained demogogy and the corrupting influence of absolute political power. In the main,however, the tendency of novelists has been, when treating alienation, to divorce private from political affairs, and to show the isolation of the private sensibility. Some novelists, like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, probe the remoter regions of the private sensibility. Others like Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell, D. H. Lawrence and Jack Kerouac are more vehement in their rejection of public life. But whatever the attitude, all novelists seem to share a common concern: the portrayal of alienation, of heroes without purpose, rejecting, in one way or another, the current social and political values. The acme of this development are two novels, both interestingly bearing the same title, The Outsider, by Camus and Richard Wright, in which alienation is carried into, and described in, its furthest reaches.

Here we treat characters, but if we turn to structure, to the form of novels, we will find a feature that can have for us the deepest political significance, a feature which will go far towards explaining

why the connections between the different political concepts we have been treating are sometimes, today, so difficult to establish.

Let us return, for a moment, to Jane Austen. In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen is able to say of Mrs. Bennet, "She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news."[14] Mrs. Bennet, it is true, is a simple character, but the ability of the author to summarise character in a few well-chosen phrases bespeaks a kind of certainty about people, which, if we look at later novelists, becomes harder and harder to find. Not merely do we find progressively less and less purposeful heroes, but,in narrative methods, we discover less and less assurance, among novelists, that character can be firmly represented at all. The turning-point in this development is, perhaps, Proust, and it may be worth considering, for a moment what seems to happen when Proust presents his characters.

Let us take the character Swann, for an example. Proust presents several views of Swann: as a friend of the narrator's parents, as a middle-aged man about town, as an art expert, as the familiar of the highest members of French society, as the lover of Odette. We see, here, a man who has, as it were, several "levels" of character. A fresh dimension is always being supplied to us whenever we imagine we have grasped the essence of his personality. We are presented, for example, with Swann as the half-besotted inamorato of Odette, following

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[14] p. 13.

her everywhere with the most slavish attentions, even into circles far beneath his own socially, where she seems most at ease. We imagine that we understand both Swann and Odette. We see her as a vain, vulgar, unfaithful courtesan. But Proust is concerned with time, and he quite suddenly, without warning, shifts the temporal perspective: we discover, with wild surprise, that the lover and mistress are man and wife, that Odette has, all the time, been Swann's wife. We marvel at Proust's ability to deliver this kind of shock, but if we think about it we must conclude that it is not the trick we first took it to be. The trick, if it is one at all, is a result of a certain spiritual attitude. For Proust, reality cannot be represented except as in infinite series of appearances. It is a characteristic of all art to be concerned with the contrast between reality and appearance, but we cannot help feeling that, in Proust, excess has begun to take possession. The function of art, in Stendhal's time, was to hold a mirror to life, and this Stendhal and Jane Austen consummately achieve. But, in Proust, the mirror image is of a curiously chameleon-like reality. It would be impossible for Proust to summarise character, as Jane Austen does, in a few clear, unambiguous statements. The difference between the views of these two writers may be brought out more sharply if we remember that Jane Austen is quite as much concerned with appearances as Proust is. In Pride and Prejudice, for example, Elizabeth Bennet has a portrait of Mr. Darcy as a vain, haughty poseur, a portrait which, near the end of the novel, facts that she does not know force her to revise. Darcy, too, has his misconceptions, notably his overweening belief that Elizabeth must be flattered by his attentions; consequently,

he is shocked that Elizabeth should refuse his suit. But the element of irony is kept within realistic bounds. As readers, we are aware of the false appearances, consequently we believe we know what the true character of Elizabeth Bennet is, and we are, also, aware that Darcy has misrepresented it. With Proust, by contrast, we can have no such certainty. Character, Proust seems to be saying, is a fiction; we see only what we wish to see, external facts embody only feelings, we see a street one way because we are in love and see the same street differently (and perhaps do not even see it) because at another time, we are not in love. Doubtless there is a certain truth in this, but, in Proust, relativism, we must think, is carried rather too far. If you believe that a sea is only an appearance, and you walk into it without being able to swim, appearances no less than reality are likely to stop happening for you. What we have, then, in Proust, is a series of subjective views, and this outlook would not have the appeal it does, if it did not correspond to our modern belief in the unreality of much that we see. It is not for nothing that Proust begins what might be called a tradition of false realities. Few modern novels escape this tradition. James Joyce, for example, hoping to deliver, eventually, a substantial portrait of Dublin in 1904 ends years later with a series of dissociated metaphors, facts become verbal associations so that by the time we reach Finnegan's Wake we are in a world of pure words which have almost entirely lost substantial significance. The Proustian technique finds itself, again, in Faulkner, in The Sound and the Fury, for example, where the narrative is presented from the points of view of four different narrators, each seeing different things in the

same (?) events. Even lesser novelists, like John Masters (e.g., Bhowani Junction), adopt the same approach. By the time we reach Lawrence Durrell, however, what had been an approach has become a fully-fledged, philosophically-grounded belief. Explaining, for example, his method, Durrell says:

> Modern literature offers us no unities, so I have turned to science and am trying to complete a four-decker novel whose form is based on the relativity proposition.
>
> Three sides of space and one of time constitute the soup-mix recipe of a continuum. The four novels follow this pattern.
>
> The three first parts, however, are to be deployed spatially . . . and are not linked in a serial form. They interlap, interweave, in a purely spatial relation. Time is stayed. The fourth part alone will represent time and be a true sequel.
>
> The subject-object relation is so important to relativity that I have tried to turn the novel through both subjective and objective modes . . . . . .
>
> This is not Proustian or Joycean method - for they illustrate Bergsonian 'Duration' in my opinion, not 'space-time.'[15]

The Alexandria Quartet, which the quotation above attempts to explain, may not represent "Proustian or Joycean method", but it does derive from this method. It derives from the belief that reality is protean, and hence character cannot be treated in substantially clear outlines.

We have argued, sofar, that whereas modern writters tend to have developed a more or less sceptical approach to human relations, Jane Austen's approach has been steady. This is not quite true. Mr. Howe, arguing that society is steady beneath Jane Austen's glass, overstates the case. If we look again at Mansfield Park, we discover

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[15] (Prefatory) Note, Balthazar.

a feature that may go far towards explaining the problems of our present chapter.

If we consider her other novels, Mr. Howe's claim is valid. In Pride and Prejudice, in Sense and Sensibility, in Emma, in Persuasion, and in Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen moves easily among the comfortable English gentry. If she depicts the lower orders, it is from a middle-class point of view; if she represents the aristocracy, the titled nobility, it is, principally, to poke fun at them for not possessing plain, commonsense, homely, bourgeois virtues. She denounces, in her disarming, witty self-assurance, all manifestation of eccentricity and extravagance, that is to say, the romantic excesses of aristocracy. Northanger Abbey is, perhaps, her fiercest assault upon romanticism, upon the Gothic romances of Walter Scott and Mrs. Radcliffe. Her world, then, is one of safe, cosy, rural domesticity. Or so it would seem. When, however, we pick up Mansfield Park, we find ourselves shifting suddenly from the snug, complacent, self-confident world of the Bertrams to the home of Fanny Price's parents. Here, for the first time, Jane Austen is out of her depth; her assurance vanishes. Dealing with Wickham in Pride and Prejudice, she has been content to put his defects down to original sins of character. Unlike Anthony Trollope, she does not seek extenuating circumstances. A man is bad by middle-class standards, and there is the end of it. Jane Austen is unable to say, as Scott Fitzgerald is, that "a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth."[16] But suddenly, in Mansfield Park, Jane Austen deliberately confronts her-

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[16] The Great Gatsby, p. 1.

self with Fanny's parents, their sordid home, the drunken father, the child-overwhelmed and ignorant mother; and suddenly, her assurance deserts. Should she sympathise or not? For once, she is ambiguous, uneasy. At times she bears down upon the Prices with all the righteous moral force of an evangelising Methodist; at other times, she is forgiving, merciful, undecided. She has moved beyond customary range. The smell of Dickens and Disraeli has assaulted her sensitive nose, the smell of the "Two Englands". Should she faint, await sal volatile and a comfortable coach home, or stand her ground? She vacillates.

Here, it is not so much that Jane Austen faces social dilemmas hitherto safely ignored, but that a canvas has been stretched, and as a result, a certain mistiness has clouded the social vision. Social, and consequently political, relations at once assume a similar cloudiness. This must mean that as long as the social framework of a novelist is familiar and maintains a fair amount of steadiness, characters have distinctive roles and clear outlines; consequently, relations between characters are both easier to see and to fix. What this means, really, from our point of view, is that the relations between concepts are clearer: we can see, for example, the relation between freedom and authority. But when society is fragmented and excessively mobile,the perspective blurs; authority, for instance, may seem to lose its internal quality of respect, and may become naked, external power because what is the authority can agree only with some sections of society, while to other sections (sections which people, like Lenin, will belong to) it can be no more than power, i.e., a force external that can coerce.

We now reach a crucial problem. What is that activity which most completely joins and inheres in both a form of art and politics? I believe, first of all, that politics, or rather the study and practice of politics, is one of the many forms of art. It is essentially open-textured and various, embracing, in different eras and different countries, different contents. It is, however, concerned with certain crucially human problems - problems of morality, of authority, of liberty, of equality, of justice, and of others; these have, quite reasonably, been thetraditional concerns of both political practice and political study. Because politics is but a form of art, art, too, is concerned with these problems, with these and with others. One of the essential characteristics of art is that of the humanistic imagination. It is a function of the imagination to synthesize experience, to weld the disparate into a homogenous, interrelated whole, and by so doing to send purpose into what has hitherto been fragmentary. In other words, in a settled society, art, and politics no less, will be settled; social and personal relations will be settled and clear. Consequently, when purpose - in the form of plotlessness and disentegrating heroes - is absent in art, and in particular, the novel, then social relations will be no less ambiguous. Attempts will be made to emphasize technique - e.g. the novels of Flaubert -; to glory in plotlessness - e.g. the novels of Joyce -; to enshrine the meaninglessness of life - e.g. the theatre of the absurd, the plays of Ionescu, of Beckett, of Edward Albee, and so many other fashionable, but ultimately facile writers. Where, in other words, certain social, and consequently personal, qualities are in abeyance, absent, or excess-

ively predominant, artists, and political philosophers no less, will attempt in various ways to reset the balance. Some will look for scapegoats and justly fulminate against the excesses of industrialism (e.g. Lawrence, Zola, Veblen etc.); others will point accusing fingers at possessive individualism (Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, and in political theory, Professor C. B. Macpherson); still others will bemoan the decline in theories of Natural Law (Maritain, Strauss, and others). All attempt, with various degrees of success and failure, with the imagination, to synthesize personal and social experience; and as Professor Berlin points out, in the first few sentences of his inaugural lecture, Two Concepts of Liberty, the very unsettled nature of life is the justification of political studies. In our own society, however, unsettlement has reached proportions hitherto unknown. Arnold Hauser, for example, goes so far as to claim that from the nineteenth century onwards, the writer is no longer the mouthpiece of accepted values: he has "to choose between different subjective possibilities" and "between different strata of society".[17] The burden is a crucifixion almost beyond human endurance; and it is easy to see why Van Gogh, a painter, goes mad, why Proust goes into his cork-lined room, why Sartre drives himself into the extremes of existential sensationalism. The social and personal situation has got out of hand.

The question, then, is this. If novels consistently show no inadequacies in actual social and political situations, how can

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[17] The Social History of Art, Vol. 4, p. 6.

political philosophy help to remedy the situation: how may it reassert a unity of purpose in the human condition, present us with a view that can inform the most diverse segments of a fragmented and fluid society, with an arresting common coherence, and thus revive failing art, society, and political philosophy?

It is the claim of this chapter that Professor Hart's concept of contingent Natural Law provides a basis for such a renaissance, for, as has been shown, upon the notion of purpose, which this concept provides, can be built rules, and from rules ideas of obligation can be developed, and so on. Political philosophers may, thus, find themselves, like E. M. Forster's novelists, in the same room, in spite of their differences of rank and historical period. Doubt is sometimes expressed about the future of political philosophy,[18] but this doubt must weaken if we are prepared to start with a general, unifying assumption like Professor Hart's. If, however, we are unprepared to make any such assumption, it is difficult to see which way concepts can assume coherent interrelations and become grounds and standards for a valid, systematic outlook.

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[18] This feeling is widespread. In Philosophy, Politics and Society, Second Series, (ed. by Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman), the title of Isaiah Berlin's contributory essay is "Does Political Theory Still Exist?" Maurice Cowling's recent The Nature and Limits of Political Science begins with an announcement that the author wished to rescue British political studies from the confusion of the last sixty years. W. G. Runciman's Social Science and Political Theory is, also, concerned to rescue a supposed corpse, the casualty of the "fact-value"dilemma. These are just a few of the more recent expressions of unhappiness.

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