

**The War for the Mind of the West:
Rationality, Culture, Geography, History,
and the German Problem**

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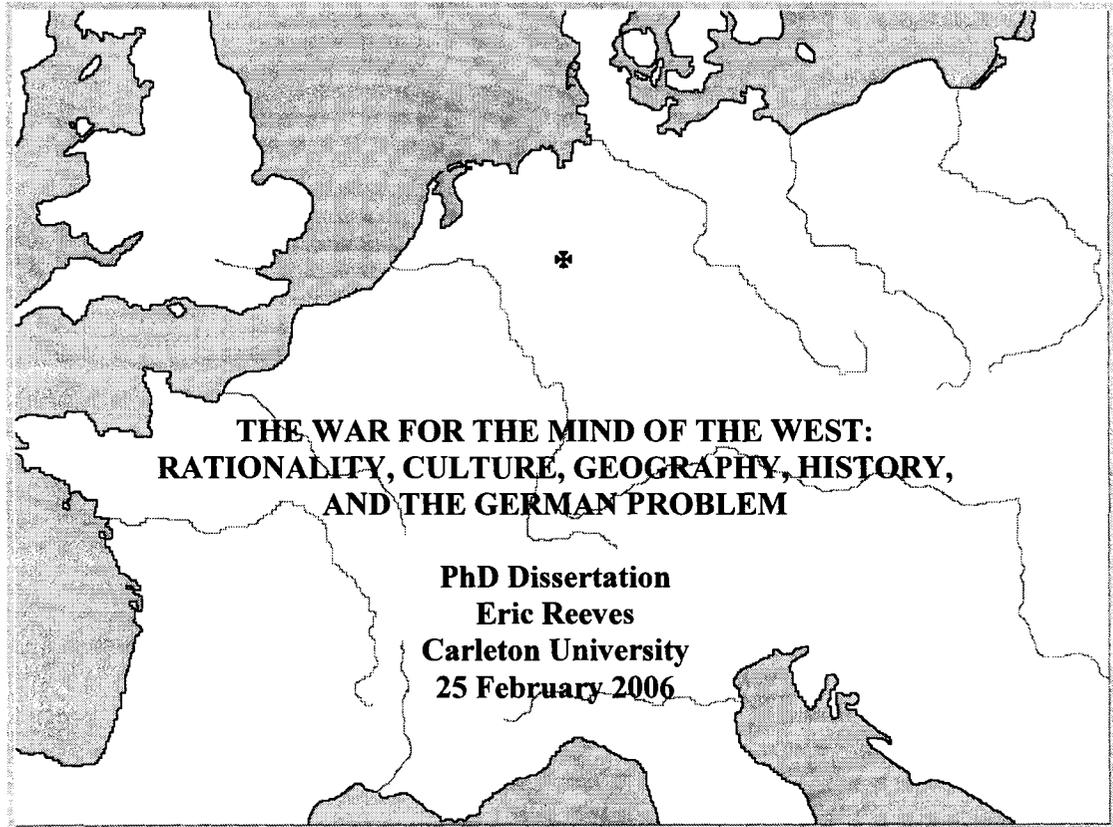
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**THE WAR FOR THE MIND OF THE WEST:
RATIONALITY, CULTURE, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY,
AND THE GERMAN PROBLEM**

**PhD Dissertation
Eric Reeves
Carleton University
25 February 2006**

Abstract. A geocultural explanation of the German problem

The “German problem,” a pathology of political culture which caused two world wars and a holocaust, was an example of extreme “spiritual cultural polarity,” which was in turn caused by the long-term “geocultural” position of Germany on a steep “cultural gradient” in Europe. More specifically, the thesis of this work is that Germany developed an extremely “spiritual” reaction against material rationality because of a reaction to a severe “cultural gradient” between the Rhine and the Elbe, which was caused by the pattern of urbanization, commerce, and ethnic interactions established during the Roman Empire.

The “German problem,” a somewhat problematic label, is the problem of the peculiar development of Germany and its culture of “reactionary modernism,” to use a paradoxical term common in the literature. In this work, the causes are found in the long-term evolution of Germany from the defeat of Roman legions on the Rhine in 9 CE to the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. The place the Romans called “Germania” was from the inception a “divided nation,” even before it became a nation or a nation-state, because of its position on the steep “cultural gradient,” between the Rhine and the Elbe, created by the natural shape of Roman expansion into Europe. This geographic “cultural gradient” caused an analogous cultural division or “polarity,” an antagonism of antithetical forces in German culture. The culture of “reactionary modernism” was not a manifestation of modernity, as has become fashionable to believe, but a reaction against it. This is a reaction which continues in the 21st Century with the misunderstood “clash of civilizations,” which is not only a war against the West, but also a war within the mind of the West itself. The German problem was only the most extreme manifestation, so far, of this war for the mind of the West.

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§ 1. Introduction

This work concerns something called the “German problem.” It is a historical problem of great consequence, a problem which is highly contentious, and a problem which is theoretically interesting. In a concrete sense, this work is about the historical evolution of Germany from the 1st Century to the middle of the 20th Century, and about the causes of the World Wars and the Nazi Holocaust. And it is about coming to terms with the contradictions of modern civilization. The German problem is not a problem because the Germans were barbarians. It is a problem because they were not, because Germany became a land of industry, technology, and science at the beginning of the 20th Century, because Germany was a land of thinkers and poets, and a land whose philosophers continue to dominate the mind of the West in the 21st Century. This work is also about the German problem as a theoretical anomaly, as a problem which presents a challenge to our concepts of rationality.

Despite all those complexities, and the controversies which arise in sorting out a problem of such magnitude, one can, with some oversimplification, sum up the German problem by saying that the problem was not *who* the Germans were, but was *where* they were.

The thesis

In somewhat more technical terms, the explanation for the “German problem” is that it was a pathological “cultural polarity” caused by the position of Germany on a steep “cultural gradient” in Western Europe. This is what, for lack of a better term already accepted in the literature, can be called a “geocultural” explanation for differences in the political cultures of nations, in general, and the political culture of Germany in particular.

The plan of the work and an outline of the argument

That thesis is premised on the assumption that our explanation for significant phenomena in political science should be based on some sort of causal theory which links up with concrete historical facts. The bulk of this work focuses on the last part of that formulation, the link between theory and history, or what might be called “midlevel” theory. This midlevel theory is the “geocultural” explanation of the German problem, which is previewed by the very brief literature review in § 2, and which is presented in the detailed historical study, supported by the conventional methodology of comparative analysis, in §§ 5-11.

“Geoculture” may be defined as the spatial relationship between cultures, evolving through time, conditioned by both natural and human structures. One of the most important of such structures is a “cultural gradient,” a gradient in relative modernization, which does not always manifest itself as a geographic gradient, but which actually did so in the case of Western Europe after the Roman Empire. As already indicated in the thesis statement above, this concrete “cultural gradient” in Europe is identified as the cause of the “German problem” in this work. But the more general theory of “cultural gradients” and “cultural polarities” is of universal significance, as indicated by the study of historical antecedents in § 5 and some of the comparative case studies in § 6. Moreover, the problem of pathological “cultural polarities,” which tend to arise from such gradients, is a potential problem for all nations and all civilizations. It is a fundamental problem of modernity, a problem of the human condition. This work is called “The War for the Mind of the West,” not merely the “German Problem,” because the German problem is our problem, throughout the West, and throughout the world, as the modernizing power of the West spreads across the planet Earth.

This work attempts to deal with some of the fundamental philosophical issues raised by this human condition. Nevertheless, it is an exercise in conventional social science which proceeds from statement of theoretical propositions (with due regard for

existing schools of thought and literature of relevance) to an empirical and comparative analysis of historical cases which supports those theoretical propositions. “Theory” takes on different forms, and the work proceeds from the most general to the most specific aspects of theory. There are two dimensions in which the discussion travels, in this progression from the general to the specific. There is generality or specificity in terms of theoretical structures, or the difference between general approaches or paradigms, in contrast to specific mid-level theories or hypotheses which are more directly linked to empirical analysis. There is also generality or specificity in terms of subject matter. The dissertation begins with the more general levels in both senses, and then moves into the more specific, in terms of both theoretical levels and concrete subjects.

First, at the most general level, something should be said about some “meta-theoretical” issues in current theory, about the conflict between “rational” and “cultural” theories in social science, and about the problem of “rationality” and “culture” as substantive causal elements. This is of relevance to the specific interpretations of the German problem to be analyzed in § 3, and to the “higher level” theory of “cultural polarity” provided in § 4.

In very general terms, much of political science, and the wider realm of social science, is now dominated by “rational choice theory” (RCT). In the peculiar study of world politics or “international relations,” RCT takes on some special permutations in various forms of “realism” ~ such as “structural realism,” “neorealism,” “defensive realism,” and “offensive realism” ~ although it plays a part in “liberalism” as well. A basic fallacy in theories about rationality ~ especially in the forms offered up in explanations for significant phenomena in world politics, such as wars and holocausts, by both mainstream and critical theorists ~ is that they often degenerate into tautology. For many realists, any decision regarding war, peace, or slaughter, no matter how ultimately self-destructive to the nation or the individual leaders, is by definition inherently “rational.” Given that some sort of reconstruction of supposedly

instrumental rational calculations at the time can always be concocted to explain the “rational choice,” the “analysis” of rational choice analysis ultimately goes nowhere. Similarly, in a curious theoretical agreement between conservative and radical camps which would otherwise seem to have nothing but disdain for each other, much of the “critical” or “postmodern” theorizing about the faults of modern civilization, as well as more traditional or theological critiques of modernity, is based on the assumption that “rationality,” especially in the form of “technological” or “instrumental” rationality, is a pervasive evil which is the root cause of the horrors of the age, such as world wars and holocausts. In many of these critiques, the putative evil of rationality, the original sin, is so pervasive, so original, and so essential to the nature of civilization, that it provides no basis for a causal theory of when and where wars or holocausts will actually occur, or not. All of modern civilization is essentially a holocaust, whether or not bodies are actually being burned at the present time. Again, as in the case of the mainstream realists or rational choice theorists, the supposed explanation of the phenomena is so complete that it explains nothing. (These summary comments on rational choice theory and postmodernism will be justified in the detailed analysis to come, in § 3.)

This is not to say that mainstream rational choice theorists, postmodernists, or traditionalists define “rationality” in the same way. For many rational choice theorists, “rationality” is a highly abstract or structural thing, akin to a law of mathematics or a basic principle of physics, which sometimes becomes so abstract, as in the case of the core proposition of “transitive rationality,” that it hardly seems to be there at all. In many postmodernist critiques, it may seem equally abstract, but it is presented as a force, such as “logocentrism” or “global technology,” which arose in deeply textured historical movements, even if sometimes poetically or metaphorically described. For traditional or theological critics of modernity, it is also a concrete historical force, as real as original sin, if not actually the same thing. In rational choice theory and realism, “rationality” is a universal structure, independent of history and culture ~

which is why “rational” theory is distinguished from “cultural” theory in conventional discourse. In the critiques of modernity, “rationality” is itself a form of “culture” ~ indeed, it is the defining element in the culture of modernity.

Now it becomes a bit confusing, because there is a crossover between these supposedly dichotomous approaches to theory, “rationality” and “culture,” in that there may be such a thing as a “culture of rationality.” Depending on how one chooses to employ the terms (which should be a matter of convenience, not essences) one might say that there are at least two different “cultures of rationality,” or two different, culturally determined, kinds of “rationality.” This relates back to an older body of “cultural theory,” and what is referred to here as the “polarities of culture.” The concept of “polarities of culture,” presented in § 4, provides the high-level theoretical framework for this work, an overarching theory or “paradigm.”

Before proceeding to that body of cultural theory, it should be noted that this older “cultural theory,” as a general approach in social science, was no more immune from the tendency towards degeneration into tautology and vague essentialism than current rational choice theory or radical critiques. It is tautological to say that any decision consciously made by a decision-maker within the limits of instrumental and bounded rationality must have been a rational decision at the time, whatever the oddity of the preferences manifested by that decision, and even if it seems to be an irrational preference for self-destruction. But it is equally tautological and uninformative to say that agents of a culture or political ideology act out that culture or ideology simply because that is the preference in such a culture or ideology, without some explanation as to why that culture or ideology developed in such a manner. Rational choice theory is not an empirically testable theory ~ a theory with “truth value” ~ without a theory about the origin of preferences. That leads us back to culture and ideology. But culture and ideology explain little, except possibly as a description of what is, without a theory of causation, a theory for the causes of differences in cultures and ideologies. And it would be very nice if we could come up with a systematic theory for differences

in distinct cultures without resorting to implicit racism or some sort of vague ethnocentric essentialism about cultural traditions.

That last important step in a truly causal theory, for the purposes of this work, is the “geoculture” which is presented in § 5. That is the *why* of it all, the demonstration, through the relatively conventional means of historical and comparative analysis, of the underlying cause of the particular phenomenon to be explained here, the “German problem,” in terms of the geographically shaped interaction of cultures. But let us first back up a bit and try to specify more clearly in theoretical terms the *what* of it all, the nature of the phenomenon to be explained.

Two world wars and a major holocaust are significant historical events to be carefully studied and explained, if possible, especially in light of the fear that world wars and holocausts may be continuing features of modern civilization rather than merely terrible failures of modern civilization. Neither the mainstream realists nor the critics of modernity are reassuring on this count. According to the realists, wars and holocausts are rational choices, no matter how mad decision-makers such as Hitler may seem to most of us naïve liberals. According to the critics of modernity, on the other hand, this instrumental or technological “rationality” of the Modern Age is indeed a madness ~ if not an absolute evil, as in more religious critiques of modernity ~ which infects all the nations of the West, if not the whole planet Earth. According to either interpretation of modern “rationality,” we are all doomed.

But that raises an interesting theoretical issue, as well as a basis for a somewhat more hopeful view of modernity. Given the absolute destructiveness of modern warfare ~ “absolute” in the technical sense that it is usually not a “zero-sum” game, but instead a negative-sum game in which both sides, winner as well as loser, lose a lot ~ it would logically follow that a general increase in instrumental rationality should lead to greater peacefulness, or perchance to what has now become famous, although problematically conceptualized, as the “democratic peace” among modern liberal democracies. Putting aside all ideological predispositions and basic human hope, as if

we were extraterrestrial sociologists with no particular affection for the dominate species of the planet, it still seems that there is something to chose between the “rationality” of the relatively peaceful European Union and the putative “rationality” of the relatively militant Third Reich. If “democratic peace” is a reality ~ which work done elsewhere would seem to support ~ then we are led to an interesting and productive theoretical issue, which is why it is that different political cultures seem to have very different definitions of what is in their own rational self-interest.

What is “rational,” in other words, depends on a cultural context. More specifically, the “preferences” which drive the peculiar “rationality” of different cultures are important characteristics for distinguishing between different cultures, and perhaps even in predicting some significant aspects of their behavior. If there is a basis for such a distinction, and a plausible link to behavior, then there is also a basis for a non-tautological explanation of wars and holocausts. An irony of the dichotomy between “rational” and “cultural” explanations in contemporary social science is that much of the older “cultural theory” actually concerned the problem of “rationality.” This was explicit in the work of Max Weber, who perhaps should be accorded priority for his focus on the distinction between different forms of “rationality” as motivations for social action, and also for his focus on systemic or general “rationalization” as the defining characteristic of modernity. But it is a central issue, sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit, throughout the wide body of cultural theory discussed in § 4.

An interesting and useful aspect which can be drawn from this large body of theory is what is characterized in this work as a basic “polarity” of culture. It is another one of those grand dichotomies. And we should be wary of grand dichotomies. But as Plato pointed out, analysis must begin with distinctions, and we need to begin somewhere. There is no one nicely suitable set of dichotomous terms for the two “polarities” of culture. There is, instead, an overabundance of terms, most of which are listed in table 2. And all of the best terms carry with them an embarrassing amount of

historical and ideological baggage. So we should try to be nominalists, not “realists,” in the matter of terminology here.

One might recognize Weber’s contributions by calling the two sides the *Zweckrational* and *Wertrational* polarities, or perhaps recognize Pitirim Sorokin’s monumental contribution to this field of study by preferring the terms “sensate” and “ideational” culture. In terms of traditional philosophical discourse, the “real” and the “ideal” might be the most intuitively familiar terms for the basic dichotomy, but that phrasing is fraught with the danger of misapprehension because of extensive controversy over the meaning of “idealism” as a metaphysical concept. A related set of traditional philosophical terms, *logos* versus *mythos*, has recently been employed to good use by Karen Armstrong, and it relates back, in an appropriate although possibly misleading way, to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Similarly, although these terms carry a huge load of baggage with them, there is something to be said for emphasizing some of the self-referential terms from debates within German culture, such as *Gesellschaft* versus *Gemeinschaft* and *Zivilisation* versus *Kultur*. All of these will be discussed in due course. For lack of a better set of terms ~ and with no pretense that this is necessarily the best choice for general characterization of the commonalities in these various dichotomous elements of culture ~ these are called the “material” and “spiritual” polarities of culture in this work. There are likely to be misunderstandings associated with both these terms, especially with the term “spiritual,” which many will object to because of both negative and positive normative connotations. But there are reasons for these terms. They actually relate well to basic historiographic, theoretical, and philosophical debates about the nature of fascism, and about “reactionary modernism” in Nazism. They also relate well to the self-referential terms in which the Germans conceived of themselves as an oppositional culture in the West.

A basic premise in this attempt at theoretical synthesis is that all these various theorists, from Vilfredo Pareto to Karen Armstrong, were on to something ~ that they have been the wise but blind men and women describing the various parts of the

elephant, and that there is a meaningful commonality in these various dichotomizations of cultures or elements of culture which relates to what Pareto calls the “objective” structure of culture. Is there an underlying objective structure we are trying to describe, and can we describe it in theoretical terms which actually explain it, rather than merely throwing more words at it? There is. But it will not be presented here, in this work, because it requires an excursus into a body of work, called “evolutionary theory,” which has yet to find enough general acceptance in political science as to be easily communicated in a work such as this, which is primarily concerned with explanation of a concrete historical phenomenon. Instead, in lieu of such a theoretical treatment of this basic cultural polarity, the elements of the polarity will be presented and discussed empirically, in a concrete historical context.

To put it most concretely, it is the conflict between the “city” and the “tribe.” That is a bit of an oversimplification, and qualifications are introduced in due course, as the evolution of the city and the geocultural foundations of the West are discussed in detail in § 5. As an initial proposition, however, this work agrees with Weber’s emphasis on the critical importance of the “occidental city” in the evolution of the uniquely dynamic and materialistically “rational” culture of the West. And further, to take it a bit beyond where Weber went, the thesis in this work is that much of the pathology of political culture which led to the World Wars and the Nazi Holocaust in the 20th Century, the “German problem” as such, can be conceptualized as a polarization of culture which has its roots in the rebellion of the tribe against the city. It is not just cities. It is also things such as commerce and multicultural contacts which are usually associated with cities, although not always. The early development of these concrete factors created a “cultural gradient” ~ a gradient in relative levels of modernization ~ west to east, in Western Europe. And this led directly to an antagonistic “geocultural” relationship between Germany and the other nations of the West. Those details, and appropriate historical comparisons, will be presented in §§ 5-6.

Put in those concrete terms, the thesis of this work is that Germany developed an extremely “spiritual” reaction against material rationality, a pathology of political culture, because of a reaction to a severe “cultural gradient” between the Rhine and the Elbe, which was caused by the pattern of urbanization, commerce, and ethnic interactions established during the Roman Empire. This is not a theory of “geographic determinism,” in the sense that there would be a simple one-to-one relationship between geographic zones or climates and national cultures. But this is a theory of “cultural geography,” or “geoculture,” in the sense that the interaction between evolving cultures is strongly affected by their spatial relationships. Again, the problem was not *who* the Germans were. It was *where* they were. Or, to be more precise, *where* they were determined *who* they *thought* they were and what they thought they had to do, to preserve that sense of who they were.

§ 2. Approaches to explanation: A general survey of literature and theories on culture, geography, the “European miracle,” and the “German problem”

This section provides a very brief literature review of mid-level theories of historical development of relevance to the German problem, and a preview to the mid-level theory of “geoculture” to come in § 6, much as the introduction of the meta-theoretical issues in § 1 was a preview to the more specific analysis of the same issues to come in §§ 3-4. It also adds another dimension to the basic conflict between rational and cultural theory raised in § 1, because it shows how that same conflict is manifest as a conflict between “material” and “non-material” explanations of European development.

No statements about a nation or culture are meaningful unless they can, at least in principle, be defined by a comparative context. The “German problem” is only a problem, in a theoretical sense, because Germany diverted from the mainstream in the evolution of the modern nation-state in Western Europe (however that mainstream is defined, which is less than clear). Conversely, the modern nation-state in Western Europe ~ a nation-state which has dominated the rest of the world through a combination of capitalism, science, technological growth, and highly effective political mobilization ~ is itself a historical and comparative anomaly which has sometimes been called the “European miracle.”¹ Thus, a basic background problem, of some relevance to understanding the “German problem,” is the question of what this “European miracle” was, and what caused it.

A “miracle” is merely an anomaly not explained, or perhaps an anomaly which someone would prefer not to explain, and bad explanations often fill the void left by the absence of good ones. The worst explanations for the domination of the world by the Europeans are religious invocations of divine right and pseudo-scientific claims of

¹ Ernest Gellner, “Introduction” to Jean Baechler, John A. Hall, and Michael Mann, eds., *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988), 1-5.

racial superiority, which are often mixed together incoherently, as they were in the Aryan myths of Nazism. Those myths have gone out of style, but they linger on in various vague invocations of ethnocentric essentialism, the idea that the West is superior because of some mysterious cultural essence, which is often thought to have been inherited from the corresponding “miracle of the Greeks.”² Few would disagree with the basic proposition that “culture matters,”³ in some sense. But the real argument is about the relationship between different realms of culture, about the relationship between the material side or under-structure, on one hand, and the superstructure of politics and ideology, or what in this work is called the “spiritual” side of culture, on the other. Few can deny that European culture, at some level ~ in the realms of science, technology, and economics, if nowhere else ~ has proven its material

² See the discussion of the “Greek miracle,” without necessarily endorsing the concept, in the separate realms of science and art, in George Sarton, *Ancient Science through the Golden Age of Greece* (1993), 160, and Diana Buitron-Oliver, *The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, The Fifth Century B.C.* (1992). Examples of this vague ethnocentric essentialism, which are far from extinct, although they should be considered atavisms, are Thomas Cahill’s popular works, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland’s Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (1995), and *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (2003); and Thomas Sowell’s study of races and cultures in *Race and Culture: A World View* (1994), *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (1996), and *Conquests and Cultures: An International History* (1998). The problem with these works is not that they are racist, which they are not, or that they are ethnocentric, which they are, but is not necessarily a sin. (Any of us who employ any form of “culture theory” will be damned with the charge of “ethnocentrism,” because we presuppose that some cultures function better than others, at some level.) The problem is that they resort to mystery or conflation instead of explanation. Cahill asserts that Greek culture “just ‘happened to happen,’” in the course of asserting a strong version of cultural determinism, or cultural essentialism. *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea*, 49. Sowell expresses disdain for “the elegance of abstract theoretical models” and insists on conflating “race” and “culture,” and also “biology” and “geography,” to such an extent that it is impossible to know what causal theory for the origin of distinct cultures he is proposing. *Conquests and Cultures*, xii; *Race and Culture*, xiii. Eventually, if one follows Sowell to the literal end of the last book in his series, he disowns racial explanations in favor of geography, but he has by then so muddled the waters that it is unclear what he sees as the determinative geographical factors, other than resort to supposedly unique combinations of favorable geographic circumstances for some nations such as the British. *Conquests and Cultures*, 369-78, 41, et passim. (Also, the significance of the specific factors he cites for the British, while explicitly disowning any actual explanation, are undermined by his lack of a comparison to the equally successful and progressive Dutch on the other side of the Channel.) The problem is not that either Cahill or Sowell (or many others who write in their mode) are propounding bad theory, as such. The problem is that they propose no theory, and instead invoke a vague essentialism.

³ Harrison, Lawrence E., Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000).

superiority as a basis for military and economic domination. That material advantage is acknowledged, or even emphasized, by critics of the West. The question is how it is that those obvious material advantages arose, and what relationship they have with the less tangible but no less important non-material realms of culture.

Material and non-material theories: Marx, Weber, and all that

That distinction also provides a convenient starting point for categorizing theories about historical development and the “European miracle.” Much as culture itself has a material and a spiritual side, and much as theories about more specific formations such as the “German problem” can be divided up into “material-rational” or “cultural-ideological” explanations (see table 1), the major schools of thought on the historic evolution of the capitalist nation-state in Europe can be divided into explanations which stress either material or spiritual factors. (If one is uncomfortable with the term “spiritual” for the non-material side of culture, please substitute “ideological,” any of the various terms from culture theory in table 2, or simply the neutral term “non-material.”) A convention of the tradition, in comparative politics and historical sociology, is to frame Marxism and Weberianism as the contrasting paradigms of materialistic and spiritualistic theories. A textbook in comparative politics, for example, is built around the comparison of Marx and Weber for this purpose. “At bottom, Marx defined culture in materialistic terms, while Weber defined culture in idealistic terms.... The Marxist conception explains culture by referring to the political, social, and economic settings of society, whereas the Weberian conception explains the political, social, and economic settings by referring to the culture.”⁴ Similarly, Michael Mann observes that, “Almost every undergraduate student of sociology writes at some point an essay which contrasts Weber’s stress on the content of religious beliefs with Marx’s stress on the material factors as explanation of the rise

⁴ Ronald Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered* (1994), 111, 114.

of capitalism.”⁵ Similar quotes could be easily gleaned from economics, history, or any other category of social science or philosophy concerned with the historical evolution of the modern economic and political order. It is a nice, simple, and obvious distinction ~ but one which is misleading.

To begin with, this has always been an oversimplification of both Marx and Weber. As Perry Anderson emphasizes in his impressive neo-Marxist examination of the origins of the European state, a “mode of production” is strongly affected by political and legal institutions in the superstructure, and social order has a lot to do with how economy and technology are organized.⁶ Although others have criticized this as a departure from classical Marxism, Anderson defends it as true orthodoxy in Marxist theory.⁷ In a more esoteric analysis of the genealogy of Marxism, Robert Tucker argues that Marx never really departed from Hegelian idealism at all, that Marxism is still a theory of spiritual causation.⁸ That philosophical (or theological) inside-school argument about the exegesis of Marxism is of far less importance, here, than the evident fact that neo-Marxists such as Anderson, when attempting to conduct a serious historical study based on their reading of Marxist theory, are compelled to take political structure and culture into account as causative factors. Conversely, it is a mistake to read Weber as promoting a simple theory of ideology or religion as the determinative factor in Western capitalism. That is a plausible reading of his famous

⁵ Michael Mann, “Forward” to Gianfranco Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit: Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic* (1983), vii.

⁶ See Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (1974) and *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974). Although these neo-Marxist works are filled with irritating jargon, they are also filled with insight and serious historical analysis, and they provide a useful study of the formation of the West for scholars in any school of thought.

⁷ Anderson argues that “one of the axioms of historical materialism” is that “struggle between classes is ultimately resolved on the *political* ~ not at the economic or cultural ~ level of analysis.” *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 11 (emphasis in original). For criticisms of this approach as a covert abandonment of core Marxist theory, see Chris Wickham, “The Uniqueness of the West,” in Baechler, Hall, and Mann, *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism*, 70, et passim.

⁸ Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (1961).

essay on “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.”⁹ But it is a reading which can only be sustained by ignoring his equally important essay on “The City,” in which he stresses the importance of the “occidental city” in Western capitalism,¹⁰ or his essay on “Origins of Industrial Capitalism in Europe,” where he argues that the full explanation “must above all consider the economic determinates.”¹¹

More importantly, to focus on the substance of the problem, this distinction between the material and spiritual, although valid in a superficial way, actually means much less when we try to penetrate to the underlying structure, to what Pareto called the “objective” aspects of cultural structure. Where, for example, are the “polity” or “political institutions” in this comparison? Where are they located in this ontological space, in this general dichotomy between the material and spiritual in culture? Or what is the “technological” realm of culture? What seems like a clear and obvious dichotomy often breaks down if we try to more sharply define the vague terms we use for various aspects of “culture,” whatever that actually is.

When we get more concrete, in formulating specific lower-level theories about history, many of the more obviously materialistic theories for the development of the European nation-state seem to degenerate into a crude form of technological determinism. The most notorious of these is the simplistic idea that the stirrup gave us the mounted warrior and feudalism, and then gunpowder gave us mass armies and the nation-state. It sounds plausible, until one looks at the actual history. The lack of gunpowder did not prevent successful Roman employment of mass armies. Nor did the stirrup and the lack of gunpowder prevent upstart Flemish and Swiss burgers from taking down mounted knights. As summed up by an eminent military historian,

⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons, trans. (1958) [*Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, 1905].

¹⁰ Max Weber, *The City*, Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, eds. and trans. (1958) [“Die Stadt,” 1922].

¹¹ Max Weber, “Origins of Industrial Capitalism in Europe,” in *Selections in Translation*, W.G. Runciman, ed., Eric Matthews, trans. (1978) [from *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 1920], 340.

Michael Howard, "The supremacy of cavalry in the Middle Ages has been as much moral and social as technical."¹² Upon serious study, it becomes apparent that "technology," like "economics" and "politics," has articulations throughout the culture, both material and spiritual. Or consider the "wool and wine" theory which Barrington Moore, Jr., proposes as an explanation for the differences in the political cultures of England and France.¹³ In fact, sheep are hardy creatures who have flourished in a variety of climates, and were certainly herded on the European Continent as well as the British Isles.¹⁴ Another example of a simplistic materialistic explanation which becomes considerably more complicated when examined closely is the "insular thesis," discussed in § 6, which is often proposed as the explanation for the remarkable success of Britain, but which breaks down when one considers the number of successful invasions of the British Isles. These material factors were significant, up to a point, but there had to be something else at work, something having to do with the economic, political, and ideological structures which took advantage of the geography or resources. As Harold and Margaret Sprout put it some time ago, we must take into account the *milieu*, the combination of geography and human perceptions ~ or the

¹² Michael Howard, *War in European History* (1986), 14.

¹³ Many historians, not only non-Marxists, have recognized what Asa Briggs calls "The special place of wool in English history." Asa Briggs, *A Social History of England* (1985), 67. But Moore elevates this commonplace to a curious form of biological determinism in which the woolly sheep is the *deus ex machina* of English political culture. Moore, Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1967), 5, et seq. According to the logic of his thesis, the history of England would have been radically different if human beings were not naked apes who need to clothe themselves, because the structure of wool production and trade, not being labor-intensive, contrasted with labor-intensive farming in France, particularly wine growing, which thereby preserved a feudal structure. But he neglects to consider that England never had a biological monopoly on sheep, who are actually rather adaptable creatures. It is true that woolens were exported from England in an early time, but they were also exported, in ancient times, from the Rhine Valley, Southern France, and Italy. See Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Times Concise Atlas of World History* (1982), map 2, page 24. In the Middle Ages, wool was a major part of the economy of Spain, but with almost opposite effects on the social and political structure. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 61-2. Wool was certainly an important commodity in English trade. But it was trade, generally, and the urban and national structures supporting the trade, arising from the special geographic position of England, which made the fundamental difference.

¹⁴ Moore, Barrington, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1967).

“cultural environment” as well, in other words ~ to understand how individuals and nations make use of material environments.¹⁵

Geography and resources are manifestly of great importance, especially in creating the starting conditions for human civilizations. That is the point of the geographic and environmental analysis of Jared Diamond,¹⁶ which is used as a beginning point for the “geocultural” analysis in § 5. However, as emphasized there, that is only a beginning point. A simplistic geographic, environmental, or technological determinism will only carry us so far. At some point, in order to have a meaningful theory consist with the facts of history, we need to integrate those material factors with some theory about less tangible cultural structures, or what are now sometimes called “historical institutions.”¹⁷

Ultimately, in the final reduction of the chain of causation, all aspects of culture must be rooted in materiality, simply because humans are material creatures who developed their cultures in response to material conditions and needs ~ because, despite the old myths, they were not given commandments and laws from gods. Therefore, in a scientific analysis, the question really becomes, how can we build up to non-material factors from material factors? What are the significant factors, connections, and patterns of development, from the material to the non-material in culture? And can we usefully abstract factors of significance without becoming lost in the complexities and contingencies of historical development? This work presumes that such a research program is feasible, and is based, in a very general way, on some previous efforts to pursue such a program.

¹⁵ Harold and Margaret Sprout, “Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1.4 (December 1957) 309-328, 311, et passim.

¹⁶ Diamond, Jared M., *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997).

¹⁷ See Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (1999) 369-371.

Materialistic explanations of development: Geography, economics, resources, diseases, technology, demographics, and history

Keeping in mind the warning against the fallacy of simplistic geographic, environmental, or technological determinism ~ or a warning not to read various approaches stressing these factors as necessarily so simplistic ~ let us look at the materialistic explanations of most particular relevance to the “European miracle.”

The first major figure promoting a geographic theory of cultural development may have been Aristotle, although he created a difficulty which was also apparent in Montesquieu, and which is still apparent in some modern writings, by conflating geographic origins with race.¹⁸ Montesquieu’s more useful contribution to the field of study is his focus on commerce, in addition to climate and resources, as a major factor providing the basis for different cultures (or “spirits”) and political orders.¹⁹ Although one may need to read into the text with a modern mentality to see it, Montesquieu can be seen as providing the first elements for a “geocultural” explanation, in that he recognizes the importance of human economic or institutional structures, and concrete connections such as roads, sailing routes, and cities, in creating a human cultural geography. This is one manifestation of what Harold and Margaret Sprout mean by a *milieu*,²⁰ or more specifically what J.R. and William H. McNeill, modern historians,

¹⁸ Aristotle says that Asians “have souls endowed with thought” while barbarian Europeans “are filled with spiritedness,” but “the stock of the Greeks shares in both ~ just as it holds the middle in terms of location.” Aristotle (of Stagira), *The Politics* [*Politica*, c. 335-23 BCE], Carnes Lord, trans. (1985), 1327b. In some passages, Montesquieu seems to say that climate affects all races alike, but in others he resorts to racial explanations. See Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* [*De l’esprit des lois*, 1748], Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone, eds. and trans. (1989), § 3.14.2-3 (pages 231-5). Race and geography continue to be conflated in modern discourse, although it may often be unintentional, but it may also be based on a deliberate evasion of the distinction, as in Sowell, *Race and Culture and Conquests and Cultures*.

¹⁹ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, § 4.20.1 (page 338), et seq.

²⁰ They speak of “the” *milieu*, but what they really mean to say is that there are many different *milieux*, plural, both material and non-material, of relevance. See “Environmental Factors,” 309-328, 311, et passim. This confusion may be one reason why the term *milieu* never caught on, although some such term is badly needed.

call the “human web.”²¹ Or as E.L. Jones puts it, we must take account of both the “economy of nature and the ecology of man.”²² Natural geography, in other words, is layered over with a cultural geography which becomes more and more determinative as it evolves. The time factor is critical. A natural factor which is highly determinative of human culture at an early state of technology and economic development may be of little relevance at a later stage.

This is an important qualification which should be kept in mind when reading a recent update on Aristotle and Montesquieu, which is Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997). Diamond, a biologist, makes a persuasive case that the early evolution of civilization in the Mediterranean ~ the highly complicated culture which became what we call the “West” ~ got its historic advantage from a unique access to biological resources and an opportunity to develop resistance to devastating diseases which had not been available to native peoples Europeans later encountered in more isolated areas. Diamond is a biologist giving social scientists a valuable primer on the biological bases of civilizations. But, contrary to criticisms that he is an “environmental determinist,” or that he has wandered too far from his field of expertise, he does not presume to say that biology explains everything about the success of the West. His analysis is only a starting point.

One might view E.L. Jones and Douglass C. North, who are both economists, as taking the project forward to the next step (after Montesquieu, and in anticipation of Diamond), to the analysis of how the material basis of Europe led to basic economic and political structures of importance in the early history of the civilization. E.L. Jones invokes the term “European miracle” merely for the purpose of proposing an entirely non-miraculous and materially-based explanation in *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (1981).

²¹ J.R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird’s-Eye View of World History* (2003).

²² E.L. Jones, quoting Marston Bates, in *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (1981), 3.

(His use of the term “geopolitics” should be read as substantially equivalent to “geoculture” in this work.) He argues that Asians historically adopted an “r-strategy” of maximum reproduction leading to overpopulation and crashes because this was insurance against the high incidence of natural disasters in Asia, whereas Europeans, beginning with the early Germans described by Tacitus, adopted a “k-strategy” of self-limited reproduction, and correspondingly higher investment in capital accumulation, because Europe provides a more stable and safe environment.²³ This basic survival strategy, which directly affected family structure and economic activity, had ramifications throughout culture which eventually led to capitalism in Europe.

It seems a little too simple. Even if valid in a general way over the long period of time from prehistory in Europe to the emergence of capitalism and the nation-state in the Modern Age, it does little to explain the distinct differences among national cultures in Western Europe, or the more distinct differences in development between Western and Eastern Europe. The theory also seems to suffer from an internal inconsistency, because Jones identifies population limitation as the critical factor in European success, but also associates economic growth with rapid population *increase* during crucial phases of national consolidation during the 11th, 13th, 15th, 16th, and 18th centuries.²⁴ As economists might be quick to point out, this is a quantitative and comparative matter. Some restriction of population, up to a point, may be advantageous during an earlier period of low technology and trade, but some increase in population may be of particular advantage, within limits, during a later period when available technology and trade will support it. Perhaps. But this has too much the look of a “just so” story, without any general theory of structure or institutions which might give it truth-value by providing a basis for comparative analysis between national cultures, if not between different periods in the civilization as a whole. The credibility of the theory is not helped by the fact that Jones shifts gears somewhat within the same

²³ Jones, *European Miracle*, 13-21.

²⁴ Jones, *European Miracle*, 128, 133, et passim.

passages and resorts to the gunpowder thesis as an explanation for the development of the modern nation-state in Europe.²⁵ That is not only wrong on the facts, but also a degeneration into *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses.

More persuasively, Jones mentions the structural effects of the Roman conquest and the lack of security in Eastern Europe as important factors. These are, of course, factors widely cited by conventional historians. The first of these factors, the Roman conquest, is undoubtedly important, but it is not clear how it fits into his general theory. The lack of security in Eastern Europe is interesting theoretically, because it he justifiably views it as a human or cultural analogue to natural disasters. And that, in turn, might fit into some form of the “insular thesis” as an explanation for the special success of Britain, although it suffers from all the other criticisms of the insular thesis. (See § 6.) Finally, in an observation which seems to stand by itself with no particular relationship to his population theory, Jones points out that, “In Europe’s case, the most relevant aspect of the resource endowment was probably the way it was dispersed across a geologically and climatically varied continent, since this provided an inducement to trade.”²⁶ I agree with that completely, and that factor is a central element of the “geocultural” analysis in this work.

Douglass C. North proposes a general theory about the relationship between demographics and culture, which lacks persuasiveness for much the same reasons, in *Structure and Change in Economic History* (1981). While also noting the unspecified relevance of the Roman conquest, North argues that “population change and the character of warfare play a decisive role.”²⁷ But his work is actually more interesting for his tentative explorations of the theoretical aspects, and specifically for his focus on the meta-theoretical issue raised in § 1, the problem of reconciling rational theories from economics with cultural theories from sociology. (Harold and Margaret Sprout

²⁵ Jones, *European Miracle*, 130-1. Also, although I would not criticize an economist for invoking literature from military history, the analysis at this point is particularly unimpressive because of the lack of citation of good sources on military history.

²⁶ Jones, *European Miracle*, xxvi.

also attempted to analyze this problem, in different terms, in their criticism of “scientific determinism,”²⁸ before that morphed into what is now known as “rational choice theory.”) North argues that, “Without an explicit theory of ideology or, more generally, of the sociology of knowledge, there are immense gaps in our ability to account for either current allocation of resources or historical change.”²⁹

He develops this somewhat in a later work, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990), a leading work in the school of “new economic history”³⁰ or “historical institutionalism,” in which North defines an “institution” as a “regularized patterns of human interaction” which resolves the impossibility of making fully “rational” calculations of interests according to abstract economic models.³¹ He supports this with a definition of “ideology” (presumably part of the “theory of ideology” which is central to his research program) as “the subjective perceptions (models, theories) all people possess to explain the world around them. Whether at the microlevel of individual relationships or at the macrolevel of organized ideologies providing integrated explanations of the past and present, such as communism or religions, the *theories* individuals construct are colored by the normative views of how the world should be organized.”³² In others words, we cannot predict or explain how people will supposedly act in a materially or instrumentally rational way without also knowing how their ideology or culture will shape their perceptions and preferences. But it is not clear what this inarguably true proposition tells us, other than that we must somehow find a way to integrate “rational” and “cultural” theory in order to have a complete and testable theory of historical causation. And it is not clear how invention of new words such as “institutions” for older words such as “culture” or

²⁷ Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (1981), 124.

²⁸ Harold and Margaret Sprout, “Environmental Factors,” 316, et passim.

²⁹ North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 47.

³⁰ See R.W. Fogel, “The New Economic History. I. Its Findings and Methods,” *The Economic History Review* (new series) 19.3 (1966) 642-656; Douglass C. North, “Beyond the New Economic History,” *The Journal of Economic History* 34.1 (March 1974) 1-7.

³¹ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990), 23.

³² North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, 23, note 7.

“superstructure” advances that research program.

Getting down to cases and historical comparisons, North joins with many others, in all fields of social science and history, in arguing that England took the lead in capitalist development and national consolidation because of “institutions,” especially political and legal institutions, which promoted individual industry and commerce. And, like many others, he resorts to the “insular thesis,” in some large part, to explain England’s success.³³ However, he does not explain the contradiction between the insular thesis and the success of the Netherlands, which he clearly recognizes as being equally remarkable, if not more so.³⁴ He correctly disagrees with other simplistic materialistic explanations in observing that, “The Dutch overcame their lack of resources by developing an efficient economic organization.”³⁵ In explaining the Dutch case, however, he says only that, “The expansion of trade and commerce was the prime mover of the Dutch economy.”³⁶ That is clearly true. But that does not explain why the Netherlands developed the “institutions” to take advantage of expanding world trade so much more effectively than any other nation, except perhaps England.

In general terms, the project represented by Jones and North, and the new rubric of “historical institutionalism,” supposedly built on the foundations of rational choice theory and economics, is an attempt to reconstruct some form of cultural theory from

³³ North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 154-6.

³⁴ North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 152-7. He discusses the Netherlands in more detail in an earlier work, Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (1973).

³⁵ North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 152. An example of what I mean by “other simplistic materialistic explanations” would be the apparent proposition that the progressiveness of English economic and legal institutions was based on easy access to iron ore and coal in early England, as advanced tentatively in Sowell, *Conquests and Cultures*, 35-6. That was helpful to England, to be sure, but it does little to explain the equally progressive Netherlands, or the failure of the Germans to make equal use of the resources of the Ruhr at an early time. Tin was probably more important to England, but not because tin is itself such a critical resource. As explained in § 6, tin played a part in drawing Mediterranean traders to the northwestern shores of Europe and the British Isles, and thereby helped establish the early trade connections. It was those trade routes and the cities which developed at the nodes, the concrete constituents of a Western European “human web,” also supported by the other geographic and environmental factors discussed in § 6, which were the more generally significant geocultural factors supporting the Roman conquest and the success of England and the Netherlands.

³⁶ North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 153.

the bottom up. Despite the criticisms made above, it is far too early to dismiss this general project, and there clearly is a need to reconstruct some sort of integrated theory along these lines. So far, however, it appears to be too sketchy and simplistic to be of much use in building a truly testable theory.

A more complex but less theoretical project has been working toward the same goal from different direction. This is the movement represented by the *Annales* school of historiography (*Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*) founded by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch in 1929. This was dedicated to the empirical integration of traditional history with economics, social science, and cultural geography. Much of the work of that school focused on the geographic basis for the evolution of Mediterranean and European civilization. An especially useful example is Fernand Braudel's three-volume series on *Civilization and Capitalism* (1981-1984) and his *History of Civilizations* (1993).³⁷

Physical and cultural geography has become fairly well integrated into historical work, as in Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (1997), and is often the theme of it, as in a recent work of particular relevance to a "geocultural" analysis of Europe, J.R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (2003). Another area of modern mainstream history of particular use is the distinct field of "historical geography," as represented by N.J.G. Pounds' standard text, *An Historical Geography of Europe* (1990), and his study of special relevance to the early development of Europe, N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball, "Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System" (1964).³⁸ Nor should we forget the relevance of Strabo's *Geography* (*Strabonos Geographicon*), written around 7 BCE, before we needed the *Annales* school to remind us that history is a story played out on the stage of geography.

³⁷ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, vol. 1-3, Siân Reynolds, trans. (1981-1984) [*Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme: XV^e-XVIII^e siècle*, 1967]; *A History of Civilizations*, Richard Mayne, trans. (1993) [*Grammaire des civilisations*, 1987].

One must mention Henri Pirenne's studies of early European economic structures.³⁹ The "Pirenne thesis" on the effect of the Islamic conquests and the Crusades on European development in the Middle Ages is highly controversial and cannot be said to have held up well ~ although it had the virtue of being a testable theory which focused a great deal of useful work on Medieval economics. His work on the early development of trade routes and cities in the Netherlands, which is used in § 6, has held up better.⁴⁰ In addition, there are a number of particularly valuable historical studies focused on early economic connections in Europe used in § 6, such as James Westfall Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300-1300)*, vol. 1-2 (1928); Melvin Knight, Harry Elmer Barnes, and Felix Flügel, *Economic History of Europe* (1928); Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown, eds., *The Transformation of the Roman World: AD 400-900* (1997); Ellen Churchill Semple, "The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin and Its Northern Breaches as Factors in History" (1915);⁴¹ Max Cary, "The Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic" (1924);⁴² Herdman F. Cleland, "Commerce and Trade Routes in Prehistoric Europe" (1927) 232-238;⁴³ and Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC ~ AD 1500* (2001).

Other historical works in the same style focus more specifically on the

³⁸ N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball, "Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 54.1 (March 1964) 24-40.

³⁹ Henri Pirenne, "The Formation and Constitution of the Burgundian State (Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries)," *The American Historical Review* 14.3 (April 1909) 477-502; *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, Frank D. Halsey, trans. (1925); "The Place of the Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe," *The Economic History Review* 2.1 (January 1929); *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, I.E. Clegg, trans. (1936) [*Histoire du moyen âge*, 1933].

⁴⁰ See Adriaan Verhulst, "The Origins of Towns in the Low Countries and the Pirenne Thesis," *Past and Present* 122 (February 1989) 3-35.

⁴¹ Ellen Churchill Semple, "The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin and Its Northern Breaches as Factors in History," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 5 (1915) 27-59.

⁴² Max Cary, "The Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 44, part 2 (1924).

⁴³ Herdman F. Cleland, "Commerce and Trade Routes in Prehistoric Europe," *Economic Geography* 3.2 (April 1927) 232-238.

development of patterns of urbanization and state formation in Europe, which are factors of special importance to the “geocultural” analysis in § 5-7. Some of these which have been especially useful are Jean Baechler, John A. Hall, and Michael Mann, eds., *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988); Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (1970); David Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700* (2003); and Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (1975). And there are, of course, numerous historical studies used in §§ 5-10, relating more specifically to the history of England, the Netherlands, and Germany. These historical works vary in the degree to which they attempt to develop some formal theory. That is usually only tentative or very general. But most of them emphasize the importance of patterns of trade and urbanization as critical factors in European development, and many of them explicitly invoke Max Weber’s thesis that European capitalism arose in the city. Those empirical studies by historians are the primary basis for the “geocultural” theory developed in this work.

§ 3. Permutations on theory: Specific interpretations of the German problem

Table 1 provides something of a guide to this section. It is an academic ritual, born of decent respect for scholarly tradition, to begin such a work with a review of the literature. But the primary purpose of this section is to move beyond the interminable arguments in the existing literature into a more productive theoretical space. This section begins with a statement of the general problem and some specific research questions, and then moves into an analysis of the theories which purport to answer those questions (while raising some additional questions). Table 1 presents the answers given in the literature ~ mainstream, revisionist, and critical, from center, right, and left ~ categorized in terms of basic viewpoints in historiography and political science. As indicated by that categorization, and previously mentioned in § 1, a critical issue to be discussed is the contrast (although not necessarily an inherent opposition) between “rational” and “cultural” explanations.

This discussion includes all important theories about the German problem ~ theory as historiographic theory, as theory in social science, political science, and the special field of “international affairs” of relevance, and also “critical” or “postmodern” theory. It even includes a very brief note on Islamic theory of relevance. But the purpose here is not to demonstrate a comprehensive review of relevant literature. The purpose is to draw out basic theoretical problems, all of which relate back to the conflict between rational and cultural theory, and to the basic problem of “rationality,” as both a theoretical concept in these conflicting schools of thought, and also as an actual factor in the history of the West, in general, and in the specific problems of German political culture.

This section makes the following substantive points:

1. Any historical or cultural theory of the German problem assumes the existence of a *Sonderweg* in some form. But we must be careful to put that into a comparative context, because all nations have a “special path” of some sort. We must

specify the special nature and special causes of that special path in Germany. Or, in other words, we must identify the relevant “continuities” in Germany history and account for their causes.

2. The *Sonderfall* theory fails in the form advanced by conservative revisionists, because it does not make a convincing case for the lack of continuities in German history, on the facts, and also because it proves too much, because it posits that Germany’s “special case” is ultimately a natural consequence of its geopolitical situation, which actually a basis for a *Sonderweg* theory, because those geopolitical factors were present for a long time in German history.

3. *Realpolitik* or “realist” explanations either fail in the face of empirical evidence of self-destructive “irrational” decisions about wars and holocausts under any reasonable standard of material rationality, or they degenerate into a tautology without true value when they resort to technical standards of “rationality.”

4. *Rationalisierung* or “postmodern” critiques of modernity which explain Nazism as the result of excessive material rationality fail in the same way, despite the difference in attitude toward modernity and the opposition to mainstream social science, because they either fail in the face of empirical evidence of the material irrationality of Nazism and the Nazi Holocaust, or degenerate in a tautology without truth value when they result to an essentialist critique of modernity which makes no distinction between liberal and totalitarian states. Also, as part of this analysis, the theory that antisemitism is an essentially modern phenomenon is rebutted.

5. *Conclusions from this section:* Because of the failure of alternative explanations, the *Sonderweg* remains the most viable interpretation of the German problem. But, as a cultural explanation, it requires a clear specification of the nature of the cultural pathology, and of its underlying causes, in the form of “continuities” in German history. The critique of *Sonderfall* points in a useful direction, towards a geographically based explanation for the special path of Germany. The critiques of *Realpolitik* and *Rationalisierung* point to the centrality of the problem of “rationality,”

and to the need for a cultural theory which can explain actions which are not materially rational.

The German problem, and some research questions

The “German problem,” a term taken from Gerhard Ritter, *The German Problem* (*Das deutsche Problem*, 1962), is the problem of the “peculiarities of German history”¹ which led to the “German catastrophe”² of Nazism. It refers, most broadly, to the extreme militarism and aggressiveness, authoritarianism, messianism, racism, and romantic reaction against modernity in German political culture which gave rise to the World Wars and the Nazi Holocaust.³ More specifically, it refers to the *Sonderweg* or “special path” of German culture and politics which diverged from other Western nations.⁴ Ritter is a German historian who has defended German culture against generalized accusations. As such, he offers a carefully considered statement of the problem which can serve as a preliminary research question. It is:

The question of how it was that there arose, in modern times, so keenly felt a contrast between ourselves and western Europe in the matter of political thinking and political institutions; for it is this contrast which, more than anything else, has caused Germany to become a “problem” for west Europeans.⁵

¹ David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Peculiarities of German History* (1984).

² See Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections*, Sidney B. Fay, trans. (1950) [*Die deutsche Katastrophe: Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen*, 1946]; Hans Herzfeld, “Germany: After the Catastrophe,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2.1 (January 1967) 79-91.

³ Calling it the “Nazi Holocaust” rather than the “Jewish Holocaust,” associates the horror with the perpetrators rather than the victims, and recognizes that there were others who were victims as well, although the special animus against the Jews should not be overlooked. Also, giving it a proper name recognizes the fact of other holocausts. See Frank Robert Chalk, and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (1990). The historical significance of the Nazi Holocaust, an almost unique event in human history, does not rest on merely the number of victims who were the targets of the genocide. Unlike the other holocausts, it arose from a pathology which also produced the two World Wars. And, unlike others, it arose within a country which had seemed to be one of the more advanced and civilized countries of Western Europe.

⁴ See Jürgen Kocka, “German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23.1 (January 1988) 3-16.

⁵ Gerhard Ritter, *The German Problem: Basic Questions of German Political Life, Past and Present*, Sigurd Burkhardt, trans. (1965) [*Des deutsche Problem: Grundfragen des deutschen Staatslebens gestern und heute*, 1962], 5.

This is primarily a “how” question, which is to say that it is an objective question about historical cause and effect. But there is also a “why” question of relevance, a philosophical question about the German reaction against the rest of the West, a question about subjective German thinking, which should be answered as part of that objective inquiry. This might also be labeled “the problem of Nazism,” except that Nazism was the terrible *dénouement* of historical factors which were already evident in the First World War. To some German historians such as Ritter, Nazism was the second “catastrophe,” following the “catastrophe of 1918,” as he spoke of it in 1924, before he knew that he would see “a second and vastly more complete catastrophe befalling Germany.”⁶ Looking at it that way, as a “catastrophe befalling Germany,” in addition to the war and genocide inflicted on other peoples, raises an important theoretical question. Aside from all moral considerations, German political and military strategies in both World Wars, and the pursuit of genocide against Jews and others in the Second World War, were policies which defied rationality in terms of the material self-interests of the Germans, their elites, or their individual leaders. Therefore, these policies are theoretical anomalies ~ and anomalies of great consequence ~ for mainstream theories of individual behavior or international relations which depend on conventional rational choice theory. These irrational policies also defied critiques of modernity which insist that war and genocide are fundamentally the result of technological rationality. Aside from being a concrete historical problem and a moral obscenity, German behavior in the 20th Century is a theoretical anomaly challenging at least two major schools of thought in contemporary social science and philosophy. Reformulated with that in mind, the question might be, how could the Germans have been so irrational?⁷

⁶ Ritter, *German Problem*, 3.

⁷ The problem may also be stated as a moral question. Who is responsible for the Two World Wars and the Nazi Holocaust? That question will be put aside here, not because it is unimportant or trivial, but because it is so important and complex, and because dealing with that question adequately would require another work of similar length. Who knew what, when, and what their motivations were, is of some relevance here, but only in terms of what it says about rationality and culture in a causal analysis.

The literature on the German problem is voluminous, but inconclusive, in part because of the immensity of the issue,⁸ and in part because of the lack of historical distance.⁹ This is only a brief summary of some of the literature of particular interest to the substantive theoretical issues, not an attempt at a comprehensive literature review. One of the best studies of the German problem is still Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (1915), written before the Second World War. Much of the more recent literature (especially in the more polemical fields of political science and philosophy) suffers from excessive polemics, hypersensitivity, moral posturing, and, in some cases, a perverse sort of political correctness which denies the relevance of comparative judgments.¹⁰ The German problem has become a focus for more general arguments about liberalism, capitalism, and modernity.¹¹ In addition to the horror of the Nazi Holocaust, the discourse is colored by the lingering ideological struggles of the Cold War, the current struggle between Islam and the West, and conflicts about modernity within the West. These issues reflect the importance of the German problem, but they get in the way of an objective search for empirical causes.

If that is thought to be amoral, then so be it. Science, as such, is necessarily amoral. But that amorality serves a moral purpose. If we mean to prevent such horrors, then we should know what causes them. Moral posturing uninformed by realistic causal analysis is itself an immorality of the highest order.

⁸ “Despite libraries of books on the Third Reich, the questions posed by the rapid descent, within a few years, of a modern, civilized, economically advanced country into barbarism, war, and systemic genocide still demand answers, and will continue to do so.” Ian Kershaw, “Hitler and the Nazi Dictatorship,” in Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990* (2001), 99. For concise samples of current literature on the German problem (but only samples of large and complex body of literature) see the collections in Gordon Martel, ed., *Modern Germany Reconsidered 1870-1945* (1992); Fulbrook, *Twentieth-Century Germany*.

⁹ “Temporal distance is...a necessary condition of scholarly distance.... Clío’s owl, too, flies at dusk.” Chris Lorenz, “Beyond Good and Evil? The German Empire of 1871 and Modern German Historiography,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 30.4 (October 1995) 729-765, 729.

¹⁰ See Gordon A. Craig, *Politics and Culture in Modern Germany: Essays from The New York Review of Books* (1999), chapter 30, “The War of the German Historians”; Geoff Eley, “Nazism, Politics and the Image of the Past: Thoughts on the West German Historikerstreit 1986-1987,” *Past and Present* 121 (November 1988) 171-208.

The theoretical space: Rational and cultural theory

Current theories of the German problem are presented in table 1, in terms of the theoretical space they fall in. This does not mean that historians, sociologists, political scientists, or philosophers are so clear in delineating their theoretical boundaries. This is an order imposed on the chaos. But most of the terms and concepts used here are from their self-referential discourses. This framework brings into sharper focus a fundamental issue, which is the relationship between fascism and “rationality.”

Consider, first, the vertical dimension in table 1, the dichotomy between views of German history as either “exceptional” or “normal.” The central theory at issue in the mainstream literature is the *Sonderweg*, category (1), the concept of a “special path” in the long-term historical development of Germany. This is also expressed as a theory of “continuities” in German history. But the question of “continuities” leads to a variation on the theme. Even if there was not an historical *Sonderweg*, Germany may have nevertheless been an exceptional state during the Third Reich. This concept of an exception without historical continuities is the *Sonderfall*, category (2), or “special case” variation on the *Sonderweg* theory.

In either of those theories, the image of Germany as an exception among Western states also raises the question of whether or not Germany was an anomaly in the technical sense of an anomaly which strains a theoretical paradigm. That, of course, depends on the paradigm one begins with. Other theories deny that Germany was an exceptional state. Or they maintain that, even if exceptional as an extreme example, it was not theoretically anomalous. This view, oddly enough, puts mainstream *Realpolitik* political scientists, category (3), in the same row as *Rationalisierung* critical and postmodern political philosophers, along with some fundamentalist conservatives, in category (4). In both of these categories of theory, the German problem was an extreme, yet theoretically explicable, result of instrumental rationality.

¹¹ See Geoff Eley, *From Unification to Nazism: Reinterpreting the German Past* (1992); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989).

But these last two categories disagree about a fundamental aspect of “rationality.” Whereas *Realpolitik* political scientists see rationality as a universal structure, independent of culture, the postmodern and theological philosophers in category (4) see rationality itself as a form of culture.

The other dimension in table 1 is the dichotomy between cultural-ideological-historical approaches and rational-material-ahistorical approaches. It is the conflict between images of *Homo sapiens* as *Homo sociologicus* or *Homo economicus*. Almost all of versions of theory in the “rational theory” column, categories (2) and (3), use history to some extent, but they do not depend on the “continuity” of a historical path, a path dependency, or on theories of epochal change, as important explanatory factors. For some of these theories, as in the “classical realism” of Hans Morgenthau, history is useful heuristically as a source of illustrative examples and eternal wisdom, but the substantive rules are ahistorical because politics “is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.”¹² History, in the sense of structural historical change, is not itself a causal factor. In any version of a cultural explanation, including the new school of “historical institutionalism,” history is central. For many in category (4), Nazism has eschatological implications.

This is an attempt to blend together, as succulently as possible, the terms of reference from history, historical sociology, and several distinct disciplines of politics. The reader may be a bit irritated by the number of apologetic quotes and the somewhat stilted terminology. I can only apologize for that. It should help to hold on to the simple dichotomy of *rational theory* and *cultural theory* throughout the various iterations in which the issues are phrased.

The various disciplines and subdisciplines of social science have different names for the dichotomy and the theme takes on somewhat different permutations in each. But it is a theoretical divide which runs throughout social science and is implicit in

¹² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, Brief Edition*, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson ([1948] 1993), 4.

much of the work of historians. In social science as a whole, it is the difference between “rational choice theory” (RCT), more or less predominant in current mainstream theory, versus traditional “culture studies,” which continue to hold their own in empirical studies, although often *sub silentio*. That divide in social science is reflected in the contrast between economics, where RCT is an almost completely dominant paradigm, although one not without problems,¹³ and sociology, where RCT made significant inroads, but which continues to cling to various forms of cultural theory,¹⁴ such as the once-dominant paradigms of “structural functionalism” and “systems theory,”¹⁵ and which may now be in the process of a “culture turn,” back to culture as the primary focus of sociological theory.¹⁶

Rational theory is strongly associated with “methodological individualism,”¹⁷ and cultural theory is, conversely, associated with various forms of “functionalism,” which is assumed to be group-level or cultural functionalism. That can serve as another way of stating the divide in the social sciences. Cultural functionalism, based on the works

¹³ See Robin Hogarth and Melvin Reder, eds., *Rational Choice: The Contrast between Economics and Psychology* (1986).

¹⁴ See, for example, one of many contemporary discussions of the contrasting approaches in the two fields in Michael W. Macy and Andreas Flache, “Beyond Rationality in Models of Choice,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 21 (1995) 73-91. For a critical view of economics, see Fikret Adaman and Yahya M. Madra, “Theorizing the ‘Third Sphere’: A Critique of the Persistence of the ‘Economistic Fallacy,’” *Journal of Economic Issues* 36.4 (December 2002) 1045-1078. One way of putting it is that “economics is all about how people make choices; sociology is all about how people don’t have any choice to make.” James Duesenberry, quoted in Macy and Flache, “Beyond Rationality in Models of Choice,” 73.

¹⁵ Robert W. Friedrichs, *A Sociology of Sociology* (1970), 12-16, 18, 20-21.

¹⁶ See Roger Friedland and John Mohr, “The Cultural Turn in American Sociology,” and other readings on culture in sociological theory, in Roger Friedland and John Mohr, eds., *Matters of Culture: Cultural Sociology in Practice* (2004). As an outsider to sociology, it is somewhat difficult for me to understand how it might have been that sociology ever turned away from “culture” as its central object of study. Among other things, Friedland and Mohr explain that culture “was largely instrumentalized, turned into a resource whose meaning could be reduced to its productivity in the struggles for social power,” and that it became “a variable, an attribute, a property measured in the same manner as the distribution of birth order, educational certificates, or equities.” “The Cultural Turn,” 12. That seems to have been a manifestation of the “instrumental rationality” of RCT, which had an influence, but which proved to be less than satisfying, if not fundamentally unnatural, to sociologists.

¹⁷ “Methodological individualism dominates our neighboring field of economics, much of sociology, and all of psychology’s excursions into organizational theory.” Donald T. Campbell, “How Individual and Face-to-Face-Group Selection Undermine Firm Selection in Organizational Evolution,” in Joel A.C. Baum and Jitendra V. Singh, eds., *Evolutionary Dynamics of Organizations* (1994), 23.

of leading sociologists such as Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, was once the basic paradigm of sociology and anthropology, but has come under attack from various quarters. This parallel association between rational theory and individualism in contrast to cultural theory and functionalism has a certain logic to it, but it should be noted that methodological individualism is a form of functionalism as well, although one which operates on the individual level.

The discipline of “political science” is strongly divided within ~ a reflection of the eclectic nature of the discipline ~ although it may have made a general shift from various forms of systems theory or functionalism to RCT.¹⁸ That, at least, was the last big “revolution” in political science ~ which reprised the rather disappointing “Behavioral Revolution”¹⁹ ~ although the discipline may have settled into peaceful pluralism since then.²⁰ In comparative politics, which has always had a close connection to sociology, cultural theory has predominated. Although RCT is beginning to penetrate, comparative politics is fighting an incoherent rear-guard action under the rubric of “historical institutionalism.”²¹ The contrast has been recently articulated in that subdiscipline as a conflict between “rationalism and culturalism.”²² In the subdiscipline of international relations (IR) ~ an unfortunate name for what should be called the study of “world politics,” in part because “international relations” implies a prejudgment of this very issue ~ the dichotomy appears, with a peculiar permutation, in

¹⁸ Gabriel A. Almond, *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science* (1990), 121-3, et passim; Ronald Rogowski, “Rationalist Theories of Politics: A Midterm Report,” *World Politics* 30.2 (January 1978) 296-323.

¹⁹ To critics outside the mainstream, justifiably taking a broader view, it may well appear that contemporary rational choice theory is “behavioralism by other means.” James Der Derian, “Post-Theory: The Eternal Return of Ethics in International Relations,” in Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry, eds., *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (1997), 71, note 1.

²⁰ Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science* (1996), 10-4.

²¹ See Margaret Levi, “Theories of Historical and Institutional Change,” *PS* 20.3 (Summer 1987) 684-688.

²² Peter Katzenstein in Atul Kohli, Peter Evans, Peter J. Katzenstein, Adam Przeworski, Susanne Hoebler Rudolph, James C. Scott, and Theda Skocpol, “The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium,” *World Politics* 48.1 (October 1995) 1-49, 15.

a series of “great debates” between theories of IR,²³ and also in a more recent framing of the debate between “liberals” and “realists” as “culturalism versus realism.”²⁴

This is a peculiar permutation in IR because contemporary IR “neoliberalism” is as much about RCT as is IR “realism,” but “neoliberalism” or “institutional liberalism” in IR adopts a more complex form of RCT which emphasizes the effect of institutional and historical constraints on choices, and the effect of cultural and historical factors in creating the subjective preferences determining the goals of those constrained choices. In particular, IR “realists” and “liberals,” even while speaking the same language of “game theory,” based on RCT, disagree strongly on whether the most important “game structures” are “zero-sum” or “non-zero sum.”²⁵

From the point of view of critical theorists standing outside the mainstream of “realism” and “liberalism,” this is perceived as “an extraordinarily narrow view of what are the topics to debate in international relations theory.”²⁶ But the nature of the game is fundamental to one’s whole picture of the world. Those on the critical left of political discourse who are generally called “postmodernists” are allergic to the technical or scientific language of game theory. But they sometimes arrive at the same point in different terms. For example, in his criticism of the Enlightenment and the liberal idea of progress, Michel Foucault argues that, “Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of

²³ The “great debates” of IR certainly belong in apologetic quotes. They have been a terribly tiresome series of petty and disingenuous inside-school debates which have done little to advance real theoretical thinking. See Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, and Ken Booth, eds., *The Eighty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1999* (1998); Michael Doyle and John Ikenberry, eds., *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (1997); Robert Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (1986); Jeffery Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” *International Security* 24.2 (Fall 1999) 5-55; David Long and Peter Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years’ Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (1995).

²⁴ John S. Duffield, Theo Farrell, Richard Price, and Michael C. Desch, “Correspondence: Isms and Schisms: Culturalism versus Realism in Security Studies,” *International Security* 24.1 (Summer 1999) 156-180.

²⁵ That is the main issue in the set of readings in David Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (1993).

rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination.”²⁷ Whether or not intending to do so, Foucault is thereby taking a stand with the mainstream “realists” against the “liberal” non-zero-sum game.

RCT is grounded in economics. As such, it has theoretical coherence and integrity when it presumes that the goals of rational choices are selfish material interests. In a completely generalized and abstract form, RCT will allow for any goals, including altruistic, spiritual, or ideological goals. In that form, however, it loses integrity and becomes a tautological explanation. Cultural theory, on the other hand, implies that the ideas, symbols, norms, values, and other non-material stuff of culture which gives it coherence beyond a mere assemblage of material artifacts, what is generically the “ideology” of a culture, has some sort of actual causative effect and explanatory meaning. Some of the postmodern discourse seems to say that there is nothing but ideas ~ that all reality, or at least all social reality, is “text” or “construction.” But this, whether in the traditional terms of structural functionalism, in the new fashion of “historical institutionalism,” or in the postmodern discourse about text, easily leads to an equally fallacious tautology in which everything, and nothing, is explained as reflections of culture or constructions, without any real theory about why that culture or text is constructed as it is.

Sonderweg: Special path, or not so special?

In the most general sense, a theory of *Sonderweg* or “continuities” in German history is simply an assertion that “culture matters.”²⁸ But it implies that there was something special about German culture. There is really nothing “special” about having a “special path” of national development. Every nation lays claim to a special history ~ with all its conflict, growth, glory, failure, good, and evil. Moreover, other

²⁶ Steve Smith, “The Self-Images of a Discipline,” in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theory Today* (1995), 23.

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, (1977), 151.

nations in the wider European family, such as Spain²⁹ and Russia,³⁰ have seemed to depart from the typical European model, whatever that is. It is often assumed that the norm for the development of a Western European nation-state is England, because it was the earliest example.³¹ That makes it an important case for comparison, but hardly a typical case. France, which is more geographically central and a more direct heir of Rome, might be the better candidate for the most normal Western state. Historians and historical sociologists often ponder the “missing bourgeois revolution” in Germany or England, on the assumption that the French Revolution was a definitive norm.³² That is a questionable assumption. But it makes perfect sense to ask why France and Germany, once part of the same Empire of the Franks under Charlemagne, took such different paths after the breakup of the empire. It also makes sense to ask why other leading Western nations, especially Britain, France, and the Netherlands, evolved into relatively liberal and non-militant states in the 20th Century, while Germany, an equally modern state in many respects, succumbed to militant authoritarianism. To phrase this question in terms of one of the most important current debates between “realists” and “liberals” in international relations theory, the comparative issue is why Germany excluded itself from the evolving zone of “democratic peace” in Western Europe in the 20th Century.

None among serious contemporary historians would subscribe to the idea that there was some peculiar strain of militarism or aggressiveness in Germanic genes. And the comparative analysis of Germanic peoples in England and the Netherlands in § 6

²⁸ See Richard J. Ellis and Michael Thompson, eds., *Culture Matters* (1997).

²⁹ See Raymond Carr, “Introduction” to *Spain: A History* (2000).

³⁰ See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (1984), 9.

³¹ See the criticism of this assumption in David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (1984), 7-8. The use of England as the paradigmatic example of modernization might have been widely encouraged by Marx. See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (1990) [*Das Kapital: Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, vol. 1, 1867], preface to the first edition, page 90, et seq.

³² See Blackbourn and Eley, *Peculiarities of German History*, 39, et seq.; Perry Anderson, *English Questions* (1992), chapter 3; Ferenc Fehér, “Introduction” to *The French Revolution and the Birth of*

should suffice to dispel that silly idea. But the serious question which remains is whether or not there was a “special path” of German historical development which was significantly distinctive from other Western European nations.

The debate about the *Sonderweg* is also framed in terms of the question of “continuities” in German history. As David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley say, “the question about continuity is not *whether*, but *what kind?*”³³ A “continuity” may consist of either (a) an unbroken chain of causation, or (b) a consistency in the continuing appearance of a phenomenon, due to a continuing condition, regardless of breaks in the chain. To give some concrete examples, is there a “continuity” from Luther to Fichte to Heidegger? Or from Friedrich the Great (Friedrich II) to Wilhelm II to Hitler? In terms of personal influence or paternity, almost certainly not. Fichte, the idealistic philosopher and sometimes putative atheist working in the tradition of Kantian liberalism, took little apparent inspiration from the theology of Luther. Heidegger, the nominally Catholic interpreter of Nietzsche, was unlikely to have been inspired by either Luther or Fichte. So there is little continuity in philosophical genealogy there, such as there is from Kant to Fichte or from Nietzsche to Heidegger. Nevertheless, Luther, Fichte, and Heidegger all gave voice to a German protest against the materialism of Western Civilization, and they all provided theological or philosophical justification for Germans to conceive of themselves as having a special national role in restoring the soul of the West.

Similarly, Hitler admired Luther,³⁴ but did not noticeably take much inspiration from his theology. Both Wilhelm II and Hitler identified with Friedrich the Great,³⁵ but neither Wilhelm II nor Hitler shared in Friedrich’s love of the French. Nevertheless, Frederick contributed to the tradition of Prussian authoritarianism and

Modernity (1990); Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1967).

³³ Blackbourn and Eley, *Peculiarities of German History*, 22 (emphasis in original).

³⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ralph Manheim, trans. ([1925-6] 1999), 213.

³⁵ Robert G. L. Waite, *The Kaiser & the Führer: A Comparative Study of Personality & Politics* (1998), 4.

militarism which supported the policies of Wilhelm II and Hitler. Those two, Wilhelm II and Hitler, loathed each other. But that was perhaps because they were so much alike. There were some remarkably strong and relevant similarities in their personalities and personal beliefs. (See § 11.) Both associated themselves with the theories of Houston Stewart Chamberlain ~ an important indicator, even if it is unlikely that either of them needed Chamberlain's help in forming their basic beliefs. There is some sort of "continuity" in that, and it is not disproved by merely showing that they did not pass down ideas and policies in a genealogical chain.

Any study of a national history, such as the "history of Germany" in the most neutral and nonpejorative sense, assumes that there are continuities which make the subject meaningful. But some German historians argue that there is no need to look further back, before the First World War, the Versailles Treaty, the threat from Russia and Marxism, the Great Depression, and the demonic personality of Adolf Hitler, to explain the catastrophe of Nazism. Others argue that there were special characteristics of German historical development, relevant to the catastrophe in the 20th Century, which are noticeable long before then.

No one who need be taken seriously would argue that these long-term trends leading up to Nazism inevitably required it. As indicated in diagram 2, the catastrophe had multiple causes. Were it not for the hyperinflation of 1922-3, the untimely death of President Friedrich Ebert in 1925, the equally unfortunate death of Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann in 1929, or the Great Depression of the 1930s, Hitler and the Nazis might have missed their chance.³⁶ But there never would have been any chance, to

³⁶ See speculation about the effect of the death of Gustav Stresemann in Amos Elon, "Could He Have Stopped Hitler?" *The New York Review of Books*, 50.16 (23 October 2002) 31-4; Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (2002). But note Elon's doubts. "The problem with this speculation is that at the time of his death Stresemann was beginning to lose control... even his own party was getting closer to the Nazis all the time." Elon, "Could He Have Stopped Hitler?" 31. Wright admits that "Whether Stresemann could have done anything to prevent this stampede into self-destruction is impossible to say." Wright, *Gustav Stresemann*, 520. The problem with such counterfactuals, moreover, is that there are many other counterfactuals which could have cut the other way and only exacerbated the catastrophe which occurred.

seize or miss, if it were not for a long-standing political environment friendly to militant nationalism, racism, and romanticism. Even Alan Bullock, who wrote a highly respected biography of Hitler, and who is often read as promoting a “great man” theory of the origins of Nazism, as biographers tend to do, does not say that one can explain Nazism by merely invoking the demonic talents of Hitler:

Nazism was not some terrible accident which fell upon the German people out of the sky. It was rooted in their history, and while it is true that a majority of the German people never voted for Hitler, it is also true that thirteen million did. Both facts need to be remembered.

From this point of view Hitler’s career may be described as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the most powerful political traditions in Germany since the Unification. This is what nationalism, militarism, authoritarianism, the worship of success and force, the exaltation of the State, and *Realpolitik* lead to, if they are projected to their logical conclusion.³⁷

That last comment about the “logical conclusion” of *Realpolitik* raises an interesting and disturbing issue about the rationality of Nazism, to be discussed below. For the moment, however, let us focus on the issue of the time frame in the *Sonderweg* theory. Note that Bullock frames it as a something beginning with the Unification of 1871. But is that all? How far should one go back on this somewhat slippery slope of historical excavation? That is the truly controversial argument about *Sonderweg*. What time frame is appropriate depends on what factors are thought to be critical. How far back the special path goes depends on what that path is.

It is common to find trends and parallels linking the Second and Third Reichs. One of the specific subsidiary issues is whether we should see the Second World War as a continuation of the First World War, reflecting a continuation of certain German policies, or a radical break because of the distinct ideology of Hitler and the Nazis. It is fairly well accepted that there were significant problems built into the “revolution from above” (*Revolution von oben*) accomplished by Bismarck in 1871.³⁸ “Is it a

³⁷ Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (1962), 487-8.

³⁸ “There is now almost universal agreement among German historians concerning the continuities in conservative politics between Bismarck and Hitler.” Geoff Eley, “Reshaping the Right: Radical

mistake to begin with Bismarck?" Gordon Craig asks rhetorically at the beginning of his masterful history of modern Germany.³⁹ Certainly not, if one wants an obvious joint at which to cut the bones, because there is no doubt that the strategic decisions Otto von Bismarck made about the formation of a modern Germany in the *Kleindeutschland* form, dominated by Prussia, did much to structure institutions, interest groups, and issues thereafter. But Bismarck did not invent Prussia, and he was a Prussian Junker who attempted to protect Junker aristocratic interests throughout his career. Nor did he create the internal cultural antimonies of Germany. A different Germany unified by someone else, perhaps a *Grossdeutschland* unified by an Austrian, might have had a different outcome. But one should pause to reflect, before boarding a *Zeitundgeistmaschine* to this counterfactual world, that Austria helped take Germany into the First World War, that Austrian Germans were even more antisemitic than Germans in Germany, and that incorporation of Austrians from other ethnic groups into a *Grossdeutschland* might have exacerbated anti-Slavic racism in Germany even more than did the Junker domination of Poles in Prussia. Before we lay too much on Bismarck, whatever his obvious faults, we should remember that things really began to get ugly in Germany after Wilhelm II dismissed him from power in 1890.

A more common counterfactual, although one that is less persuasive than it might seem, is that Germany would have avoided the First World War, and all that ensued from that, if Bismarck had been able to keep things under control in the snake pit of German domestic politics and continued with his *Realpolitik*, based on his doctrine of Germany being a "satisfied power."⁴⁰ But it was the dissatisfactions of interest groups inside Germany, including aristocrats who thought he had not protected their interests

Nationalism and the German Navy League, 1898-1908," *The Historical Journal* 21.2 (June 1978) 327-354, 327.

³⁹ Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978), 1.

⁴⁰ Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, vol. 1-3, Heinz Norden, trans. (1969) [*Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk: Das Problem des "Militarismus" in Deutschland*, 1954-68], 1.250, et passim; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Bismarck's Imperialism 1862-1890," *Past and Present* 48 (August 1970) 119-155, 150-1; Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914* (1976), 13.

sufficiently, which did him in. Imanuel Geiss makes a strong argument that the underlying problems in German political culture would have overwhelmed Bismarck or any other political genius and led to the First World War even if he had not been dismissed in 1890.⁴¹ Steven Ozment points out that Bismarck himself “scoffed at the notion that great men manufacture great events.”⁴² He saw himself as a pilot (to invoke the famous *Punch* cartoon) who could only navigate the ship of state to places that existing winds and currents would allow.⁴³ In asking what it was that Bismarck had such difficulty with, despite his genius as a manipulator, we are drawn back to problems of a political culture which existed long before his time.

Thus, many other historians go further back. Some see critical elements of German political culture originating in Luther, the Reformation, and the Thirty Years War.⁴⁴ Some, including Craig, see continuities in authoritarianism and militarism going back as far as Frederick the Great and the formation of the Prussian Army.⁴⁵ Some go farther back for the sources of militarism, to the age of the Teutonic Knights.⁴⁶ This work proposes that we should go back even farther, to Hermann and the defeat of the Romans on the Rhine in 9 CE, and to the problems of particularism, hatred of the city, and mysticism in the Holy Roman Empire. Such an approach requires justification. That will be provided in §§ 5-8.

⁴¹ Geiss, *German Foreign Policy*, 52-9.

⁴² Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (2004), 223.

⁴³ That is my metaphor, inspired by the *Punch* cartoon. Bismarck himself used a metaphor from agriculture to make the same point. “The arbitrary intervention into the evolution of history based solely on subjective factors invariably results in the plucking of unripe fruit...” Quoted in Sebastian Haffner, *The Ailing Empire: Germany from Bismarck to Hitler*, Jean Steinberg, trans. (1989) [*Vom Bismarck zu Hitler*, 1987], 31.

⁴⁴ An approach discussed and criticized, but acknowledged to be of some use, in Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (1967), 371. See also Elizabeth Harvey, “The Rise of the Nazis: Sonderweg or Spanner in the Works?” in Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990* (2001), 77.

⁴⁵ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (1964); Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*.

⁴⁶ Emilio Willems, *A Way of Life and Death: Three Centuries of Prussian-German militarism* (1986).

Sonderfall: Special case, or special pleading?

The *Sonderfall* theory can be looked upon as a variation of the *Sonderweg* theory. Excepting some holocaust deniers who need not be taken seriously, no historian would deny that there was a “German catastrophe”⁴⁷ in the occurrence of Hitler, the Third Reich, the Second World War, and the Nazi Holocaust. But some historians argue that this was not the result of any “special path” or *Sonderweg* in German political history. It was merely a “special case” or *Sonderfall* of geopolitical, economic, and social crises arising in the interwar years.

This is a rational theory, but one that differs slightly from “realist” or “third image” interpretations in IR because it does sometimes posit the existence of special institutional structures and problems in the formation of Germany, and a unique role for Germany in the states system of Western Europe. It is often associated with the “primacy of external politics” (*Primat der Außenpolitik*) or “geopolitics” (*Geopolitik*), an outside-in or “realist” view which emphasizes the geopolitical position of Germany as the “land in the middle” (*Land der Mitte*) rather than ideology or political culture as the cause of the German catastrophe. In this sense, it accepts the existence of “continuities” in German history, but views those continuities as objective or material rather than cultural. Although this interpretation sees some specific historical analogues between the geopolitical situation facing Hitler and the situations facing Frederick the Great and Bismarck, it emphasizes the “discontinuity between the political culture of the Second and Third Reichs.”⁴⁸ *Sonderfall*, which was generated by conservative historians, implies a different normative view of the problems of German political culture and institutions in Weimar. Jürgen Kocka, who views it as variation on *Sonderweg*, summarizes *Sonderfall* thus:

While the liberal *Sonderweg* thesis has stressed the illiberal, undemocratic, authoritarian and pre-modern aspects of the German system as responsible for its particular problems before and after the first world war, this geopolitical version of

⁴⁷ Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 3.

⁴⁸ Lorenz, “Beyond Good and Evil?” 734 (emphasis in original).

the *Sonderweg* thesis [*Sonderfall*] turns the argument around: Germany was not sufficiently conservative, the traditional élites were not strong enough, populist nationalism from below, democratization and the imperialism of the liberals were responsible for a kind of dynamism which ~ in European terms ~ was not exceptional but was too much for Germany's always endangered position in Europe.⁴⁹

Kocka himself is “not convinced by the new geopolitical *Sonderweg* theory,” in part because it “provides an unacceptable whitewash of the governing élites.”⁵⁰ This combination of elements, the factor of outside geopolitics and the conservative view of the problem, are artifacts of the genealogy of *Sonderfall* as a contemporary conservative revision with a definite ideological agenda, rather than logically necessary correlates. Why could there not be a liberal version of geopolitical theory? One can argue that an inventor of “geopolitics,” Halford MacKinder, intended it to be just that.⁵¹ But that is another argument. Let us pursue the conservative *Sonderfall* for purposes of analysis.

We might interpret it, in a good faith reading, this way. Facing the need to continue modernization by an enlightened revolution from above while holding off the threat of communism both inside and outside the borders of Germany in the 1930s, what Germany needed was another Frederick the Great or another Bismarck ~ a leader from the conservative aristocracy who could defend Germany vigorously in its dangerous position in the middle of Europe while making sure that progressive reforms in internal politics did not degenerate into chaos or a communist revolution. One could cite Francisco Franco, the contemporaneous dictator of Spain, as an example of such an alternative.⁵² Or, taking note of the analogue of “Weimar Russia,” a current concern in

⁴⁹ Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 9-10.

⁵⁰ Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 12.

⁵¹ See Halford J. MacKinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* ([1919] 1996).

⁵² Franco's suppression of communists and republicans was brutal, but he was a traditional conservative who did not engage in aggressive wars and did not perpetrate any program of genocide. Nor was his regime “totalitarian,” however oppressive. It never contemplated the complete alignment of all ideology and institutions demanded in Nazism, Stalinism, and Maoism. The party did not attempt to absorb the church and other civil institutions. Spain, eventually, became a successful case of reform and

post-Soviet studies,⁵³ what was needed was a Vladimir Putin. Unfortunately, what Germany got at this time instead was a Hitler, precisely because reform degenerated into revolution. According to the *Sonderfall* theory, Hitler represented a definite break with the aristocratic traditions which Germany needed the most at that time ~ a discontinuity.

The flaw in this interpretation is how it was that Germany actually ended up with Hitler. He did not seize power ~ to the surprise and dismay of many followers in the SA who desired a “second revolution” from below. He was given it. He was brought in by a “revolution from above” instigated by the very aristocrats whom the conservative revisionists are now championing. The role of the old Prussian Junker aristocrats in the army, in particular, was critical. (See the discussion of the Junkers in § 9.) They had a titular leader with real power, President Paul von Hindenburg, who was as close to the ideal of the aristocratic and charismatic leader as any conservative could hope for. Hindenburg was supposed to be the ultimate guardian of the Weimar Constitution. But he was an unwilling guardian, and a guardian dissuaded from his duty by his aristocratic advisors. Long before Hitler, Hindenburg undermined the constitution by appointing “presidential chancellors” without consultation with the Reichstag, with the supposed goal of having a government above politics ~ which is always bad politics. He had *de facto* support from the Social Democrats in the Reichstag, who avoided challenging his appointments despite his refusal to give them any seats in the cabinet. But when he appointed Franz von Papen chancellor in 1932, he directed Papen to distance the government further from the Social Democrats. That forced Papen to seek support from the Nazis.⁵⁴ The dangerousness of that tactic should have been obvious.

democratization guided from above. The fact that Franco successfully deeded Spain back to the monarchy in his will, to the good fortune of Spain, is an interesting contrast to the unsuccessful attempt by Hindenburg to do the same. See Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975* (1987).

⁵³ See Stephan E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, “The Weimar/Russia Comparison,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13.3 (July-September 1997) 252-283.

⁵⁴ Henry Ashby Turner, *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (1996), 5-6, 8, et passim. “There can be no question that, objectively, the Papen government was a ground-breaker for the Nazis.”

As Michael Burleigh points out, “the Nazis had frequently announced their contempt for the rule of law, and by 1932 were vowing to intern Communist and Social Democrat opponents in concentration camps.”⁵⁵ Karl Dietrich Bracher argues that “there was never any doubt as to how this party leader and his chieftains, the sworn enemies of democracy, would use their power....”⁵⁶

More importantly ~ because we must acknowledge that, against all the evidence, some among the aristocrats did in fact have fantasies about their ability to control Hitler ~ Bracher effectively demolishes the notion of a “legal revolution” tying the hands of the aristocracy after Hitler’s actions demonstrated that he was out of control.⁵⁷ Hitler managed to give his program a superficial appearance of legality. As Bracher says, however, these actions “went far beyond existing constitutional practices,” and the “*façade* of legality” was preserved only because “none of the offices responsible or

Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John Stephens, *Capitalist Development & Democracy* (1984), 110.

⁵⁵ Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (2000), 149.

⁵⁶ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, Jean Steinberg, trans. (1970) [*Die deutsche Diktatur: Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, 1969], 191.

⁵⁷ Bracher, *German Dictatorship*, 191, et seq. During a period of consolidation lasting one year and six months ~ what was openly called the *Nationalsozialistische Revolution* ~ aristocrats and the army stood by while Hitler (a) installed Hermann Göring as the Prussian Minister of the Interior, giving him control over the Prussian state police, from which Göring formed the *Gestapo*, and which allowed Göring to make the *SA* and the *Stahlhelm* auxiliaries of the police, on 6 February 1933, (b) obtained the *Reichstagbrandverordnung*, the “Reichstag Fire Decree” under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution from Hindenburg on 28 February 1933, suspending civil liberties and the independence of the states (*Länder*), which the Nazis used to suppress all other political parties except the Nationalists (*DNVP*), and to send the *SA* into the streets to terrorize opponents, (c) took over the administrations of the other German states (*Länder*), the beginning *Gleichschaltung*, “coordination,” with illegal replacements of state officials, backed up by the *SA* and threats of violence, culminating in an invasion of Munich, the capital of Bavaria, the last hold-out state, by the *SA* on 9 March 1933, (d) obtained the *Ermächtigungsgesetz*, the “Enabling Act,” from a Reichstag intimidated by the *SA*, on 24 March 1933, allowing rule by decree with an appearance of legality, although he ignored the requirements of the *Ermächtigungsgesetz*, (e) began a formal purge of Jews and political opponents in the civil service on 7 April 1933 with the *Gesetz über die Neuwahl von Schöffen, Geschworenen, und Handelsrichtern*, “Law regarding the Reelection of Assessors, Jurors, and Commercial Judges” of 7 April 1933, also referred to as the “Civil Service Act” of 7 April 1933, (f) outlawed all political parties except the Nazis on 14 July 1933, with the *Gesetz gegen die Neubildung von Parteien*, “Law Against the New Formation of Political Parties” of 14 July 1933, and (g) murdered a number of political opponents, as well as leaders of the *SA*, in the *Nacht der langen Messer*, the “Night of the Long Knives,” the purge of 30 June 1934.

accountable for the preservation of the legal state ~ from the president and the army down to the ministries, the state governments, the parties, the trade unions, and the courts ~ resisted or effectively opposed these power grabs.”⁵⁸ In commenting on the responsibility of Germans as a whole for Nazism, Ritter argues that “the things that *were* common knowledge ~ beginning with the mass murders on June 30, 1934 ~ were amply sufficient to prove to every thoughtful person that Germany was being run by a band of criminals.”⁵⁹

This could only occur because the Germans, by this time, had already long been accustomed not only to rule by authoritarian means but also to politics as a form of warfare on the streets. It is significant that, in this critical phase, the Nazis had a *nationale Verbände*, a “national federation,” with the Nationalist Party, which not only gave the Nazis political support in the *Reichstag*, but also brought the Nationalist paramilitary *Stahlhelm* into the streets at the side of the *SA*. And, as Gordon Craig says, “There is no longer any doubt about the army’s collusion in the Night of the Long Knives.”⁶⁰ It was more than they bargained for, especially as Hitler took the opportunity to murder two senior army officers. But the army and the other advisors around Hindenburg did not “make any attempt to register their disapproval after they learned that it had gone further than they expected.”⁶¹

The *Nationalsozialistische Revolution* was exactly that, a “revolution,” but it was another *Revolution von oben*, willingly supported by traditional conservative forces. General Ludwig Beck, for example, believed at this time that the army and Nazis were in agreement on what Germany needed most. “An authoritarian state, abolition of the parliament, restoration of the people’s armed preparedness...”⁶² Any revolution, perhaps, is by definition a discontinuity. But there is a definite continuity, in German history, of *Revolutionen von oben*. A common response to this, on behalf of the

⁵⁸ Bracher, *German Dictatorship*, 196.

⁵⁹ Ritter, *German Problem*, 196 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁰ Craig, *Germany*, 589.

⁶¹ Craig, *Germany*, 589.

conservative view, is that democracy would have meant Communism ~ merely another kind of totalitarianism. Not necessarily. The second-strongest party at this point, after the Nazis, was not the Communist Party (*KPD*) but the Social Democrat Party (*SPD*) ~ the only party which attempted to oppose the “Enabling Act” of 23 March 1933. Alternatively, a conservative alliance could have been formed with the Catholic Center Party, the *Zentrum*. But the conservative elites who held commanding positions in all the important national institutions ~ bureaucracy, army, courts, and educational institutions at all levels ~ did not consider an alliance with either the Social Democrats or the Catholics. Quite to the contrary, they had been undermining the Weimar Republic by openly encouraging violence in the streets and illegality ever since its inception in 1919. They had their reasons for that, of course. But that only indicates the depth of the problem.

Thus, as Bullock puts it well, Hitler was a *reductio ad absurdum* of existing German traditions. In the conservative *Sonderfall* view, these factors were a result of Germany’s endangered position as the *Land der Mitte* rather than a basic defect in political culture. As is said in the courtroom, this is “an argument which proves too much.” When was Germany *not* the *Land der Mitte*? If the reactionary politics of the traditional elites in the Weimar Republic were a response to this objective situation, is it not more plausible to assume that this was a tradition of politics which goes back to Prussia under Frederick the Great, or earlier? The behavior of the army in 1933, in addition to its collaboration with fascists since 1918, makes a great deal more sense in light of the history of the Prussian Army since its formation under Frederick Wilhelm I (1713-1740) and its employment against liberalization in 1848. At that time, it was said that *Gegen Demokraten, helfen nur Soldaten*, that “against democrats, only soldiers help.”⁶³ The only reason for ignoring such reactionary traditions is a dogmatic assumption that the decisions made by the traditional elites during the

⁶² Beck quoted in Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (1987), 165.

⁶³ See Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (1964).

Nationalsozialistische Revolution must have had some strange rationality. But how so? After the murder of two senior officers, if not before, it should have been clear that Hitler was no friend of the traditional aristocracy. It was insane, moreover, for the senior military leadership to support Hitler, as they actually did, in a program of virtually unlimited aggressive war. That issue, the irrationality of unlimited war, brings us to the *Realpolitik* theories.

Realpolitik: Realism, or denial of reality?

According to the strict logic of rational choice theory (RCT), particularly as applied in the mainstream “realism” of “international relations” (IR) theory, the aggressive militarism of Nazism was no more than the *realpolitik* practiced by all nations. “Realpolitik” means the rational and strategic pursuit of material interests in the international system.⁶⁴ Although *Realpolitik* in the original German has some specific historical connotations, “realpolitik” as a term domesticated in English, and *Realpolitik* as a special term, can be taken to be more or less synonymous with “realism” in IR theory. Taken seriously, as many theorists in mainstream IR theory do, *Realpolitik* or “realism” holds that there must have been an explicable rationality to the actions of both Wilhelm II and Hitler which led them and their supporters to war, that “the decision for war was a reasonable response to the particular circumstances.”⁶⁵

This is where I would like to pause and quote a line from the comedian Brett Butler, which she often used after telling an outrageous story that had the audience roaring with disbelief. “I’m *not* making this up!” Actually, this is a terribly serious issue in modern political theory. Although one may well doubt whether contemporary “realists” really hold true to their theoretical tenets,⁶⁶ those academics who formally subscribe to “realism” (which is rather “ideal” in a theoretical sense, and unrealistic)

⁶⁴ See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (1979), 117.

⁶⁵ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), 211.

⁶⁶ Legro and Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?”

seem to have the greatest influence in current American foreign policy.⁶⁷ This is thoroughly inconsistent with belief in the “democratic peace theory” as well, at the highest levels. But that only evidences their theoretical confusion.⁶⁸ Despite great inroads into academic thinking of late with the “democratic peace theory,” a misnamed theory which is nevertheless valid empirically, the resistance to its implications remains strong. The “democratic peace theory” (DPT) would be better characterized as a theory about how liberal or “polyarchic” states make decisions about war and peace, and it has not yet been explained by a clear logic of causation supported by a consensus among its advocates. But those are quibbles to be put aside here. To put it simply, if DPT is valid, the realist paradigm in IR cannot be. So that specific theory has become a major issue in the interparadigmatic debate between “realists” and “liberals” in IR.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Richard Rosecrance points out that “The study of realism has taken on a new relevance and importance since the election of George W. Bush as president of the United States,” in part because Condoleezza Rice, his former national security advisor and now secretary of state, is “an avowed realist,” and because the policies of the administration seem to follow its tenants. Richard Rosecrance, “War and Peace,” *World Politics* 55.1 (October 2002) 137-66, 137.

⁶⁸ If all states act according to “realist” principles, then why have American “realist” academics long complained so much about the supposed “idealism” of America? John Mearsheimer recognizes that “liberal” principles of democratic peace are now widely invoked by American leaders, but argues that it is merely rhetorical. “Because Americans dislike realpolitik, public discourse about foreign policy in the United States is usually couched in the language of liberalism.... Behind closed doors, however, the elites who make national security policy speak mostly the language of power, not that of principle, and the United States acts in the international system according to the dictates of realist logic.” Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 25. Actually, the problem is much worse than that. “Realist” or “neo-conservative” ideologues sincerely accept part of the “democratic peace theory,” the idea that more democracy will lead to a more peaceful world. However, because they are confused about the general logic of the theory, they make the mistake of thinking that democracy can be imposed around the world by an idealistic crusade which is inconsistent with the empirical rationality of liberalism. On a more genuinely liberal approach, see Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004).

⁶⁹ There is extensive literature on DPT. It should suffice to note only a few of the usual quotes and citations. William Thompson and Richard Tucker observed, in 1997, that there were approximately one hundred empirical studies of the theory published in the preceding ten years. “A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41.3 (June 1997), 428. The literature continues to accumulate. This is understandable. The question of war and peace, after all, is among the most important of all human concerns, and is the reason for the founding of “international relations” as a discipline. Moreover, there is much to be said for replication.

Highlights of the current debate: Jack Levy can probably lay claim to the most replicated sound bite (figuratively speaking) in the literature of DPT. He says that “absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.” Jack S. Levy,

DPT also bears directly on the German problem in a comparative analysis. If the Western democratic states were moving toward peaceful cooperation among themselves in the 20th Century, that is a base line of “normal” Western development from which Germany deviated in the 20th Century. If DPT is correct, in other words, then there most certainly was a *Sonderweg* in some form.

There are several basic tenets to the realist IR paradigm, all of which bear on the German problem. Those include the idea that states can be presumed to be unitary actors in the international system, and that they all pursue their rational material

“Domestic Politics and War,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18.4 (Spring 1988) 653-673, 88. Zeev Maoz says that “The democratic peace proposition has emerged as the conventional wisdom of the 1990s in international political research.... The evidence is seemingly overwhelming, making this the most replicated research program in the modern study of international politics.” Zeev Maoz, “The Controversy over the Democratic Peace: Rearguard Action or Cracks in the Wall?” *International Security* 22.1 (Summer 1997) 162-198, 162. There is, of course, opposition to this liberal celebration from both realist and critical theorists. The realist opposition is well represented by Christopher Layne, who calls it a “myth” without any theoretical logic or grounding in actual historical cases. Christopher Layne, “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace,” *International Security* 19.2 (Fall 1994) 5-49. See also Ido Oren, who calls it ideologically “subjective.” Ido Oren, “The Subjectivity of the ‘Democratic’ Peace: Changing US Perceptions of Imperial Germany,” *International Security* 20.2 (Fall 1995) 147-184. And David Spiro calls it statistically “insignificant.” David Spiro, “The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace,” *International Security* 19.2 (Fall 1994) 50-86. A critical theory opposition may be represented by Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, who argue that democratic peace theory represents a “hegemonic liberalism” which “‘defines out’ other historically valid democratic claims and may license violence against them.” Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, “The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force and Globalization,” *European Journal of International Relations* 5.4 (December 1999) 403-434.

Core statements of the theory: The classic articulation of what became later known as “democratic peace theory” was Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” [“Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf,” 1796], in *Political Writings* (1970). The modern theory was also prefigured by the writings of supposed “idealists” in the years before and after the First World War, such as Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (1910) and Clarence Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Leading Democracies* (1938). One of the leading proponents among current scholars is Michael Doyle, who explicitly draws on Kant, but who also invokes some themes from Joseph Schumpeter and Machiavelli, and who credits Streit for a modern articulation of the theory. Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics Revisited,” in Charles W. Kegley, Jr., ed., *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995). Another of the most prominent current scholars is Bruce Russett, who has written a well-received book summing up most of the central themes and leading research, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (1993). For a strongly written current work, very well documented, see also Spencer Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (1998). Finally, there is the neo-Hegelian interpretation, hardly part of the mainstream liberal theory, but probably the best-known of all the modern works, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992).

interests in the international system.⁷⁰ Together, those two propositions, making up what is called the “third image” of analysis in IR, lead logically to the proposition that there is no need to go inside the state, or back into its history, to understand its foreign policy. In other words, political culture is irrelevant because rational calculation predominates. This supposedly leads to a set of simple and elegant rules for what states will do to protect their interests. That much is quite clear in the realist view of the world. But when one asks why it is so, *why* we can assume that all states follow their rational material interests, and *what* those rational material interests actually are, the simple and elegant rules become complicated and fuzzy.

As originally articulated most clearly in American academia by Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980), who can be said to have personally brought *Realpolitik* over to the United States from Germany,⁷¹ all men and states are motivated by an insatiable desire for power which he calls *animus dominandi*, a “desire for power.”⁷² Morgenthau quotes Aristotle, who says in the *Politics* that, “the greatest crimes are caused by excess and not by necessity. Men do not become tyrants in order that they may not suffer cold.”⁷³ Morgenthau’s *animus dominandi* might seem to echo Hobbes and his “perpetual and restless desire of power after power.”⁷⁴ But Morgenthau fails to provide a clear explanation for this supposed drive, the *animus dominandi*, which Hobbes grounds in

⁷⁰ There are many summaries of realism. Most seem to come up with a list of three core tenets, but the three on the list sometime vary. A good short summary of realism as an overall “research program” is in Robert O. Keohane, “Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond,” in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (1986), 163-170, where he provides a conventional list of the three core tenets as follows: (1) the “state-centric” assumption, often stated by others as the “unitary state” assumption, (2) the “rationality assumption,” and (3) the “power” assumption, which, as he and others note, is altered in “structural realism.” On “classical realism” and a list of six main tenets, see also Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 4-16.

⁷¹ See the note on the German genealogy of Morgenthau’s *Realpolitik* in Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 408, note 33.

⁷² Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1946), 192. More literally, *animus dominandi* means “spirit of domination.” It may be thought of as a permutation of Platonic *thymos*.

⁷³ Aristotle, *Politics* [*Politica*, c. 335-23 BCE], 1267a. (as translated by Morgenthau).

⁷⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C.B. Macpherson, ed. ([1651] 1968), chapter 11, p. 161.

the more basic principle of self-preservation.⁷⁵ Carefully considered, the Hobbesian logic leads to a more liberal variation on RCT. Morgenthau recognizes this implicitly when he criticizes Hobbes as a modern scientific rationalist, and therefore not a realist, in the opening pages of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1946).⁷⁶ That work has a dark and antimodern caste, a deep pessimism about the Enlightenment and rationality, or what the Germans called *Kulturpessimismus*, which might be a surprise to those only familiar with Morgenthau's better-known and more conventional textbook, *Politics Among Nations*. (1948). Indeed, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* is a link between the *Realpolitik* and *Rationalisierung* categories.⁷⁷

According to Morgenthau ~ who was not so concerned as later realists about keeping separate the “three images” or three levels of analysis ~ the lust for power is universal in all spheres. “Domestic and international politics are but two different manifestations of the same phenomenon: the struggle for power.”⁷⁸ The similarity to Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Wille zu Macht* is apparent, although Morgenthau seems to have taken his inspiration more directly from Reinhold Niebuhr,⁷⁹ a Christian

⁷⁵ Some would say that “Hobbes starts with a deterministic assumption about human nature: all people are uniformly egotistic, controlled by an *animus dominandi*.” Doyne Dawson, “The Origins of War: Biological and Anthropological Theories” (1996). But I think that is too simplistic a reading of Hobbes. He saw self-preservation, the will to survive, more primary than the will to power. See Patrick Neal, “Hobbes and Rational Choice Theory,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 41.4 (December 1988) 635-652, 647, et passim.

⁷⁶ This is a characterization of Hobbes with which Leo Strauss agrees, for similar reasons. See Leo Strauss, “Notes on *The Concept of the Political*,” in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen*, 1932], 91.

⁷⁷ Morgenthau's best-known text, *Politics Among Nations*, although quite polemical, does not mention *animus dominandi* as such. However, *Politics Among Nations* has been generally interpreted, quite plausibly, as being based on the same assumption about the basic motivations of men and states, which Morgenthau does point to there by a reference to “forces inherent in human nature.” Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3. See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 19.

⁷⁸ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 50.

⁷⁹ See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* ([1932] 1960). There is a self-contradiction in both Niebuhr and Morgenthau's use of *animus dominandi* as the *deus ex machina* of history. Niebuhr argues that “a sharp distinction must be drawn between the moral and social behavior of individuals and of social groups, national, racial, and economic.” *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (2001), xxv. This, indeed, is the very point of the contrast in his title. But then both Niebuhr and Morgenthau go on to directly jump from the supposed will to power in the individual to the will to power at the national level without a clear explanation of the connective logic between one level

theologian, and Edmond Burke.⁸⁰ William Bluhm argues that there is also a distinctly Augustinian cast to his ideas.⁸¹ *Animus dominandi* sometimes seems to be a form of original sin. However, unless we simply accept the Biblical myth, that brings us no closer to where this primordial drive comes from. Edward Hallett Carr, the Briton who is usually acknowledged to be the other founding father of modern American IR realism (although his ideas are considerably more complex and allow for Marxist or postmodernist readings) argues that the will to power is based on the Hobbesian imperative of survival. Also citing Niebuhr, Carr says that, “the exercise of power always appears to beget the appetite for more power” because there is “no possibility of drawing a sharp distinction between the will-to-live and the will-to-power.”⁸² That is just not true. A state which puts the priority on survival will be willing to live peacefully with another state which it knows is of the same mind. A state which puts the priority on power will not, and will probably fear that the other state has the same ultimate intentions. That, again, is the relevance of DPT.

Most of contemporary “neorealism” or “structural realism” in IR theory, especially in the “third image” or “structural” theory of the international system formulated by Kenneth Waltz,⁸³ puts aside the *animus dominandi* and speaks instead of the “security dilemma” in the anarchic international system. Because of the central role of “balancing” as a solution to the security dilemma in his theory, Waltz also refers to it as “balance of power theory.” Waltz’s one specific prediction is that in all circumstances a state will attempt to ally itself with the weaker of two sets of alliances in order to balance against the threat to stability. The classical realism of Morgenthau

and the other. See Niebuhr, for example, at *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 42. The basic flaw in the argument, of course, is the logical fallacy of composition.

⁸⁰ William T. Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System: Classics of Political Thought and Modern Political Analysis* (1978), 149, et seq.

⁸¹ Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System*, 149, et seq.

⁸² Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* ([1939]1946), 112, citing Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 42.

had originally predicted “balancing” as well, but it was a rather flexible concept for him, and not one that was always consistent with his own logic.⁸⁴ Taken to its extreme, the will to power would cause states to engage in risk-taking that is decidedly irrational and unbalanced (in both senses, which justifies the pun). But both Morgenthau and Waltz assume that states act according to their rational material interests.

The assumption that states will act rationally, which does not necessarily follow from the assumption of individual rationality in RCT, may be based on one of two arguments ~ both of which are only rarely stated with clarity by realist theorists. For the most part, realists simply assume that the two things, individual rationality and state rationality, are the same. This is called the assumption of the “unitary state.” Bueno de Mesquita says that, “So long as we are prepared to think of the ‘national interest’ as being embodied in the welfare of a single individual, we may describe national policies as being responsive to the national interest.”⁸⁵ One might argue that state leaders, being intelligent people, whatever their moral defects, because of the competition which they must survive, can be presumed to use their intelligence to preserve their personal status, which requires that they protect the survival of their states. However, aside from systemic problems with collective decision-making and the difference between individual and collective time frames, that assumption clearly breaks down in some of the most important cases, such as a Hitler who chooses to go to his death in a *Götterdämmerung*,⁸⁶ or Japanese leaders in the same war who would rather commit

⁸³ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* ([1954] 1964) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979). See also Stephen G. Brooks, “Dueling Realisms,” *International Organization* 51.3 (Summer 1997) 445-477.

⁸⁴ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 183, especially note 1, et seq. John Mearsheimer points out the inconsistency in Morgenthau’s logic. If the will to power is a constant and fundamental motivation, then all states should strive for hegemony rather than balance. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 408, note 35. See also Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” *International Security* 19.1 (Summer 1994) 72-107.

⁸⁵ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (1981), 12.

⁸⁶ See Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (1962), 462, et passim.

*harakiri*⁸⁷ than lose face in defeat.

A common realist response to such objections is that yes, they are quite aware that methodological individualism and the assumption of material rationality is a simplification of reality, but so is all theory, and this is a useful simplification. That may be fair enough, as a general proposition, but a simplification which obscures the motivations of the most significant leaders in the biggest war ever fought in human history is a simplification which vitiates the practical usefulness of the theory in this field of study. Another realist approach is to admit that some states may not behave rationally, but argue that those who do not will not survive competition, just as irrational or poorly managed corporations will fail in the marketplace. Kenneth Waltz seems to advance this argument tentatively, as part of an overall analogy between states and firms in a competitive marketplace, when he says that, “the theory requires no assumptions of rationality or of consistency of will on part of all of the actors. The theory says simply that if some do relatively well, others will emulate them or fall by the wayside.”⁸⁸ In other words, as economists say, it will all work out in the long run. However, as John Maynard Keynes says, “In the long run we are all dead.”⁸⁹ More precisely in this case, the dying takes time and is a messy process.

One of the great fallacies about natural selection is the simplistic idea that it is supposed to create an ideally balanced and completed ecosystem in which all creatures are perfectly adapted to their environment. Not at all.⁹⁰ Perfect adaptation would mean the end of evolution (and would be evidence of intelligent creation, not evolution). It is a process, and there are many maladaptations surviving for considerable time during

⁸⁷ As Japan faced certain defeat and the emperor was attempting to convince his government to make peace, more than a thousand officers and hundreds of civilians committed suicide to protest or grieve the decision to capitulate. William O’Neill, *A Democracy at War: America’s Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (1993), 425.

⁸⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 118.

⁸⁹ John Maynard Keynes, quoted in Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers* (1986), 263.

⁹⁰ This is the central thesis of Stephan Jay Gould, *The Panda’s Thumb* (1982), in which the panda’s thumb, an award digit evolved from a wrist bone instead of finger bone because of a peculiar evolutionary history is an example of maladaptation caused by path dependency.

that process. The same is true for the marketplace. It sometimes takes general business downturns to squeeze out inefficient firms. As Robert Keohane points out, “Waltz undermines this argument by pointing out later that ‘the death rate for states is remarkably low.’”⁹¹ This raises a crucial point about the application of general theory to specific historical problems. One could accept Waltz’s theory of structural realism on this basis, as an ideal construct describing the long-term general evolution of states, and nevertheless view Germany in both World Wars, or Japan in the Second World War, as irrational and maladapted regimes going through death by natural selection. (That, oddly enough, is how they can be characterized in DPT) Therefore, without some principled basis for determining the relevant time frame, based on a specification of the underlying logic of causation, this is a theory which is impossible to test for falsification.⁹²

⁹¹ Keohane, “Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond,” 173, quoting Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 137.

⁹² Realizing that his underlying causal logic is weak, Waltz attempts to evade the problem by declaring that “assumptions are neither true nor false.... We can freely admit that states are in fact not unitary, purposeful actors. States pursue many goals, which are often vague and inconsistent. They fluctuate with the changing currents of domestic politics, are prey to the vagaries of a shifting cast of political leaders, and are influenced by the outcomes of bureaucratic struggles. But this tells us nothing about the merits of balance-of-power theory.” Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 119. Quite to the contrary, the underlying logic of his assumptions has everything to do with the value of his theory, even as a purely heuristic device. One may quibble that the word “assumption” means something we take for granted without proof or argument, but simply labeling a theoretical premise an “assumption” is a poor excuse for having no basis for the premise. Without an understanding of the causal logic, which begins with these assumptions, we do not know what evidence will verify or falsify the theory. If the assumption is the rational unitary state actor, then we should expect to see a consistent level of rational behavior ~ Waltz’s “balancing” ~ over any time frame. If the logic is the competitive or evolutionary logic, then we should only expect to see the results over a very long term, and should also expect to see definite fluctuations, as in market corrections or biological die-offs. In fact, Waltz’s subsidiary theory of “balancing,” which is supposed to result from basic rationality, has proven to be inconsistent with the historical record in Europe over a long period, from the formation of the Westphalian states system in 1648 to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Paul Schroeder, “Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory,” *International Security* 19.1 (Summer 1994) 108-148. Other variations of realism predict that smaller states will “bandwagon,” which means that they will ally themselves with rising powers, instead of joining balancing alliances against them. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.” Realism is a degenerative research program in which “any one of the following can be taken as evidence supporting the realist paradigm: balancing of power, balancing of threat, and bandwagoning. At the same time, the paradigm as a whole has failed to specify what evidence will be accepted as falsifying.” John A. Vasquez, “The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal

John Mearsheimer makes a determined attempt to rescue IR realism from this degeneration with what he calls “offensive realism” in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001). He claims that “the structure of the international system forces states which seek only to be secure nevertheless to act aggressively toward each other,” and that “the best guarantee of survival is to be a hegemon, because no other state can seriously threaten such a mighty power.”⁹³ However, with refreshing intellectual honesty, Mearsheimer admits that the attempt to achieve hegemony has not often been a winning strategy during the history of the Western states system:

To be sure, the United States is the only state that has attempted to conquer its region and succeeded. Napoleonic France, Wilhelmine Germany, Nazi Germany, and imperial Japan all tried but failed. One out of five is not an impressive success rate. Still, the American case demonstrates that it is possible to achieve regional hegemony.⁹⁴

A 20% chance of success is certainly *not* impressive as a rational risk, especially when the consequences of the failed attempts were so disastrous. And the one example of the United States is not consistent with his theory. The US enjoys a tremendous hegemony, perhaps over the whole planet, but it is not the sort of hegemony that Mearsheimer otherwise talks about. Elsewhere, he talks about hegemony as military and territorial conquest. Although the US has conducted many military interventions in the Western hemisphere, and has dominated it through forms of economic imperialism, it has not conquered Cuba, Mexico, or Canada. As Richard Rosecrance says in his

of Neotraditional Research on Waltz’s Balancing Proposition,” *The American Political Science Review* 91.4 (December 1997) 899-912, 905.

⁹³ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), 3.

⁹⁴ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 212. Mearsheimer purports to take a step back toward the classical realism first advanced by Morgenthau, but supposedly without the primordial *animus dominandi*. Mearsheimer calls the classical realism of Morgenthau “human nature realism,” and the structural realism of Waltz “defensive realism.” He calls his “offensive realism” a hard realism of power which sees imperialism and aggression as constants in international relations, but constants which arise from the security dilemma rather than human nature. On the facts, however, Mearsheimer fails to explain away the irrationality of the German and Japanese decisions to make war on the US in 1941. Neither of them had a prayer of conducting a territorial conquest of the US. If that was not their goal, however, that violates the underlying logic of his theory. The ghost of *animus dominandi*, which Mearsheimer thinks he has exorcised from classical realism, lingers on, *sub silentio*, in his reliance on an imperialistic desire for conquest unconnected to the specific logic of the security dilemma.

review of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, “The major difficulty with Mearsheimer’s whole analysis is that he fails to recognize that there are powerful but nonaggressive states. The US and Britain really have been less aggressive, *ceteris paribus*, than many other equally powerful countries.”⁹⁵ Moreover, in his strained attempts to rationalize German prospects in the World Wars, Mearsheimer systematically underrates sea power, which is inconsistent with the fact that his one example of a successful hegemon is a sea power. Ultimately, Mearsheimer relies on the same hedge as Waltz and other realists, about the limits of realist theory:

The theory pays little attention to individuals or domestic political considerations such as ideology.... These omitted factors, however, occasionally dominate a state’s decision-making process; under these circumstances, offensive realism is not going to perform as well. In short, there is a price to pay for simplifying reality.⁹⁶

Indeed. The price for such simplification is irrelevance. That is the deeper problem in the conventional RCT which lies behind IR realism.

Rationalisierung: Modernity, or reaction against modernity?

Rationalisierung, or “rationalization” in ordinary German, is the term Max Weber used when he spoke of the “rationalization” of modern science which brought about the *Entzauberung der Welt*, the “disenchantment of the world.” It was also used by the Nazis, perversely, for the system of supposedly efficient extermination in the death camps ~ although they were not so rational or efficient. Both of those special uses make “*Rationalisierung* theory” an appropriate label for category (4) in table 1, which includes a wide collection of critical, postmodern, traditional, and theological antimodernists who see Nazism as an exemplum of modern technological rationality. They themselves, in other words, are *Antirationalisierung*. More specifically, an analysis of this school of thought brings us to a central issue in the contemporary debate about Nazism, which is how to interpret the paradoxical characterization of

⁹⁵ Richard Rosecrance, “War and Peace,” *World Politics* 55.1 (October 2002) 137-66, 143.

Nazism as a result of endemic “reactionary modernism” in German culture.⁹⁷

At first glance, this looks like an entirely different theoretical landscape. Most practitioners of IR theory would not quickly associate Carr and Morgenthau, the founders of modern IR realism, with postmodern or theological criticism. There is a connection, however, in that both categories, despite other significant disagreements, see war and the horrors of the Modern Age as based on instrumental rationality. The thoroughgoing cynicism about modern liberal values articulated by Carr can be seen as a precursor to the total critique of modernity expressed by many critical or postmodern writers. The primordial *animus dominandi* of Morgenthau, and his hostility to science, overlaps with conservative or theological interpretations of modernity which condemn scientific or materialistic hubris and the loss of traditional spiritual values. It might seem as strange to lump postmodernists and theologians together in the same category. However, despite differences in terminology and style, there is a substantive commonality in their view of history and rejection of rationalism.⁹⁸ Much of postmodernism, including permutations in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Derrida, has an odd similarity to theology in viewing human history as a *Verfallsgeschichte*, a “history of decay,” or The Fall from Paradise. They only differ, and not always so much, in when The Fall occurred and what it was that caused evil to rule the world. In many ways, the evils of the postmodernists ~ rationality, logocentrism, and global technology ~ seem to be versions of the Fruit of Knowledge in Genesis. There is great confusion about when The Fall actually occurred, and what “modernity” actually means, especially because much of the discourse of postmodernism concerns itself with vague essences and genealogical traits rather than concrete historical formations. The Fall supposedly occurred during the

⁹⁶ *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 10-1.

⁹⁷ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984); Eric Dorn Brose in *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia: Out of the Shadow of Antiquity, 1809-1848* (1993).

⁹⁸ For the commonality of the argument against rationalism, see Peter Augustine Lawler, *Postmodernism Rightly Understood: The Return to Realism in American Thought* (1999).

Neolithic Revolution according to Rousseau, in Homeric Greece according to Horkheimer and Adorno, or with Plato and Aristotle, according to Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida.

The protest against modern rationality began before modernity, as we normally think of it, with Plato. But we might begin in the Modern Age, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The adoption of Heidegger in what has been called “Modern French Philosophy,”⁹⁹ a distinct area of resistance to Anglo-Saxon ideological dominance in the West, is less ironic if we remember that Rousseau was one of the original sources for German criticism of the Enlightenment, what Fritz Stern and others call the “conservative revolution” in Germany.¹⁰⁰ Contemporary postmodernism owes much to the criticism of modernity Rousseau developed in his *First and Second Discourses* on the *Sciences and Arts* (1750) and the *Origins of Inequality* (1754). Rousseau argued that humans in their natural state enjoyed freedom, virtue, pity, and general peacefulness ~ and that civilization was the source of “crimes, wars, miseries, and horrors.”¹⁰¹ Rousseau creates a modern myth of The Fall, closely analogous to the Biblical story of Cain and Able. Everything went wrong with the first farmers and builders of cities. Rousseau’s myth of the peaceful savage lingered on for long among anthropologists and archeologists indulging in romanticism, reverse ethnocentrism, or political correctness, despite overwhelming evidence against it.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding, trans. (1980) [*Le Même et l'autre*, 1979].

¹⁰⁰ As Fritz Stern says, Rousseau “fathered a new type of cultural criticism, and his followers, particularly in Germany, linked his criticism to what they called the naïve rationalism and the mechanistic thought of the Enlightenment. Having distorted the Enlightenment, they then held it responsible for every kind of cultural ill, and insisted that enlightened thought was powerless to even to grasp these ills.” Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (1961), xvi. See also Dieter Sturma, “Politics and the New Mythology: The Turn to Late Romanticism,” in Karl Ameriks, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (2000), 220.

¹⁰¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse* [*Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité Parmi les Hommes*, 1754], second part, in *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. and Judith R. Masters, trans. (1964), 141.

¹⁰² Contrary to the myth, “the available evidence shows that peaceful societies have been very rare, that warfare was extremely frequent in nonstate societies, and that tribal societies often mobilized for combat a very high percentage of their total manpower.” Lawrence Keeley, *War Before Civilization:*

In much of the literature, especially in Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, and Ellul, modernity is itself the evil, in some essential way, or by definition. Modernity is by definition a “holocaust,” to abuse a term to a perverse degree.¹⁰³ The analytical problem with such statements is that they are tautological. This essentialist critique of modernity admits no contrary argument or comparative analysis of different regimes in history. It is an assertion that the condition of modernity, itself, is in some way essentially destructive of some sort of fundamental value, more fundamental than the trivial concerns of humanism or liberalism.¹⁰⁴

Without indulging in the essentialist critique of modernity, one can argue that modern liberal democratic regimes, despite their significant differences in internal political structure, which means that they are not “essentially” the same as overtly

The Myth of the Peaceful Savage (1996), 25-6. “Time and time again there have been reports of a truly peaceful primitive people. Almost always, the reports have not worn well... With population spare, friction is low. But when densely settled along fertile ground, hunter-gatherers have warred lavishly.” Robert Wright, *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* (2000), 54-5. “It now seems generally accepted that humans probably had warlike propensities as hunter-gatherers throughout the long reaches of the Paleolithic ~ that is, during all that time when most of our psychic biases were in formation or being strengthened.” William D. Hamilton, *Narrow Roads of Gene Land* (1996), 1.189. See also Steven LeBanc and Katherine Register, *Constant Battles: The Myth of the Peaceful Noble Savage* (2003); Matt Ridley, *Nature via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human* (2003), 239; Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), 63, 81, et passim; Tim Folger, “Ancient America’s Culture of War,” *Discover* 24.5 (May 2003) 65-9. The evidence of violence among early primitive humans is supported by evidence from primates. See Joseph H. Manson and Richard W. Wrangham, “Intergroup Aggression in Chimpanzees and Humans,” *Current Anthropology* 32.4 (August-October 1991) 369-390.

¹⁰³ I apologize for that abuse of language here, but it is an accurate representation of the argument. To quote Brett Butler again, “I’m *not* making this up.” Note, for example, Heidegger’s comment equating modern agricultural technology with a holocaust. Heidegger quoted in Richard Wolin, *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (1995), 160. The terms “holocaust” and “genocide” are employed for almost anything about modernity that some people find offensive. “Such diverse phenomena as family planning, abortion, medical research, language regulation in schools, the establishment of Indian reservations, and so forth have all been referred to as genocidal by some authors. Used in this manner, the term becomes almost devoid of all cognitive context and communicates nothing but the author’s disapproval.” Frank Robert Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *History and Sociology of Genocide* (1990), 3.

¹⁰⁴ As Stanley Rosen puts it in his summary of postmodernism, with specific reference to Foucault but certainly applicable to Derrida as well, the idea is “that truth, or belief in an objective reality, is the metaphysical version of violence and domination.” Or, as Stanley Rosen interprets Jean-François Lyotard, the idea is that “persuasion is also violence and suppression.” Stanley Rosen, *Hermeneutics as Politics* (1987), 191-2. In other words, rationality is itself, without need of any other intervening cause,

totalitarian regimes, have nevertheless tended to perpetrate genocide on outsiders. If one uses this general concept of “holocaust” to encompass the nuclear bombing of Japan or the fire bombing of both Japanese and German cities ~ an arguably appropriate use of “holocaust” in terms of its etymology as well as the magnitude of the carnage ~ one can say that the Anglo-American liberal states have indeed conducted holocausts. One should note that the Nazis themselves drew explicit parallels between their conquest of the Slavs in Eastern Europe with the earlier conquest of the Native Americans in the North American West, which continued up to nearly the end of the 19th Century. And one can add examples such as the murderous enslavement of Africans in the Belgian Congo, which did not end until the beginning of the 20th Century, or the extinction of Tasmanians by Australians, completed in 1876. If those things were also “genocide” ~ again, an arguably legitimate use of the term ~ then genocide has also been practiced by modern liberal democratic states.

Nevertheless, acknowledging those legitimate accusations of “holocaust” and “genocide” against liberal states, such examples do not justify the assertion that modern rationality is actually a cause of holocausts. The fact that liberal states have sometimes violated their own stated principles of liberalism does not mean they always will, or that such violations are inherent in the nature of their modernity. As Michael Freeman points out, we would not even recognize these acts as evil if not for the modern discourse of humanism and liberalism.¹⁰⁵ One may dismiss the liberal discourse as wholly hypocritical, but there is a significant difference between celebrating war and mass murder as glorious or denouncing it as evil, even while sometimes hypocritically engaging in it. Moreover, the material consequences are different. The Tasmanians are extinct. But the Native Americans live on in both the United States and Canada, and the responsibility of those liberal states for their plight

a destructive *Rationalisierung* in a sense equivalent, in some essential sense, to the way that term was used in Nazi concentration camps.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Freeman, “Genocide, Civilization and Modernity,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 46.2 (June 1995) 207-223, 214.

has been grudgingly acknowledged. Most telling, the nations of Japan and Germany, however much their populations suffered from the wrath of Anglo-Saxon air power during the war, learned to appreciate the value of liberal enlightened self-interest in the rebuilding of their nations after the Second World War. Whatever philosophers such as Heidegger or Kojève may say about the essential similarity of the Soviet Union and the United States, the fact remains that Germans fled from East to West during the last days of the Second World War, even after all the horrible fire bombing of their cities by Anglo-Americans, because they knew which occupiers were preferable. One might counter that the post-war policies of the liberal states were a result of their own enlightened self-interest in cultivating allies. And yes, that is precisely the point. Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union did not consolidate their conquests in such a rational way.

Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), which focuses specifically on the Nazi Holocaust as a historical case, provides the most clearly articulated version of a *Rationalisierung* theory applied to the German problem. Because his language is fairly conventional, largely without the esoteric and evasive rhetoric of postmodernism, his work is more useful for analysis. Having said that, however, there are still some significant ambiguities in Bauman's thesis which would need to be sorted out before it could be accorded truth-value as a testable theory. His thesis is that:

Modern civilization was not the Holocaust's *sufficient* condition; it was, however, most certainly its *necessary* condition. It was the rational world of modern civilization that made the Holocaust thinkable. "The Nazi mass murder of the European was not only the technological achievement of an industrial society, but also the organizational achievement of a bureaucratic society."¹⁰⁶

Bauman asserts that modernity causes holocausts. But what about the obvious fact that mass murder is nothing new in history? Conscious of that objection, Bauman

¹⁰⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), 13 (emphasis in original), quoting from Christopher R. Browning, "The German Bureaucracy and the Holocaust," in Alex Grobman and Daniel

proposes an essentialist critique of modernity in arguing that modern mass murder is somehow essentially different because it is motivated by rational calculations:

At no point of its long and tortuous execution did the Holocaust come in conflict with the principles of rationality.... *On the contrary, it arose out of a genuinely rational concern....* We know of many massacres, pogrom, mass murders, indeed instances not far removed from genocide, that have been perpetrated without modern bureaucracy, the skills and technologies it commands, the scientific principles of its internal management.... The Holocaust, however, was clearly unthinkable without such bureaucracy. It was a legitimate resident in the house of modernity; indeed one who would not be at home in any other house.¹⁰⁷

To begin with, it is evasive to speak of pre-modern events “not far removed from genocide.” There was genocide before the Modern Age, plain and simple. Based on detailed historical documentation, using a carefully limited definition of “genocide” as “a form of mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group,” Frank Robert Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn observe that, “Genocides seem to have been common throughout antiquity, especially in the Middle East....” They note that this includes cases of the successful extermination of whole peoples.¹⁰⁸ They go on to document other genocides in the Middle Ages as well, such as the Albigensian Crusades in the early 13th Century. Pre-modern wars were often incredibly brutal, and pre-modern killers were often motivated by explicit genocidal ideologies. One need only to read the *Old Testament* for a sanity check. (See § 5.)

What, then, is Bauman saying? What it comes down to is a form of the essentialist critique of modernity, a claim that modern mass murder must be qualitatively as well as quantitatively different because it is motivated by a peculiarly modern rationality. Again, as he puts in emphasis, he claims that the Holocaust “*arose out of a genuinely rational concern.*” But nowhere in his book does he explain how the Nazi Holocaust served the rational interests of the German people or the Nazi state. In fact, the Nazi

Landes, eds., *Genocide, Critical Issues of the Holocaust: A Companion to the Film, Genocide* (1983), 148.

¹⁰⁷ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Chalk and Jonassohn, *History and Sociology of Genocide*, definition at 23, discussion of ancient incidences at 33, et passim.

Holocaust interfered with the German war effort.¹⁰⁹ And it was not something that helped to solidify internal support for the regime. As Ian Kershaw has shown persuasively, the great “Jewish Question” which troubled the Nazi Party ideologues so much “was of no more than minimal interest to the vast majority of the Germans.”¹¹⁰ For those devoted to the extermination, on the other hand, it was far from a mechanical or bureaucratic process. Bauman argues that methods of modern organization were employed to overcome the “natural pity” of the executioners. And that was true in many cases. But there were also many cases of executioners who gloried in their task. Those were the *Schöne Zeiten*, the “beautiful times,” to some of them.¹¹¹ And there were many bystanders who came to watch in the same way that medieval crowds gathered in a town for a gruesome execution ~ what has been characterized as “execution tourism” during the Nazi Holocaust.¹¹²

Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996) is a highly controversial book which has been justifiably criticized for unduly generalizing from limited case studies of attitudes among executioners to the German population at large. What it does incontestably document, nevertheless, is that many individual Germans volunteered for the work and positively enjoyed it. It was up-close, personal, and sadistic. They sent home pictures to their wives, showing themselves shooting Jews. They laughed as they smashed the brains of children. They beat men and women in the camps to bloody pulps, for no reason other than the pleasure of inflicting pain, while the inmates were supposed to be doing work. As Goldhagen documents to the point of nausea, the “open joy being taken in the mass slaughter...was not a singular

¹⁰⁹ Chalk and Jonassohn, *History and Sociology of Genocide*, 57-9.

¹¹⁰ Ian Kershaw, “The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich,” *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* 26 (1981) 261-289, 281. See also Chalk and Jonassohn, *History and Sociology of Genocide*, 400-3.

¹¹¹ Also translated loosely as “good old days.” Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, Deborah Burnstone, trans., (1991) [*Schöne Zeiten*, 1988], xix.

¹¹² Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*, xx.

occurrence.”¹¹³ At a programmatic level, the Holocaust was organized for sadistic purposes. As Emil Fackenheim emphasizes, the Nazi Holocaust “had *two* ultimate purposes: extermination *and also* maximum prior humiliation and torture.”¹¹⁴ This was not impersonal, bureaucratic, or materially rational.

Bauman falls prey to the same fallacy in much of mainstream IR realist and RCT literature. The observation that actors pursue their preferences is a trivial observation which does not really say much about whether or not they are rational, without an explanation of why those are “rational” preferences. Although Bauman often cites Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) to support other elements in his argument (as will be discussed immediately below) he seems to ignore her observation that the holocaust was distinctly irrational. She says that the Nazis came to “throw overboard all utilitarian considerations,” and that their exterminatory policies demonstrated a “prodigious insanity, in which all rules of logic and principles of economics were turned upside down.”¹¹⁵ Indeed, she specifically criticizes “the mistaken notion that we are dealing with a normal state...a bureaucracy...”¹¹⁶

As part of his case, however, Bauman makes use of a thesis about the nature of antisemitism originally popularized by Arendt in *Origins of Totalitarianism*.¹¹⁷ It is often difficult to figure out what Arendt means to say. Her work, especially *Origins of Totalitarianism*, is an example of perceived profundity based on ambiguity.¹¹⁸ But this is an instance in which her theory is clearly wrong on the facts. Arendt begins her

¹¹³ Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996), 220.

¹¹⁴ Emil Fackenheim, “The Holocaust and Philosophy,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 82.10 (October 1985), 508.

¹¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1979), 411

¹¹⁶ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 411.

¹¹⁷ She was not the first, but merely the most well-known proponent of this thesis. It had roots in Christian apology. See Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism* (1990), 24, 276.

¹¹⁸ See the severe criticisms of Arendt’s methodology in Walter Laqueur, “The Arendt Cult: Hannah Arendt as Political Commentator,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33.4 (October 1998) 483-496, and Lisa J. Disch, “More Truth Than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt,” *Political Theory* 21.4 (November 1993) 665-694. For a more sympathetic but critical

work by baldly asserting that antisemitism is “a secular nineteenth century ideology” which is “obviously not the same” as “religious Jew hatred.”¹¹⁹ She then asserts that modern antisemitism differed in kind from medieval Jew hatred because its rationale was the pseudo-scientific concept of race, in place of the traditional concepts of religion, and it was now exterminatory rather than merely exclusionary or hostile. “A crime...is met with punishment; a vice can only be exterminated.”¹²⁰ Bauman builds on this distinction to argue (with his emphasis) that “*the exterminatory version of anti-Semitism ought to be seen as a thoroughly modern phenomenon.*”¹²¹

We can agree that “antisemitism” is a term of modern usage,¹²² and that, more importantly, the rationale for antisemitism slowly shifted in emphasis from religion to race from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age ~ although neither rationale ever completely excluded the other.¹²³ Nor is there any doubt that, based in part on a theological doctrine originally articulated by Augustine, the Catholic Church often protected Jews from violence in the Middle Ages. Moses Mendelssohn said in the 18th Century that, but for Augustine, “we would have been exterminated long ago.”¹²⁴ But Arendt, Bauman, and others who have picked up on her thesis,¹²⁵ are quite wrong in asserting that this shift in the philosophical rationale of antisemitism was manifested by a substantive shift from exclusion to extermination as the goal of many antisemites. Their methodological error is too quick of an assumption that there is a direct causal connection between the fine points of theological or philosophical logic and actual social behavior. This is a common fallacy ~ endemic to all who are philosophically

discussion of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, see Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (1996), 62, et seq.

¹¹⁹ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, xi, et seq., 87, et passim.

¹²⁰ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 87.

¹²¹ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 73.

¹²² It was apparently coined in 1871. James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (2001), 491.

¹²³ The concept of the Jews having impure blood apparently arose distinctly for the first time during the Spanish Reconquest in the 13th century, at which time it was mixed with religious rationales. Carroll, *Constantine's Sword*, 380-1.

¹²⁴ Moses Mendelssohn quoted in Carroll, *Constantine's Sword*, 218-9.

inclined ~ which Vilfredo Pareto diagnosed as a confusion between objective sociological actions and subjective psychological states.¹²⁶

Gavin Langmuir picks up on this error in his detailed study of *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism* (1990). To begin with, he points out that Arendt simply did not conduct a serious historical comparison:

...assertion is not argument. She had not examined the earlier Jew-hatred at all closely and did not begin to face the problem of possible connections between it and what was to come later. She analyzed the modification of hostility against Jews after 1800, but not the hostility that was modified. Luther does not even figure in her index!¹²⁷

Moreover, as Langmuir explains, an argument based on a philosophical distinction is not enough to prove an empirical distinction. It is a fallacy which Arendt adopts from the Christian theologians.

Several Christian scholars...sought to distinguish between the hostility in antiquity of which they did not approve and the Christian rejection of Judaism on theological grounds of which they did approve. Yet if they were able to do so by arguments based on Christian premises, they were unable to demonstrate an empirical distinction between the two kinds of hostility. Their historical investigations only demonstrated ever more clearly an undeniable connection between Christian hostility in the first century and the horrors of twentieth-century antisemitism.¹²⁸

Moses Mendelssohn emphasized the importance of the protection of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, however unreliable, because the fact remains that the Jews very much needed protection against extermination in the Middle Ages. The beginning of the Christian Crusade against Islam in 1095, for example, was also the beginning of a series of large-scale pogroms, rationalized by religious hatred, against Jews in the

¹²⁵ See also this thesis in George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution* (1985), 134.

¹²⁶ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of the Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*, Hans L. Zetterberg, trans. (1968) [*Applicazione di teorie sociologiche*, 1901], 27, et seq. That common fallacy runs throughout Arendt's work. She once admitted that *Origins of Totalitarianism* "does not really deal with the 'origins' of totalitarianism ~ as its title unfortunately claims ~ but gives a historical account of the elements...the elemental structure of totalitarian movements and domination itself..." Hannah Arendt in Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," *The Review of Politics* 15.1 (January 1953) 68-85, 78.

¹²⁷ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 22.

¹²⁸ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 276.

Rhineland. Edward Flannery says that, “From January to July of 1096 it is estimated that up to 10,000 died, probably one fourth to one third of the Jewish population of Germany and Northern France at that time.”¹²⁹ Lesser pogroms were associated with the later Crusades. The Black Death (1347-50) was occasion for another outbreak of large-scale butchery. “It is impossible to determine the extent of Jewish casualties during these years. In all, over 200 Jewish communities, large and small, were destroyed. The massacres were greatest in Germany where every sizable city was affected....”¹³⁰ In absolute numbers, this may pale beside the millions of the Nazi Holocaust. But there is little to distinguish in the quality of the murderous intent. Pre-modern hatred based on popular religious ideology, such as the characterization of the Jews as the “murders of Christ” or the “blood libel,” was quite sufficient to rationalize murderous violence. As Joshua Trachtenberg says, “It is of no point that the Church did not directly charge the Jew, *qua* heretic, with such practices. What matters is that the common people and their clerical mentors made the association....”¹³¹

Bauman asserts that, “It was the rational world of modern civilization that made the Holocaust thinkable.”¹³² Not true. Some Christians of the Middle Ages believed that “all the Jews ought to be utterly destroyed as constant enemies of the Christian name and the Christian religion.”¹³³ Trachtenberg, who has documented medieval conceptions of the Jews in detail, says that it reveals “a hatred so vast and abysmal, so intense, that it leaves one gasping for comprehension.”¹³⁴ Martin Luther’s denunciations of the Jews, and the specific measures he urged ~ based on religious doctrine ~ were as bad as anything publicly admitted to by the Nazis. The Nazis, after

¹²⁹ Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism* ([1965] 1971), 93. Also Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (1987), 207-8; Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*, 246-256.

¹³⁰ Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*, 111.

¹³¹ Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (1943), 207.

¹³² Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 13 (emphasis in original), quoting from Browning, “German Bureaucracy and the Holocaust,” 148.

¹³³ Thomas of Monmouth, a medieval monk, quoted in Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*, 273.

all, never publicly admitted to a program of extermination *per se*. Martin Luther, in his pamphlet *On the Jews and Their Lies* (*Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen*, 1543), says that “all cash and treasure of silver be taken from them.... Let whoever can, throw brimstone and pitch upon them.... Let them be driven like mad dogs out of the land.”¹³⁵ Klaus Fischer points out that “Luther heaped more vile attacks on the Jews than could be found in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*,” and argues that “his whole apocalyptic thinking, in which Jews are children of the devil, was the first major step on the road to the Holocaust.”¹³⁶

Conversely, it is factually incorrect to argue that the modern racism of the Nazis wholly replaced the medieval religious rationale. The two concepts of the Jews as “devils” and as “vermin” were combined in Nazism.¹³⁷ Julius Streicher, one of the most prominent of the Nazi ideologues and the editor of the Nazi paper, *Der Stürmer*, which is apparently the only paper Hitler read regularly, invoked the religious rationale when he said that “who fights the Jew fights the devil” and “who masters the devil conquers heaven.”¹³⁸ The distinction was of little importance to Hitler. “I know perfectly well,” Hitler admitted in private, “just as well as all these tremendously clever intellectuals, that in a scientific sense there is no such thing as race....”¹³⁹ As Berel Lang says, “Much twentieth-century antisemitism, including much of its expression in Nazi sources, cites justifications that are conceptually and practically independent of biological factors.”¹⁴⁰ Edward Flannery argues that, “Ontologically considered (in essence), Christian and modern racial antisemitism are radically different and opposed; historically they form a continuum. Modern racial antisemitism as exemplified in its purist culture by the Nazi regime, would not have been possible without centuries of

¹³⁴ Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 12.

¹³⁵ Martin Luther quoted in Klaus Fischer, *History of an Obsession: German Judeophobia and the Holocaust* (2001), 39.

¹³⁶ Fischer, *History of an Obsession*, 39.

¹³⁷ Fackenheim, “Holocaust and Philosophy,” 509.

¹³⁸ Julius Streicher quoted in Fackenheim, “Holocaust and Philosophy,” 508.

¹³⁹ Hermann Rauschning, *The Voice of Destruction* ([1940] 2003), 232.

¹⁴⁰ Berel Lang, *Heidegger’s Silence* (1996), 67.

anti-Judaic and antisemitic precedents.”¹⁴¹ Gavin Langmuir argues that Nazism was more lethal because it was a “physiocentric” religion, whereas Christianity was a “psychocentric” religion.¹⁴² “It can be argued that anti-Judaism is a nonrational reaction to overcome nonrational doubts, while antisemitism is an irrational reaction to repressed rational doubts.”¹⁴³ But he also argues that, “Never has there been a more sweeping expression of religious irrationality than the ‘Final Solution.’”¹⁴⁴

Arendt never presents a clear theory of the origins of antisemitism, but she notes at several points that modern antisemitism, particularly in Germany in the late 19th Century, was an instrument of feudal reaction against liberalism.¹⁴⁵ Bauman recognizes in his own words, with his emphasis again, that European Jews in the Modern Age were “*the prime target of anti-modern resistance.*”¹⁴⁶ He says that it is “an apparent paradox” that “racism was instrumental in the mobilization of anti-modernist sentiments and anxieties...”¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, he continues to insist, “racism is strictly a modern product.”¹⁴⁸ Again, this is just not true. Does he seriously mean to say that ancient Jews and Greeks, for example, were not racist? He goes on to say that, “Racism, in short, is a thoroughly modern weapon, used in the conduct of pre-modern or at least not exclusively modern, struggles.”¹⁴⁹ Now he seems to have backslid considerably. Racism is a tool of political propaganda, not analytically different from other tools such as railroads, which an antimodern ideology uses to accomplish its will. It may be a convenient tool provided by modernity ~ assuming, without basis, that racism is somehow essentially modern ~ but it is only an incidental cause of holocaust, neither sufficient nor a necessary. If this weapon can be used to

¹⁴¹ Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*, 289-90

¹⁴² Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 344-5.

¹⁴³ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 276.

¹⁴⁴ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 346.

¹⁴⁵ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 35-42.

¹⁴⁶ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 46.

¹⁴⁷ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 61.

¹⁴⁸ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 62.

¹⁴⁹ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 62.

fight the pre-modern struggle, so can others, and there is no necessary link between this weapon and the fundamental causes. That is demonstrated by the fact that Stalinist Russia conducted its own holocaust in service of an explicitly anti-racist ideology.

That should suffice to indicate the problem with this sort of argumentation. I should note that I am picking on the defects in Bauman's logic in detail because he, almost uniquely among well-known critics of modernity who specifically address the Nazi Holocaust, has the intellectual honesty to state his logic clearly, even if inconsistently.

More traditional philosophical and theological objections to modernity have never disappeared. Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin were two German exiles to the United States from Nazi Germany whose works are particularly notable for conservative versions of the *Verfallsgeschichte*, or "history of decay."¹⁵⁰ For those who still take Christian theology seriously, the nihilism of the Modern Age has an obvious cause in the lack of faith ~ the belief that "God is dead,"¹⁵¹ in the slogan Nietzsche made famous, although he was not the first to coin it ~ endemic in modern thought since the Enlightenment. Gene Edward Veith provides a recent articulation of this long-standing traditional critique in *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview* (1993). Veith argues specifically that, "Fascism is essentially a response to the alienation that has been a part of the landscape of the West since the Enlightenment."¹⁵² In his view, however, the postmodern critique of the Enlightenment is part of the same problem.¹⁵³ Where does this leave modern secular liberalism and the distinction between liberal and totalitarian states? Is liberalism, as a

¹⁵⁰ See John Gunnell's commentary on Strauss and Voegelin in *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation* (1979), chapters 2-3.

¹⁵¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1974) [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882 & 1887], §§ 108, 125 (pages 167, 181), et passim. See also Eric Von Der Luft, "Sources of Nietzsche's 'God is Dead!'" and its Meaning for Heidegger," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45.2 (April-June 1984) 263-276.

¹⁵² Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview* (1993), 28.

secular ideology, also damned? Veith is not entirely clear about that. “American democratic institutions are a genuine barrier to fascism,” he says, but he worries, in a way similar to Strauss, that “Utilitarian ethics...and existential ethics...have nearly erased the transcendent principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition” in America.¹⁵⁴ Veith argues that neo-fascism is a greater problem in Europe, and associates that difference with the greater decline of traditional religious belief in Europe.¹⁵⁵ But Veith also makes the interesting observation, without much elaboration, that “Fascism is essentially a spiritual movement” which is a reaction against logic, rationalism, and science rather than a manifestation of rationalism.¹⁵⁶

To emphasize this important distinction, it is therefore antimodernity, in the form of the fascist reaction, rather than modernity itself, which is the evil. From a Christian perspective, Veith might well argue that the distinction between the thing itself and the reaction to it is of little ultimate importance because, given the spiritual void created by modernity, the reaction is inevitable. Nevertheless, a secular liberal may insist on the importance of that distinction.

Those are only the highlights of modern antimodern philosophy in the West. These writers and works do not include the more traditional expressions of the hatred of the city and politics which will be mentioned in § 5. And they do not include any of the non-Western objections to Western modernity. Good examples of non-Western critiques, relevant to the current clash between Islam and the West, are the condemnations of both liberalism and Marxism as global materialistic philosophies in Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones (Ma'alim fi'l Tariq)*, 1964), and Ali Shari'ati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique* (1980). Thierry Hentsch argues that, “Islam today...represents the only ideology capable of articulating a radical challenge to Western hegemony without simultaneously borrowing its intellectual weapons from

¹⁵³ Veith, *Modern Fascism*, chapter 8, et passim. Veith is especially critical, throughout *Modern Fascism*, of the influence of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Nietzsche at 81-4, Heidegger at 85-9, et passim.

¹⁵⁴ Veith, *Modern Fascism*, 156.

¹⁵⁵ Veith, *Modern Fascism*, 158.

the West.”¹⁵⁷ That is part of the theological argument in Qutb and Shari’ati. However, some radical Islamics, including Sayyid Qutb himself, and the infamous Osama bin Laden, were inspired to some extent by Western postmodernism.¹⁵⁸ The war against the West from the outside is not different in substance from the war for the mind of the West inside the West. Islam is no more inherently antimodern than Christianity. It is merely in a different stage of development.¹⁵⁹

The issue, as will be made clear in following sections, is not a “clash between civilizations,” as such, but a clash of cultures, or more precisely a conflict between “cultural polarities,” within civilizations as well as between them.

¹⁵⁶ Veith, *Modern Fascism*, 14.

¹⁵⁷ Thierry Hentsch, *Imagining the Middle East* (1992), 159-60.

¹⁵⁸ See Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (2003); Waller R. Newell, “Postmodern Jihad: What Osama bin Laden Learned from the Left,” *The Weekly Standard* 7.11 (26 November 2001) 26-8; Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2004).

¹⁵⁹ See the outstanding analysis of Islam and the critique of Samuel Huntington’s thesis of the “clash of civilizations” between Islam and the West in Shireen Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?* (1998). But see also Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996).

§ 4. The polarities and pathologies of culture

The purpose of this section is to explain the fundamental concept of “polarities of culture,” to draw on a wide body of cultural theory dealing with specific manifestations of “polarity,” the “avatars of polarity” listed in table 2, and to relate all of this, in particular, to war, fascism, and the German problem. The concepts and theories presented here will then be directly relevant to the historical and comparative analysis in §§ 5-11. In these terms, the “German problem” can be diagnosed as a pathologically “spiritual” polarity, an extreme reaction against the “materialistic” polarization of the West, which was caused by the steep “cultural gradient” described in § 5.

The critiques of *Realpolitik* and *Rationalisierung*, presented in the previous section, point to the centrality of the problem of “rationality,” and to the need for a cultural theory which can explain actions which are not materially rational. This section presents a synthesis of basic elements from a wide variety of traditional cultural theories, with an emphasis on specific elements in those theories which are of most relevance. This is not an attempt to present a detailed textual exegeses of these sources. It is an analysis of the most basic issues ~ the problems and research projects ~ obviously driving these various philosophical and sociological theories, with special attention to common engagements with the problems of rationality, modernity, war, and fascism.

The premise to this identification of the “avatars of polarity” in various theories of others is that there is some underlying structural foundation to the general dichotomy framed here as a tension between “material” and “spiritual” poles of culture. Two basic structural factors are also presented as important elements in the pathology of an excessive spiritual polarity. One is the “cliff effect,” the problem of social adaptation and learning, which creates a tension, over time, between changing material conditions and the cultures (or “institutions,” in the term used in the new economic history) which evolved under older conditions. The other is the “group effect,” the evident tendency

of human beings to strongly value group identifications, and which becomes the basis for political conflict, for the sake of conflict itself, because conflict becomes a means of identification. These two factors are related in that the “cliff effect,” although based in part on an instrumental problem in adaptation or learning, is not merely that. One must also account for the deliberate refusal to learn in the face of failure and evident risk of future failure. That is accounted for by the desire to risk conflict and disaster for the sake of a spiritual value, the non-material value of group identity.

It may seem somewhat odd that the basic structural mechanisms described here, the cliff effect and the group effect, are associated with the evolution of “spiritual” institutions or ideologies as such. But that is the very point of digging down to a basic structure, below surface appearances. This is the significant point made by invoking Pareto’s analysis of the underlying structure of the Christian turn in Rome, by the discussion of the “authoritarian personality,” and by the analysis of fascism as an urge to restore group identity in the face of secular modernity, with little regard to the putative content of the fascist ideology.

This section, in combination the following sections on the concrete history of Germany, makes the following substantive points:

1. In terms of the dichotomous terms and sources listed in table 2, we can say that, on the whole, and to a significant degree, although far from perfectly, a modern liberal state or “polyarchy” tends to be materialistic, skeptical, liberal, open to external influences, positivistic, rational and legal, *zweckrational*, capitalistic, based on contract relationships, historical in its lawmaking, secular-humanist, physiocentric in its basic beliefs, a *Gesellschaft*, Apolline in its religious style, a society which exposes principles of “partnership,” more commonly known as “pluralism,” even if it does not fully practice those principles, an “open society” in Popper’s sense, “constrained” by incremental method in Sowell’s sense, “loosely bounded” in Merelman’s sense, intellectually committed to the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), based on concepts of

social contract, based on positive-sum strategies, a trading state, part of McWorld, and also suffering from anomie as a result, other-directed, and sensate.

2. Conversely, a hegemonic regime tends to be characterized by the opposing “spiritual” elements of culture listed in table 2. These spiritual elements directly relate to reactions in Germany on the cultural gradient in Europe. Germans rebelled against the worldliness of the Roman Church and the Renaissance with an attempt to reclaim an unconstrained, absolute, spiritual purity. Germans opposed the Enlightenment, which they saw as an alien influence from France and England, and a “disenchantment of the world,” in Weber’s terms. (Weber himself opposed the “materialism” of the West.) They celebrated the supposed virtues of *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation*, and the unconstrained Faustian quest for power. They opposed modern utilitarian modes of law and economics. They pursued the *Realpolitik* logic of the “conquest state,” against the premier “trading state” of Britain, which they romanticized as the battle of the *Händler und Helden*, the “traders and heroes,” to the point of irrational self-destruction. The German social character of the 20th Century, after the beginning of late but rapid industrialization and urbanization, closely fit Riesman’s image of the troubled “inner-directed” social character which results from a rapid transition from traditional society. And German culture closely fits Sorokin’s image of an “ideational” culture suffering from “epistemological instability” in the face of rapid modernization and intrusion of foreign influences, just as other traditional cultures are now reacting violently to the influences of globalization around the world.

3. The opposing values of a “spiritual” hegemonic regime explain its lack of material rationality, and its reaction against materialistic influences. This is also quite consistent with the explanation of fascism as “a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism.”

4. *Conclusions from this section:* As implied by this general alignment of elements, and by many details of the specific avatars of polarity, it is persuasive to

conceive of the “reactionary modernism” of Nazism as a reaction against modernism, or technically a “spiritual” reaction against “materialism.” This provides a theory for *what* happened in German culture to produce Nazism, and a clearer picture of what Nazism was, but it does not prove *why* it happened. It explains the result, but not the causes. That is the purpose of the rest of the work.

The concept of polarity and its implications for actual polities

“Polarity,” here, means an imbalance of influence or power on one side or another, a domination of one system by another. This may occur in any area of culture, and there may be local deviations from the general polarity. On the whole, however, a culture is usually polarized in one of two directions. The only other possible states are perfect balance or synthesis, an ideal state which is difficult to maintain, or incoherence, in which case it is not a true cultural entity but instead two or more cultures, which will therefore be in conflict if in proximity. Every culture has these “poles,” or contrasting aspects. “Polarity” does not mean that either of these poles is absent, but that one is dominant over the other.

The two polarities, at the most fundamental level, might be called the “material” and the “spiritual.” The “material” (the first column in table 2) and the “spiritual” (the center column in table 2) correspond roughly to what Vilfredo Pareto calls the “external” and “internal” parts of a culture.¹ The internal is the mental and social life of a given culture, whereas the external is the physical and biological environment. The “material” and “spiritual” also correspond to what Auguste Comte calls the “positive,” on one side, and the “theological” and “metaphysical” on the other.² In some cases it is apt to frame this as an “economic” culture versus a “political” culture.

¹ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society: A Treatise on General Sociology*, vol. 1-4, Andrew Bongiorno, Arthur Livingston, and James Harvey Rogers, trans. (1935) [*Trattato di sociologia generale*, 1916], 1.188, 189, 191. George Homans adapted these terms from Pareto. Don Martindale, *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory* (1981), 112, 468-70.

² Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, Frederick Ferré, trans. (1970) [from *Cours de philosophie positive*, 1830-42], 2.

Or, looking at the culture as a whole, the material side is the “antithesis” (A⊖) and the spiritual side is the “thesis” (⊕). Although the material is ontologically and evolutionarily prior, the spiritual is the “thesis” because it is the traditional side of dominance in human history, and because it is the formed entity. Change and growth, caused by exterior forces of selection, are necessary to the life of an entity. But there can be no change and growth without a formed entity for those forces to act on.

At this point, the reader may be reminded of Hegel’s system of phenomenology based on the dialectical interaction between *Geist* and *Welt*, or “Spirit/Mind” and the “World.” This is appropriate, because it is based on the same basic concept, except that it is unnecessary to import Hegel’s obscure system of philosophy in order to point to the basic relationship at work. It is simply the conflict or interaction ~ the continuing process of learning and adaptation, including misunderstanding and maladaptation ~ which arises from the imperfections of minds, including social minds, attempting to integrate changing realities into their self-conscious schemas. Call it what you will. Call it Hegelian *Geist* and *Welt*, Marxist *Überbau* and *Unterbau* (“superstructure” and “under-structure”), the Freudian struggle with the “reality principle,” or by any of the names in the “avatars of polarity” below.

Although a human is a complex combination of multiple systems, what is most essentially human about a human being ~ to indulge for a moment in talk of essences ~ is his or her self-conscious identity. More to the point, our minds are stuck with the fact that we cannot perceive reality directly, but only through our sensations, perceptions, and conceptualizations. Because of that epistemological reality, which philosophers have obsessed about to no end, idealism of some form has never gone out of fashion. As Arthur Schopenhauer puts it, “the beginning and end of the world are to be sought not without us, but rather within.”³ Or, as Alexandre Kojève puts it in his reading of Hegel, “that man is Wise who is *fully and perfectly self-conscious*.... The

Wise Man's 'absolute Knowledge' is *circular*...."⁴ There are a great number of subtleties and controversies about "idealism" in philosophy, which we may avoid.⁵ The validity of philosophical idealism in the abstract is tangential to the main point, which is that the human mind, or any other self-conscious system, has a tendency to idealize reality. Even more, a self-conscious system will attempt to refashion reality, whenever it can, to fit its ideal, its sense of self, or its identity. This mental idealism, and not anything more mystical, is what is indicated by the term "spiritual."⁶

Another way to describe the basic dichotomy is in terms of the "relational" versus the "essential." Essentialism is the attempt to base meaning on an irreducible being (*Sein*) or nature (*physis*), which cannot be altered. It is, as Tom Darby puts it, "an attempt to abolish the indefinite, partial, and relative character of human communication and to speak of things not in relation to each other but as they are exactly."⁷ Relationalism is the recognition that this is unrealistic. Things are defined by their relationships to other things. The boundaries between things are sometimes fuzzy. And all things, from subatomic particles to human beings, are subject to change.⁸ We might simply use the term "relative" rather than "relational," except that

³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1-2, E.F.J. Payne, trans. (1966) [*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1818], 1.421. I would not say that the philosophy of Schopenhauer leads logically to Nazism, but there were psychological reasons why Hitler admired it.

⁴ Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, James H. Nichols, Jr., trans. (1969) [*Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 1947], 76, 94.

⁵ See the finely crafted defense of idealism (although one that is ultimately flawed in my opinion) in Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (1983).

⁶ It is the most unsatisfactory term, except for all the others I can think of. The term "ideological" might be more precise, but that has even more negative connotations than "spiritual," and I do not mean to demean this mentality with pejorative labels. If I were writing this in German, I might use *psychisch*, a term used by Ferdinand Tönnies for something "relating to the human psyche." Or I might use a form of the ordinary adjective *geistig*, which may mean either "intellectual" or "spiritual" because the noun *Geist* means both "mind" and "spirit." That is an ambiguity which has troubled translators of Hegel. In my case (as in Hegel as well, I tend to think) the ambiguity is intentional.

⁷ W. Tom Darby, *The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time* (1982), 34.

⁸ Eric Voegelin asserts that human nature cannot be altered, and that it is an abomination to try. Eric Voegelin, with a response by Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," *The Review of Politics* 15.1 (January 1953) 68-85, 74-5. An evolutionary theorist such as myself counters that it is human nature to have a changeable nature (it is the nature of all organisms on the planet to have a

pop philosophy has completely misinterpreted the concept of “relativity.”⁹

There is an inherent tension, a dialectic, if one likes, and a balance to be struck, between change and stability, between relations with the outside world and internal essence, between open and closed boundaries. That tension explains the mystery of sex and death, which are two topics of great fascination to evolutionary theorists. W.D. Hamilton was perhaps the greatest figure in evolutionary biology since Darwin ~ their equivalent to Kant, although almost unknown to social scientists. Hamilton made those two phenomena, sex and death, the preoccupation of the rest of his life after he solved the problem of altruism. The problems, and the solutions, are actually quite similar. Just as selfish and altruistic behavior is a balance between short-term gains to be obtained by defecting and long-term gains to be obtained by cooperation, sex and death are ways of giving up short-term and limited gains in favor of long-term success by a form of cooperation. By splitting itself in half, like Plato’s poor circle creatures torn apart by the gods,¹⁰ a piece of DNA allows part of its identity to die. But the part that lives on becomes stronger by becoming more diverse when it joins with another sexually. Similarly, an organism which ages and dies loses its identity in a big way, but that identity continues on, although only in part, but with more potential for adaptive success, in progeny or inclusive genes it has assisted by its death.

Neither of those strategies, although successful in the long run, comes easily. Sex took a long time to evolve, and is not always used, still, by many simpler organisms. Death must always be resisted, up to a point. And that often means choosing, instead

changeable nature, but humans are especially malleable) and that attempting to freeze that evolution in place is an oppression which is abominable.

⁹ The term “relational,” as a substitute for “relative,” comes from Karl Mannheim. “Relationalism signifies merely that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation have reference to one another and derive their significance from this reciprocal interrelationship in a given frame of thought.” But this “should not be confused with a philosophical relativism which denies the validity of any standards and of the existence of order in the world. Just as the fact that every measurement in space hinges upon the nature of light does not mean that our measurements are arbitrary, but merely that they are only valid in relation to the nature of light.” Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, trans. (1949) [*Ideologie und Utopie*, 1929], 86, 283.

¹⁰ Plato, *Symposium*, [c. 387-347 BCE], 189a, et seq.

of cooperation and sex, the more basic strategies of defection and violence. The art of our culture, both popular and refined, Western and non-Western, is fascinated with the two poles of sex and violence. That represents the power of these two alternatives in evolution. As social organisms, our economies, politics, and cultures are rather recent stages in evolution. It is therefore far from surprising that they come with many maladaptive characteristics. In particular, they have difficulty getting the balance right with these tensions, between change and stability, between the relational and the essential, between difference and identity, between the inclusive and exclusive, or between sex and violence.

On the whole, a more “material” culture will be more prone to adopt a sexual, inclusive, or “multicultural” strategy, while a “spiritual” culture will be more prone to adopt a violent, exclusive, or “monocultural” strategy. This follows logically from the fact that the more “spiritual” a culture is, the stronger is its sense of self-conscious and separate identity. In a sense, it simply has more to lose by allowing a penetration of its boundaries. It becomes rigid, and also becomes prone to violence as a way to protect the rigid boundaries of its identity.¹¹ The Spartans were immensely proud of their “good order” (*eunomia*) given to them by a god-like lawgiver.¹² But then they “grew afraid of the enterprise and the unorthodoxy of the Athenians.”¹³ Because of the strength of their identity, manifested in the sacrificial fighting quality of their soldiers, they won the Peloponnesian War in a military way. But then they lost the war in an economic, political, and cultural way, because their rigid order could not adapt. This pride in a fixed identity is expressed by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* (1925-6). He distinguishes between a political party program, which he despises for its conciliatory nature, and a “philosophy of life,” which he advocates for the Nazi Party. “Such a

¹¹ This is why old scientists and scholars, however learned and wise, must die off before new paradigms and philosophies can flourish. See Max Planck, quoted in Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996), 151, et passim.

¹² H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (1979), 92-5.

¹³ Thucydides, *History* [*Historia*, c. 404 BCE], in *The Peloponnesian War*, Rex Warner, trans. (1954), 1.102.

philosophy of life is never willing to share with another, it cannot be willing either to collaborate in an existing régime which it condemns, but feels obligated to combat this régime and the whole hostile world of ideas with all possible means....”¹⁴

This also relates closely to the idea of politics as the “distinction between friends and enemies,” which is discussed below with regard to the “group effect.” But first, a bit more should be said about the fundamental problem of learning and adaptation in the relationship between an entity and its environment.

The cliff effect: The problem of cultural adaptation

Another way to conceptualize the difference between the material and spiritual, and to understand pathological political cultures such as those of the Spartans and the Germans, is the concept of “overshoot,” or the “cliff effect.” The basic conflict between “rational” and “cultural” approaches to explanation can be looked upon as a difference in the time factor ~ both are valid, but on different time scales. Material rationality means that a people will respond to changing material reality as necessary, to their best advantage under any circumstances, whatever the alteration of those circumstances or social environment. But culture, identity, and “spirit,” or collective self-consciousness, is sometimes a drag on this otherwise rational process of social adaptation. A culture may become an atavism, a social structure which may have once been “rational,” but is no longer so in a material sense, although it is “rational” in the spiritual sense, because it is the thing, itself, which the highest value to be preserved, from the point of view of the spiritual polarity. The distinction in the time factor seems to be much of what is behind a new theoretical fashion, the concept of “historical institutionalism,” as a replacement for the traditional concept of “culture” in comparative politics.¹⁵ The general idea is that “structures” and “institutions” develop

¹⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ralph Manheim, trans. ([1925-6] 1999), 455.

¹⁵ See Margaret Levi, “Theories of Historical and Institutional Change,” *PS* 20.3 (Summer 1987) 684-688; Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (1999) 369-371.

for perfectly rational reasons in a material sense, in ways which economists would predict, but then became social formations, a subject more appropriate to sociologists, as these historical adaptations become “institutions.”¹⁶

This relates directly to the German problem. As Imanuel Geiss points out at the beginning of his study of *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914* (1976), Germany’s foreign policy can only be understood as an adaptation to its situation in the middle of Europe, where it was constantly pulled and pushed by influences on both sides, and taught to fight for survival. Germany was “Born on the battlefield.”¹⁷ The cultivated tradition of Prussian militarism, which has been well documented,¹⁸ grew out of that situation and contrasted sharply with the relative lack of militarism among the closely related Anglo-Saxons in Britain, where the insular and marginal geography provided a natural buffer against such forces. (The “insular thesis,” a common explanation for the success of Britain, is discussed in § 6.) However, having adopted an advantageous militarism, Germany carried it too far after the great success of 1871. That success, combined with the institutionalization of revolution from above in domestic politics, led to the catastrophe of 1914.

In 1914, in other words, the previous success of German militarism, an overadaptation, led it to “overshoot” an environmental “cliff.” This “cliff effect,”¹⁹ illustrated in diagram 1, is a variation on the S-curve, also known as the “sigmoidal curve,” the “growth curve,” and the “logistic curve.”²⁰ This is a basic feature in

¹⁶ The leading theorist in developing this RCT-based theory of social institutions, but one who has been less than clear about the actual relationship between the rational and cultural elements of explanation, may be Douglas C. North. See his *Structure and Change in Economic History* (1981), and *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990).

¹⁷ Wilhelm Liebknecht quoted in Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy* (1976), 16.

¹⁸ Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (1964); Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, vol. 1-3, Heinz Norden, trans. (1969) [*Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk: Das Problem des “Militarismus” in Deutschland, 1954-68*]; Emilio Willems, *A Way of Life and Death: Three Centuries of Prussian-German militarism, An Anthropological Approach* (1986).

¹⁹ Matt Ridley *Nature via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human* (2003), 122.

²⁰ See William Cunningham and Barbara Woodworth Saigo, *Environmental Science: A Global Concern* (1990), 92-3; *Concise Encyclopedia of the Sciences* (1980), “growth.”

biology, economics, and other fields,²¹ which is applicable to politics as well. All life has limits. There are few things so good that too much is not bad. Any economic investment, evolutionary strategy, or learned behavior, will eventually reach a point of diminishing returns because of either environmental limits or internal complications. “Many businesses fail because they do not know when to stop expanding,” economists observe. In other words, they violate the principle of “marginalism,” which means that cost and benefit must be measured by where one is at a given point in time, not by previous successes.²² Marginalism is easily explicable. The great difficulty for economists is explaining why otherwise apparent intelligent managers cannot seem to grasp this basic economic principle. That is more a matter of psychology.

Before the point of diminishing returns, especially in complex systems in biology and economics, there is usually a “takeoff” area, represented by point A in diagram 1a, where there are increasing marginal returns on investment due to overcoming a critical threshold, the benefit of economies of scale, or synergistic effects. For example, a multiplying herd of animals benefits from mutual protection provided by a bigger herd as well as the additional production in young. Or a firm hiring more workers benefits from the opportunity to specialize production tasks as well as the direct increase in labor. But then there are limits, which may be either external or internal.

Simple examples of external or environmental limits are the herd that uses up its food supply and the firm that reaches the limits of its market. Robert Gilpin, for example, uses both external and internal limits to growth, and the S-curve, to explain hegemonic change in world politics.²³ Perry Anderson argues that the Roman Empire fell because it exhausted the available supply of slaves from the frontier. In effect, he says, the empire ate up its available prey.²⁴ Internal limits may result from the

²¹ Sharon E. Kingsland, “The Refractory Model: The Logistic Curve and the History of Population Ecology,” *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 57 (March 1982) 29-52.

²² Todd Buchholz, *New Ideas from Dead Economists: An Introduction to Modern Economic Thought* (1999), 149.

²³ Robert Gilpin, *War & Change in World Politics* (1981), 159-85.

²⁴ Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (1974), 176-103.

complications of growth. A herd may become overly susceptible to parasites because of crowding. A firm may develop over-centralization and rigidity. Mancur Olson argues that business firms and nation-states tend to succumb, in their overdeveloped stages, to organizational “sclerosis” and the depredations of “distributional coalitions.”²⁵ In effect, he says that states die from internal parasites. This is one of the common explanations for the fall of the Roman Empire. External and internal problems may combine, and probably do so in most cases of large-scale decline of complex systems. A biological or cultural entity may become too specifically adapted to a current environment, and is then unable to respond when the environment changes. This is also known in biology as “evolutionary lag” and “overadaptation.”

In his seminal *Study of War* (1942), Quincy Wright argues that one of the primary causes of war is the “general tendency for change in procedures of political and legal adjustment to lag behind economic and cultural changes arising from technological progress.”²⁶ Similarly, in contemporary IR studies on the causes of war, Charles Doran refers to this as the “power cycle theory” of war. He argues that war is most likely when states are experiencing “abrupt changes in role and position,” that “these critical points are seen as bringing about exaggerated fear, misperception, and foreign-policy overreaction during the interval immediately following, making the state and system vulnerable to major war,” in part because “governments, like individuals, tend to plan and to coordinate policy in terms of essentially linear extrapolations of past experience.”²⁷

²⁵ Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (1982).

²⁶ Quincy Wright, with Louise Leonard Wright, *A Study of War* ([1942] 1983), 351-2.

²⁷ Charles Doran, “War and Power Dynamics: Economic Underpinnings,” *International Studies Quarterly* 27.4 (December 1983) 419-441, 420-1. Doran might criticize me, as he does others such as Robert Gilpin, for overemphasising the point of diminishing returns (point B in diagram 1), whereas he asserts that there are equally dangerous points (as at point A in diagram 3) wherever there is a significant change in the curve. Doran, “War and Power Dynamics,” 427-8. But Doran’s somewhat too mechanistic analysis ignores the difference between early states of learning, in which an organism or system is developing in response to a variety of stimuli, good and bad, and later states, fixed in

Theoretically, if an organism is well adapted, a firm is rational, or a state is wisely governed, this should not be a big problem. Somewhere past the point of diminishing returns at point B in diagram 1a, near point C, the entity should perceive that returns have diminished, that point B has been passed, and that it is time to respond by moving back toward point B. The herd breaks up. The firm decentralizes or sells off components. The state pulls back from a program of imperial conquest and consolidates previous gains, exactly as Bismarck did after 1871. (Let point B also stand for “Bismarck.”) But that is not how it always works. And that is why there are population crashes in biology, business cycles in economics, and imperial overextensions in politics. Theoretically, states should never go to war because one or both of two rational states in conflict will back down from the brink before sliding over the edge. But each tends to focus on the imaginary gains to be had from continuing the march over the cliff represented by the dotted line in diagram 1b. In his case study of *Why Nations Go to War* (1974), John Stoessinger finds out that, “There is a remarkable consistency in the self-images of most national leaders on the brink of war. Each confidently expects victory after a brief and triumphant campaign.”²⁸

Thus, the passage beyond diminishing returns at point B is not perceived, or is not responded to despite being perceived, until the entity has already arrived at point C in diagram 1b, after a fall off a steep cliff of declining returns, which is technically what in mathematics is called a “catastrophic change in state”²⁹ ~ and what is often a “catastrophe” in the common sense. That is the “cliff curve.” It might also be called the “hubris curve,” because it is a representation in graphic form of what the Greeks called “tragedy” and “hubris,” which they related to the rise and fall of states as well as human tragedy.³⁰ Tragic hubris is what drives a hero to self-destruction ~ Siegfried to

accordance with prior successes, in which the organism or system then finds it much more difficult to revise strategies.

²⁸ John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (1974), 223.

²⁹ A.E.R. Woodcock and Monte Davis, *Catastrophe Theory* (1978).

³⁰ Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors* (1991), chapter 3.

his *Götterdämmerung* in the great German myth of the *Ring*, or Hitler to his actual policy of *verbrannten Erde*, the “scorched Earth,” at the end of the Second World War. It is what Aristotle describes with the less well-known word, *hamartia*, a “flaw” which might not be an inherently bad thing, but a good thing gone wrong.³¹ A poetic variation on *hamartia* is *hamartanô*, which has as one translation, “to miss the mark,” as in an arrow gone astray.³²

Overshoots occur for many reasons. Evolution being blind, the genes have no way of perceiving or responding to the slightly diminishing returns and reversing course unless the decline continues to be extremely gradual. Adaptations which were previously successful must now be selected out by death. Overshoots often occur simply because biological collectives and human organizations, despite sometimes being made up of self-conscious units at the individual level which do have some awareness of changes in their environment, lack sufficient foresight to realize that point C in diagram 1a is not merely a minor downturn, an incidental fluctuation, but is actually the beginning of a catastrophic drop leading to point C in diagram 1b. Sometimes, the needed information about the future changes in a complex interactive environment is simply impossible to obtain despite best efforts. This is the dilemma that highly self-conscious and rational investors deal with in a stock market.

At the cultural level, however, it is a little more complicated. Part of the tragedy in tragedy is the sense of inevitability. The noble hero is warned that his or her hubris will only result in a catastrophe, but he or she persists nevertheless because it is the only way to remain true to what he or she is, a hero. As Kaiser Wilhelm II slowly and painfully saw himself slide into the First World War, despite his genuine desire to avoid it, despite his opinion that Austria was being unreasonable and was unnecessarily dragging Germany into war, he put aside rationality and took psychological refuge in

³¹ Aristotle, *Poetics* [c. 350 BCE], 1453a, et seq. See also Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, and William Burto, eds., *Eight Great Tragedies* (1957), 10, et passim.

³² See ἁμαρτανῶ in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (1966).

what he called his *Nibelungentreue*, his mystical blood oath to support Austria.³³ He self-consciously saw himself as a tragic figure out of Wagner's *Ring*, and perversely gloried in it. The leaders are aware of "jumping off a cliff," to use the metaphor some Japanese leaders used just before Pearl Harbor,³⁴ but there is no going back, no capacity to reverse the momentum.

At a collective level, states often become too "path dependent." Whether or not led by one mad leader, it is the herd that stampedes over the cliff.³⁵ This is often based, as is evolutionary lag in biology, on previous successes. Previous successes and conditioned responses to those successes, positive and systemic reinforcement of the previous adaptations, make a change in strategy extremely difficult. In the Second World War, the Japanese called it "victory disease."³⁶ They had gone so far, and done so well, that turning back was inconceivable. That was very much the case for Hitler, and for his generals as well. They could see the disaster coming, but his previous successes had so consolidated his hold over them, politically and psychologically, that rebellion became extremely difficult.

This "path dependency" is a way of saying that there is an "arrow of time" in the calculus. Diagram 1a is a time-symmetrical utility function. The fully rational mind, like the omnipotent god, can go back. But there is sometimes no going back for humans. Having come to greatly regret the oath of allegiance they had given Hitler, many of his generals still could not bring themselves to violate their sense of honor by breaking it. Others, including some who were sincerely appalled by his crimes, did bring themselves to contemplate attempts on his life. But most of these brave

³³ Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 5.

³⁴ In the course of arguments over the decision to go to war with the United States, Tojo said that a man sometimes must jump off Kiyomizu-drea ~ a Buddhist temple in the heights of Kyôto, above a dangerous ravine ~ with his eyes closed. Other Japanese advocates for war used expressions such as "gambling the fate of the nation" or going for "all or nothing." Robert Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War* (1961), 267, notes 6-7.

³⁵ In her historical study of what she calls "folly," Barbara Tuchman focuses specifically on follies of groups. Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly* (1984), 5.

conspirators nevertheless clung to the hopeless delusion that they could then negotiate a settlement with the Western Allies which would bring them back to point B in diagram 1b, whereby they would hold on to most of the territorial gains Hitler had made just before he went to war. (Let point B in diagram 1b now stand for “before 1 September 1939.”) This fantasy of turning back the clock was one of the things which doomed their efforts.³⁷ The arrow of time can be deadly.

It is particularly instructive to see what happens after a state falls off the cliff in diagram 1b. To quote Brett Butler, “the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.”³⁸ What the state needs is a new strategy, or perhaps a more cautious approach to applying the old strategy. But the problem may be that the only immediately available strategy to which the political system is adapted is the old one, and that it begins to take off again, as it did before at point A, in producing desired returns. Other things being equal, a new approach, however rational, is likely to be more difficult to implement because of the new learning and restructuring that must take place. In the short term, the gains from repeating the old strategy may be higher, as in point A₁ in diagram 1c, although much riskier than a new strategy, as in point A₂.

Brett Butler is talking about what we commonly call “neurotic” behavior at the individual level.³⁹ A person continues to repeat self-destructive behavior compulsively, such as drinking, gambling, or promiscuity, despite the overwhelming pain that inevitably follows the short-term satisfactions. They cannot ever seem to learn that the poison is in the tail, *in cauda venenum*. This is known in psychology as the “neurotic paradox.” It was also called the *Teufelskreis* by some early German

³⁶ John Mueller, “Pearl Harbor: Military Inconvenience, Political Disaster,” *International Security* 16.3 (Winter, 1991-2) 172-203, 193.

³⁷ Joachim C. Fest, *Plotting Hitler's Death: The Story of the German Resistance*, Bruce Little, trans. (1996) [*Staatsstreich: Der lang Weg zum 20. Juli, 1994*], 232, 337, 339, et passim.

³⁸ Brett Butler, *Knee Deep in Paradise* (1996), 199.

³⁹ See Isaac Marks, *Cure and Care of Neuroses: Theory and Practice of Behavioral Psychotherapy* (1981), 15, et seq.

psychologists.⁴⁰ This is literally a “devil’s circle,” or what in English is called a “vicious circle.” In Freudian theory, this was explained as the complex interaction of an overactive superego and a frustrated id. There may be something to that, in the form of dysfunctional schemas or ideologies at work at unconscious levels.⁴¹ The neo-Freudian theory of Eric Berne provides a more refined explanation, and one that may be based on behavioral conditioning and learning theory as much as psychodynamics. Berne diagnoses repetitive dysfunctional behaviors as semi-conscious “bad games” in which the subject is enjoying a secretly pleasurable “stroking,” a social stimulation reassuring them of their identity, even while inviting known disaster.⁴² Good games which produce positive results overall are obviously more rewarding and rational. In the short term, however, it is easier to obtain negative than positive stroking. Some people, therefore, become addicted to the bad games. It has also been demonstrated that the “neurotic paradox” can be created in rats by setting up a situation in which they are rewarded in the short term but punished in the long term for the same behavior. Some of the rats learn. But others persist all the more strongly in the failed behavior.⁴³ In other words, “neurotics suffer from a learning deficit.”⁴⁴

This was exactly the situation in Germany after the First World War. There were two obvious alternatives, and Germany was almost equally divided between them in terms of the domestic balance of power. Although many Germans accepted the rational need to reform the political system and engage in *Erfüllungspolitik*, the policy

⁴⁰ Hobart Mowrer, *Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics: Selected Papers* (1950), 447.

⁴¹ Although there is much in Freudian theory which appears to be archaic and unsupported by modern experimentation, such as the discredited theory of catharsis, there does appear to be some solid support to the basic psychodynamic model of the mind ~ the id, ego, and superego ~ in current neurophysiology and clinical psychology. See Mark Solms, “Freud Returns,” *Scientific American* 290.5 (May 2004) 82-88.

⁴² Eric Berne, *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relationships* (1964), 61-2, et passim.

⁴³ The seminal work is reported in Hobart Mowrer, *Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics: Selected Papers* (1950), 418-54, 483-530. A good summary of research and current thinking on the phenomenon, in a basic psychiatric reference, is presented in Theodore Millon, “Social Learning Models,” in Arnold M. Cooper, Allen J. Frances, and Michael H. Sacks, eds., *The Personality Disorders and Neuroses (Psychiatry Series, Vol 1)* (1986), 29-34.

of fulfilling the demands of the Versailles Treaty, this was only done reluctantly, against basic instincts, even by the *Vernunftrepublikaners*, the “rational republicans” who supported the Weimar Republic, and it did not, for a long time, produce much in material gains. Some of the opponents of this policy actually called their resistance to it *Katastrophenpolitik*, the “catastrophe policy” of promoting chaos in order to bring down the republic. It turned out to be a “catastrophe policy” in a different sense, in that it led to the massive defeat at the end of the Second World War. For seven years, however, from Hitler’s ascension in power in 1933 to the beginning of the war in 1939, the return to aggressive militarism seemed to be reaping great benefits for Germany. Some of those economic benefits were in fact payoffs from policies of the Weimar Republic, and Nazi policies were not in fact so beneficial to the economy,⁴⁵ but that made no difference to the perception. It felt good, just as another drinking binge feels good, even if the drunk knows that the hangover will be painful, or that drinking may even lead to death when the drunk meets a sharp S-curve on the highway.

The group effect: The problem of group identity

The S-curve is only one especially significant aspect of a more fundamental problem, which is, in the most basic terms, the conflict between environment and identity ~ or between the material and the spiritual. There are many ways of explaining it, all of which are simultaneously valid, or merely ways of explaining the same problem on different levels of analysis, or in terms of different disciplines. In terms of evolutionary biology, it is the natural result of the fact that evolution is a blind process, not the teleological process it is often imagined to be, and that adaptations also become maladaptations.⁴⁶ In economic theory, it is the failure of historically path-dependent institutions to always promote perfect competition and equilibrium.⁴⁷ In terms of

⁴⁴ Millon, “Social Learning Models,” 31.

⁴⁵ Richard Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (1994).

⁴⁶ See Stephan Jay Gould, *The Panda’s Thumb: More Reflections in Natural History* (1982).

⁴⁷ See Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990).

cybernetic theory, it is the result of the impossibility of a secondary system of internal signals being a perfect filter for the external signals impinging on the system from the outside environment.⁴⁸ In terms of learning theory in psychology, it is the fact that certain learned behaviors may be appropriate to certain contexts, but quite inappropriate, or neurotic, in other contexts.⁴⁹ The ability of intelligent creatures to develop highly sophisticated pictures of the world and their place in it ~ what the psychologists call a “schema” or “gestalt,” what scientists call a “theory” or “paradigm,” or what social scientists and philosophers call an “ideology” or “world view” (*Weltanschauung*) ~ is generally a valuable capability which helps those creatures survive and which even helps to counter some of the follies of other maladaptations. But self-consciousness, the folding in of consciousness in on itself ~ although a good thing in general, the basis for the philosophical “reflection” and moral “responsibility” which makes us most essentially human ~ can become a dangerous maladaptation which sometimes drives us over a psychological cliff of diminishing returns when it causes us to replace perception of the outside world with perception of our own ideas instead.⁵⁰ The Germans were the *Volk der Dichter und Denker*, the “people of poets and thinkers,” and also a people who produced a disproportionately high number of scientific and technical geniuses in the 20th Century.⁵¹ But that came

⁴⁸ See Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control* (1966).

⁴⁹ The problem of maladaptive learning, or the “neurotic paradox,” was also called the *Teufelskreis* by some early German psychologists. See Hobart Mowrer, *Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics: Selected Papers* (1950), 447, et passim.

⁵⁰ A good illustration of the problem with a psychological schema appears in a little visual game appearing in *Discover*. The reader is presented with a succession of images of the same object, from very blurry to distinct. As confirmed by experiments, a reader who tries to identify the object in the blurriest images first, thus taking a guess as to what it is, will find it more difficult, not less, to make a correct identification further on in the sequence. Eric Haseltine, “Beware the Tantalizing Allure of Mental Images,” *Discover* 24.7 (2003) 88.

⁵¹ From the creation of the Nobel Prize in 1901 up to the expulsion of Jews and intellectuals by Hitler after 1933, “Germans garnered a larger share of prizes than any other nationality, about 30 percent.” Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (1987), 32. See also Jean Medawar and David Pyke, *Hitler’s Gift: The True Story of the Scientists Expelled by the Nazi Regime* (2001), 3.

with a pathological political culture, in part because of an overdeveloped tendency to live in the *Luftreich der Träume*, the “airy realm of dreams,” detached from practical political realities, as Friedrich Engels puts it in his somewhat unfair criticism of the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848.⁵²

To be a self is to be separated from the world ~ and also, for creatures with significant consciousness, to be unhappy because of that separation. Thus, to use the philosophical language of certain German philosophers who have been especially sensitive to the dissonance of life, such as Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger, there is always an “alienation” (*Entfremdung*) between the self and the world. Or to put it more simply and poetically, as Leonard Cohen says in a song, “There is a crack in everything.”⁵³ All life is, to some extent, maladapted. The creation of any entity, which is to say, the establishment of a boundary between the inside entity and the outside environment, necessarily implies some degree of separation or dissonance between the entity and the environment. The greater the self-consciousness of that entity, the greater the dissonance and unhappiness. This is why “identity politics” is almost always the politics of resentment ~ or *ressentiment*, precisely in the sense used by Nietzsche and Weber. And this is why the peculiar German fixation on “community” was a pathological fetish.

Sigmund Freud proposes that one of the root causes of social conflict is the “narcissism of minor differences.”⁵⁴ This arises from the “instinct” or “urge” (*Trieb*) to

⁵² Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The German Revolutions: The Peasant War In Germany and Germany: Revolution And Counter-Revolution*, Leonard Krieger, ed. (1967) [*Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, 1850, translation by Engels in English, 1926, and letters to the New York tribune, 1851-2], 171.

⁵³ Leonard Cohen, “Anthem” (1997), refrain, line 3.

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, James Strachey, ed. and trans. (1961) [*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, 1930], 61. Many of Freud’s intuitive insights are now finding some basis in evolutionary psychology. Dori LeCroy, “Freud: The First Evolutionary Psychologist?” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 907 (April 2000) 182-90. It should be noted, however, that he bases his explanations of human behavior on a somewhat different ontology. Freud defines *Trieb* in a way more akin to the desires of the circle creatures in Plato’s *Symposium*, as an existential urge to regain a lost wholeness. Plato, *Symposium*, [c. 387-347 BCE], the speech of Aristophanes beginning at 189a. Freud says that *Trieb* is “an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces.” Sigmund Freud,

define a group, and to react punitively against those who threaten that tribal unity of inclusive fitness or pseudo-kinship cooperation. We have an urge to put on what biologists call “green beards”⁵⁵ ~ marks of group identity such as dueling scars, uniforms, clothes, manners, and manners of speech ~ and to seek out defectors or cheats who do not belong, even if they might not exist. Politics is about friends and enemies, and also about an instinctive urge to *define* friends and enemies, and thereby to *find* our tribe. This is where Carl Schmitt, the Nazi philosopher, unfortunately, got it right. As he says in *The Concept of the Political* (1932), politics is founded on the “distinction between friend and enemy” (*Unterscheidung zwischen Freund und Feind*).⁵⁶ Deep within all of us there is a creature who wants to know what happened to its tribe ~ even if it never really existed ~ and who is willing to do terrible things to find that lost tribe.

One of the problems in explaining the Nazi Holocaust is that it cannot be reconciled with rational theory as conventionally understood. The genocide was obviously counterproductive to the Nazi war effort, and their virulent form of antisemitism was not really helpful to the Nazis in German domestic politics either. But Freud’s explanation of the phenomenon of German antisemitism, written in 1930, makes perfect sense in terms of modern evolutionary biology, which shows that human beings are strongly motivated by a desire towards “groupishness,” or the affirmation of

Beyond the Pleasure Principle, James Strachey, ed. and trans. (1961) [*Jenseits des Lust-Prinzips*, 1920], 43. Whether or not this translates into evolutionary logic depends on what exactly is meant by “an earlier state of things.” There is no inborn urge among biological creatures to reverse basic changes in their evolution ~ no more than there is an urge to evolve, as such. We do not instinctively want to become apes or fish again, although there may be something to the Freudian idea that we have an urge to be babies again. Where this Freudian concept of “instinct” and evolutionary psychology do agree is on the fact that we have the desire to restore a sense of tribal wholeness.

⁵⁵ Robert B. Glassman, Edward W. Packel, and Douglas L. Brown, “Green Beards and Kindred Spirits: A Preliminary Mathematical Model of Altruism Toward Nonkin Who Bear Similarities to the Giver,” *Ethology and Sociobiology* 7.2 (1986) 107-115; Cartwright, *Evolution and Human Behavior*, § 3.4.1.

⁵⁶ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen*, 1932], 29.

group identity.⁵⁷ According to Freud, it is all about identity:

Aggressiveness was not created by property. It reigned almost without limit in primitive times, when property was still very scanty....

It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers against intruders is not to be deposed. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness..... I gave this phenomenon the name of "the narcissism of minor differences".... In this respect the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful service to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts; but unfortunately all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that period more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows. When once the Apostle Paul had posited universal love between men as the foundation of his Christian community, extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it became the inevitable consequence. To the Romans, who had not founded their communal life as a State upon love, religious intolerance was something foreign, although with them religion was a concern of the State and the State was permeated by religion. Neither was it an unaccountable chance that the dream of a Germanic world-domination called for anti-semitism as its complement; and it is intelligible that the attempt to establish a new, communist civilization in Russia should find its psychological support in the persecution of the bourgeois. One only wonders, with concern, what the Soviets will do after they have wiped out their bourgeois.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ A manifestation of this is what the biologists call "conformist transmission," which is when "individuals preferentially adopt common behaviors, which acts to increase the frequency of the most common behaviors in the population." Joseph Henrich and Robert Boyd, "Why People Punish Defectors: Weak Conformist Transmission can Stabilize Costly Enforcement of Norms in Cooperative Dilemmas," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 208.1 (January 2001) 79-89, 81. "Human beings are terribly easily talked into following the most absurd and dangerous path for no better reason than that everyone else is doing it. In Nazi Germany, virtually everyone suspended their judgment to follow a psychopath." Matt Ridley *Nature via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human* (2003), 181. Another important manifestation of "groupishness" especially relevant to the German problem is what the biologists call "altruistic punishment," which is punishment that is more costly to the punisher than the prospective rewards to the punisher, but which serves some social purpose. Ernst Fehr and Simon Gächter, "Altruistic Punishment in Humans," *Nature* 415 (10 January 2002) 137-140. A closely related phenomenon is "outsider exclusion," which is exactly what it sounds like, and it is also a special case of altruistic punishment. Outsider exclusion or "othering" plays a critical role in group identity and selection. Joel R. Peck, "The Evolution of Outsider Exclusion," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 142.4 (1990) 565-71. As Samuel Huntington observes in the context of global politics, "People define their identity by what they are not." Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), 67.

⁵⁸ Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 60-2. Freud's general observations about Christian antisemitism are backed up in an interesting study by James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (2001).

Freud's theory that German antisemitism was directly related to the German desire to create a nation-wide "community" (*Gemeinschaft*) of Germans was anticipated by Helmuth Plessner⁵⁹ in *The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism*, published in German in 1924. Plessner says that:

The idol of this age is community (*Gemeinschaft*)....

It is the ideology of the excluded and betrayed, of people in waiting, of the proletariat and the impoverished and of the youth who still freshly experience the chains that bind them. It is justified by as the protest of those suffering in the great cities under mechanization and displacement. Under its banner, armies have arisen and thousands are prepared to die.⁶⁰

And die they did. There is a growing body of literature in biology and evolutionary psychology which is of interest in explaining the causes of this social phenomenon. But the focus of this section is on the results of that general tendency towards groupishness, which sometimes results in an extremely "spiritual" polarity.

Structure and appearance: Some initial avatars of polarity

As an introduction to the general survey of the "avatars" of polarity of relevance to the German problem, it may be helpful to begin with a some "avatars" which illustrate, most clearly, the underlying structure of the relationship. Vilfredo Pareto argues that "every sociological phenomenon has two distinct and often entirely diverse forms: an objective form, which determines the relations between real objects, and a subjective form determining the relations between psychological states."⁶¹ Although we should avoid the ontological essentialism implied by talk of "real objects," his distinction between the "objective" and the "subjective," or what can be called the "structural" and the "apparent," gives some indication of what is to be uncovered here. As an example

⁵⁹ Plessner (1892-1985) was a German philosopher who was a contemporary of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and who later wrote *The Late-coming Nation (Die verspätete Nation, 1959)*, a diagnosis of the German problem invoking the Veblen theory of unstable development. See also Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* ([1915] 1990).

⁶⁰ Helmuth Plessner, *The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism*, Andrew Wallace, trans. (1999) [*Grenzen der Gemeinschaft: Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus, 1924*], 66.

of his distinction between the objective and subjective, Pareto cites the rise of Christianity in Rome. Pareto points out that the spectacular success of Christianity can be explained, without resort to divine intervention in human history, as a result of a basic structural change in Western culture:

We are accustomed to viewing the history of that time as a struggle between Christianity and other religions or doctrines which we believe to be essentially dissimilar, and we imagine that the course of modern history would have been altogether different if, instead of Christianity, the cult of Mithra or some other oriental cult had triumphed, or if paganism had flowered again.

All this does not hold true. There was indeed a violent struggle between sects A, B, C..., which all sprang from one single cause, X, that is, from the increased religious sentiment. But the main fact is precisely X, and facts A, B, C... are only secondary.⁶²

Rome was a cultural environment filled with competing mystery cults at the time, and Christianity was merely the one that won the competition, not the cause of the fundamental change in the nature of religion. As Franz Cumont says, it was “the outcome of a long evolution of beliefs.”⁶³ We cannot say that, if we took a *Zeitundgeistmaschine* back in time and hit the reset button on history, Christianity would not have won the competition again. And perhaps it did offer the most complete package of doctrines and practices satisfying the hungry *Zeitgeist*. But what Pareto is saying is that, if Jesus and Paul had never existed, there would still have been some

⁶¹ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of the Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*, Hans L. Zetterberg, trans. (1968) [*Applicazione di teorie sociologiche*, 1901], 27.

⁶² Pareto, *Rise and Fall of the Elites*, 31-2 (ellipses in original).

⁶³ My translation of *l'aboutissement d'une longue évolution des croyances*, quoted in Samuel Angus, *The Mystery-Religions: A Study in the Religious Background of Early Christianity* ([1928] 1975), 274. It was also the result of an “evolution” in a technical sense, in that the eventual selection of Christianity as the dominant mystery religion, although apparent miraculous after the fact, was no more so than if one of the many other mystery religions won the competition. It was not only Christians and Mithrasians. There were also Eleusians, Dionysians, Orphics, Samothracians, Isisians, Essenes, Qumrans, and Zoroasterians, among others. Devout Christians will of course insist on explaining the success of Christianity as the result of a divine inspiration, and historians have long followed suit in assuming that this one mystery religion, among many others, must have had unique attributes assuring its victory over all the others. But even a historian such as Samuel Angus, who indulges in this *ad hoc* rationalization of the supposedly inevitable victory of Christianity, is forced to admit that, “There had been a real preparation, both negatively and positively, by the Mystery-Religions, the Greek religious philosophies, Judaism, and the Roman Empire, and by the terrible thirst for love (the *amabam amare* of Augustine) of dying paganism.” Angus, *Mystery-Religions*, 276.

other mystery religion arising in place of Christianity to fill those needs. There was a turn toward spiritualism in the empire, a fundamental desire, especially among anomic urbanites, to fill a void left by the destruction of old tribal identities. It was this basic need which created an environmental niche for Christianity to fill.

The same confusion has infected the thesis of “the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.”⁶⁴ A great deal of misdirected analysis has focused on arcane issues such as the strange doctrine of predestination, the curious “worldly asceticism” of Protestantism, or on the subtleties of doctrinal differences between Luther and Calvin. These all have apparent relevance. Indeed, some of these things were indicators of certain tendencies in German culture. But they were largely epiphenomena ~ effects or dependent variables ~ not fundamental causes. The significance of Protestantism for capitalism was that it promoted individualism and freedom of thought at places in which it was in local spatial opposition to the prevailing orthodoxy.⁶⁵ In spite of themselves, Luther and Calvin contributed to the secularization of culture by their challenges to the hegemonic ideological authority of the Catholic Church. Such challenges had much the same effect from whatever quarter they came, whatever the apparent content of the challenge. Many of the peasants who rose up against the church and nobility in the German Peasant War of 1524-6 took inspiration from Luther, but had social and theological ideas that horrified him.⁶⁶ And he was no advocate of capitalism.⁶⁷

Another example of structure versus appearance of special relevance to German

⁶⁴ Max Weber, “Protestant Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism,” in *Selections in Translation*, W.G. Runciman, ed., Eric Matthews, trans. (1978) [*Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, 1905, and from *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 1920].

⁶⁵ See R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* ([1926] 2000), 113. See also Kurt Samuelson, *Religion and Economic Action: The Protestant Ethic, the Rise of Capitalism, and the Abuses of Scholarship*, E. Geoffrey French, trans. (1993) [*Ekonomi och Religion*, 1957], 145, et passim.

⁶⁶ Friedrich Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (2000) [*Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, 1850].

⁶⁷ In line with the old prejudice of the farmer against the city, Luther says that “it would be much more godly to increase farming and decrease commerce.” Martin Luther, “An Appeal to the Ruling Class,” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed., various translators (1962) [*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520], 482.

political culture is the concept of the “authoritarian personality.”⁶⁸ As first developed by Max Horkheimer, Eric Fromm, Wilhelm Reich,⁶⁹ and other members of the Frankfurt School in Germany, the “authoritarian personality” and its operational measure, the “F-scale,” for “fascism,” was based on Marxist and Freudian theories. In response to a local spatial opposition, they supposed that the opposite to bad “authoritarian” personality was good “revolutionary” personality⁷⁰ represented by the German Communist Party (*KPD*). They should have noticed that the Nazis around them were calling for “revolution,” and that the Nazis were an appealing alternative for some of the same radicals attracted to the *KPD*.⁷¹ Even though they often attacked each other on the streets, there were transfers of membership between thugs in the Nazi *SA* and thugs in the *KPD* Red Front (*Rote Frontkämpferbund*).⁷² Like rabid sports fans, they would sometimes switch to what they thought was the winning team. Ernst Röhm said that he had more in common with communist streets fighters than with the bourgeoisie because they shared the activist mentality of the soldier.⁷³ Alfred Rosenberg welcomed Red Front defectors to the Nazis in 1921 with the claim that, in

⁶⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality: Part One* ([1950] 1964).

⁶⁹ Whereas Max Horkheimer and Eric Fromm represented Marxist and Freudian approaches, respectively, Wilhelm Reich was one of a number of theorists of the time who tried to explicitly meld Marxism and Freudianism. Franz Samelson, “The Authoritarian Character from Berlin to Berkeley and Beyond: The Odyssey of a Problem,” in William F. Stone, Gerda Lederer, and Richard Christie, eds., *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today* (1993), 24.

⁷⁰ William F. Stone, “Introduction: Strength and Weakness,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 16.

⁷¹ Conan Fischer, “Class Enemies or Class Brothers? Communist-Nazi Relations in Germany, 1929-1933,” *European History Quarterly* 15.3 (1980) 259-79, 264-73. And Hitler was quite happy to have them. He thought that former Communists made good Nazis. See Hitler in Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (2000), § 14 (2 August 1941, midday) (pages 19-20).

⁷² Conan Fischer, in a work on the sociological foundations of the *SA*, documents “appreciable transfers of membership between the *SA* and *KPD*.” Conan Fischer, *Stormtroopers. A Social, Economic and Ideological Analysis, 1929-35* (1983), 206, et seq. In another work, Fischer notes that much of this seems to have been opportunistic. That is, “numerically significant switches appear to have been restricted to the autumn of 1932, when disillusioned *SA* members turned to the Communists, and early 1933 when Communists turned to the *SA*.” Conan Fischer, *The Rise of the Nazis* (1995), 129.

⁷³ Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership* (1979) [*Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches: Profile einer totalitäreren Herrschaft*, 1964], 140.

the two opposing camps, there were “to be found the most active and self-sacrificing section of our people. In both there are fighters.”⁷⁴

Since that time, with the benefit of perspective gained from travels in time and space during its development in post-war America ~ and a considerable amount of empirical testing and peer criticism along the way ~ the “authoritarian personality” has come to be conceptualized as a more general pattern of extreme groupishness and conformity which manifests itself in communism as well. Bob Altemeyer, working with populations in Canada and the United States, developed a more refined scale which he calls a measure of “right wing authoritarianism.” By “right wing,” he means adherence to the prevailing power structure rather than any particular ideology. His “RWA scale” focuses more narrowly on those elements of the previous “authoritarian personality” measure or “F-scale” which have demonstrated the greatest internal consistency in empirical trials. These are *authoritarian submission*, *authoritarian aggression*, and *conventionalism*.⁷⁵ In the environment of post-Soviet Russia, for example, the local spatial opposition is between “right wing” or “hard line” adherents to communist and nationalist parties, as opposed to liberal reformers. The true opposite of the “authoritarian” is not a “revolutionary” but a “libertarian,”⁷⁶ a person who values individual rights and individual freedom, however that is expressed in various ideologies. In the political environment of North America, that can easily include some Marxist socialists and Milton Friedman capitalists alike.

Altemeyer and others conducted comparative studies in Russia which confirmed that such RWAs from different ideological traditions share a strong tendency toward “acceptance of the established authorities and conventions,” and that they both “tend to

⁷⁴ Rosenberg, quoted in Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (1972), 76.

⁷⁵ Bob Altemeyer, *The Authoritarian Specter* (1996), 51.

⁷⁶ William F. Stone, “Psychodynamics, Cognitive Functioning, or Group Orientation: Research and Theory in the 1980s,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 174-6, et passim, and literature cited therein. “Libertarian” is what we might simply call a “liberal,” if that term were not so contaminated by local spatial oppositions in contemporary North American politics.

be the most prejudiced members of their societies.”⁷⁷ Other psychologists agree that “virtually the same authoritarianism scale that correlates strongly with anticommunism among Western samples correlated strongly with anticapitalist attitudes among the Soviets.”⁷⁸ It is necessary to make “a distinction between the structure of ideology and the content of that ideology.”⁷⁹ Milton Rokeach says that it is “not so much *what* you believe that counts, but *how* you believe.”⁸⁰

There was one important respect, however, in which the local spatial associations were the same in the United States and the Soviet Union. In both countries, authoritarian personalities are more likely to be found in rural rather than in urban areas.⁸¹ This is a manifestation of the hatred of the tribe for the city discussed in § 5.

As to the actual structure of the “authoritarian personality,” considerable refinement, testing, and replication by modern researchers has put aside Marxist or Freudian interpretations and focused instead on what seems to be a generalized tendency to respond strongly, depending on the political environment, to in-group and out-group identifications, and also to be distinctly punitive toward members of out-groups.⁸² The authoritarian personality is also associated with, or much the same thing as, the personality which Milton Rokeach calls the “closed mind.”⁸³ Rokeach’s attempts to isolate a factor of “dogmatism” in the authoritarian personality were

⁷⁷ Altemeyer, *Authoritarian Specter*, 130.

⁷⁸ Sam McFarland, Vladimir Ageyev, and Maria Abalakina, “The Authoritarian Personality in the United States and the Former Soviet Union: Comparative Studies,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 212.

⁷⁹ William F. Stone and Laurence D. Smith, “Authoritarianism: Left and Right,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 145.

⁸⁰ Milton Rokeach, *Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems* (1960), 6.

⁸¹ William F. Stone, Gerda Lederer, and Richard Christie, “The Status of Authoritarianism,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 239; Stone and Smith, “Authoritarianism: Left and Right.”

⁸² Stone, “Psychodynamics, Cognitive Functioning, or Group Orientation,” in Stone, Lederer, and Christie, *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, 174-6, et passim, and literature cited therein. See also the review of the work of Altemeyer and others in John H. Duckitt, “Culture, Personality, and Prejudice,” in John H. Duckitt and Stanley A. Renshon, eds., *Political Psychology: Cultural and Crosscultural Foundations* (2000), 91, et seq.

⁸³ Rokeach, *Open and Closed Mind*.

hobbled by defects in research design.⁸⁴ But Altemeyer's more careful research designs reveal a definite correlation between authoritarianism and several elements of rigidity in cognition, including dogmatism.⁸⁵ His high-scoring RWAs did not differ significantly from low-scoring RWAs in general intelligence, but did, nevertheless, have significantly greater difficulty detecting false inferences, detecting inconsistencies in their own beliefs, and detecting political opportunism.⁸⁶ One finding of particular relevance to the relationship between these psychological traits and political movements is that high-scoring RWAs are "astoundingly gullible" to political pitches which appeal to their prejudices. Therefore, opportunistic political manipulators will do better by targeting authoritarian populations.⁸⁷ A specific manifestation of the maladaptation is a willingness to be driven off the cliff in diagram 1.

Finally, a short example from contemporary world conflicts brings together themes from the examples above. Mark Juergensmeyer reports on some fascinating interviews with religiously motivated terrorists in *Terror in the Mind of God* (2001). One member of a radical Islamic group in the Middle East, named Abouhalima, explained that he considers the United States the leader of the "enemies of Islam," but not because the United States is a Christian country. To the contrary, "it was due to America's ideology of secularism, which Abouhalima regards not as neutrality but as hostility toward religion, especially Islam.... I asked him if the United States would be better off if it had a Christian government. 'Yes,' Abouhalima replied, 'at least it would have morals.'"⁸⁸ The global conflict is not so much about conflicting faiths as it is about the difference between secularism and faith, as Pareto was pointing out in the case of Hellenistic Rome.

Now, many citizens of the United States would be quick to respond that they

⁸⁴ Altemeyer, *Authoritarian Specter*, 193-201.

⁸⁵ Altemeyer, *Authoritarian Specter*, chapters 4-6, 8.

⁸⁶ Altemeyer, *Authoritarian Specter*, chapter 4.

⁸⁷ Altemeyer, *Authoritarian Specter*, 110-1.

⁸⁸ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (2001), 68.

certainly have morals. But for most of them, putting aside certain fundamentalists, their belief in their moral standards, or even their belief in matters of religious faith and doctrine, is a different kind of belief. As in the case of the authoritarian personality, it is “not so much *what* you believe that counts, but *how* you believe.”⁸⁹ Among other things, it is not a belief which requires the exclusion of other beliefs or the political domination of one group of believers. In other words, they have succumbed to the PC liberalism of a pluralistic and materialistic society, to the detriment, in the view of true believers, of their spiritual purity.⁹⁰ Both views, it should be emphasized, are “rational” in a sense. But PC liberalism and pluralism is based on utilitarian or materialistic rationality, a rationality which accepts the practical need for social toleration as a convincing argument. The fundamentalists, on the other hand, are far more “rational” in their own terms, because they insist on doctrinal purity, even if the practical result is disastrous conflict.⁹¹

Avatars of polarity: A synthesis of cultural theory

Another of Pareto’s insights is what he calls “a rhythm of sentiment which we can observe in ethics, in religion, and in politics as waves resembling the business cycle.”⁹² The basic idea appears in many forms, as historical cycles, as tensions within a culture at any time, or as fundamental sociological or philosophical dichotomies. Table 2 lists many of the relevant manifestations of cultural polarity in the work of others, or the

⁸⁹ Rokeach, *Open and Closed Mind*, 6. See also the analysis of “authoritarianism and cognitive style” in Peter Suedfeld and Mark Schaller, “Authoritarianism and the Holocaust,” in Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber, eds., *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust* (2002), 74, et passim.

⁹⁰ On the truly vicious implications of a completely faithful interpretation of Christian scripture, see Shadia B. Drury, *Terror and Civilization: Christianity, Politics, and the Western Psyche* (2004).

⁹¹ To put it in terms which Professor Farhang Rajaei of Carleton University once suggested to me, “they are rational, but not reasonable.” Ironically, I would say the same of the mainstream “realists” on the other side of the political spectrum as well, because the “rationality” of their RCT will admit the most horribly unreasonable consequences as well.

⁹² Pareto, *Rise and Fall of the Elites*, 31.

“avatars of polarity.”⁹³ The list is long, and my treatment of their work will be quite summary. The purpose is to uncover a basic structure, and one should try to avoid being hung up on semantics. As is said in Zen, one should follow the signpost down the road rather than sit on top of the signpost. I am not concerned with fine points of interpretation, but only the basic oppositions and the general logic behind them. Followers of some of these theories will no doubt be offended by my crude raiding in their territory. With that apology, here are some of the avatars of polarities in the theories of others.

Weber, Wundt, and Tönnies on rationalization. Max Weber’s central focus throughout his monumental research program is the *Rationalisierung* and *Entzauberung der Welt*, the “rationalization” and “disenchantment of the world.”⁹⁴ That states a fundamental general polarity, the difference between those cultures that have not yet made the passage into science, capitalism, and other aspects of modernity, and those which have, sometimes to their dismay.

He also distinguishes two types of “rational” social action. This is a warning that “rationality” is an ambiguous concept. *Wertrational* action is a concerted “attempt to realize some absolute value,” something that has “unconditional intrinsic value.” *Zweckrational* action is the employment of “appropriate means to a given end.”⁹⁵ *Wertrational* action is expressed in a saying from Wagner, that “To be German means

⁹³ For somewhat similar lists describing the characteristics of basic cultural types, divided into “premodern,” “modern,” and “postmodern” cultures, see Farhang Rajaee, *Globalization on Trial: The Human Condition and the Information Civilization* (2000), table 1, page 29. His “premodern” and “modern,” for which one of the leading oppositions is *nomos* versus *logos*, line up roughly with my “spiritual” and “material.” Figuring out postmodernism is a more complicated matter ~ and a matter which, in my opinion, tends to obscure the more fundamental dichotomy between the premodern and modern. Postmodernism is a mixed phenomenon, characteristic of what Pitirm Sorkin, to be discussed below, diagnoses as a “breakdown in the system of truth.” But it is, overall, a modern reaction against modernity.

⁹⁴ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation” [“Wissenschaft als Beruf,” 1918], in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds. (1946), 155.

⁹⁵ Max Weber, “The Nature of Social Action” [from *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1922], in *Selections in Translation*, W.G. Runciman, ed., Eric Matthews, trans. (1978), 28. He lists two additional types of social actions, “affective action” and “traditional action.” But those are tangential to the basic polarity.

to do something for its own sake.”⁹⁶ *Zweckrational* action is “means-end” or “instrumental” rationality, and the form of “rationality” which we sometimes too quickly assume to be the standard in the modern West.⁹⁷ Similarly, Wilhelm Wundt contrasts *Triebwille*, “urge-driven will,” to *Zweckwille*, “goal-driven will,”⁹⁸ and Ferdinand Tönnies contrasts *Wesenwille*, “natural will,” to *Kürwille*, economic and instrumental “willfulness.”⁹⁹ *Zweckrational* action, *Zweckwille*, and *Kürwille* all reflect the “economization” of culture.

Weber also distinguishes three types of domination or authority, “traditional,” “charismatic,” and “legal.”¹⁰⁰ Charismatic and traditional authority are both “traditional” in a general sense. Traditional authority is the “routinization” of charismatic authority.¹⁰¹ This relates directly to a distinction he makes in the history of religions, between “prophetic” and “priestly” stages.¹⁰² Legal authority is the modern form, based on “rationally created rules” rather than the “fear of the vengeance of magical powers.”¹⁰³ Weber’s “disenchantment of the world” is the undermining of the dominance of the psyche in the Modern Age by science, technology, and capitalism. Whereas magic was once a way of dealing with the material world, it is now denatured. Religion and prophecy, while preserved, are deprived of their power. Some religious fundamentalists re-invent forms of magic, such as “creation science,” in a pathetic attempt to reclaim territory from science, and a large number of people cling to other forms of magic such as astrology, but these are not taken seriously by most. Some

⁹⁶ In Theodor W. Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will, trans. (1973) [*Jargon der Eigentlichkeit: Zur deutschen Ideologie*, 1964], 108.

⁹⁷ See the criticism of this tendency in Rajae, *Globalization on Trial*, 11, et passim.

⁹⁸ Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 97.

⁹⁹ Arthur Mitzman, *Sociology and Estrangement: Three Sociologists of Imperial Germany* (1973), 80, et seq.

¹⁰⁰ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” [“Politik als Beruf,” 1921], in *From Max Weber*, 78, et seq.; “The Social Psychology of the World Religions” [“Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligion, 1922-3], in *From Max Weber*, 295, et seq.

¹⁰¹ Weber, “Social Psychology of the World Religions,” 297.

¹⁰² Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Ephraim Fischhoff, trans. (1993) [“Religionssoziologie,” in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1922], 46, 69.

¹⁰³ Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 79.

antimodernists fight a guerrilla war against science by attempting to conceptualize science as merely another form of ideology, or else by admitting the power of science and technology but condemning it as an apoplectic evil.¹⁰⁴ Traditional religion, philosophy, and prophecy still hold out in enclaves of culture, but they do so at the cost of schizophrenia, by separating themselves from the implications of science with artificial but conventionally accepted walls between science and faith.¹⁰⁵ Religion is no longer so much a world-defining order as it is a matter of social fashion.

The notion of “unconditional intrinsic value” in *wertrational* action is a reflection of the essentialism of the spiritual side. *Triebwille*, “urge-driven will,” also expresses an inner self-conscious urge. *Trieb*, which is translatable as “urge,” “force,” or “instinct,” is a word with spiritual connotations. Hitler, who valued instinct over intellect, said that the opening words of the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the word (*logos*),”¹⁰⁶ should be read to say that, “In the beginning was the *urge!* (*Trieb*).”¹⁰⁷ This was a variation on a line in the opening scene from Goethe’s *Faust*, in which Faust rewrote the Gospel of John to say that, “In the beginning was the force (*Kraft*).”¹⁰⁸ But the force of all creation for Hitler was the “urge” (*Trieb*), which he probably associated with “will” (*Wille*) in Schopenhauer, the one philosopher he most clearly admired.

Marx and Engels on capitalism. Karl Marx is another big German name to be mentioned. But we should avoid becoming enmeshed in the endless exegesis of Marxism. This comment is restricted to the most obvious observations about the basic Marxist conception of history. Although Marxism is the ideology of Communism, and Communism is thought of as the quintessentially revolutionary movement, Marx and

¹⁰⁴ See Paul Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (1998).

¹⁰⁵ See Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (2004).

¹⁰⁶ *Bible* (*Holy Bible, New International Version*, 1978), John, 1.1.

¹⁰⁷ Otto Wagener, *Hitler ~ Memoirs of a Confidant*, Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., ed., Ruth Hein, trans. (1985) [*Hitler aus nächster Nähe: Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauten 1929-1932*, 1978], 172.

¹⁰⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* [1808 and 1832], in *Goethe’s Faust*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (1961), 1.1237.

Engels actually concern themselves a great deal more with the study of capitalism,¹⁰⁹ which is a more fundamentally revolutionary stage in history. Just as Weber speaks of the “disenchantment of the world,”¹¹⁰ the *Communist Manifesto* proclaims that it is under capitalism, not Communism, that “All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned.”¹¹¹ Capitalism, in other words, is the source of an epochal change throughout all of culture, and this change is driven by the changes in the economy. In terms of the discussion of self-consciousness above, it should be noted that Adam Smith’s “invisible hand”¹¹² is blind, that capitalism becomes a machine that runs of its own accord, doing both good and ill, with indifference to spiritual or political concerns, transforming the world in ways beyond the control of individual self-consciousness or the semi-self-consciousness of nation-states. That is exactly what so many instinctively hate about globalization. Much has been written about this historic transformation.¹¹³ Social scientists are less familiar with the analogous changes in a nearby realm of culture, the law.

Weber, Maine, Durkheim, and Pound on law. Edward Gibbon argues that, “The laws of a nation form the most instructive portion of its history.”¹¹⁴ Although that is doubtful in many cases, it may well be the case for Rome, Britain, and the United States, all world empires which made secular rational law into an important technology of rule. Both the early Roman Law and the English Common Law, which share strong structural similarities, are manifestations of a materialistic polarity in law, or law

¹⁰⁹ See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (1990) [*Das Kapital: Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, vol. 1, 1867].

¹¹⁰ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 155.

¹¹¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Samuel Moore, trans. (1985) [*Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, 1848], 1.83.

¹¹² Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1976), 1.4.2.477.

¹¹³ See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* ([1944] 1957); Douglas North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (1981); E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (1981); Jean Baechler, John Hall, and Michael Mann, *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988).

¹¹⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1-6, Hugh Trevor-Roper, ed. ([1776-1788] 1994), 4.44.421.

dominated by “adjudication” and “contract,” or, more generally, incremental and empirical evolution.¹¹⁵ James Sumner Maine, a historian of law, makes an early distinction between legal rights based on “status” in a traditional society and rights based on “contract” in a modern society.¹¹⁶ Sociologists have generalized this in speaking of “status society” and “contract society.”¹¹⁷

Fernand Braudel argues that one of the basic elements in the human move to cities is “a shift from human relations based on status to those based on free contract.”¹¹⁸ A good example was the difference between *Grundherrschaft* and *Gutherrschaft* forms of land tenure west and east of the Elbe in Germany. Émile Durkheim, an early founder of sociology, argues that there is a distinction between “repressive” law, designed to maintain collective social structure in a primitive society, and “restitutive” law, designed to maintain balance among individual members in advanced societies.¹¹⁹ An example of this was the ancient Greek contrast between *themis*, law as an edict of the gods, and *dike*, justice and equity.¹²⁰

Roscoe Pound says that the three theoretical justifications for law have varied among authority, philosophy, and history. “Authority” is the dictate of *themis* in a traditional culture, as in the rigid *eunomia* of the Spartans, “philosophy” is rationalized authority, as in the Roman and Civil Law codes, and “history” is the reliance on a flexible form of *nomos*, as in the English Common Law. His general progression, although based on a different logic than that of Maine,¹²¹ is consistent with it:

¹¹⁵ R.C. Van Caenegem, *The Birth of the English Common Law* (1988).

¹¹⁶ Henry J.S. Maine, *Ancient law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas* (1883), 165.

¹¹⁷ Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 99, 106, 175.

¹¹⁸ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (1981-1984), 1.517-8.

¹¹⁹ Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 101.

¹²⁰ See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, John Raffan, trans. (1985) [*Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, 1977], 185, 249; J.M. Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory* (1992), chapter 1.

¹²¹ Pound also has some unconvincing technical quibbles with Maine’s dichotomy which are probably of interest only to lawyers. He sees the modern Common Law as bound to “status” as much as it is to “contract” because some legal rights are established by entering into specific relationships. He uses the example of landlord and tenant rights, which are controlled by the legal relationship of

The Greek and Roman world relied upon authority and later on philosophy. The modern world has relied successively upon authority, upon philosophy, and upon history ~ roughly speaking, upon authority from the twelfth century to the sixteenth, upon philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and upon history in the nineteenth.¹²²

In his “authority,” which may flow from “a political god in the form of State or People,” there is “a single ultimate unchallengeable author.”¹²³ In his “philosophy,” there is an “idealizing of the social order,” under “the new juristic god...called ‘reason.’” Reason “was represented as hostile to authority. But hostility extended only to the authority of gods other than himself.”¹²⁴ Pound’s “authority” and “philosophy” correspond quite closely to Comte’s general historical stages of the “theological” and “metaphysical,” both of which correspond to the spiritual polarity. Comte says, of his “metaphysical,” that it “is in reality only a simple general modification of the first state,” the theological, in which “the supernatural agents are replaced by abstract forces, real entities or personified abstractions.”¹²⁵

Weber, Durkheim, Park, and Langmuir on religion. Weber distinguishes two stages in the development of religion, the “prophetic” and “priestly” stages.¹²⁶ Prophecy, the revelation of new religions, is an avatar of self-conscious spiritualism, and is less consistent with empirical and evolutionary change than the dull priestly mode of established churches which make practical compromises with politics and become more worldly as they grow. Weber sees the prophetic breaks of Buddha, Jesus, and Luther as representing a period of rationalization and relative

ownership and tenancy (because this was traditionally governed by property law rather than contract law), with basic background rights determined by statute and case law, in addition to negotiated contractual provisions in the lease. Roscoe Pound, *Interpretations of Legal History* ([1923] 1990), 53-63. But he misses the larger point, which is that the status itself and the invocations of the background rights do not arise until the parties enter into the contractual relationship. A modern tenant becomes a tenant by entering into a contract. In medieval law, by contrast, a serf was born into his relationship with his lord. Regardless of his quibbles, “freedom of contract” is basic to modern law. See John Calamari and Joseph Perillo, *The Law of Contracts* (1970), § 3, “Freedom of Contract.”

¹²² Pound, *Interpretations of Legal History*, 2.

¹²³ Pound, *Interpretations of Legal History*, 3.

¹²⁴ Pound, *Interpretations of Legal History*, 5-6.

¹²⁵ Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, 2.

modernization.¹²⁷ I see it as just the opposite, as a spiritual reaction against rationalization and modernization. Erasmus and Luther, who represented the two polarities, are discussed in § 8.

Durkheim makes a more general distinction between the “sacred” and the “profane,” as opposing elements of culture. This was also used by Robert Park in the form of the “sacred” and the “secular.”¹²⁸ This is echoed by the contemporary political opposition of “fundamentalism” versus “secular-humanism.” Gavin Langmuir, a modern historian of religion, makes a distinction between basic types of religions, which he calls the “psychocentric” versus the “physiocentric.” This dichotomy fits directly into the polarity. Psychocentric religions are those which are traditional and theocratic, which “proclaim that unobserved entities with the mental attributes of consciousness, intention, or willpower control human destiny,” whereas physiocentric religions proclaim the force of “physical forces or processes that themselves lack intention or consciousness.”¹²⁹ The physiocentric form includes modern movements which are “surrogate religions,” such as Marxism and Nazism.¹³⁰ “Religions may disappear,” Langmuir says, “but religiosity continues.”¹³¹ Or as Saint-Simon says, “Religion cannot disappear; it can only be transformed.”¹³² Langmuir struggles with the problems of terminology. Along the way, he makes the same distinction between amounts of self-consciousness and orientations of self-consciousness, albeit in somewhat different terms:

I might have called them the idealist and materialist religions, but that would have suggested a sharp ‘either/or’ distinction rather than a matter of emphasis. The attributions of psychocentric religiosity and religions stem from and emphasize our

¹²⁶ Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 46, 69.

¹²⁷ Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 208.

¹²⁸ Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 101, 99.

¹²⁹ Gavin I. Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism* (1990), 227-8.

¹³⁰ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 226.

¹³¹ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 231.

¹³² Claude Henri de Rouvroy Saint-Simon, quoted in Robert Friedrichs, *A Sociology of Sociology* (1970), 104. Friedrichs notes that this was reported to be Saint-Simon’s deathbed observation. *Sociology of Sociology*, 337, note 11. See also the discussion of modern ideologies as religions in Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* ([1967] 1990), 257, et passim.

awareness of minds at the expense of our awareness of bodies: their most salient symbols refer to psychic characteristics. Physiocentric religions do the reverse. But in most cases, though each emphasize one or the other, each also incorporates elements of the other... in physiocentric religions the cosmic forces, however mindless, create human consciousness and determine human will.¹³³

In other words, it is a question of whether matter is dominated by will, or will by matter, not whether or not either is present. Although I agree completely with Langmuir's basic dichotomy, I disagree with his characterization of Nazism as a physiocentric surrogate religion. Marxism is a somewhat more complicated matter. It has definite scientific and materialistic inclinations, but it never lost some of its original attachment to Hegelian idealism, and it took on a more primordial charismatic and religious form with Lenin, Stalin, and Mao.¹³⁴ Covertly, as Walter Benjamin says, Marxist dogma is animated by theology.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, Nazism was distinguished from Marxism by its overt rejection of materialism.

Tönnies, Durkheim, and Redfield on community and society. Ferdinand Tönnies did not invent the terms, but he enshrined the dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*, or "community" versus "society," in sociology.¹³⁶ This dichotomy is directly parallel to his dichotomy of *Wesenwille* versus *Kürwille*. We have already seen *Gemeinschaft* in connection with Freud's "narcissism of minor differences."¹³⁷

A number of later sociological theories follow the general dichotomy of

¹³³ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 229-30.

¹³⁴ See Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (1961). This begs the question of how "idealistic" Hegel actually was, and I must note that Langmuir, consistent with his view of Marxism and the philosophical paternity Tucker documents, also characterizes Hegelianism as a physiocentric surrogate religion. Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 230. I disagree with that as well, but that argument would take me too far away from the main path. My main point is that, whatever the intent of either Hegel or Marx, or the proper understanding of Hegelianism or Marxism as philosophical systems, Marxism as a political movement had an incoherent and shifting mixture of both physiocentric and psychocentric elements. On this incoherence in Marxism in general, and on the similarity of Marxism to a religious movement, see Robert Daniels, *The Nature of Communism* (1962), chapter 9, et passim.

¹³⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt, ed., Harry Zohn, trans. (1969) [*Illuminationen* 1955], 253.

¹³⁶ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis trans. (2001) [*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1887].

¹³⁷ Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 61.

Gemeinschaft versus *Gesellschaft*, with emphasis on slightly different factors. Durkheim distinguishes between “mechanical” and “organic” methods of forming social “solidarity.”¹³⁸ This is an instance, not unique among the avatars of polarity, in which the terms mean exactly the opposite of what they imply intuitively. In German folkish ideology and Nazism, the traditional *Gemeinschaft* culture was often referred to as “organic” (*organisch*). But Durkheim calls a traditional culture “mechanical” in its organization, because it is characterized by a simple set of widely repeated social differentiations, such as master and slave or lord and serf. His “organic” organization, on the other hand, is the highly complex and individual differentiation of many specialized occupations in a modern society, forming a web of relationships rather than a simple hierarchy of roles. The complexity of modern culture is a natural outgrowth of cultural evolution, which proceeds incrementally in layers, not by the simplistic unconstrained schemes of philosophers.

Robert Redford applied the scheme of *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft* to field studies of communities in Mexico. He found that this division was strongly associated with the division between rural and urban culture, or what he called *los tontos*, literally “the fools,” and *los correctos*, literally “the correct ones.”¹³⁹ The same distinction appeared in German folkish ideology, except that there the countryside was valorized and the city was condemned as corrupt and degenerate.

Spengler and Tönnies on culture and civilization. The dichotomy of *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation*, was popularized by Oswald Spengler.¹⁴⁰ He uses these as temporal categories. *Zivilisation* is the degenerate stage of a *Kultur*. Tönnies makes use of this dichotomy as more of a structural distinction, indicating different parts of what we call a “culture” or society in English. *Zivilisation* is the material and technical component of a society. *Kultur* is the cluster of values and ideals.

¹³⁸ Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, George Simpson, trans. (1933) [*De la Division du Travail Social*, 1893]; Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 99-101.

¹³⁹ Martindale, *Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, 105.

Benedict and Eisler on ancient archetypes. Benedict and Eisler each make use of some unusual dichotomies which apply to pre-modern cultures, but thereby provide more insight into the fundamental dichotomy of spiritualism and materialism. In his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (*Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik*, 1872), Nietzsche contrasted what he called the “Apolline and Dionysiac” (or “Apollonian and Dionysian”) modes of art in Western culture.¹⁴¹ (Oswald Spengler turned this into the “Apollonian-Faustian” dichotomy.) Ruth Benedict applies these to Native American tribes. The Dionysiac tribes value violence and ecstatic experiences designed to obtain “the annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence.”¹⁴² She considers most of the North American tribes, except the Pueblo group, to be Dionysiac:

The Indian of North America outside the Pueblos have, of course, anything but uniform culture.... But throughout them all, in one or another guise, there run certain Dionysian practices. The most conspicuous of these is probably their practice of obtaining supernatural power in a dream or vision.... On the western plains men sought these visions with hideous tortures....¹⁴³

The Pueblo tribes, which she categories as Apolline, also had many religious rituals. Indeed, elaborate and highly stylized rituals were one of their primary social activities. But the purpose of the rituals was to solidify social bonding rather than to obtain mystical insight.¹⁴⁴ The practical consequences of these different types were most evident in their attitudes towards physical violence. The Dionysiac tribes celebrated war or murder, and imposed harsh initiation rites on their young men. The

¹⁴⁰ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Helmut Werner and Arthur Helps, eds., Charles Francis Atkinson, trans. (1991) [*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1922].

¹⁴¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, Michael Tanner, ed., Shaun Whiteside, trans. (1993) [*Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik*, 1872], § 1 (page 14).

¹⁴² Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), 79, quoting Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, § 7 (page 39). Benedict’s translation of the original German phrase, *Vernichtung der gewöhnlichen Schranken und Grenzen des Daseins*, is more literal, and true to Nietzsche, than many popular translations. Nietzsche texts in the original German are available at the Nietzsche Channel, on line at www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/ntextger.htm.

¹⁴³ Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 81.

Apolline tribes avoided war, treated violence as a disease, and were gentle in childrearing.¹⁴⁵

Although Benedict does not make much of it, it may be of significance that the Apolline Pueblo tribe she studied most closely was also matrilineal and matrilocal. Riane Eisler, in *The Chalice & the Blade* (1988), presents a somewhat speculative but intriguing interpretation of lost human history. The “chalice” is a symbol for the female principle, which she believes was once more predominate as an integral part of human culture among European Neolithic agricultural settlements and the Minoan Civilization.¹⁴⁶ The “blade” is a symbol for the principle of male domination imposed by the Aryans who invaded both Europe and the Mediterranean, and which has successfully repressed the female principle in Western Civilization ever since. Much of the violence of patriarchy, or what she calls “androcracy,” results from the continuing need to repress the ever-present female claim to equality, what she calls the alternative of “gylany.”¹⁴⁷ She sees a clear affinity between the male domination of the early Aryans and the attitudes of the Nazis. “In its faithful replication of rigid male dominance, authoritarianism, and a high degree of institutionalized male violence, Nazi Germany was one of the most violent reactions to the gylanic thrust.”¹⁴⁸ Her dichotomy is not male versus female or patriarchy versus matriarchy, but what she calls two models of culture, “the *dominator* model, what is popularly termed either patriarchy or matriarchy...one half of humanity over the other” versus “the *partnership*

¹⁴⁴ “In Nietzsche’s fine phrase,” Benedict says, in characterizing the Apolline rites of the Pueblo tribes, a participant “remains what he is, and retains his civic name.” Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 80, quoting Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, § 8 (43).

¹⁴⁵ They also had a more relaxed attitude towards sex. As Benedict puts it, they had “no sense of sin.” Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 116.

¹⁴⁶ See also a strong interpretation of Minoan culture as distinctly feminine in Jacquetta Hawkes, *Dawn of the Gods* (1968). Hawkes, like Eisler, sometimes speculates beyond what the mute archaeological evidence will support. But a balanced evaluation of this thesis in current literature by Rodney Castleden concludes that “Whatever the specifics of the situation, Jacquetta Hawkes is right in seeing the Minoan civilization as gaining much of its distinctive flavor from qualities which we often think of as feminine.” Rodney Castleden, *Minoans: Life in Bronze Age Crete* (1990), 177.

¹⁴⁷ Riane Eisler, *The Chalice & the Blade* (1988), 105.

¹⁴⁸ Eisler, *Chalice & the Blade*, 183.

model...with the most fundamental difference in our species, between male and female...not equated with either inferiority or superiority.”¹⁴⁹ The Aryans were herders, without cities, but armed with warhorses. The societies they invaded in Europe and the Mediterranean (and in India) were agricultural city-dwellers.¹⁵⁰ These prehistoric conquests, in both Greece and India, were symbolized by the domination of female earth gods by male sky gods.¹⁵¹

“An important lesson to be learned from the rise of modern totalitarianism,” Eisler points out, “is that it can be a fatal error to underestimate the power of myth.”¹⁵² A system of domination requires a constant repression of empirical knowledge about the obvious natural equality of males and females by ideological structures, especially religious myth. Beginning with the story of Adam, Eve, and the tree of knowledge,¹⁵³ the Judeo-Christian tradition teaches that “knowledge is bad.”¹⁵⁴ In other words, in terms of the polarity of consciousness, religious myth is a self-conscious teaching, or “secondary signal,” repressing the less-self-conscious perception of natural reality. Thus, although this notion is easily misunderstood, it also makes sense that Eisler stresses the need to open cultural space for more “intuitive, nonlinear, nonrational functions of our minds that in neoandroncratic dogma have so often been called ‘the feminine.’”¹⁵⁵ Properly understood, the alternative to the power of myth and ideological rationalizations is not more myth or a retreat into a New Age mysticism. The alternative to ideological domination is a greater appreciation for what has been

¹⁴⁹ Eisler, *Chalice & the Blade*, xvii.

¹⁵⁰ Eisler, *The Chalice & the Blade*, 48, drawing from Marija Gimbutas, “The First Wave of Eurasian Steppe Pastoralists into Copper Age Europe” (1977), 201. See also Francis Owen, *The Germanic People: Their Origin, Expansion, and Culture* (1960), 45.

¹⁵¹ H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (1979), 19; Edward Geoffrey Parrinder, *World Religions: From Ancient History to the Present* (1985), 200-1.

¹⁵² Eisler, *Chalice & the Blade*, 183. I would add that Athena, the syncretic female god of domestic arts, war, and wisdom who infuriated her brother Ares, was a survivor from a time before the Aryan invasion of Greece, perhaps from Minoan, who finally restored some of the balance when she became the teacher of the warrior Odysseus.

¹⁵³ *Bible*, Genesis, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Eisler, *Chalice & the Blade*, 101.

¹⁵⁵ Eisler, *Chalice & the Blade*, 183-4.

called “emotional intelligence,”¹⁵⁶ a concrete and valuable set of biologically evolved responses to the environment. This also means openness to more empirical and experimental modes of social relations.

Popper, Sowell, Merelman, and Durkheim on philosophical visions. “Openness” is the central theme in Karl Popper’s highly polemical study of Western philosophy, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1944). Thomas Sowell and Richard Merelman each develop the same theme, with different terminology, in more contemporary contexts. Sowell’s formulation of the “constrained” and “unconstrained visions,” although somewhat confusing at first glance, is particularly valuable for understanding differences in concrete decision-making. But it will help to first set the stage, conceptually, with the more famous and highly controversial concept of the “open society” in Popper.¹⁵⁷ One thing the debate clearly reveals, if nothing else, is the fact that “openness,” like “rationality,” depends on which side one approaches it.¹⁵⁸

Although much of the debate about Popper’s “open society” turns on fine points of textual exegesis, these can never decide the issue because what is at stake is a fundamental disagreement about ontology. For Popper and many moderns, such as “liberals” or “secular humanists,” any tightly-constructed philosophical, religious, or political ideology ~ especially when it lays claim to some supersensory apprehension of Truth, the Good, or History in big letters, or even when it is merely based on esoteric and rhetorical devices not susceptible to empirical testing ~ is inherently dictatorial, if not totalitarian. It is an attempted closure of empirical experimentation

¹⁵⁶ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995).

¹⁵⁷ Karl Popper seems to have taken a cue from Carl Schmitt, in that he defines himself in terms of his enemies. *The Open Society and Its Enemies* consists of two volumes, the first of which is an unrestrained attack on Plato, the second of which is an equally unrestrained attack on Hegel (and Marx). This double-barreled blast at some of the biggest names in the Western tradition set off a huge table-thumping debate which has never ended, and which I will not attempt to resolve here. For conflicting arguments, see articles in Thomas Landon Thorson, ed., *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?* (1963). The close affinity of Plato and Hegel, and some of the distinctions, are carefully analyzed in a work written before the Popper debate, M.B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (1935). More generally, Popper’s concept of an “open society” is attacked in Dante Germino, *Political Philosophy and the Open Society* (1984); Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* (1956-1987), vol. 4.

and the openness of history, promoted by an arrogant and self-involved prophet or philosopher. To the liberals, it does not really matter what the details of the ideological system are, or how well intended it is. It is the claim to special revelation or esoteric insight, and the attempt at closure, which is oppressive.

But for those who retain a belief in special religious or philosophical knowledge, such a rejection of revelation or philosophy is itself a closure of tragic proportions. It closes off humanity from the light of revelation ~ or at least the inspiration of human intuition. Thus, Dante Germino reverses Popper's definition of "openness" in *Political Philosophy and the Open Society* (1984), where Germino says that "openness" requires "receptivity to the experience of theophany, or the awareness of the divine presence in the consciousness of men."¹⁵⁹ Similarly, without any reference to Popper, or to God, Leo Strauss condemns the materialism celebrated by Machiavelli in the Renaissance when he says that "in Machiavelli everything appears in a new light, but this is due not to an enlargement of the horizon, but to a narrowing of it."¹⁶⁰ Strauss claims that an engagement with classical texts based on a certain esoteric method opens up wider horizons. That may be so. But the problem with his esoteric method, to this liberal empiricist, is that it categorically resists any form of rational or empirical testing for truth value.¹⁶¹ The apotheosis of this approach is the yet more mysterious method of Heidegger. "For Heidegger," as John Gunnell says, "it is quite clear that historical analysis is circular and that all interpretation is from the standpoint of our present concerns."¹⁶² It flows from the philosopher's own self-consciousness. To followers of Strauss or Heidegger ~ which is not to lump them together in most things, because they certainly are not philosophical bedfellows ~ these esoteric insights are self-justifying.

¹⁵⁸ This point is made again, more recently, in Rajae, *Globalization on Trial*, 11, et seq.

¹⁵⁹ Germino, *Political Philosophy and the Open Society*, 19.

¹⁶⁰ Leo Strauss, "Niccolo Machiavelli," in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (1987), 316. See also Leo Straus, with Alexandre Kojève, *On Tyranny*, Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth, eds. ([1961] 2000).

¹⁶¹ See John G. Gunnell, *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation* (1979), 72-6, et passim.

¹⁶² Gunnell, *Political Theory*, 82.

They provide a view into a wider ontology which is obscured to those of us trapped in a narrow “positivist” model of “truth value.” That is probably as fair as I can be in characterizing a point of view which I think is fallacious. The most important thing is not fairness, but merely a clear understanding of the difference in viewpoint.

In *A Conflict of Visions* (1987), Thomas Sowell argues that this basic connection between visions of reality and our moral or political positions is foolishly obscured by modern liberalism ~ a squishy and politically correct sort of liberalism, a liberalism which has lost the acidic cynicism of Hobbes, Adam Smith, or Kant ~ because it seeks to separate ontology and morality. This “PC liberalism” (my term) is philosophically illegitimate because “Labeling beliefs ‘value premises’ can readily become one more means by which conclusions insulate themselves from confrontation with evidence or logic.”¹⁶³ In PC liberalism, values are disconnected from philosophical ideas and are transformed into matters of taste or fashion. Values become a matter of aesthetics rather than ethics. As Sowell would probably acknowledge, we do that in modern societies precisely because the “conflict of visions” he identifies is so basic and disturbing.

Sowell’s way of labeling his dichotomy of “visions” creates another one of those intuitive confusions, in which the terms might seem to say exactly the opposite of what they mean. But his terms are entirely logical for his purposes, and the resolution of the confusion provides a deeper insight into the polarity. He calls them the “unconstrained vision” versus the “constrained vision.” The “unconstrained vision” equates to the “closed society” in Popper’s terms, although Strauss would say that it is the more open version. The “unconstrained vision” believes in the “power of specifically articulated rationality,” or domination by the self-conscious psyche, and the “constrained vision” believes in the “power of unarticulated social processes to mobilize and coordinate

¹⁶³ Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (1987), 217.

knowledge.”¹⁶⁴ The “unconstrained vision” believes in human nature, in essential goodness and badness, and in possibilities for salvation. The “constrained vision” believes that human actions and values are constrained by circumstances. It does not discount the possibilities for progress, but it holds that progress is more likely to occur if it is incremental and empirical. To the advocate of a “constrained vision,” in other words, values are constrained by reality. To the advocate of an “unconstrained vision,” values are eternal and absolute.

This was much the sense in which the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte was speaking, in his famous *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808), when he praised Hermann and his fellow warriors for the German spiritual and tribal resistance to the Roman materialistic empire in 9 CE. “These men, and all others in the history of the world, won the victory because eternity inspired them.... He who sets no limit whatsoever for himself, but on the contrary stakes everything he has...will undoubtedly win the victory over an opponent whose goal is more limited.”¹⁶⁵ This is not true. Those who make war for more limited and materialistic goals, such as the liberal democracies, or even relatively open oligarchies such as Rome, are generally more likely to win at war than the heroic warriors, like the Germans, who throw themselves into war without counting the cost.

Now, just in case the reader is not yet sufficiently confused, Richard Merelman presents a related dichotomy which does line up quite intuitively with Popper’s “open” and “closed societies,” and which also talks about “visions,” but in a slightly different sense than Sowell. Merelman says that the political culture of the contemporary

¹⁶⁴ Sowell, *Conflict of Visions*, 49. An example of this conflict is the debate between Tom Paine and Edmund Burke about the French Revolution, in which Paine was arguing for unrestrained exercise of human reason and Burke was arguing for the restraint of tradition. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* ([1776] 1997); Edmund Burke, *Reflections on The Revolution In France* ([1790] 2001). Sowell does not mention the Paine-Burke debate, but he uses Paine as one of his favorite examples of the unconstrained vision in American politics, and he also cites Rousseau as an example of unconstrained vision. Sowell, *Conflict of Visions*, 18-43, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, R.F. Jones and G.H. Turnbull, trans. (1968) [*Reden an die deutsche Nation*, 1808], Address #8, 7.390-1 (page 124).

United States is predominantly a “loosely-bounded” culture, as opposed to a “tightly-bounded” traditional culture, because it has rejected a set of “failed visions.”¹⁶⁶ Although he presents this as a particular theory about American political culture, he says that it “is only an extreme case of a pattern that to some degree is endemic to all industrialized societies.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Canadians and Europeans are likely to think that Americans are all too tightly wrapped.¹⁶⁸ That is the result of a lingering Puritanism in American culture, a “tightly-bounded” tradition which is, however, one of Merelman’s “failed visions.”¹⁶⁹ In defining what it means to be “loosely-bounded,” Merelman cites Émile Durkheim. “According to Durkheim, the primary difficulty industrialized societies face is the decline of a *conscientious collective*, that set of religiously validated norms which, if violated, called forth immediate punitive sanctions undertaken in the name of society as a whole.”¹⁷⁰ Once again, I must quibble with terms. What we really mean is a “self-consciousness collective,” the set of reflective self-images and identities in the polity and psyche which justify political or legal sanctions, or Easton’s “authoritative allocation of values.” What exists in a “loosely-bounded” culture which has rejected such self-consciously authoritative values is a set of “fashions” and legal constraints centered in the materialistic side of culture. The society is collectively aware of these, and they are conditioned to obey them most of the time, but they fail to command their self-conscious assent as an authoritative “vision.” A “loosely-bounded” culture, then, is a culture with a lack of “vision” in Merelman’s terms, but it is equivalent to Sowell’s “constrained vision,” as well as Popper’s “open society,” because it is a culture in which “unconstrained visions” such as Puritanism have lost authoritative standing in the face of a practical constraint. That

¹⁶⁶ Richard Merelman, *Making Something of Ourselves: On Culture and Politics in the United States* (1984), 1.

¹⁶⁷ Merelman, *Making Something of Ourselves*, 2.

¹⁶⁸ See T.R. Reid, *The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy* (2004), especially chapter 8.

¹⁶⁹ Merelman, *Making Something of Ourselves*, 3-8.

¹⁷⁰ Merelman, *Making Something of Ourselves*, 2.

practical constraint is the lack of a friendly environment to spiritual or ideological visions in a technological society. This may seem like intellectual gymnastics on a quick reading. But the logic is consistent, and this sifting through the semantic problems uncovers the underlying structure. If we realize exactly how the words can be deceptive, that opens us up to perception of the underlying reality. Do not think in words, those viruses of the mind. Think in thoughts.

Fukuyama and Wright on progress in history. Kant and Hegel, those two great philosophers of the *Aufklärung* or the German “Enlightenment,” offer optimistic visions of long-term historical progress in the world which contrast sharply with the *Verfallsgeschichte* or “history of decay” running through much of German philosophy. The difference between the optimism of the *Aufklärung*, based on science and material progress, and the pessimism *Verfallsgeschichte*, based on a sense of loss of soul, is one of the most important polarities. But let me skip over those two inordinately complex German philosophers and instead mention some modern theorists of progress who provide other dichotomous concepts by way of their updates on Kant and Hegel. The update on Hegel is provided by Francis Fukuyama. The update on Kant, by Robert Wright. Following an interpretation of Hegel by Alexandre Kojève, Francis Fukuyama argues that a fundamental requirement for human self-consciousness ~ which is to say that it is a fundamental requirement for being fully human ~ is the “struggle for recognition.”

This closely resembles Carl Schmitt’s idea that all politics is based on the “distinction between friend and enemy” (*Unterscheidung zwischen Freund und Feind*),¹⁷¹ even though Schmitt rejected Hegel and it would be unfair to associate Hegel, Kojève, or Fukuyama with Schmitt’s Nazism. The “struggle for recognition,” or what is more commonly called “identity politics,”¹⁷² relates directly to the self-consciousness of the psyche. This is more than merely a result of self-consciousness,

¹⁷¹ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen*, 1932], 29.

Kojève emphasizes. It is the ontological base of self-consciousness itself. The opposing conception of politics, which Schmitt detests, and which Kojève and Fukuyama accept reluctantly as a necessity, is the liberal “social contract” of Hobbes or Locke. That is an economic and material concept of politics, which Kojève and Fukuyama, along with Schmitt, see as an extinction of politics.¹⁷³ Robert Wright presents a different view of historical progress ~ based on Kant¹⁷⁴ and Darwin rather than Plato and Hegel ~ in *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* (2000). It avoids all essentialism, and is solidly founded on the logic of evolution from the materialistic side of the anatomy.

Rosecrance, Barber, Ahmed, and Armstrong on current global conflicts. The first two writers present simple and obvious dichotomies ~ yet valid and useful despite that ~ on the theme of economics versus politics, or the *ecos* versus the *polity*, in the Modern Age. The third, Akbar Ahmed, develops that same dichotomy from an Islamic perspective. And the fourth, Karen Armstrong, relates that modern conflict between economics and politics to the more fundamental conflict, throughout history, between *logos* and *mythos*. In *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (1986), Richard Rosecrance makes the obvious observation that “conquest states,” although more successful in the past, are now slowly being replaced by “trading states.” The paradigmatic clash of the “trading state” versus the “conquest state” was the face-off between Britain and Germany, or the *Händler und Helden*, the

¹⁷² Amy Gutmann, *Identity in Democracy* (2003).

¹⁷³ “We inhabitants of liberal democratic countries are by now so used to accounts of current events that reduce motivation to economic causes, so thoroughly *bourgeois* in our perceptions, that we are frequently surprised to discover how totally non-economic most political life is.” Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), 145.

¹⁷⁴ I should mention that Fukuyama does not fail to mention Kant as well. Indeed, he could have published a book based only on Kantian theory and his own empirical arguments as they stand in the text ~ simply cutting out Plato, Hegel, and Kojève ~ and could have thereby produced a more coherent and defensible work. As Timothy Burns points out, none of Fukuyama’s substantive claims for the victory of liberal democracy depend on Hegelianism. “As Fukuyama knows, all of them can be made on the basis of a refined common sense; they are Aristotelean or Tocquevillian in character.” Timothy Burns, “Modernity’s Irrationalism,” in Timothy Burns, ed., *After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics* (1994), 31-170, 133. And Kantian, I would add. But that is obscured by the Hegelianism.

“traders and heroes,”¹⁷⁵ in the First and Second World Wars.

In *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy* (1995),¹⁷⁶ Benjamin Barber represents trading states by the spread of McDonald restaurants, and conquest states, or, more precisely, want-to-be conquest states and terrorist organizations, by the Arabic term, *jihad*. The use of the term *jihad* is unfortunate, and he sometimes substitutes a far better term, “neo-tribalism.”¹⁷⁷ But there is a certain logic to using *jihad*, precisely because of its theological sense as a “spiritual struggle.” The violent neo-tribalism breaking out all over the world is closely linked to a desire to capture a lost spiritualism, *la revanche de Dieu*, what may be translated as either “the return of God” or “the revenge of God.”¹⁷⁸ Much of modern terrorism, especially when it is associated with strong religious or ideological beliefs, does not have a rational material goal. Did they really think for a moment that the way to make the United States withdraw militarily from the Middle East was to attack its cities? If so, they failed to consider what happened after Pearl Harbor. “What is most striking about religious terrorism,” says Mark Juergensmeyer, “is that it is almost exclusively symbolic....”¹⁷⁹ It is *wertrational* rather than *zweckrational* violence.

Barber might be accused of “Orientalism” ~ of creating simplistic dichotomies

¹⁷⁵ Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen* [*Traders and Heroes: Patriotic Considerations*] (1915).

¹⁷⁶ A very similar contemporary analysis, but one that is less inflammatory, is presented in Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000).

¹⁷⁷ Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy* (1995), 221. *Jihad* is not only unnecessarily provocative, but also technically misleading. It is too broad, in that some Islamic connotations of the term, can be translated as “spiritual struggle.” “*Jihad*, infinitive noun of *jaahada*, properly signifies the using or exerting of one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors or ability, in contending with an object of disapprobation; and this is of three kinds, namely, a visible enemy, the devil, and one's self; all of which are included in the term as used in the *Qur'an* 22:77.” Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1984). This protest, however, is undermined by well-known terrorist organizations such as “Islamic Jihad.” More importantly, the term is also too narrow, because there are many violent reactions against the trading states which have nothing to do with Islam, including some home-grown Christian fundamentalist terrorists in the United States. Barber acknowledges those problems with the term, but hopes that readers will accept it as a special term of art for his purposes. *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 9, 299.

¹⁷⁸ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), 95. See also Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (2001).

between the West and Islam which reflect a Western imperialistic or neo-colonial perspective.¹⁸⁰ But the same dichotomy is perceived, sometimes with a simple reversal of the values, by many Islamic theorists.¹⁸¹ One of the most thoughtful of these is Akbar Ahmed, who agrees in large part with the analyses of Barber, despite his devout adherence to Islamic theology, in *Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honor World* (2003).¹⁸² Drawing on both Western and Islamic traditions, including Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Ibn Khaldun, a founder of Islamic sociology, Ahmed argues that the modern “clash of civilizations” is a conflict between cosmopolitan materialism without values and the threatened spiritual values of local tribalism. He phrases this as a conflict between *Al-qaida* and *Al-fayda*, or “the Word” and “the Profit,” and also as a conflict of “*asabiyya*” versus “anomie.”¹⁸³ As drawn from Ibn Khaldun, this is also an explicit conflict between the tribe and the city.¹⁸⁴

Although this is phrased in Arabic terms, and is concerned primarily with the current conflict between the West and Islam, Ahmed stresses that it is not really a “clash of civilizations” as much as a clash of cultures inside a civilization. Khaldun’s original theory was that there was a cyclic process of rural and urban conflict inside Islamic civilization. *Asabiyya*, as both Khaldun and Ahmed use the term, refers to a traditional tribal culture in any civilization.¹⁸⁵ Ahmed is concerned with “hyper-*asabiyya*,” which is the violent response to the sense of anomie and loss of “honor,” especially male honor, in traditional societies which feel that they are under siege by Western materialism. “This is not limited to radical movements in Islam such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda: The Taliban are not the only example of hyper-*asabiyya*. In

¹⁷⁹ Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 217, 123, 209, et passim.

¹⁸⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978).

¹⁸¹ See Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2004).

¹⁸² See also Rajaei, *Globalization on Trial*.

¹⁸³ Akbar Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honor World* (2003), 12, 75, et passim.

¹⁸⁴ Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege*, 79, et passim.

¹⁸⁵ Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege*, 83.

different ways other groups also reflect hyper-*asabiyya*: These include Muslim clerics in Iran, Jewish settlers on the West Bank, Serb militias in the Balkans, and Hindu groups in India.”¹⁸⁶ This same generalization of the problem is articulated by Karen Armstrong in *The Battle For God: A History of Fundamentalism* (2000), where she puts contemporary global conflicts into a larger context, and thereby helps to clear up the conceptual point which is confused by formulations such as Barber’s McWorld versus *jihad* or Samuel Huntington’s popular thesis of a “clash of civilizations”¹⁸⁷ between Islam and the West. Shireen Hunter, in her criticism of Huntington, points out that both Christianity and Islam, as civilizational traditions, have had their periods of violent religious crusading, their medieval periods, their renaissances, and their continuing conflicts, within the tradition, about faith versus modernity.¹⁸⁸ Armstrong stresses that “fundamentalism,” or “militant piety,”¹⁸⁹ is a product of modernity. The various fundamentalisms in Christianity, Islam, and other religions “are embattled forms of spirituality, which have emerged as a response to a perceived crisis.”¹⁹⁰ This is a manifestation of a larger conflict embedded in the human psyche throughout history, the conflict between *mythos* and *logos*.¹⁹¹

These, of course, are old categories in philosophical discourse. What Armstrong adds to the analysis is an interesting point about the confusion between the two things in the minds of modern fundamentalists. Martin Heidegger argues that everything went wrong in the West when *mythos* and *logos*, both of which simply meant “speech” in some contexts, were separated by the Greeks.¹⁹² His desire is to reunite them. Armstrong sees this as a terrible mistake. The problem begins with the obvious fact

¹⁸⁶ Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege*, 83.

¹⁸⁷ Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*.

¹⁸⁸ Shireen Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?* (1998).

¹⁸⁹ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle For God: A History of Fundamentalism* (2000), xi.

¹⁹⁰ Armstrong, *Battle For God*, xiii.

¹⁹¹ Armstrong, *Battle For God*, xv, xv.

¹⁹² Martin Heidegger, “What Calls for Thinking” [“Was heisst Denken?” 1951-2], in *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed., Frank A. Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray, trans. (1977), 375-6.

that *logos* is dominant over *mythos* in the Modern Age. For most people of faith or spirituality, the solution to this materialistic assault on cherished myths is a cultural wall of separation, or cultural schizophrenia, allowing each a separate domain. Armstrong is an advocate of this PC liberalism. *Mythos* is healthy and necessary, as long as it is not taken literally. But the problem with fundamentalists is that, “because an increasing number of people regard scientific rationalism alone as true, they have often tried to turn the *mythos* of their faith into *logos*.”¹⁹³

This is another way of expressing the basic danger of mixing philosophy with action. But the particular insight Armstrong offers helps to resolve the paradox of “reactionary modernism”¹⁹⁴ in Nazism, Italian Fascism, and other modern reactionary movements. Fundamentalism, as she defines it, is a modern version of *mythos* trying to resist the incursions of *logos* with the weapons of *logos* ~ and by recasting itself in the form of *logos*. This is not merely the incidental phenomenon of religious radicals or fascists using the internet to propagate their myths. It is also their claim to provide a scientific logic based on the substance of the mythology, as in Biblical “creation science,”¹⁹⁵ similar attempts to read the *Qur'an* scientifically,¹⁹⁶ or the “race science”¹⁹⁷ of the Nazis. It is an attempt to turn science back into magic.

Riesman (et al.) on social character. David Riesman’s *Lonely Crowd* (1950), co-authored with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, has often been compared to Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (1835 & 1840), from which it draws deeply, as a classic study of American character.¹⁹⁸ He also draws on the earlier framework of

¹⁹³ Armstrong, *Battle For God*, xviii.

¹⁹⁴ Jeffery Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984).

¹⁹⁵ Henry Morris, *Scientific Creationism* (1985).

¹⁹⁶ See A.M. Al-Rehaili, *This Is The Truth* (1995); Keith Moore, *The Qur'an and Modern Science ~ Correlation Studies* (1990); Mohammed Ali Albar, *Human Development As Revealed In The Holy Quran and Hadith (the Creation of Man between Medicine and the Qur'aan)* (1986).

¹⁹⁷ Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People* (1999), 27, et seq.

¹⁹⁸ Neil McLaughlin, “Critical Theory Meets America: Riesman, Fromm, and *The Lonely Crowd*,” *American Sociologist* 32.1 (Spring 2001) 5-26, 5, 19, et passim. See also Seymour Martin Lipset and

Gemeinschaft and *Gesellschaft* in sociology, and some of the neo-Freudian ideas of Eric Fromm.¹⁹⁹ Riesman describes types of “social character,” which are “ideal types,”²⁰⁰ much as with Max Weber’s types.²⁰¹ In addition, “social character” applies to the “character of classes, groups, regions, and nations.”²⁰² He hypothesizes an association, although not necessarily a causal connection, between rates of population growth on the ubiquitous S-curve (from ecology, economics, and demography) and cultural change.²⁰³ Riesman’s scheme is tripartite rather than binary. But the middle category is a transitional stage between two poles. The three types, in historical progression, are (a) “tradition-directed” character, (b) “inner-directed” character, and (c) “other-directed” character.²⁰⁴ Aside from the possible association with demographics, the change in social character is clearly linked to industrialization,

Leo Lowenthal, *Culture and Social Character: The Work of David Riesman Reviewed* (1961); Carl N. Degler, “The Sociologist as Historian: Riesman’s ‘The Lonely Crowd,’” *American Quarterly* 15.4 (Winter 1963) 483-497; Cushing Strout, “A Note on Degler, Riesman and Tocqueville,” *American Quarterly* 16.1 (Spring 1964) 100-102. His social character types have empirical support as reliably distinguishable types. Waltraud Marggraff Kassarijian, “A Study of Riesman’s Theory of Social Character,” *Sociometry* 25.3 (September 1962) 213-230.

¹⁹⁹ McLaughlin, “Critical Theory Meets America,” 13.

²⁰⁰ David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* ([1950] 1955), 23.

²⁰¹ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 279.

²⁰² Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 18.

²⁰³ Riesman later disavowed the hypothesis of a general connection with changes in demography under criticism. David Riesman, “*The Lonely Crowd: A Reconsideration in 1960*,” in Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal, eds., *Culture and Social Character: The Work of David Riesman Reviewed* (1961), 420-3. But he may have been too quick to do so. The primary criticisms were that (1) the United States was experiencing a post-war baby boom contrary to the general trend of stabilization, and (2) that other Western countries, especially Britain and France, also experienced the same effect. On the later criticism, see Seymour Martin Lipset, “A Changing American Character,” in Lipset and Lowenthal, *Culture and Social Character*, 156-7. The baby boom was a temporary phenomenon, and one can argue, indeed, consistent with the general theory, that the temporary period of population expansion in the 1950s was in fact associated with a revival of conservative inner-directed character in the United States. The other argument assumes that “other-direction” has no applicability to modern changes in society in the other nations of Western Europe, that it is an exclusively American phenomenon. In the specific and detailed terms in which he described it, Riesman may have so intended it. But it is patently obvious that the other Western nations, including Britain and France, have also been experiencing a breakdown in fixed “inner-directed” values in the era after the Second World War. Note, especially, the student “revolution” of 1968. Neither of these criticisms, made in 1961, have much weight today.

²⁰⁴ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 24-45.

urbanization, capitalism, and “rationalization,” presumably in a Weberian sense.²⁰⁵ “Tradition-directed character,” which is fairly obvious, is prevalent in pre-industrialized and rural societies with strong familial and communal bonds. It equates easily with Weber’s “traditional” form of authority, and with *Gemeinschaft*.

“Other-directed” character is a rather new and somewhat still inchoate phenomenon, although Riesman says that it may have arisen to some extent in Periclean Athens.²⁰⁶ Riesman also sees an analogy between other-directed character and Ruth Benedict’s Apolline tribe.²⁰⁷ The other-directed is manipulative and cynical, although a friendly glad-hander and social butterfly. It is a character with neither shame (which is felt by the traditional-directed) nor guilt (which is felt by the inner-directed). The other-directed has no fixed morals, merely strategies and affectations. And, of course, this loathsome creature is associated with the city.²⁰⁸ This new type has only come into its own in the 20th Century, in Europe as in America. But this is what the Germans, in particular, despised about the *Gesellschaft* they saw emerging around them at the end of the 19th Century. In an unacknowledged restatement of Kant’s “unsocial sociability” among liberal rationalists,²⁰⁹ Riesman says that the other-directed are “antagonistic cooperators.”²¹⁰ Although it might not be intuitively obvious, the other-directed character fits quite well with Weber’s third stage of “legal authority.” To say that the other-directed has no fixed morals is not to say that it is lawless. Quite to the contrary, where morality is weak, the law must be strong. But the law has the distinct character of what Maine calls “contract society.” Alexis de

²⁰⁵ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 23.

²⁰⁶ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 42.

²⁰⁷ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 267-9. This seems entirely valid as far as he takes it, but one must remember that all of Benedict’s cultures were pre-modern, and thus generally “traditional” in Riesman’s basic scheme. Such comparisons illustrate the fact that all these categories are relative.

²⁰⁸ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 35.

²⁰⁹ Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” [“Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht,” 1784], in *Political Writings*, H.B. Nisbet, trans. (1970), 44.

²¹⁰ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 102-4, et passim.

Tocqueville observes the central place that law plays when “religious belief is shaken” and “moral right is therefore fading away.” In America, he notices, “Argument is substituted for faith, and calculation for the impulses of sentiment.” Americans have a high level of respect for the law, Tocqueville says, but only because they “regard it as a contract.”²¹¹

“Inner-directed” character, which is Riesman’s intermediate or “transitional” type, is more difficult to define, or to fit into the neat dichotomies of other theorists. But this tells us something that the simple dichotomies do not, and also says something in particular about the German problem. This is a type which appears during periods of rapid change, when a traditional society is disrupted by industrialization, urbanization, and accelerated population growth. Note that this characterizes the situation in modern Germany. In addition to the highly accelerated rates of industrialization and urbanization in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries (indicated by graph 1), Germany also experienced a definite surge in population, although one more difficult to quantify, beginning in the last half of the 18th Century.²¹²

²¹¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1-2, Henry Reeve, Francis Bowen, and Phillips Bradley, trans. (1990) [*De la democratie en Amerique*, 1835 & 1840], 1.14.246, 248.

²¹² David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (1997), 26-7. Riesman’s shift from tradition-direction to inner-direction is also closely associated with the shift from oral to print communication. Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 111, et seq. This aspect is emphasized more strongly by Marshall McLuhan who, expanding on theories of Harold Innis, sees all forms of culture as arising from epochal shifts in mediums of communication. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1965); Marshall McLuhan, with Quentin Fiore and Jerome Agel, *The Medium is the Massage* (1967); Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (1951). I do not agree with McLuhan that “the medium is the message,” as he puts it more conventionally in *Understanding Media*, or that stages of oral, print, and electronic mediums are the causative and defining factors in cultural shifts. Although the inventions of writing, printing, and electronic communication have had enormous cultural consequences, the effects are mixed. Writing has long been used for both opening up communication between cultures and for repression by priestly bureaucracies. Print stimulated science, but it also stimulated mystical fetishization of the *Bible*. Electronic communication is an instrument for globalization, but also an instrument for a new mythologizing and fragmentation of communities by the enemies of globalization. In fact, McLuhan’s own work is an example of the revival of a poetic and symbolic style of philosophy, a revival of *mythos*, supported by modern technology. No, the message is the message. That is why I am not using his categories as indications of polarity, however interesting his poetic form of philosophy. But he does provide some particular insights of value ~ such as his depiction of the assault of advertising on traditional cultures ~ which are of relevance to the polarity of culture.

Riesman points out that the phrase “traditional growth” is “a mild way of putting it.” The transition “is likely to be violent, disrupting the stabilized paths of existence in societies in which tradition-direction has been the primary mode of insuring conformity.”²¹³ In this process, the “inner-directed” character appears as an individual fragment of tradition, broken off from the traditional community, but still guided by traditional values. Indeed, the very fact that the individual is now exposed to a new world in which those traditional values are no longer accepted as authoritative as a matter of course means that the individual has a stronger sense of the distinction, of the boundaries, between the chaos of the outside world and the internalized values. Identity is strengthened by contrast with the other. Riesman calls the inner-directed a “moralizer.”²¹⁴

The difference between the tradition-directed character and the inner-directed character corresponds to a common anthropological distinction between a “shame” culture and a “guilt” culture,²¹⁵ as illustrated by Ruth Benedict’s classic study of Japan, which was a shame culture, compared to the guilt culture of the West.²¹⁶ Riesman also analogies the inner-directed character to some of Benedict’s Dionysiac tribes.²¹⁷ The inner-directed character has what Freud would call an overdeveloped superego.²¹⁸ It has internalized values which it clings to, but which can never be satisfactorily reconciled with the external world. Thus, the inner-directed is inherently restless, and sometimes violent, although it can also take the form of asceticism or pacifism. In either case, it “may be forced into resentment,” especially when forced to make the change from rural community to urban society.²¹⁹ These tensions and contradictions in

²¹³ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 29.

²¹⁴ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 200, et seq.

²¹⁵ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 41.

²¹⁶ Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (1946), 222, et seq.

²¹⁷ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 262.

²¹⁸ In rather Freudian terms, Riesman refers to the inner-directed as the “oversteered child.” Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 118. See also page 47, note 10.

²¹⁹ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 50, et seq.

the conscience of the inner-directed character relate closely to the spiritual anxiety in Max Weber's famous but poorly understood "protestant ethic."²²⁰

In many respects, the inner-directed character seems to be far more appealing than the other two types. It is more modern and dynamic than the traditional, but also virtuous, constant, and honest, unlike the degenerate other-directed manipulator. Above all, it is strong and manly.²²¹ Riesman speaks of inner-directed moralizers with "manly contempt for soft and city ways" among resentful "miners, lumberjacks, ranch hands, and some factory workers."²²² The mythological American icon which fits this type most perfectly is the cowboy.²²³ He has moral certitude and a willingness to use righteous force against corrupt, manipulative, and effete city folk. His polar opposite is the other-directed cosmopolitan "Sex and the City"²²⁴ sophisticate changing clothes three times a day, and husbands and careers several times in a lifetime, who hardly knows who she is anymore. (Re this gender-biased language, keep in mind the parallel dichotomy of the chalice and the blade.) The cowboy is the American version of an ancient archetype, the heroic shepherd. To see the hold that this archetype still has on the United States, one need only look at an American president from Texas.

The cowboy, however romantic, has a dark side. David Davis points out that the cowboy has a disturbing likeness to the Teutonic warrior who conquered native Slavs

²²⁰ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 149; Weber, "Protestant Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism." See also Gianfranco Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit: Max Weber's Protestant Ethic* (1983). Gianfranco provides the best explanation I have ever found of the mysterious internal psychology of the protestant ethic, although I am not convinced that this internal psychology has a strong link to the external economic development of capitalism.

²²¹ One might easily jump to the conclusion that it is "virtuous" in Machiavelli's sense. But I believe this is only true if one understands Machiavelli's much touted "virtue" (*virtù*) as an atavistic or romantic hangover from a traditional ethic which his inner-directed hero was clinging to, even while operating according to a manipulative logic which was quite other-directed. Machiavelli's world is a complex and tortured mixture of all types, which he struggles with but does not resolve. Machiavelli, and his *virtù*, are easily susceptible to both rational and romantic readings. See commentary on the "difficulties with Machiavelli's use of *virtù*" in Leo Paul de Alvarez, "Introduction," in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Leo Paul S. de Alvarez, trans. (1989) [*Il principe*, 1532], xix, et passim.

²²² Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, *Lonely Crowd*, 52.

²²³ Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (1998), 517; David B. Davis, "Ten-Gallon Hero," *American Quarterly* 6.2 (Summer 1954) 111-125.

²²⁴ See Kim Akass and Janet McCabe, eds., *Reading Sex and the City* (2004).

on the Eastern frontier of Europe.²²⁵ Hitler loved American Western novels written by Karl May,²²⁶ and the Nazis frequently drew a convenient analogy between the American conquest of the Western frontier and their ambitions in Eastern Europe. The inner-directed is also the ideal of the “self-made” man. This struggle to build a self-conscious identity was clearly manifested in Germany, in the period between 1831 and 1933, by the German cult of *Bildung*, variously translated as “education,” “personal image,” or “self-formation.” Kant calls it the “culture of the soul.”²²⁷

Sorokin on cultural dynamics. In order to appreciate Pitirim Sorokin’s grand theory of cultural change in his *Social & Cultural Dynamics* (1937-1941), one must recognize the argument made by Thomas Sowell, discussed above, that there is a definite connection between ontological visions and cultural values. Everything in Sorokin’s theory originates in the conflict between “systems of truth.”²²⁸ He sometimes calls these the “supersystems” of culture, and he also refers to them as “mentalities.” A “system of truth” is the “logico-meaningful integration of culture,”²²⁹ and it touches on all aspects of culture. Sorokin asserts that any developed culture has a substantial degree of integration, such that functionally or mechanically disparate aspects of the culture display a significant degree of unity, imposed by the human mind, at the level of meaning and symbolism.

The two polarities in Sorokin’s systems of truth are the “ideational” and “sensate.” Whether or not deliberately invoking Pareto, Sorokin says that these two systems of truth reflect “internal” and “external” knowledge.²³⁰ The “ideational” system includes

²²⁵ Davis, “Ten-Gallon Hero,” 116.

²²⁶ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (2003), 23.

²²⁷ Harvey Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (1992), 25-50. See also Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 52.

²²⁸ Pitirim Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law, and Social Relationships* (1957 one-volume revision of the four volumes published in 1937-1941), 226, et passim.

²²⁹ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 9, et passim.

²³⁰ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 20.

the “truth of faith” and the “truth of reason and logic” as well,²³¹ much as Comte’s first two stages, the “theological” and “metaphysical,” are closely associated. Sorokin’s “sensate” system is “truth based upon the testimony of the organs of senses,”²³² and corresponds closely to Comte’s “positivism.” When speaking of the “sensate” system, Sorokin often uses the term “empiricism” as an equivalent. Technically, in his scheme, “empiricism” is a system in science and philosophy, within the larger “supersystem” of “sensate” truth, which includes other subsidiary systems. But empiricism is a pervasive element throughout all of sensate culture. For example, he also uses the term “empirical” to describe the sensate style of visual art, or what is more commonly called “naturalism” in art.²³³

Sorokin’s dichotomy parallels Weber’s “enchantment” versus “rationalization,” Pound’s “authority” and “philosophy” versus “history,” Armstrong’s *mythos* versus *logos*, and my “spiritualism” versus “materialism.” Provocatively, in light of Heideggerianism, Sorokin also explicitly associates the “ideational” with “everlasting Being (*Sein*),” and the “sensate” with “ever-changing Becoming (*Werden*).”²³⁴ Sorokin’s two polarities of the “sensate” and the “ideational” closely parallel two of the three philosophical systems which Ernest Gellner says are now the only choices available in the Modern Age. Gellner speaks of “utilitarian rationalism,” which is his equivalent to Sorokin’s “sensate” culture, and “fundamentalism,” which is equivalent to Sorokin’s “ideational” culture. Gellner says that there is a third choice in the Modern Age, which is “postmodernism.”²³⁵ But this is a non-philosophical and unsystematic philosophical system, which is what Sorokin calls “skepticism.”

Sorokin’s two basic systems, the “ideational” and “sensate,” are reflected in the art

²³¹ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 226 (emphasis in original omitted).

²³² Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 227 (emphasis in original omitted).

²³³ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 85. See the entry on “naturalism,” as a generic style, in Ian Chilvers, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists* (1990).

²³⁴ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 30 (with his insertions in parentheses), et passim

²³⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (1992). On postmodernism as a third category, see also Rajae, *Globalization on Trial*.

of a culture, in the form of the familiar distinction, among conventional historians of art, between abstract and representational art, as generic categories, or “symbolism” and “naturalism.”²³⁶ A cultural style of art might be an unimportant epiphenomenon of a culture, in terms of underlying cause and effect, but it is a particularly useful indicator for the sociologist.²³⁷ In close accord with Sorokin’s concepts, Arnold Hauser, Alois Riegl, and other German historians of art perceive a basic antithesis in the intention of art, or *Kunstwollen*, which reflects “the dialect of the mental and the material.”²³⁸ Hauser describes a long-standing controversy among German art historians about the true nature of art, which varies “according to whether they see in art a means of dominating and subjecting reality, or experience it as an instrument of self-surrender to nature. In other words, corresponding to their particular autocratic and conservative or liberal and progressive views, they revere either the geometrically ornamental art forms or the naturalistic imitative forms of expression...”²³⁹ A system of truth permeates all aspects of a culture. The following elements are taken directly from his discussion, with his esoteric terminology, but without quote marks and ellipses for sake of readability:

The *ideational* system of truth is associated with rationalism, mysticism, idealism, eternalism, indeterminism, philosophical realism, sociological universalism, familistic and compulsory social bonds, legal realism, ethics of absolute principles, freedom as inner minimization of desires, limited discoveries in natural sciences, static social life,

²³⁶ See the entries on these “terms of art,” which unfortunately are not well-established or clear terms of art in art theory, in Chilvers, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*. The same distinction is described with great clarity as a distinction between “natural” and “canonical” art, or “real” and “ideal” art, in Paul Johnson, *Art: A New History* (2003). To the extent that there is a generic terminology, “abstract” art is the opposite term to “natural” art, but “abstract” tends to be commonly associated with a specific movement in Western Europe in the 20th Century. So does “symbolism,” but that is more of an inside-school term for art historians. Whatever the specific terms used, it is “a commonplace of art history that there is a cycle in esthetic preferences.” Mary L. Coolidge, “Ethics ~ Apollonian and Dionysian,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 38.17 (August 1941) 449-465, 463.

²³⁷ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 54.

²³⁸ Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 1-4, Stanley Godman and author, trans. (1957) [*Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur*, 1953], 1.4, note 1, citing Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen [Questions of Style]* (1893).

scripture as the main form of literature, pure or diluted theocracy as a form of government, a weak state, and criminal law focused on expiation, as well as symbolic forms of art.

The *sensate* system of truth, conversely, is associated with empiricism, materialism, temporalism, determinism, philosophical nominalism, sociological singularism, contractual and pseudo-contractual social bonds, legal nominalism, ethics of happiness, hedonism, utilitarianism, freedom as exterior maximization of satisfactions, extensive discoveries in the natural sciences, dynamic social life with rapid rates of change, secular realisms and naturalism in literature, pure or diluted secularism in government, a strong state, and criminal law focused on re-education or extermination, as well as empirical forms of art.²⁴⁰

There is a lack of symmetry between ideational and sensate systems.²⁴¹ An ideational system tends to be one of hegemonic dominance, in which only certain ideas are accepted, whereas a sensate system tends to be one of diversity and pluralism. This follows logically from the basic definitions of the systems of truth. If truth is a revelation from interior spiritual knowledge, it cannot tolerate conflicting revelations. A theocracy cannot tolerate heretics. In a secular state, on the other hand, many religions can be tolerated with indifference, along with disbelief. A sensate state can afford to adopt the attitude of the Romans summed up by Gibbon, in which “The various modes of worship...were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful.”²⁴² In an ideational system, by contrast, only the one dominant religion can be regarded as true. There have been, of course, many states with dominant religions in which others are

²³⁹ Hauser, *Social History of Art*, 1.3.

²⁴⁰ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 15, 469-73, 488, 498-522.

²⁴¹ See Dean Keith Simonton, “A Study of Generational Fluctuations in Philosophical Beliefs,” in Joseph B. Ford, Michel P. Richard, and Palmer C. Talbutt, eds., *Sorokin and Civilization: A Centennial Assessment* (1996).

²⁴² Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1.2.34.

tolerated up to a point.²⁴³ But the toleration has always been limited. They are merely regimes which have not enforced the dominant ideology with fanatical rigor.

When Sorokin speaks of conflicting visions in any sphere of culture as expressions of “systems of truth,” he means that literally. For him, it is not merely a matter of psychological or sociological orientation. Each vision of reality is actually “true” in some fundamental sense, and the full range of existence cannot be comprehended without both perspectives. Each system contains “a part of the truth, and a part of error.”²⁴⁴ Sorokin argues that each system of truth carries the seeds of its own destruction, in an explicitly dialectical sense invoking Hegel,²⁴⁵ because each will tend to become self-reinforcing until it reaches extreme limits, thus becoming a logical *reductio ad absurdum*. He insists on making this argument in purely philosophical terms, which is an indication of his own bias towards the ideational or spiritual side. And he makes an involved argument, quite spurious, that all true explanations of change must be “immanent” rather than “environmental,” or ultimately explicable by internal contradictions rather than outside influences.²⁴⁶ A reader who is persuaded by Hegel will also be likely to find this chapter in Sorokin persuasive.

But if we may put Hegel and pure philosophy aside, this can be easily restated as the phenomenon of “overadaptation.” Showing an ability to shift between the poles, Sorokin goes on in the following chapter to talk about “the principle of limit.”²⁴⁷ In my corrupt sensate view, this seems to actually be an “environmental” explanation of the

²⁴³ Good examples include the toleration and incorporation of other “peoples of the Book,” Christians and Jews, in some Islamic states, or the coexistence, for a time, of Muslims and Hindus in India. And Hinduism itself is an incredibly diverse religion with little concern for the sort of doctrinal consistency basic to Western theology. These forms of limited toleration have occurred in cultures which were obviously ideational in Sorokin’s sense. In all these cultures, however, religious identity has been intimately linked to status and success in the society. Not being an adherent of the official dominant belief or a member of the preferred caste carries serious disabilities.

²⁴⁴ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 682.

²⁴⁵ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 635. See also Robert Hanson, “Sorokin as Dialectician,” in Ford, Richard, and Talbutt, *Sorokin and Civilization*.

²⁴⁶ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, chapter 39, pp. 630, et seq. See also Robert Perrin, “Sorokin’s Concept of Immanent Change,” in Ford, Richard, and Talbutt, *Sorokin and Civilization*.

²⁴⁷ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, chapter 39, pp. 647, et seq.

breakdown of systems.²⁴⁸ It is the S-curve and the “cliff effect” familiar to materialistic theory in ecology and economics. In other words, it is quite easy to take Sorokin’s philosophical arguments and translate them into materialistic and empirical terms.

He develops an empirically applicable hypothesis based on his theory, which might be called a hypothesis of “epistemological stability.” He argues that periods of stability or crisis in the way of knowing reality, that is, the method of knowing, not particular beliefs or ideologies *per se*, cause corresponding periods of stability or crisis in political, economic, and social orders. It is a cyclic system of history (although he disavows adherence to any predetermined cycles) in that the eventual degeneration of a dominant system of truth opens the way for the resurgence of an alternative, but only after a period of degeneration and conflict. This period of transition from one system to another is a “crisis in the system of truth.” This philosophical crisis is similar to what Durkheim calls “anomie,”²⁴⁹ or what Darby calls the “shattered self.”²⁵⁰ For Sorokin, the empirical hypothesis is that this breakdown in epistemological stability, a crisis in the system of truth is a cause, an independent variable, not merely an epiphenomenon, in a resulting period of social chaos, political conflict, and violence. These immanent fluctuations in systems of truth are associated with distinct oscillations in periods of relative stability or chaos in the course of a civilization.

Although Sorokin sees both systems of truth as having validity from a philosophic point of view (and actually demonstrates an ability to shift between them in his own theorizing) he nevertheless has a strong bias against the dominant materialism or “sensate” system of truth in the Modern Age. As do almost all philosophers, he

²⁴⁸ This is also Robert Perrin’s reading of Sorokin in “Sorokin’s Concept of Immanent Change,” 122, *et passim*.

²⁴⁹ Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, trans. (1951) [*Le suicide*, 1897], 246-54, *et passim*.

²⁵⁰ Darby, *The Feast*, 3.

instinctively dislikes modernity²⁵¹ and shares strongly in the philosopher's dislike of the city.²⁵² This is especially evident when he claims that "the totalitarian (and secular) state with an omni-managing government belongs logically to the Sensate culture and society."²⁵³ He makes this assertion despite his admission that "totalitarianism" has sometimes taken on "sacral and theocratic" forms in history.²⁵⁴ And he is occasionally self-contradictory about the nature of modern totalitarian movements. At one point, he says that "the faiths, credos, dogmas, and revelations of the Communist, Hitlerite, Mussolinian, or democratic bosses" in the Modern Age are a reaction against the empiricism of sensate and secular culture.²⁵⁵ He seems to be saying that these are "surrogate religions," as Gavin Langmuir would call them.²⁵⁶ But they cannot be what Langmuir calls "physiocentric" religions, in Sorokin's scheme, because they are, according to Sorokin, anti-empirical. That makes them manifestations of an ideational reaction against sensate modernity.

Sorokin's attempts to make simple one-to-one correlations between his cycles in Western Civilization and supposed periods of stability or disruption have been unsuccessful,²⁵⁷ because such correlations are confounded by precisely those internal tensions which he identifies in Western Civilization. The uniqueness of the West, what makes it different from all other civilizations in the history of the planet (whether or not it is politically correct to make such an assertion of uniqueness, which is an assertion also made by those who most vehemently resent the West) is that it has never

²⁵¹ This comes out most clearly in a shorter follow-on to his masterwork, Pitirim Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* (1941). See also Palmer C. Talbutt, "Sorokin's Challenge to Modernity," in Ford, Richard, and Talbutt, *Sorokin and Civilization*.

²⁵² See the discussion in Talbutt, "Sorokin's Challenge to Modernity," 65-8. Sorokin's first work in the United States, highly respected, was in rural sociology. His later shift to issues of large-scale historical change seemed like a strange change of focus. But the common theme linking these two research programs is his dislike of the degeneration of the modern city.

²⁵³ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 506.

²⁵⁴ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 507.

²⁵⁵ Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*, 253.

²⁵⁶ Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*, 226.

²⁵⁷ William Eckhardt, "Transitions, Revolutions, and Wars," in Ford, Richard, and Talbutt, *Sorokin and Civilization*

resolved these internal tensions. And, beginning with the conquests of Alexander, no other civilization has been as aggressive in penetrating other cultures (thereby engendering global resentment). The Islamic conquests of the Mediterranean lands came closest to imitating this expansionism, but Islam then lost that impetus when it settled down into a successful, but static, form of ideational culture.²⁵⁸ Because of this historic expansionism of the West, Sorokin's analysis is further confounded by the same systemic problem that for long confounded the "democratic peace theory." Liberal democracies fight few wars with other liberal democracies, and thereby create a slowly expanding "zone of peace." But that expanding zone of peace comes into conflict with other states on the boundaries. Thus, the liberal democracies end up being involved in most, if not all, of the big and bad wars. In the same way, a developing or expanding zone of sensate culture continues to come into conflict with ideational resistance on the boundaries.

Robert Dahl on polyarchy. The last important dichotomy to discuss in this segment is the distinction which Robert Dahl makes between "polyarchic" and "hegemonic" regimes.²⁵⁹ This relates directly to the "democratic peace theory." That theory is not really about "democracy" and "peace." It is about pluralistic and imperfect liberal democracies, or what Dahl describes more precisely as "polyarchies." And it is about how they fight wars. The core idea in this theory of liberal warmaking is that polyarchies are generally more materialistic, utilitarian, and rational states which avoid wars with each other because wars are destructive and irrational ways to resolve disputes. But polyarchies are, counter-intuitively, more effective than other states in fighting wars because of that same materialistic and utilitarian rationality. Concrete interactions between states reflect the underlying structure of their political cultures in specific ways leading to different outcomes in war and peace. The dynamics of this

²⁵⁸ See the description of Islamic culture (without use of the term "ideational," but fitting the definition) in Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, Richard Mayne, trans. (1993) [*Grammaire des Civilizations*, 1987], chapter 6; Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (2002).

interaction also bear directly on the central theme in this work, the problem of categorizing modern totalitarian hegemonies such as Fascism and Nazism as “modern” or “reactionary.” As this might help to make clear, they are modern reactions to modernity, just as are the fundamentalisms described by Karen Armstrong.

The critical factor in determining whether a particular regime tends towards the pole of “hegemony” or “polyarchy” ~ both of which, of course, are ideal forms never perfectly realized in concrete polities ~ is the openness of the regime to influences and changes from outside. Outside influences include ideas and interests outside the dominant elite, which may include either foreign influences or influences from the wider publics inside a particular nation. Conflicts between cultures (or the political cultures of states) are also conflicts within cultures. Dahl expresses this factor of openness in terms of the two independent but related elements in his definition of polyarchy, which are “public contestation” and “inclusiveness.”²⁶⁰ In a similar typology of regimes, Lowell Field observes that the movement toward what he calls a “representative-consensual” regime, a substantial equivalent to a modern liberal democracy or “polyarchy,” is marked by a wide-spread consensus on rules of the game which allow for peaceful public discourse without an imposed ideology.²⁶¹ Although “public contestation” and “inclusiveness” are conceptually and concretely distinct elements in the mixture we call a “liberal democracy” or “polyarchy,”²⁶² they are closely related in that they both share one critical factor. They are both based on a basic pluralism, an acceptance of the legitimacy of opposing viewpoints and opponents, even if only from other elites. The most important question is not the quantitative extent of the effective franchise. It is the qualitative relationship between competing interests. As Field points out, one of the distinguishing marks of a regime which is not “representative-consensual” is that it is one in which “neither side accepts

²⁵⁹ Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971).

²⁶⁰ Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 4.

²⁶¹ Lowell Field, *Comparative Political Development: The Precedent of the West* (1967), 16, 15-6. I am summarizing very briefly a rather complex typology in Field.

the morality of its opponents.”²⁶³ More generally, it is a question of pluralism and diversity.²⁶⁴

On the whole, and to a significant degree, although far from perfectly, a modern polyarchy tends to be materialistic, skeptical, liberal, open to external influences, positivistic, rational and legal, *zweckrational*, capitalistic, based on contract relationships, historical in its lawmaking, secular-humanist, physiocentric in its basic beliefs, a *Gesellschaft*, Apolline in its religious style, a society which exposes principles of “partnership,” more commonly known as “pluralism,” even if it does not fully practice those principles, an “open society” in Popper’s sense, “constrained” by incremental method in Sowell’s sense, “loosely bounded” in Merelman’s sense, intellectually committed to the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), based on concepts of social contract, based on positive-sum strategies, a trading state, part of McWorld, and also suffering from anomie as a result, other-directed, and sensate. Conversely, a hegemonic regime tends to be characterized by the opposing “spiritual” elements of culture listed in table 2.

One of the most obvious concrete characteristics of a polyarchy is the way in which politics seems to become less serious, because politics becomes a form of popular entertainment, or art, rather than a matter of life and death.²⁶⁵ In a hegemony,

²⁶² Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 4.

²⁶³ Field, *Comparative Political Development*, 25.

²⁶⁴ Hannah Arendt emphasizes this in an interpretation of Montesquieu which is basic to her theory of liberal politics. “Montesquieu realized that the outstanding characteristic of tyranny was that it rested on isolation ~ on the isolation of the tyrant from his subjects and the isolation of the subjects from each other through mutual fear and suspicion ~ and hence that tyranny was not one form of government among others but contradicted the essential human condition of plurality, the acting and speaking together, which is the condition of all forms of political action.” Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* ([1958] 1998), 202. As she does so often, Arendt confuses things by insisting on a peculiar and essentialist terminology. Tyrannical politics are a form of politics. And there are many types of regimes, aside from the regime of a single tyrant, which share this quality of non-pluralism, or hegemony. She points to a critical factor, which is that hegemonic forms of government of any specific type depend on limiting “the essential human condition of plurality.” Unfortunately, the condition of plurality is only “essential” in a prescriptive sense. As much as I agree with her in valuing plurality, it is, unfortunately, far from being the natural or most common condition in human history.

²⁶⁵ An obvious example in the United States is the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California. But that is only the last absurd example of a long-standing trend in US politics. The

by contrast, politics dominates art. Art and entertainment become matters of political important, and sometimes matters of life and death, because the hegemony cannot tolerate openness in art. This is part of what has been called “aestheticization of politics” under fascism, although what this really means is the politicalization of aesthetics, in the sense that all matters of art take on political importance,²⁶⁶ as they did for Alfred Rosenberg²⁶⁷ and other Nazis, especially Hitler.²⁶⁸

Sex, violence, war, and fascism

Now, with apologies for being somewhat metaphorical (but less so than it might appear at first glance), let me speak of “sex” and “violence” as ways in which cultures interact.²⁶⁹ Sex has been a great mystery to evolutionary theorists as well as poets because it seems, at first glance, to violate natural selection and the selfishness of genes. When an organism reproduces via sex, instead of asexually, as was the case in more primitive life, it extinguishes a large chunk of its genetic inheritance. (It is actually something less than 50%, because of the variable factor of inclusive fitness, but it is a significant sacrifice nevertheless.) Despite that, sexual reproduction is almost universal among the higher animals on the planet. We are forced to assume that

impeachment of President Bill Clinton was more of a soap opera than a constitutional crisis. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Royal Family has long since become an institution for generating celebrities rather than sovereigns. Lack of seriousness about politics is the mark of a modern liberal democracy which is so confident in the stability of its politics that it can afford the indulgence of entertaining itself at the expense of its political elites. The classic precedent was Aristophanes, who put on plays mocking Athenian politics even while Athens was in the epic struggle of the Peloponnesian War.

²⁶⁶ See the rather confusing discussion of these concepts in Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (1993), 164-9, et seq., and the equally confusing discussion in the original text where the “aestheticization of politics” was coined, Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (“Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit”), in *Illuminations*.

²⁶⁷ The subject of “Germanic art” is literally the central part, the subject of the second of three books, in Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of our Age*, James B. Whiskey, trans. (1982) [*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 1930].

²⁶⁸ Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (2002).

organisms and their genes get something important out of the bargain. What they get out of it is, in a word, diversity. Contrary to what Hitler believed,²⁷⁰ nature loves bastards. Greater genetic diversity provides protection against parasites and dangerous defects hidden in recessive genes. It increases the overall adaptive flexibility of the line. It is also a basic hedge against disaster, exactly as is diversification of financial investments.²⁷¹

The same attributes of diversity or “pluralism” give strength to a society or a state. The historical analysis of Britain and the Netherlands in § 6 will show that multiculturalism and pluralism played a large part in their success as modern states. (See table 3.) The great strength of the “West” as a whole, a civilization which is devilishly difficult to define precisely because it consists of so many disparate elements, such as the strange mixture of Hellenism and Judaism which occurred in the Roman Empire, is precisely that diversity. With the globalization of the Modern Age, the Western Democracies have become even more committed to a policy of multiculturalism.²⁷² A pluralistic culture, associated with the polyarchic “trading state,” like the gene or organism which adopts the evolutionary strategy of sex, is engaged in a grand bargain. It is betting that, in the long run, giving up part of its identity and its bodily integrity will make it stronger.

Still, there is a cost.²⁷³ And even in the most advanced and liberal states in the world, there is vehement reaction to this loss of identity.²⁷⁴ Even more so in cultures and states which have not adopted principles of pluralism, which are not polyarchies,

²⁶⁹ See also the use of sex as a way of characterizing the German, French, and Russian relationships during the Second World War in John Lukacs, *The Last European War: September 1939 ~ December 1941* (1976), 387-91.

²⁷⁰ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 400.

²⁷¹ John Cartwright, *Evolution and Human Behavior* (2000), chapter 4.

²⁷² See Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (1998); Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (2003).

²⁷³ See Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster* (1995).

this cultural “sex” feels like cultural “rape.” Sayyid Qutb, one of the founders of modern militant Islam, was incensed by the relative pluralism and freedom in the United States during a visit from 1948 to 1950. As Paul Berman says in his recent study of *Terror and Liberalism* (2003), “Qutb always recognized that Islamism’s truest enemy was not a military force but, instead, an insidious penetration of cultural influences and ideas ~ the ideas that, in his words, threatened to ‘exterminate’ Islam. The struggle, as he interpreted it, was mental, above all.”²⁷⁵

Marshall McLuhan, in the course of his poetic musing on *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968), proposes that there is an intimate relationship between “education” and war. “Education,” in the global context, is “information technology being used by one community to reshape another.”²⁷⁶ The same thesis was articulated by Thucydides. He quotes Pericles, near the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, boasting that, “Our city is an education to Greece.”²⁷⁷ Thucydides also points out (contrary to “realist” misinterpretations of his *History*) that “the first open quarrel between Athens and Sparta” occurred, as Athens was actually providing military assistance to Sparta, because the Spartans “grew afraid of the enterprise and the unorthodoxy of the Athenians.”²⁷⁸ And well they might. Although the Spartans won the war, they lost the peace when their society was opened up by the wealth that followed their victory.²⁷⁹ Similarly, McLuhan argues that “the world of advertisements” is “a frank declaration of war,” on customers both inside and outside national boundaries, because its explicit purpose is to change the way people live.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ Patrick Buchanan, *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization* (2002).

²⁷⁵ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (2003), 183.

²⁷⁶ Marshall McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968), 149.

²⁷⁷ Thucydides, *History*, 2.40-1.

²⁷⁸ Thucydides, *History*, 1.102.

²⁷⁹ “The Spartans’ slide towards weakness and collapse began almost as soon as they had put an end to the Athenian hegemony, and the state became flooded with gold and silver.” Plutarch, *Agis [Vitae Parallelae]*, c. 70-120 CE], 5, in *Plutarch on Sparta*, Richard J. A. Talbert, trans. (1988). See also Aristotle, *Politics [Politica]*, c. 335-23 BCE], 1334a.

²⁸⁰ McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, 152.

Writing in 1968, McLuhan shows some foresight in focusing specifically on the example of the Islamic veil, which is undermined by Western dress ~ and undress.²⁸¹ These sorts of images, along with the more substantive liberation of Western women, such as the American female soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia, undermine one of the most sensitive aspects of traditional family values in Islamic societies. International intercourse dominated by the material power of liberal states, in the form of liberal globalization, is perceived as a form of “cultural rape.”

If two regimes are highly rational in a materialistic sense, they should generally prefer positive-sum games of co-operation over the ultimate negative-sum game of war. Their “moral equivalent of war,” to adapt a phrase from William James,²⁸² is economic competition. And even that is something which they will attempt to make into a positive-sum game as much as possible. They will tend to resort to economic sanctions before war. And, when they do fight a war, they will approach it as a form of engineering or business, as something in which the object is to efficiently obtain a material goal, with as little cost as possible to the overall society, and as something to be ended as soon as possible ~ a limited war. But this requires that neither of these two theoretically rational regimes be existentially threatened by contact or intercourse with the other. Neither will be, if they are both material cultures. A material culture, in terms of the polarity discussed above, is by definition a culture in which the spiritual identity and political culture of the culture as a whole is open to influences from the outside. Foreign inputs to its culture are not unlike the materialistic changes to which it must already adapt, and it can therefore incorporate those influences easily.

Spiritual cultures, on the other hand, are inherently xenophobic. They have a strong sense of what is and is not part of their identity, simply because that sense of identity itself, that self-consciousness of being, is what defines them as spiritually

²⁸¹ McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, 157-9. See also Shaista Aziz, “Why I Decided to Wear the Veil,” *BBC News Online*, news.bbc.co.uk (12 September 2003).

²⁸² William James, “The Moral Equivalent of War” [1910], in *The Moral Equivalent of War, and Other Essays* (1971).

polarized cultures. “Spiritual” may mean religious, nationalistic, or ideological. And it is, of course, a form of polarity which may occur in any tradition or civilization. This is the form of culture and polity which has existed in most times and places throughout human history. It is so familiar that its awesome and irrational power over humanity is often forgotten, only to be remembered when tribalistic urges resurge in atavistic ways. It is patently absurd, to a modern utilitarian mind, that Hindus and Muslims should butcher each other over competing claims to ownership of a temple in Ayodhya,²⁸³ that Jews and Muslims should do the same over ruins in Jerusalem,²⁸⁴ or that Protestants and Catholics should do so over marching routes in Belfast.²⁸⁵ But the “marching season,” as the Irish put it, has long been with us. Throughout most of human history, it has seemed perfectly normal that we should be willing to sacrifice blood and treasure for the sake of making our tribe, our god, or our ideology supreme in a certain area of the planet, and that we should remain unhappy, and ready to do battle, until our identity, whatever that is, is supreme over the whole planet.

When in that mode of polarity, of course, we are always doomed to be unhappy with worldly reality. And we are always inclined to be aggressive, because our identity is always under threat from the simple fact that it is not supreme over the whole world. There was a time when one ideology could be so, in a sense, because the world could be defined as an isolated region on the surface of the planet. But the globalization

²⁸³ Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism and Secularism: After Ayodhya* (2001).

²⁸⁴ Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (1996).

²⁸⁵ It is ironic that Thomas Cahill should credit the Irish with having “saved civilization” in the West during the Middle Ages, when now, in the Modern Age, they are demonstrating that tribalism is alive and nasty as ever in one of the most highly cultured nations of the West. See Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland’s Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (1995). But see also Gary MacEóin, *Northern Ireland: Captive of History* (1974).

One might also compare the identity politics or politics of symbolism in the case of the Sikh kirpans in schools in the United States and Canada, or the Ten Commandments in the courthouse in Alabama. But the big difference, of course, is that no one has yet died over those issues in the United States or Canada. Instead, they have been litigated peacefully. See *Gurdev Kaur Cheema v. Harold Thompson*, 67 F. 3d 883 (9th Cir. 1995); *Singh Multani c. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeois*, (2002-05-17) QCCS 500-05-071462-020; *Glassroth v. Moore*, 229 F. Supp. 2d 1290 (MD Alabama, 2002). On similar cases litigated in Europe, see *The Economist*, “To Ban or Not to Ban: The Headscarf in Other Countries,” 369.8347 (25 October 2003) 46.

which began with the Roman Empire has now made the dilemma insolvable.²⁸⁶ This is the *reductio ad absurdum* which obtains from the theory of *Realpolitik*. Sometimes the spiritual polity has attempted to withdraw from the world, as did Sparta and Japan. But that only makes it more xenophobic when it finally comes into contact with disruptive foreign influences. More commonly, the spiritual polity waits, biding its time, out of relative weakness, waiting for a good time to make war. But it always is, as realist theory has it, in a potential state of war with other polities. And that means it must, in accordance with the variation on the theory called “offensive realism,” always be ready to seize opportunities for aggression.

The spiritual or hegemonic polity is forever motivated by the spirit of aggression, the *animus dominandi*. When two spiritual cultures come into contact, each will naturally attempt to dominate the other. The most obvious means is by seizure of territory. Sometimes it will be by seizure of population, or by forced conversion of the other to the ideology of the stronger culture. And they are in the perpetual condition of potential war. The fact that the two political cultures share the same basic polarity may allow for temporary bargains or alliances, which may be facilitated by the fact that they understand the same rules of the game. But it is always the zero-sum, or negative sum, game of realist theory. Thus, a Hitler and a Stalin may make a pact. But it is always a temporary alliance, until the next war. States have behaved that way so often, for so long, that it is difficult to see how irrational such behavior is. But the true mystery is actually that commonplace irrationality. In a sense, it is not irrational. If a culture has a spiritual polarity, as have most cultures in human history, then it would actually be irrational to surrender that strong cultural identity for material gain. Utilitarian or economic rationality does not apply. Such a culture and its polity are “rational” in a sense, but they are *wertrational* rather than *zweckrational*.

The rules of the game become confused when material and spiritual cultures come into contact. The material culture views this as a Tit-for-Tat game in which it is

²⁸⁶ See Rajae, *Globalization on Trial*, in which the title makes this point.

attempting to force a recalcitrant culture into a positive sum game by material rewards and punishments. But the spiritual culture has no interest in playing such a *zweckrational* game. The material goals of peace and prosperity, the rewards of peaceful cooperation, are simply not as important as the spiritual goals of nationalism, racism, religious purity, or ideology. Peaceful contact and trade with a strong material power threatens that identity. It is what Thomas Mann called the “imperialism of civilization” in 1918,²⁸⁷ or what modern anti-modernists condemn as “globalization” and the “liberal international economic order.”²⁸⁸ In some cases the economic dominance of the wealthy material states, may be genuinely exploitive in a comparative sense. This form of war by economics is perceived as “structural violence.” In defense of its identity, the spiritual culture responds with violence.

When war breaks out between material and spiritual cultures, it is asymmetrical. Both cultures have distinctive strengths and weaknesses. These various asymmetries lead to “rock and roll.” War comes as a surprise to a materialistic culture, or as something it stumbles into almost unconsciously, because it seems so irrational. It has difficulty perceiving why the spiritual culture will not play an economically productive game of cooperation, and why its material penetration of the spiritual culture, its sexual exchange of material, is perceived as rape. At the outset, the material culture is set back by the violence of an assault from a spiritual culture. But it will, slowly, in an initially haphazard and incremental fashion, with the overall systematic rationality of a competitive and open culture, organize to fight a war. Once it does, it will become highly effective in bringing material strength and mass armies to bear on the problem. There is no more dangerous state than a materialistic polyarchy aroused to total war. It does not fight for glory. And it certainly has no interest in any heroic *Götterdämmerung*. It will instead bring down a *Götterdämmerung* on the heads of its opponents with all the ungodly might of its material technology.

²⁸⁷ Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, Walter D. Morris, trans. (1983) [*Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, 1918], 33.

That is a description of the Second World War. Whether or not it is an accurate interpretation of the underlying cultures in conflict depends on whether or not it is accurate to categorize Nazi Germany as a “spiritual” political culture. This can be related to the conventional discourse about the meaning of “fascism.”

Many books have been written on the problem of defining “fascism.”²⁸⁹ All uses of the term as a generic category are fraught with controversy. Is it useful to group together the two concrete political movements of greatest interest, Italian Fascism and German Nazism? Can we legitimately go further and speak of “fascism” as a category which includes the militant nationalism which arose at the same time in Japan?²⁹⁰ A similar problem arises in trying to define “totalitarianism” as a generic category.²⁹¹ Despite their antipathies, is it meaningful to put Nazism and Communism under Stalin into the same category? There are obviously some important similarities, but also some important differences, among all these highly anti-liberal regimes. (See table 5.)

²⁸⁸ David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-globalization* (2002).

²⁸⁹ Some of those books include Kevin Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction* (2002); George Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (1999); Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (1993); Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (1980); F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (1967); Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Fran Caise, Italian Fascism, National Socialism*, Leila Vennewitz, trans. (1965) [*Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, 1963]. See also Robert O. Paxton, “The Five Stages of Fascism,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70.1 (March 1998) 1-23; Emilio Gentile, “Fascism as Political Religion,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 25.2/3 (May-June 1990) 229-251; Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., “Fascism and Modernization,” *World Politics* 24.4 (July 1972) 547-564; A. James Gregor, “Fascism and Modernization: Some Addenda,” *World Politics* 26.3 (April 1974) 370-384; Gilbert Allardyce, “What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept,” *The American Historical Review* 84.2 (April 1979) 367-388; Stanley G. Payne, “Comments (What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept),” *The American Historical Review* 84.2 (April 1979) 389-91; Ernst Nolte, “Comments (What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept),” *The American Historical Review* 84.2 (April 1979) 391-394; Richard Bessel, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts* (1996); Wolfgang Sauer, “National Socialism: Totalitarianism or Fascism?” *The American Historical Review* 73.2 (December 1967) 404-424.

²⁹⁰ See Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 153-6; Robert Neelly Bellah, *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation* (2003), 44-52, et passim; W.G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan* (1974), 241, et passim; Paxton, “The Five Stages of Fascism,” 1.

²⁹¹ See Michael Halberstam, “Totalitarianism as a Problem for the Modern Conception of Politics,” *Political Theory* 26.4 (August 1998) 459-488; Sauer, “National Socialism: Totalitarianism or Fascism?; Yehoshua Arieli and Nathan Rotenstreich, *Totalitarian Democracy and After* (2002); Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (1956); J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952); Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1979).

The trick is to see if the similarities point us to core elements of “fascism” or “totalitarianism” which are actually useful as analytical categories. Although the great varieties of fascism have prompted some scholars to say the term has no real meaning, the concrete historical cluster of something that arose at a specific moment in history, and which did so much damage, begs for a general label. As F.L. Carsten says, “There was no ‘Fascism’ anywhere in Europe before the end of the first world war.”²⁹² And then there was, in many countries, in a multitude of forms, including the extreme fascism of Japan. Moreover, three of the most powerful fascist powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan, became allies in a great war against the leading Western liberal democracies. If we categorize these more generally with the Stalinist version of Communism as a form of totalitarianism, then there were four totalitarian powers which temporarily joined that alliance against liberalism. Whatever label we choose to give it, or not, something quite nasty, quite concrete, and of great significance, arose at this specific time in history.

We might begin with etymology and genealogy, although we should not linger there long, nor assume too much importance to origins. The term “fascism” comes from the Italian *fascismo* and Latin *fascis*, “fasces” or “bundle,” the collection of rods around an axe used as a symbol of the authority of a Roman magistrate. The term was adopted by the modern Italian Fascist Party, *Fasci di combattimento*, “Fighting Fascists,” also known as the *Camicie nere*, the “Black Shirts.” Thus, there is no question about the meaning of the term “Fascism,” capitalized, as a specific movement in Italy headed up by Mussolini. But the problems arise when we try to speak of generic “fascism,” especially as applied to Nazism and Hitler. Hitler originally associated Nazism with “fascism” (*Faschismus*),²⁹³ and he later developed a personal bond with Mussolini. But he quickly came to dislike the characterization of Nazism as “fascist,” in part because he wished to establish the primacy of Nazism, and in part

²⁹² F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (1967), 9.

²⁹³ Payne, “Comments (What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept),” 390.

because a central element in Nazism was the unique racial identity of the German *Volk*. An ideology based on a specific racial or national identification cannot be universalized, as such. That, however, is no bar to outsider observers generalizing about racist and national ideologies as a general category, as a way of forming an ideology rather than a specific concrete ideology. This, again, following Pareto, is the difference between subjective and objective forms, or surface and structure. Mussolini and the Italian Fascist theorists were also the originators of the term “totalitarianism.” They claimed, with pride, to be creating *lo stato totalitario*, “the totalitarian state.”²⁹⁴ But there is some irony in this, because, as a matter of actual practice, whatever its theory, Italian Fascism under Mussolini was far less totalitarian than either Nazism under Hitler or Communism under Stalin. It never displaced traditional institutions such as the monarchy, the aristocracy, the military, the church, academia, popular culture, or the family to nearly the degree that both Nazism and Communism did.²⁹⁵ Most noticeably, in what is probably a closely related aspect, Italian Fascism, although oppressive and violent in a traditional sense, never gave rise to the sort of mass murder or “genocide” against a race or class occurring under Nazism and Communism.²⁹⁶ There was no Italian Holocaust or Italian Gulag. Italian Fascism, although racist in a general sense,²⁹⁷ was noticeable for its lack of endogenous antisemitism.

In other important respects, Nazism must be distinguished from both Fascism and Communism. Although Italian Fascism celebrated militarism and Mussolini looked for easy conquests, the aggressive militarism of Italian Fascism, like that of the Soviet

²⁹⁴ Mark Lilla, “The New Age of Tyranny,” *The New York Review of Books* 49.16 (24 October 2002) 28-9, 28.

²⁹⁵ Carl Levy, “‘From Fascism to ‘Post Fascists’: Italian Roads to Modernity,” in Richard Bessel, ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts* (1996).

²⁹⁶ “Fascist Italy can never be equated with the two monstrous industrialized death regimes in Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union.” Levy, “From Fascism to ‘Post Fascists,’” 168.

²⁹⁷ The racism of Italian Fascism might be described, as does Roger Griffin, as “white supremacist.” Roger D. Griffin, ed., *Fascism (Oxford Readers)* (1995), 58. Nazism saw Jews, inconsistently, as representatives of both degenerate modernity and primitive barbarism. The Italian Fascists, more consistently, directed their racial prejudice toward what they saw as barbaric non-white races.

Union, was opportunistic in a traditional imperialistic way. Neither Mussolini nor Stalin were inclined to risk the security of their own regimes on unlimited war. Both of them practiced a mixture of offensive and defensive foreign policies which can be easily rationalized as traditional *Realpolitik*. Mussolini postured as a great war leader, with pretensions for creating a new Roman Empire in Africa and the Mediterranean, but there was a non-serious, comic-opera quality about his adventures. Hitler, by contrast, pursued war as if it were for the sake of war itself.²⁹⁸ And he dreamed even larger than Napoleon. He intended to completely restructure Europe under a Nazi Empire, and then to contest the United States for domination of the world. Although he may have been alone in dreaming that large, his generals did share his aspirations for the conquest of Central Europe and Russia. In this respect, in the willingness to take extreme risks for the sake of imperialistic conquests, the only near counterpart to Nazi Germany is Japan under the Showa Restoration.

Thus, Nazism continues to stand out as a peculiar political pathology, more virulent than either Italian Fascism or Soviet Communism,²⁹⁹ albeit sharing some significant characteristics with both of those ideologies. As Ernst Nolte puts it, "Hitler's National Socialism was 'radical fascism' and was very different from Mussolini's 'normal fascism.'"³⁰⁰ This was recognized at the time by Winston Churchill, who confused both friends and enemies by his apparent inconsistency. As much as he despised both Stalin and Mussolini, he was willing to deal with them, to even "appease" them, to use a loaded term. But he would never make a deal with Hitler. The difference, which makes perfect sense of his policies, although it was not perceived by many at the time, was that Hitler's desires were of a nature that could not

²⁹⁸ Michael Geyer, "Restorative Elites, German Society and the Nazi Pursuit of War," in Richard Bessel, ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts* (1996).

²⁹⁹ It has been argued on other grounds, apart from my main points, that Italian Fascism and Soviet Communism actually share more similarities than might be obvious at first glance. See A. James Gregor, "Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31.1 (March 1998) 1-15.

³⁰⁰ Nolte, "Comments (What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept)," 392.

be appeased by a rational bargain in a materialistic sense.³⁰¹

Another important singularity about Nazism in Western Civilization ~ which brings us back to the central theme of this work ~ is the attitude towards modernity. Although much of Italian Fascism was atavistic and backward looking, invoking the glories of the Roman Empire and the goodness of Italian peasant life, it was also based on an explicit celebration of modernity, in the form of Futurism. In this respect, again, Italian Fascism resembled Communism rather than Nazism. Nazism had a distinctly divided attitude towards modernity. Although the Nazis were fascinated with modern technology, especially in the form of weapons or tools of propaganda, there was a definite resistance to modernity in other spheres of culture which was basic to their ideology. In this respect, oddly enough, the closest counterpart is again Showa Japan.³⁰² The Nazi fascination with technology was actually a fetishization of technology, a treatment of technology as a form of symbolism, art, and magic.

That summarizes the main comparative issues. We will not delve very far into the extensive discourse about fascism and totalitarianism, because it is already presented clearly and authoritatively in a recent work on the subject by Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (1993).³⁰³ Griffin shows that there is a core set of elements which can be specified in order to speak meaningfully of “fascism” as a useful analytical category despite all the problems and controversies with the concept.³⁰⁴ But, as with many of the theorists discussed in this section, he states this in somewhat esoteric terms which

³⁰¹ See John Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary. Statesman. Historian* (2002), chapter 1. Although he was an adamant anti-Communist, Churchill “recognized that Stalin was a nationalist and not an Internationalist Communist.” Lukacs, *Churchill*, 12. In other words, he recognized that Stalin would put aside revolutionary ideology for sake of *Realpolitik*. He saw no such rationality in Hitler.

³⁰² The Japanese slogan which expressed this divided mentality was “Western science, Japanese essence.” Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853-1964* (2003), 20. Although Chinese nationalism expressed a similar philosophy, this was probably taken to a more extreme form in Japan than in any other modernizing nation in the 19th and 20th centuries, perhaps simply because of the rapidity of that process in Japan. (See graph 1.)

³⁰³ See also his introduction to his edited set of readings, Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism* (1995).

³⁰⁴ Robert Paxton, in one of the most recent works on the subject, while disagreeing somewhat with the “ideal type” method, says that Griffin’s definition is “The most widely accepted recent concise definition of fascism as an ‘ideal type.’” Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (2004), 21.

require interpretation. According to Griffin, “Fascism is genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism.”³⁰⁵

Mythos. The first element in this definition, the element which creates the most confusion about the concept of fascism, is its “mythic core.” Much of the difficulty in attempting to define fascism arises from the assumption that it must have a logical core, an internally consistent and articulated set of rational precepts making up an ideology.³⁰⁶ For example, one may find such an internally logical core in Marxism as a theory, although it should not be assumed that Marxist logic actually carried over to the Stalinist variation on Marxism as a movement. “Nazism never claimed to be a rational system of thought,” as Robert Cecil says in his political biography of Alfred Rosenberg, “it was the faith of men who prided themselves, like their *Führer*, on being intuitive men of action. As Rosenberg himself put it, ‘National Socialism is an attitude.’”³⁰⁷ As Joachim Fest says in a commentary on Joseph Goebbels, “one might

³⁰⁵ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 26. Robert Paxton cites this as the “most widely accepted recent concise definition of fascism as an ‘ideal type.’” Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, 21. Others may be skeptical of such esoteric language, and Paxton himself attempts to avoid “ideal types.” I am not sure why Paxton considers this definition more of an “ideal type” than any definition of any political ideology such as “Marxism” or “democracy.” It is not really an “ideal type” in a Weberian sense, because it fits the concrete phenomena of Italian Fascism, Nazism, and imitators in other countries quite well. It is another form of what Paxton himself claims to be looking for in his *Anatomy of Fascism*, which is an empirical statement of the common elements in the major fascist movements. Indeed, this is what Paxton offers as an alternative definition at the end of his study: “Fascism may be defined as a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion” Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, 218. Paxton’s definition is useful. It provides more details about the incidents of fascism, in terms of its development, strategies, and consequences. But it complements rather than contradicts Griffin’s formulation of “mythic palingenetic populist ultranationalism.” While Paxton’s definition has the virtue of empirical detail, Griffin’s has the virtue of uncovering the structure.

³⁰⁶ “By an analogy that has gone largely unexamined, much existing scholarship treats fascism as if it were of the same nature as the great political doctrines of the long nineteenth century, like conservatism, liberalism, and socialism.... Unlike them, fascism does not rest on formal philosophical positions with claims to universal validity.” Paxton, “The Five Stages of Fascism,” 4.

³⁰⁷ Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (1972), 66.

say that National Socialism was propaganda masquerading as ideology.”³⁰⁸

At first blush one might think that Nazism has such a logical core, albeit perverse, in its emphasis on Aryan (or Nordic or Teutonic) racial superiority and the idea of Social Darwinism (an extreme form of naturalistic morality or amorality). There is, however, no internal consistency in Nazism about what constitutes an “Aryan” (*Arier*), or whether or not it is based on genetics. Both of the best-known writers of canonical works on Nazi ideology, Alfred Rosenberg³⁰⁹ and Houston Stewart Chamberlain,³¹⁰ were unable to settle on whether the mysterious quality of being an Aryan (or a Nordic or a Teuton) was biological or spiritual. With complete inconsistency, Hitler and the Nazis were able to simultaneously despise the Slavs as subhumans (*Untermenschen*) but admire Genghis Khan and even speculate that the Mongols under the Khan “were not garden variety Asiatics but descendants of émigrés from ancient Atlantis who may have been the forebears of Aryan Germans.”³¹¹ Similarly, the Japanese became almost honorary Aryans and Semitic Arabs were welcomed as allies against the Jews.

As to the Jews themselves, Hitler even admitted to a certain admiration on occasion. In *Mein Kampf*, he writes that, “Success is the one earthly judge concerning the right or wrong,” and that “The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew. In hardly any people in the world is the instinct of self-preservation developed more strongly.... Of this, the mere fact of the survival of this race may be considered the best proof.”³¹² The Germans, to the contrary, ought to be condemned by their lack of success historically, which Hitler himself indicates might be due to their lack of racial purity. He writes that “the German people lack that sure herd instinct which is based on the unity of the blood,” and he condemns what he calls a

³⁰⁸ Joachim Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership* (1979), 83.

³⁰⁹ Rosenberg, *Myth of the 20th Century*. Hitler appointed him the official ideological instructor or the Third Reich, even though Hitler actually despised the theories in his book. This was in itself an indication of the unimportance of ideological consistency in Nazism.

³¹⁰ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1-2, John Lees, trans. (1911) [*Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1899].

³¹¹ Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (1998), 175.

³¹² Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 343, 300.

“co-existence of unblended basic racial elements of the most varying kind” in Germany. Thus, according to the logic of Social Darwinism, the Jews should have been the most admirable of races, and the Germans among the least, if one can even say that the Germans are a coherent race. Hitler is a faithful student of Nietzsche in asserting that morality is nothing more than the verdict of history. But he ignores the conclusion which Nietzsche draws from that precept, which is that the Germans are only to be despised for their historical failures. And then, of course, there is the patent absurdity of Hitler himself, and his leading henchmen, posing as representatives of the Aryan ideal. According to a standing joke in the Third Reich, this ideal physical form was “thin like Göring, tall like Goebbels, blond like Hitler.”³¹³

None of that is really important, however, because Nazism was never inspired by a coherent ideology in the sense of a philosophical system, such as one sees in the writings of Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith, or Marx. As Benedict Anderson points out in his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, one of the “paradoxes” of nationalisms in general is the “‘political’ power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. In other words, unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers.”³¹⁴ The same can be said of the extreme form of nationalism we call “fascism,” only more so. Hitler’s ability to posture as the leader of an Aryan race merely demonstrates the triumph of spiritual essence over mundane material appearance in the dreamlike mentality of Nazism.³¹⁵ If fascism were truly the “aestheticization of politics,” it is difficult to understand how such an ugly and physically unimpressive man could have become the embodiment of the nation.

³¹³ In Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 157. A variation was, *So groß und stattlich wie Goebbels, so blond wie Hitler, so gertenschlank wie Göring, so keusch wie Röhm*. “As big and magnificent as Goebbels, as blond as Hitler, as slim as Göring, as chaste as Röhm.” In Siegfried Fischer-Fabian, *Die ersten Deutschen: Über das rätselhafte Volk der Germanen* (2003), 207.

³¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), 5.

³¹⁵ Fritz Gerlich made much of the contradiction between Hitler’s appearance and the Aryan ideal in his “Trial of Hitler’s Nose.” Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, chapter 9.

Fascism appeals to rhetoric, not reason, to *mythos*, not *logos*, and especially to emotive mythological symbolism. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, “The more incommensurable and incomprehensible for the understanding a poetic creation may be, the better.”³¹⁶ There is logic to it, in the sense of being an explicable phenomenon. But the logic only appears in an objective look from the outside, not from the interior of its dream-like mythological worldview. Indeed, this dream-like quality is precisely what made it so appealing. As Hitler himself writes, “Faith is harder to shake than knowledge.”³¹⁷ Hitler also remarks at one point in *Mein Kampf* that the Germans “have so often demonstrated in their history that they were capable of waging wars down to the last drop of blood for phantoms...”³¹⁸ He certainly demonstrated that once again. Harold James sums it up accurately in saying that:

Though it claimed to have a hard core of doctrine, no one quite knew what this might be. Nazism had all the properties of a pseudo-religion: a cult, ritual, incantations, priests, and a giant congregation. Like many false religions, National Socialism preserved an air of mystery about its innermost secrets in order to conceal an inner emptiness.³¹⁹

This is, of course, not a unique phenomenon in politics. Much of politics in all sorts of regimes is based on “symbolic consensus,” sometimes called “symbolic politics,” in which the function of symbols as means of identification with the group is far more important than their substantive meaning ~ which may vary considerably, and inconsistently, among various adherents to the symbols.³²⁰ The difference in fascism is that it takes this sort of symbolic identity politics to the extreme.

Populist ultranationalism. This element is perhaps the easiest to understand. There was a wide variety of fascism in the interwar period, from the mostly harmless

³¹⁶ Quoted in Walter Kaufmann, “Introduction” to *Goethe’s Faust*, 10.

³¹⁷ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 337.

³¹⁸ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 565.

³¹⁹ Harold James, *A German Identity: 1770 to the Present Day* (2000), 136-7.

³²⁰ See James W. Fernandez, “Symbolic Consensus in a Fang Reformatory Cult,” *American Anthropologist* (new series) 67.4 (August 1965) 902-929; Peter Stromberg, “Consensus and Variation in the Interpretation of Religious Symbolism: A Swedish Example,” *American Ethnologist* 8.3 (August

versions represented by the British Union of Fascists and the *Action française*, to the moderately dangerous but self-limiting versions represented by the Spanish *Falange* and Italian Fascism, to the apocalyptic horror of Nazism, as well as many other versions one could mention.³²¹ At the edge, on the more moderate side, these blended into more traditional nationalistic or conservative movements. Again, one might argue that fascism is not so much an independent or essentially unique political phenomenon, but merely an extreme variation on a theme ~ in this respect the theme of nationalism raised to the highest pitch, or nationalism gone mad, in other words.

But that does not answer the question of why this particular form of nationalism became so virulent. Whether or not fascism is qualitatively different from normal nationalism in some essential sense or not, the quantitative difference remains a matter of significance to be explained. The particular virulence of fascist ultranationalism, what we might call “militant nationalism,” seems to derive in part from the identification of the “nation” or “race” ~ ethnicity, in more general terms ~ as the locus of highest loyalty. Claudia Koonz uses a particularly accurate term, drawing on the analogous phenomenon in modern religion, to describe Nazism. She calls it “ethnic fundamentalism.”³²² Fundamentalism, as Karen Armstrong points out, is a modern reaction to modernity.

That aspect of the analogy between religious fundamentalism and political fascism is especially useful in helping understand the confusing element of “reactionary modernism” in fascism. But the underlying motivation for either fundamentalism or fascism is not something new in history. It is something very old, which is tribalism.

1981) 544-559; Pamela Johnston Conover, , “The Mobilization of the New Right: A Test of Various Explanations,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 36.4 (December 1983) 632-649.

³²¹ Other fascist movements of the period include the *Soiuz Russkogo Naroda* (Union of the Russian People), the *Isanmaallinen Kansanliike* (Patriotic People’s Movement) in Finland, the *Nyilaskeresztes Párt* (Arrow Cross Party) in Hungary, the *Garda De Fier* (Iron Guard) in Romania, the *Frontpartij* (Front Party) in Flemish Belgium, the *National-Socialistische Beweging der Nederland* (Nazi Movement of the Netherlands), and the *Deutsch-Amerikanischer Volksbund* (German-American People’s Union).

³²² Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (2003), 13.

Western Civilization had slowly evolved, over the centuries, to other forms of identity. In the beginning, as in the *Old Testament* (although that was a document written well after the clash between tribe and city had begun, an early version of fundamentalist reaction, not a product of primordial tribalism), the god and the tribe were virtually one, and there was no higher morality than protection of the tribe, at the expense of anyone outside the tribe.

The great innovation of the universalistic religions growing up during periods of multicultural intercourse (including newer forms of Judaism) was in the separation of god and tribe, in the development of moral standing applicable to all humans. But then war in the name of the god and the universal religion became incredibly vicious, against both external and internal non-believers, even if not explicitly genocidal. The next great innovation in the identity politics of the West was the separation of power, the division of the secular state from the religion, and the elevation of the state as the higher identity ~ the identity which, as Max Weber puts it, can claim the legitimate monopoly over violence. In more crude terms, this is simply the question of who has the right to kill you. That was once the tribal chief and his witch doctors. Then it was the priest-king. Then it was the king or the priests. Then, finally, in the modern Western state, it was only the king. But this claim to the ultimate moral authority brings with it a natural tendency to draw in ~ as a larger celestial body draws in lesser bodies by gravitation and thereby becomes the largest possible body ~ the ancient sacred identity of the tribe. For a fascist, ultranationalism is merely the last logical step, a *reductio ad absurdum*, in the long-term transfer of ultimate moral authority from the god to the state. The state is god, and thou shalt have no other.

This also helps make sense of the apparent paradox of “reactionary modernism” in fascism. It is plausible to characterize the ultranationalism of fascism as a phenomenon of modernity if one sees it as the last logical step in the deification of the state which began once the state began to separate from the tribe. This is a way of restating the arguments of those who see fascism as an outgrowth of populist democracy or “mass

politics.” At the same time, however, without any real contradiction, it is a truly atavistic phenomenon because it seeks to recover that ancient, primordial, instinctive lost unity between god and tribe. If one of the characteristics of modernity is pluralism and the autonomy of different domains, then this attempt to recover the lost unity is a distinctly anti-modern or reactionary phenomenon. History has come round in a circle. That may be confusing. But it is no real paradox.

Palingenesis. That leads to the most difficult, and interesting, part of Griffin’s definition. The core myth of fascism, he argues quite plausibly, is “the myth of renewal, of rebirth.”³²³ He calls this “palingenesis,” to be distinguished from its other meanings in theology and biology, put together from *palin*, “anew,” and *genesis*, “creation.”³²⁴ Although this might be an esoteric way of putting it, it relates directly to many of the significant elements in fascism cited by Paxton, such as “preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood” and “compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity.”³²⁵ Griffin argues that “The most obvious well-head of palingenetic myth in the wider sense is religion.” He argues at some length that “secular palingenetic myth is not derived from religious myth but is simply the expression of an archetype of the human mythopoetic form in secular form.”³²⁶ This strikes me as protesting too much about a distinction which is not much of a difference.³²⁷ Unless one insists on a rather narrow definition of “religion,” it seems

³²³ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 32.

³²⁴ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 32-3. In theology, it means “transmigration of souls; metempsychosis,” and in biology, it means “repetition by a single organism of various stages in the evolution of its species during embryonic development.” *American Heritage Dictionary*, “palingenesis.”

³²⁵ Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, 218.

³²⁶ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 33.

³²⁷ He says that, “By defining fascism as a genius of political ideology we resist the temptation to treat it as a modern form of millenarianism or a revivalist cult...” Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 32. But why is this a “temptation” which must be resisted? (Note the use of religious language.) What, for example, could be more like millenarianism than the “Thousand Year Reich,” or more of a cult than the secret rituals of the SS? Griffin goes on in the same sentence to say that we thereby “locate it [fascism] firmly among the political forces which constitute a modern secularizing society.” Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 32. In other words, he insists on distinguishing fascist myth from religion because he insists on characterizing it as a modern phenomenon. But this is inconsistent with his emphasis on the

that human “mythopoetic” archetypes are inherently religious. More to the point, in the course of seeking to distinguish fascism from religion, Griffin makes a convincing case that it is a closely analogous phenomenon.³²⁸ Once again, we need to avoid becoming a prisoner of language. It makes no matter if we call fascism a “political religion,” a form of politics which mimics religion without sharing in some mysterious essence of religion, however defined, or perhaps a “pseudo-religion,” as Harold James puts it. The important point is that fascism depends on the invocation of fundamental “mythopoetic” archetypes which, in terms of the polarities of culture, are clearly “spiritual.” Or in simpler terms, fascism is a modern religion which substitutes the state, or the race, for the god. As Emilio Gentile says, “fascism aimed at abolishing the boundaries between the religious and political spheres.”³²⁹ Whether one wishes to call the resulting faith “religion” or something else is merely a semantic quibble.

It is also no more than a similar semantic quibble to argue about whether fascists and totalitarians are essentially “modern” or “anti-modern.” As Griffin details quite clearly in his description of “palingenesis,” the core theme in the myth, the central story which gives it motive power and a sense of direction, is a faith in renewal. This means that it is forward-looking, in a sense, because it promises a new future, but it also means that it is a rejection of something considered decadent in the current time. Both Nazism and Communism, especially, had strong elements of “millennial prophecy.”³³⁰ Griffin chooses to see fascism as more modern than anti-modern. But this is merely a matter of perspective, as his own description indicates:

Some forms of fascist myth are radically anti-urban, anti-secular and/or draw on cultural idioms of nostalgia for a pre-industrial idyll of heroism, moral virtue or racial purity. However, even in these cases it is only the allegedly degenerative elements in the modern age which are being rejected.³³¹

“mythopoetic” archetypes in fascism, and his clear recognition that fascism is a reaction against the perceived degeneration of modernity.

³²⁸ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 35, et passim.

³²⁹ Emilio Gentile, “Fascism as Political Religion,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 25.2/3 (May-June 1990) 229-251, 231.

³³⁰ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 31.

³³¹ Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 47.

This is another distinction without a difference. To say that “it is only the allegedly degenerative elements in the modern age which are being rejected” still leaves a lot to be rejected ~ in the most radical and violent way.

Ernst Nolte, another writer on the subject whose esoteric style requires a bit of interpretation, says that “fascism is the first phenomenon after the long epoch of ideological history in which the particular reality seeks itself and only itself.... Now for the first time its fundamental structures attain a definite self-awareness.”³³² Fascism is the ultimate manifestation of “groupishness” explained by evolutionary theory. Even more, it is the extreme polarization of that groupishness, as a self-conscious valorization or spiritualization of the group, as such, as the ultimate ground of being and basis of the good. Fascism’s unique character is its totality, the extent to which it is willing to elevate identification with the group to the exclusion of all other values. It is in a sense simply a terrible *reductio ad absurdum* of the basic urge to form group identities built into our nature by evolution. All the rest is details.

The group identification which the member of a fascist or totalitarian group assumes ~ whether it is the cross, a red flag, the swastika, or the various brown, black, blue, and purple shirts of various fascist movements ~ is simply a “green beard” consolidating that identity. Hitler strongly emphasized the importance of the Nazi Party having a potent and emotionally satisfying symbol in the form of the swastika flag, an “outward sign of their common bond.”³³³ But it does not really matter all that much what symbol it is. Either a hammer and sickle or a swastika may suit street fighters just as well, as long as they have the “authoritarian personality” which is especially prone to strong group identifications. It may be religious, economic, or racial, but such a symbol is always political in the sense of being a division between friends and enemies. The origin of the term for the phenomenon, the *fascis*, happens to be a perfect symbol. Fascism, at its most irreducible core, is simply the desire to

³³² Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, 422-3.

bundle together as strongly as possible. The vague anti-modern and anti-urban ideology of the early *Wandervögel* or “Wanderers” in late 19th Century Germany stressed the beauty of *Bunderlebnis*, the “bonding experience.” This was invoked even more intensely after the First World War in the romanticism of the *Fronterlebnis* or “front experience,” the sacred brotherhood of arms.

The question, then, is why this natural urge to group ~ an urge expressed in benign form every day by sports fans or fashion-conscious consumers, and expressed less benignly by conventional patriotism and ethnic pride ~ happened to manifest itself in such an extreme and malignant form in the fascism and totalitarianism arising in Europe after the First World War. The obvious answer to this is that it was, just as their ideologues said, a reaction against modern political anomy. Whatever the differences between various fascist and totalitarian movements, they were all quite clear about what they were against. They were all against liberalism, open market capitalism, and social pluralism. To explain why the specific movements took the specific form that they did ~ why fascism did not develop in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and why, in particular, the most extreme form of fascism arose in Germany, while the Italian form remained relatively mild, despite that being the place where the theory of fascism was most highly developed ~ requires the more concrete, historical, and geographic analysis to come in the following sections. But the basic nature of the phenomenon is not really such a mystery. Indeed, it might be that fascism has caused so much controversy not because it is such a complex phenomenon, but rather because it is such a simple phenomenon. It is the utter simplicity of fascism, its pure urge to group identity, with little actual concern for other substantive context, which makes it seem mysterious to academics searching for ideological content. It is an ultimately simple idea which is so dangerous because it has found its natural ecological niche in the simple mind of a collective self-consciousness.

We need only pay serious attention to fascism’s most successful leader, *der*

³³³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 492.

Führer, to see that this is so. Georges Bernanos aptly characterized Hitler as a “terrifying simplifier.”³³⁴ Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (1925-6) is not often subjected to the sort of textual exegesis visited on the works of Rousseau, Nietzsche, or Marx. There seems to be no point in attempting to analyze such an incoherent and inelegant ramble. But the academic scholars are falling prey to the same error as the politicians who neglected to take seriously the aggressive designs laid out in the same work. The scholars do not take the philosophy or ideal of Nazism seriously, because it is so simplistic and offensive. But it is there, buried in the torrent of words:

The Aryan is not greatest in his mental qualities as such, but in the extent of his willingness to put all of his abilities in the service of his community.

....

The basic attitude from which such activity arises, we call ~ to distinguish it from egotism and selfishness ~ idealism.

....

In the first volume I have dealt with the word “folkish” (*völkische*) in so far as I was forced to establish that the term seems inadequately defined to permit the formation of a solid fighting community. All sorts of people, with a yawning gulf between everything essential in their opinions, are running around today under the blanket term “folkish.” Therefore, before I proceed to the tasks and aims of the National Socialist Workers’ Party, I should like to give a clarification of the concept, “folkish,” as well as its relation to the party movement.

The concept “*folkish*” seems as vaguely defined, as open to as many interpretations and as unlimited in practical application as, for instance, the word “religious,” and it is very hard to conceive of anything absolutely precise under this designation, either in the sense of intellectual comprehension or of practical effects.

³³⁴ Georges Bernanos, quoted in Friedrich Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, Janet Sondheimer, trans. (1968) [*Das Heilige Römische Reich*, 1916], 81. Simplistic political rhetoric is not, of course, a monopoly of dictators. Ronald Reagan, perhaps the most successful propagandist among 20th Century American presidents except Franklin Roosevelt, was hailed or scorned, depending on partisanship perspective, as the “Great Simplifier.” Russell Hardin, “The Public Trust,” in Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, eds., *Disaffected Democracies: What’s Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* (2000), 48; Haynes Bonner Johnson, *Sleepwalking Through History: America in the Reagan Years* (1991), 458. Howard Gardner argues that “Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers,” and he also observes that such simplifications are often tied to a childhood “Star Wars” mentality of “rigid dualities” and a “Manichean struggle” in which “two groups ~ good and evil exist ~ and those of ‘us’ who resemble one another in racial or ethnic background must stick together so that ‘we’ may prevail. Those individuals or groups that, for one reason or another, cannot be included under the national umbrella are exorcised, often viciously.” Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (1995), 259, 43-4. For a democratic politician with decent values, simplistic rhetoric is merely a cheap device which draws on childish images we all share. Like anything else, however, it becomes dangerous when carried to extremes.

The designation “religious” only becomes tangibly conceivable in the moment when it becomes connected with a definitely outlined form of its practice. It is a very lovely statement and usually apt, to describe a man’s nature as “profoundly religious.” Perhaps there are a few people who feel satisfied by such a very general description, to whom it can even convey a definite, more or less sharp, picture of that soul-state. But, since the great masses consist neither of philosophers nor of saints, such a very general religious idea will as a rule mean to the individual only the liberation of his individual thought and action, without, however, leading to that efficacy which arises from religious inner longing for the moment when, from the purely metaphysical infinite world of ideas, a clearly delineated faith forms. Assuredly, this is not the end in itself, but only a means to an end; yet it is the indispensably necessary means which alone makes possible the achievement of the end. The end, however, is not only ideal but in the last analysis also eminently practical. And in general we must clearly acknowledge the fact that the highest ideals always correspond to a deep and vital necessity, just as the nobility of the most exalted beauty lies in the last analysis only in what is logically most expedient.

By helping to raise man above the level of bestial vegetation, faith contributes in reality to the securing and safeguarding of his existence. Take away from present-day mankind its education-based, religious-dogmatic principles ~ or practically speaking, ethical-moral principles ~ by abolishing this religious education, but without replacing it by an equivalent, and the result will be a grave shock to the foundations of their existence.

....

The situation with the term “folkish” is similar to that with the term “religious.” In it, too, there lie basic realizations.... *For the realization of philosophical ideals and of the demands derived from them nor more occurs through men’s pure feeling or inner will in themselves than the achievement of freedom through the general longing for it. No, only when the ideal urge for independence gets a fighting organization in the form of military instruments of power can the pressing desire of a people be transformed into glorious reality.*

*Every philosophy of life, even if it is a thousand times correct and of highest benefit to humanity, will remain without significance for the practical shaping of a people’s life, as long as its principles have not become the banner of a fighting movement....*³³⁵

I am forced to quote him at length, because his prose wanders with such apparent aimlessness down the wood path. But there is a path, and a point to it all. The Aryan is superior because he is the most groupish. The specific manifestation of that group is the German folkish community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). The subordination of the individual to that community is the highest human ideal. This urge to belong to the community is closely analogous to religious faith. Like faith, its essential virtue is the

pure act of faith itself (much like the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith alone) but it must have a concrete historical movement to be meaningful to the bulk of the population. And this movement must be an essentially militant movement. By giving the people something to fight for, the leader gives them something to have faith in, to belong to.

Hillel summed up an enlightened vision of Judaism by saying that “What is hateful to yourself, do not to your fellow-man. That is the whole of the *Torah* and the remainder is but commentary.”³³⁵ If he had been as elegant in his prose, Hitler might well have summed up the fascist faith by saying that “What is not your group you must fight, so that you can have faith in your group, and the remainder is but details you can leave up to me.” The great mystery of fascism, and its great dangerousness, arises from the amazingly simple purity of its purpose. Nazism, just as Heidegger claimed, was the political manifestation of pure Being. It was the absolute and essential apotheosis of the simple idea, the self-conscious identity of self, which found its perfect ecological niche in the simple mind of the collective will.

³³⁵ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 297, 298, 378-80 (emphasis in original).

³³⁶ *Talmud Bavli*, Shabbat 31a, in Abraham Cohen and Jacob Neusner, *Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages* (1968), 65.

§ 5. Geoculture and cultural gradients

The last section drew on a wide body of cultural theory for a basic set of dichotomous terms, the “polarities of culture,” which should be useful for analyzing the German problem. In the remainder of this work, the problem will be explained as an empirical phenomenon with the conventional tools of historical and comparative analysis as well as that basic concept of polarity. But there is one more set of theoretical terms ~ terms of midlevel theory closely related to the more general concept of polarity ~ to introduce. Those are “geoculture,” the “cultural krater,” and the “cultural gradient.” These are specific links between the conventional analysis and the theory of “polarity.” “Geoculture” posits that the primary determinates of cultural evolution are geographic ~ in the sense of spatial relationships between cultures, or “cultural geography,” as well as physical and biological environments, as discussed generally in § 2. A “cultural gradient” is a spatial differential in cultural development, which may be an especially steep gradient when it occurs on the outer edge of a major “cultural krater.” Restated in these terms, the thesis of this work is that the reactionary and pathological culture which engendered irrational militarism and fascism in Germany was an example of extreme spiritual polarity, within a context of an unresolved antagonism between polarities in Germany, which directly resulted from its position on a steep “cultural gradient” in Northwest Europe.

The reader may preview this section, and thereby see concretely what is meant by “geoculture,” “cultural kraters,” and “cultural gradients,” in maps 1-4, photos 1-2, and tables 3-4. This section covers a wide ground, including some major elements of spiritual reaction to modernity in the West, which were recapitulated in an extreme form by the Germans, and the geocultural foundations of Western Europe and Germany. The comparative analysis of the German *Sonderweg* is given in § 6. The *Sonderweg* itself, the effect of those causes, is then described in §§ 7-11.

This is the mid-level theory of this work, and the beginning of the empirical analysis, which supports the higher-level theory of polarity and which provides empirical proof of actual causes. This first section in that process of empirical verification is more historical than comparative, but is also partly comparative, in that it makes basic comparisons of polarizations in the major traditions of the West ~ Jewish, Greek, and Roman ~ which are directly relevant to the Germans in terms of both genealogy and historical analogy.

The historical conflict between “the tribe and the city” is a concret conflict of central importance to the evolution of the West, and is the most obvious manifestation of the conflict between the “spiritual” and “material” polarities in culture. Ideological reactions arising from this conflict, such as the Jewish justification of genocide in holy war, the Jewish hatred of materialism, the myth of Spartan virtue, and the Roman myth of rustic virtue, were significant elements in spiritual reaction in the West which were explicitly adopted in various quarters of German ideology. The genealogical continuities are not fanciful. They are documented in the explicit, self-conscious reactions against materialism as expressed by figures such as Luther, Fichte, Nietzsche, Rousseau (who was adopted by German romantics), Schmitt, Heidegger, and Nazi ideologues. Moreover, the specific concept of the “cultural gradient” as a causative factor in such polarizations is documented by the existence of previous gradients between the Jewish and Canaanite cities, between Sparta and Athens, and between the eastern and western cities of the Roman Empire.

This section makes the following substantive points:

1. Advanced “secondary cultures” evolve by incorporation of elements from older cultures, and the spatial relationships between cultures, as shaped by geographic routes and resources, will largely determine, at early stages, the degree to which a culture is able to take advantage of this cultural sex. Incorporation of disparate elements from older cultures has both advantages and disadvantages. It brings more specific knowledge to be used (what is sometime called “human capital”) and

undermines old rigid institutions, thus forcing a culture to be more adaptable. (Rome was the leading paradigm of such adaptability in the classical world.) But it also brings tension between groups, anomie, and spiritual reaction. The “West” was the most successful civilization in the world because it was the most polyglot. But it was also highly conflicted because of that.

2. *Conclusions from this section:* Rome passed along many of those internal conflicts to the Germans, and the “German problem,” as a problem in spiritual reaction against urbanization, materialism, and multiculturalism, was the same kind of reaction as experienced before by Jews, Greeks, and Romans ~ only more so, because of the especially steep “cultural gradient” in Germany.

The tribe and the city

The city. In one word, to put the matter in its most concrete terms, it all began with the damn city. Deep within all of us, there is a creature who wants to know what happened to its tribe. It wonders why the world has become so alien, lonely, and strange. And it hates the city.

Cities ~ and also the conflict between ideal and real cities, or the conflict between the mythological city on the hill and the commercial city by the sea ~ are at the core of the problem. More specifically, where cities were built, and what types of cities those were ~ whether they were *necropoleis* or *poleis*, cities hidden in the hills or cities by the sea, monocultural cities or multicultural cities, autonomous cities or feudal and ecclesiastical cities, and cities which were core areas for consolidation of nation-states or cities which were merely military capitals of nation-states ~ were material determinates of geocultural relationships, cultural gradients, and differences between national political cultures. The full explanation of the German problem, as depicted in diagram 2, is complex, multilayered, and multicausal. We should always be wary of simple answers. There are few things so deceptive as a simple idea which has found its natural ecological niche in a simple mind. But first, as simply as possible, in terms

which relate to traditional philosophical discourse and concrete history, this is what it is all about. It is about the hatred of the city.

We might begin at the beginning, though there is no true beginning to anything, with the philosopher who reasoned from the beginning (*ex archês*).¹ Aristotle's most famous quote, the cornerstone of his *Politics*, is that "man (*anthrôpos*) is by nature (*physis*) a political animal (*politicon zôon*)."² In actuality, as well as etymology, "civilization" and "politics" were founded in the city, the *civitas* of the Romans and the *polis* of the Greeks. Aristotle argues that politics ~ which is to say, the form of open and relatively liberal politics which is worthy of civilized humans ~ arises from the intercourse of the city. This is true. He also argues that civilization and politics come naturally to humans. Unfortunately, despite the virtue of his concept of politics, that is not true.

Before explaining exactly why Aristotle is mistaken about that, let me point out something he gets quite right. A few lines further, he says that, "One who is incapable of participating or who is...no part of a city...is either a beast or a god."³ That is an excellent short diagnosis of Nazis and other totalitarian ideologues such as Stalinists and Maoists. I have not seen any indication that Hitler ever read Aristotle. But this simple idea somehow found its way into his fetid mind, perhaps via Nietzsche, and occupied a niche. "Gods and beasts," he told Hermann Rauschnig, "that is what our world is made of."⁴ By rejecting politics, totalitarians seek to become gods, and

¹ "Now in these matters as elsewhere it is by looking at how things develop naturally from the beginning (*ex archês*) that one may best study them." Aristotle (of Stagira), *The Politics* [*Politica*, c. 335-23 BCE], Carnes Lord, trans. (1985), 1252a.

² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a. Some imprecise transliterations of Greek, such as *physis* for *phusis*, are followed for sake of convention. Insertions of original foreign words in quoted translations are with parentheses () rather than brackets [].

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a. He adds that "just as man is the best of animals when completed, when separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all."

⁴ Hitler, quoted in Hermann Rauschnig, *The Voice of Destruction* ([1940] 2003), 246. In that context, he was expressing a rather Nietzschean *Weltanschauung*. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* [*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887], in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1987), 1.16 (page 54); *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1968) [*Nachgelassene Werke: Der Wille zu Macht, Versuch einer Umwertung aller Wert*,

instead become beasts. The Nazi Party liked to call itself a “movement” (*Bewegung*) rather than a “party.”⁵ Hitler posed as an artist rather than a politician,⁶ and was treated as a god.⁷ The totalitarians are not merely on the extremes of politics. They claim to be above politics, and they thereby pursue the most dangerous form of politics.⁸ In other words, they seek to rise above the city.

As Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit observe, the current global hostility towards the West is closely connected with hatred of the city.⁹ But that hatred has deep roots in the mind of the West itself. Economics was once called the “dismal science.” Western political philosophy might be called the “bitchy science,” because of its hatred of its own subject matter.¹⁰ Consider the hostility toward the city and its politics evident in

1901, posthumous], § 4.958 (page 503). On the reliability of Hermann Rauschning, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, “Preface” to Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (2000), x.

⁵ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, Martin Brady, trans. (2002) [*LTI, Notizbuch eines Philologen*, 1957], 226; Robert Waite, *The Kaiser & the Fuhrer* (1998), 35, 131, 136; Horst Gies, “The NSDAP and Agrarian Organizations in the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic,” in Henry A., Turner, Jr., ed., *Nazism and the Third Reich* (1972), 56.

⁶ Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda* (1993), 13; Alan Bullock, *Hitler* (1962), 217; Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (2002); Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler* (1998), 214-20.

⁷ Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West*, E.W. Dickes, trans. (1939) [*Die Revolution des Nihilismus: Kulisse und Wirklichkeit im Dritten Reich*, 1938], 35; Rauschning, *Voice of Destruction*, 51, 246; Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth* (1987), 39; Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich* (2000), 113, 255, 264-5; Waite, *Kaiser & Fuhrer*, 131.

⁸ This is the point of the neo-Aristotelian definition of “politics” insisted upon in Bernard Crick, *In Defense of Politics* (1962). He argues that anything not meeting his model of liberal politics is not “politics.” There is little utility in that sort of normative definition, whatever the worthiness of the norm. Political systems which are oppressive, tyrannical, or totalitarian are still “political” in some form. But the substantive point is that political factions do their worst damage when claiming to be nonpolitical. On the “decline of the political attitude” in Weimar Germany and the rise of extremism in its place, see Helmuth Plessner, *The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism*, Andrew Wallace, trans. (1999) [*Grenzen der Gemeinschaft: Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus*, 1924], 84, et passim; Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, Walter D. Morris, trans. (1983) [*Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, 1918], 16, et seq. Fascism, in other countries as well as Germany, was “particularly suited to expressing the ‘anti-political’ resentments of those who condemned the entire parliamentary system as corrupt and divisive.” Adrian Lyttelton, “What Was Fascism?” *The New York Review of Books* 51.16 (21 October 2004) 33-6, 34.

⁹ Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2004), especially chapter 13, “The Occidental City.”

¹⁰ According to Nietzsche, philosophy is the “gay science.” Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1974) [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882 & 1887]. But as Nietzsche actually describes his supposed gaiety, it is more the manic interlude of a manic depressive, “a

Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Schmitt ~ and among the fashionable postmodern, romantic, and conservative philosophers in contemporary academia, on both right and left, who invoke Nietzsche and Heidegger. As Leo Strauss says, there is a “natural tension between the city and the philosophers.”¹¹ Or as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno put it, “all philosophy is homesickness.”¹² The philosophers are in the city, but they are not of it. They speak instead, with resentment and outrage, for the dangerous inner child from the childhood of our species, the creature who wants to know what happened to its tribe and how to return to a paradise lost, however fanciful. But do they think it is possible, as John Seery asks of postmodernists, to return to an existential nomadism?¹³

Rousseau may have done the most to articulate the hostility toward the city in the Modern Age. As Helmuth Plessner puts it, “something terrible has lodged itself in the head through his teachings.”¹⁴ Rousseau admitted that there was no return to the paradise lost.¹⁵ But his response, no less unrealistic, was to fantasize about founding a

bit of merry-making after a long privation and powerlessness” after a “stretch of desert, exhaustion, disbelief, icing up in the midst of youth...this tyranny of pain...the *nausea* that had gradually developed out of an incautious and pampering spiritual diet, called romanticism...” “Preface for the Second Edition,” *Gay Science*, 32-3.

¹¹ Leo Strauss, “Plato,” in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (1987), 58.

¹² Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, trans. (1972) [*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 1944], 78. “German philosophy as a whole ~ Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, to name the greatest ~ is the most fundamental form of *romanticism* and homesickness there has ever been.” Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, § 419 (page 225) (emphasis in original). Heidegger speaks often of the “essential homelessness (*Unheimlichkeit*) of man.” Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism” [*Brief über den Humanismus*, 1947], in *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed. (1977), 244; Heidegger, with Rudolph Augstein and Georg Folff, Maria P. Alter, trans., “Only a God Can Save Us: Der Spiegel’s Interview with Martin Heidegger” [“Nur ein Gott Kann Uns Noch Retten,” interview conducted on 23 September 1966, published in *Der Spiegel* 23 (31 May 1976), 193 et seq.], *Philosophy Today* 20.4 (Winter 1976) 267-284, 277.

¹³ John E. Seery, “Castles in the Air: An Essay on Political Foundations,” *Political Theory* 27.4 (August 1999) 460-490, 466. See also Patricia Springborg, “Politics, Primordialism, and Orientalism: Marx, Aristotle, and the Myth of the *Gemeinschaft*,” *The American Political Science Review* 80.1 (March 1986) 185-211.

¹⁴ Plessner, *Limits of Community*, 60.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality* [*Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité Parmi les Hommes*, 1754], in *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. and Judith R. Masters, trans. (1964).

new form of city based on a simplistic ideal.¹⁶ That was also a philosopher's pastime for Plato, Augustine, and Marx ~ and one that Nietzsche intended to take up.¹⁷ For German romantics and fascists, the substitute for the ideal city was the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the "national community" of Germany. In that new order, all would "be forced to be free," as Rousseau puts it.¹⁸ It was in this spirit that Heidegger called for the "self-determination" of the university in accordance with the *Führerprinzip*.¹⁹ These ideal cities invented in speech, like Hitler's plans for rebuilding Berlin in inhuman proportions, only reflected their hatred for real cities.²⁰

Nietzsche says it most vehemently, but speaks for the great tradition, when he tells us to "spit on this city of shopkeepers and turn back.... Spit on the city of compressed souls and narrow chests....where everything infirm, infamous, lustful, dusky, overmusty, pussy, and plotting putrefies...."²¹ Nietzsche also claimed to be "the last

¹⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Maurice Cranston, trans. (1968) [*Du contrat social*, 1762].

¹⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, quoted by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, "Introduction" to the Thomas Common translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1950) [*Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1883-91], xviii.

¹⁸ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, chapter 7, p. 64. To be fair, what Rousseau means by this controversial phrase is considerably more ambiguous than what Heidegger means by "self-determination" (*Selbstbehauptung*) in the Rector's Address.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, Rector's Address on "The Self-Determination of the German University" ("Die Selbstbehauptung der Universität," 27 May 1933), in Victor Fariás, *Heidegger and Nazism*, Paul Burrell, trans. (1989) [*Heidegger et le nazisme*, 1987], 96, et seq.

²⁰ Leo Strauss, although a renowned proponent of Plato and classical Greek philosophy, acknowledges that "by leaving the cave" of human perceptions in search of the pure idea, as Plato attempts to do metaphorically in the *Republic*, "one loses sight of the city, of the whole political sphere." And he even admits seeing at least a danger that such an idealistic, theological, or transcendental politics, or what Strauss calls "man's aiming too high," can lead to "bestialities." Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* ([1959] 1988), 32, 44. The failures of German idealism prompted Marx to say that, "Philosophy and the study of the actual world have the same relation to one another as masturbation and sexual love." Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, translator not given (International Publishers, 2001) [*Die deutsche Ideologie*, 1846], 103. But he never gave up that idealism himself. See Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (1961). On Hitler's *Germania*, an ideal and monumental Berlin, see Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, Richard and Clara Winston, trans. (1970) [*Erinnerungen*, 1969], 114-8, 189-91; David Clay Large, *Berlin* (2002), 300-6; Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (1998), 407-8.

²¹ "Speie auf diese Stadt der Krämer...." Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, third part, § 7, "On Passing By," 177. *Speien*, "to spit," also means "to vomit."

anti-political German.”²² One might wish that had been so, but it certainly was not. The fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Third Reich were facilitated (although not caused in main) by the “unpolitical man” (*Unpolitisch*), the German intellectual who would not lower himself to participate in the tawdry business of parliamentary politics.²³ They could not avoid politics. But what they got instead was the politics of the dagger.²⁴ Nietzsche claims that “resentment” (*ressentiment*) is the motivation for the bourgeois morality he despises.²⁵ This is psychological projection.²⁶ In fact, what unites all these philosophers, despite other wide differences, is their resentment of the city ~ or more precisely, their resentment of the ignoble, base, and pragmatic politics required by civilized life.

This is a manifestation of a basic cultural polarization and conflict within the civilization, a war for the mind of the West. Nazism was exceptional only in being an

²² Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* [1908], “Why I am So Wise,” § 3, in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1987), 225. See also his call for a time “when politics will have a different meaning” (*wo man über Politik umlernen wird*) under the rule of the “master race” (*Herren-Rasse*). Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, § 4.960 (page 504).

²³ The classic manifesto of the anti-political German is Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, Walter D. Morris, trans. (1983) [*Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, 1918]. There, Mann claims that “the national character itself is speaking through me.” *Reflections*, 17. On the “extraordinary depoliticization of Germany during this period,” see Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Political Incompetence of Philosophy” (1992), 369. See also Gordon A. Craig, “Engagement and Neutrality in Weimar Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2.2 (April 1967) 49-63; and Harvey Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (1992).

²⁴ One can say that there was too much politics in Weimar Germany. See Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics* 49.3 (April 1997), 401-429. But it was anti-political politics. The SA, the *Stahlhelm*, and the street troops of the KPD did not fight in the streets to participate in parliamentary politics, but to overthrow it, while conservative elites in business and the military conspired, politically, to create an authoritarian regime which would repress parliamentary politics.

²⁵ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* [*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887], in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1987), § 1.10, et passim. The connection between Judeo-Christian and bourgeois morality, and *ressentiment*, is discussed in Walter Kaufmann, “Editor’s Introduction” to *Genealogy of Morals*, 8.

²⁶ Richard Rorty speaks of “the resentment which, despite himself, Nietzsche displayed so conspicuously.” Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (1991), 70. “Projection” is the defense mechanism of ascribing one’s own uncomfortable feelings to others, especially those against whom one has those feelings. For example, “the prejudiced person denies his bias by insisting, ‘I don’t hate them, they hate me.’” Robert Goldenson, *The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior* (1970),

especially extreme manifestation of this reaction against the city. The “German problem” is our problem, a problem with the self-hatred of civilized humans, a *Weltschmerz*.²⁷ The great tradition of bitchy philosophers speaks authentically for the angst of the civilization. It is endemic in the history of the West. Jewish prophets curse the evils of Jerusalem, polluted by Philistines. Aristophanes, the sophisticated urban poet of Periclean Athens, employs a rustic farmer to mock the evil *polis* in *Acharnians*. The Old Oligarch bitches about upstart slaves and metics on the streets of Athens. Juvenal and Horace sneer at Greeklings and whores on the streets of cosmopolitan Rome. Cato demands the destruction of Carthage. Augustine and Luther condemn the citizens of the earthly city to Hell. Among the moderns, this self-hatred is still as strong ~ if not more so, because there cannot be a reaction against modernity without modernity.²⁸ As Richard Rorty says, “it is among the philosophers of the West that contemporary self-hatred is most prevalent.”²⁹ But they are expressing a hatred of the city, and a corresponding myth of rustic virtue, which infects common culture and politics in the Modern Age.³⁰ It is trite, perhaps, but this is the place to quote Pogo. “We have met the enemy and he is us.”³¹ More precisely, the enemy is that hurt and resentful creature inside us who longs to rejoin its tribe.

“projection.” Resentment is a real factor in the Judeo-Christian tradition. But it is most evident in the *Old Testament*, which Nietzsche admires. *Genealogy of Morals*, § 3.22 (page 144).

²⁷ “World-weariness.” Max Weber uses that term to characterize intellectuals reacting against urban culture in Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Ephraim Fischhoff, trans. (1993) [“Religionssoziologie,” in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1922], 83.

²⁸ See Karen Armstrong, *The Battle For God: A History of Fundamentalism* (2000). Foucault points out that “...the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of ‘countermodernity.’” Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment” [*Was ist Aufklärung?*, Catherine Porter, trans.], in *The Foucault Reader* (1984), 39.

²⁹ Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 82.

³⁰ For example, on the especially strong myth of rustic virtue in the United States, see Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (2004). “In spite of the fact that the United States has become predominately urban during the twentieth century, the image of rural virtues and of the superiority of rural life persists.” Gordon Baker, *Rural Versus Urban Political Power: The Nature and Consequences of Unbalanced Representation* (1955), 1. See also Harlan Hahn, *Urban-Rural Conflict: The Politics of Change* (1971), 12, et passim; Paul Krugman, *The Great Unraveling: Losing Our Way in the New Century* (2003), 177.

That is not the same thing as saying that modernity is itself the problem. This work is an argument against that currently fashionable thesis. Indeed, a charge that postmodernists make against liberal technocrats such as myself is that we are essentially totalitarian because we also replace politics with something else.³² With us evil technocrats, it is global technology, globalization, commercialism, the culture industry, manufactured consensus, administration, instrumentalism, positivism, and logocentrism. It might be a rational, efficient, and gentle totalitarianism, the “universal homogeneous state” (UHS), or something worse. Some argue that Nazism and the Nazi Holocaust were essential manifestations of modernity. This is a current theater of the “war for the mind of the West” waged within Western intelligentsia. Strangely enough, many who argue that modernity is totalitarian are influenced by Martin Heidegger, who was a Nazi, and not in a merely incidental way. That is only one of many ironies in this story.

But let me begin again at the beginning of the story, with Aristotle.³³ Immediately after saying that “man is a political animal,” he invokes a line from the *Iliad*. “He who is without a city...is ‘without clan, without law, without hearth,’ like the person reproved by Homer.”³⁴ The *Iliad* refers to one who is *aphrêtôr*, or “without a *phratra*.” *Phratra* is “clan” or “tribe” in Homeric Greek, and also “brotherhood,” in the sense of

³¹ Actually Walt Kelly, in his comic strip, *Pogo*. James Simpson, *Simpson's Contemporary Quotations* (1988) # 4622.

³² I was a typical sample of the despised species in my earlier life as a government manager of environmental programs. See Eric Reeves, “Exotic Politics: An Analysis of the Law and Politics of Exotic Invasions of the Great Lakes,” *Toledo Journal of Great Lakes Law, Science & Policy* 2.2 (Spring 2000) 125-206.

³³ My disagreement with his most famous quote probably would have been old news to him. “Aristotle’s defense of the naturalness of the city must be seen as a response to a powerful contemporary opinion according to which the city is contrary to nature and rests in the last analysis on force.” Carnes Lord, “Aristotle,” in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (1987), 137. Although this view was apparently held by the materialistic and cynical Sophists whom Plato opposed, it seems that Plato also saw the city as an unnatural creation. Plato’s “good *polis* must be consciously founded; it will not evolve of itself by a historical necessity.” William Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System* (1978), 48. Plato, *Republic* [*Politeia*, c. 387-347 BCE], 472c-472a, 472d. “The just city...is impossible, because it is against nature.” Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (1964), 127.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a, quoting Homer, *The Iliad* [c. 700 BCE], 9.63.

a consensual non-biological association, in the Attic Greek of Aristotle's Athens. In that later context of the city, the *phratra* became a subdivision of the *phylê*, also a "tribe."³⁵ A "tribe," either *phratra* or *phylê*, may have evolved beyond biological relationships long before that stage of the *polis*.³⁶ Still, as Anthony Snodgrass says, "tribal survivals in later Greek political systems are strong enough to suggest a considerable pervious importance."³⁷ Nevertheless, clans, tribes, and brotherhoods do not figure in Aristotle's construction of the *polis*, which he builds up from households and villages in the *Politics*.³⁸ Indeed, as he (or one of his students) tells us in the *Athenian Constitution*, the construction of a workable *polis* in Athens required that the ties to tribes be severed. Cleisthenes created a new unit, a *dêmos*, for voting and representation in 507-8 BCE.³⁹ This reform, says the *Athenian Constitution*, "is the origin of the saying, 'Don't judge by tribes (*phylai*),' addressed to those who want to inquire into a man's ancestry."⁴⁰ Here are the beginnings of a most significant trait of Western modernity, which is individualism.⁴¹ In arguing against Plato's ideal city, Aristotle says that the city is "made up not only of a number of human beings; but also of human beings differing in kind."⁴² The city has "organic" rather than "mechanical" solidarity. (See § 4.) And it tends to be multicultural, which is another threat to

³⁵ See ἀφρητῶρ, φράτρα, and φυλή in Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

³⁶ Anthony Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece* (1980), 25-8.

³⁷ Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece*, 25. See also Springborg, "Politics, Primordialism, and Orientalism."

³⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b.

³⁹ Ancient sources attest to notable Greeks who are members of the same *genos*, or "clan," being split among separate *dêmoi*. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, translator not given (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) [*La Cité antique*, 1864], book 2, chapter 10, § 1, page 94. *Dêmos* has the primary meaning of "people" or "common people," but takes on the meaning of "district" here. It also means "prostitute." See δῆμος in Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

⁴⁰ Aristotle (of Stagira), *The Athenian Constitution* [*Athênaiôn Politeia*, c. 332-2 BCE], P.J. Rhodes, trans. (1984), 21.2. An alternative translation is "Don't draw distinctions between tribes," which nicely contrasts liberal politics with Carl Schmitt's concept of politics being based on the "the friend-and-enemy distinction."

⁴¹ See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), 71-2.

⁴² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1261a.

traditional values.⁴³

It is important to note that the “tribe” and the “city” are ideal types, giving us a simple dichotomy which is considerably complicated in reality.⁴⁴ With that qualification, however, it is significant that the constitution of Athens was inconsistent with the original biological identities of the tribe. Aristotle may still claim that the city is “natural,” but only in a teleological or normative sense, not in the sense of natural origins.⁴⁵ My disagreement with Aristotle is not his normative end, which is more or less the liberal norm of politics, but with the facts.

The current biological form of human beings, what anthropologists ironically call “modern humans,” or technically *Homo sapiens sapiens*, evolved from about 100,000 years before the present (BP). This is the end stage of the “environment of evolutionary adaptation” (EEA), which gave us, more or less, whatever is our current genome. Sometime around 40,000 BP the species or subspecies called the

⁴³ Modern sociologists have two theories for why the city threatens traditional values. In the “urban anomie” model, the big city is inherently cold and impersonal, and therefore generates anomie. But this theory is not strongly supported by the data. There is more evidence for the “urban value-diffusion” model, in which big cities undermine traditional values because they provide a home to “deviant subcultures.” Claude S. Fischer, “The Effect of Urban Life on Traditional Values,” *Social Forces* 53.3 (March 1975) 420-32, 430-1. See also Kevin Christiano, *Religious Diversity and Social Change: American Cities, 1890-1906* (1987).

⁴⁴ Among anthropologists, “tribe” is now a taboo word unless used self-referentially by Native Americans. To be politically correct, they use “band” or “clan” instead, depending on whether the related group is relatively small or large. See “tribe” in the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (1996). In historical time, the “tribe” took on a different meaning (although there is dispute about exactly what that was, and it undoubtedly changed over time) when the “tribe” as *phratra* or *phylê* became a division within the Greek *polis*, or the “tribe” as *gens* or *tribus*, sometimes representative of a previously separate city, became a division within the uniquely international polity of Rome. Léon Homo, *Roman Political Institutions: From City to State*, M.R. Doble, trans. (1930) [*Les institutions politiques Romaines: De la Cité à L'état*, 1927], 10. In addition to the Greek terms cited, see *gens* and *tribus* in Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (1969), and Fustel de Coulanges, *Ancient City*, 3.1.109, et seq., “The Phantry and the Cury, the Tribe.” See also the discussion of “tribes” (*tribus*) in Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita* [27-20 BCE], 8.37. The early cities did not extinguish all tribal connections. As Patricia Springborg says, “network systems, familialism, patron-client relations, and other affective, affinal, and traditional social structures” persisted, in various permutations, within the political structures of all early cities, including the Greek *poleis*. Springborg, “Politics, Primordialism, and Orientalism,” 187.

⁴⁵ I can agree with Aristotle in hoping that civilization has a future, and that its future might be ensured by some basic logic of evolution, although that is speculative. See Robert Wright, *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* (2000).

“Neanderthal” disappeared, perhaps in a prehistoric holocaust, leaving the “Cro-Magnon” to dominate the planet alone.⁴⁶ The “Paleolithic” culture of these Cro-Magnons was based on hunting-gathering in small groups consisting of “bands” or “tribes.” Based on observations of contemporary hunter-gatherers as well as archeological evidence, it appears that bands rarely exceeded an upper limit of 100 members, and probably averaged around 25 members.⁴⁷ This reflects not only the limits of resources but also the limits of human cooperation at a low level of technology.⁴⁸ Among different species of primates, “the best predictor of brain development is the size of the social group.”⁴⁹ What makes us most essentially human,

⁴⁶ *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution* (1992), § 6.6. As pointed out by the eminent evolutionary biologist, William D. Hamilton, the extremely close genetic relatedness of *Homo sapiens* and its “isolation” from “allied forms” ~ that is, the lack of closely related hominoid species, which would actually be something more like the “races” in the misconceptions of rabid racists ~ indicates a high degree of “competitive intolerance” among early hominoids. William Hamilton, *Narrow Roads of Gene Land* (1996), 1.190. Harold Morowitz sees evidence that there were “perhaps a dozen species” in earlier stages. Harold Morowitz, *The Emergence of Everything* (2002), 153.

⁴⁷ The population density of hunter-gatherers is severely limited by the availability of naturally usable food sources and varies between 0.1 and 1.0 hominid per square kilometers depending on local resources. *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*, § 10.2.403. See also James E. McClellan III and Harold Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History* (1999), 12.

⁴⁸ John Landers, “Reconstructing Ancient Populations,” *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*, § 10.2.403. There is nothing in the anthropological data, however, to support Rousseau’s mythical image of solitary hunter-gatherer roaming the wild in noble isolation ~ or the more hypothetical abstraction of the solitary man before a social contract in Hobbes. See Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality*; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1651]. Quite to the contrary, all the available evidence indicates that human beings were social animals like dogs, not solitary hunters like cats, long before they were even human. “One of the most distinctive features of primates is their tendency to live in social groups.” Catherine A. Key and Leslie C. Aiello, “The Evolution of Social Organization,” in Robin Dunbar, Chris Knight, and Camilla Power, eds., *The Evolution of Culture* (1999), 15. The difference between a dog and a cat is a common example in arguments over language, signifiers, referents, and meaning in the postmodern debate. See John Searle, “The World Turned Upside Down,” *The New York Review of Books* 30.16 (27 October 1983) 74-9, 76. Oddly enough, the difference between a pack animal such as a dog and a solitary hunter such as cat is not only a manifestation of fundamentally different evolutionary game strategies, but also a difference of significance in the biological basis of human civilizations. See Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997), 173.

⁴⁹ John Maynard Smith and Eörs Szathmáry, *The Major Transitions in Evolution* (1995), 276, summarizing research reported in Robin I.M. Dunbar, “Neocortex Size as a Constraint on Group Size in Primates,” *Journal of Human Evolution* 20 (1992) 469-93.

our brains, is intimately linked to our sociability.⁵⁰ But it was a distinctly exclusive sociability, limited to a small number who lived face-to-face and worked, or fought, side-by-side. It was more analogous to the infantry company.⁵¹ Such was the “natural” state of humans for the 30,000 years of Paleolithic hunting-gathering culture preceding the Neolithic Revolution, as well as for millions of years before that, during the biological evolution of humanoids. *Homo sapiens* is not a *politicon zoon*. It is a *phratriâcon zôon*, a “tribal animal.”

Civilization does not come naturally to us.⁵² But that is no excuse for not learning to make it work, which should be the project of political philosophy, rather than all the simple-minded bitching about modernity. We should begin by rejecting some fallacies founded on the tyranny of the simple idea. One is the form of the naturalistic fallacy which assumes that naturalness equals goodness.⁵³ Another is the myth of origins, the simple-minded notion that origins are essence.⁵⁴ Tribalism, racism, sexism, slavery,

⁵⁰ Current thinking in anthropology is that “language as we now know it evolved rather recently, and that it was responsible for the dramatic changes that have occurred in the past 100,000 years, not for the increase in brain size that took place earlier.” Smith and Szathmáry, *Major Transitions in Evolution*, 276. See also Ridley, *Nature via Nurture*, 218-20. In any case, all the various theories for the sudden and dramatic development of hominid brain size 2 million years ago stress the importance of social interaction as an environmental factor. A particularly interesting variation on that theme is what is termed the “Machiavellian intelligence” hypothesis, which is that “primate intelligence allows an individual to serve his or her own interest by interacting with others either co-operatively or manipulatively but without disturbing the overall social cohesion of the group.” John Cartwright, *Evolution and Human Behavior* (2000), chapter 6 (pages 157-91), § 6.2.3 (pages 178-9).

⁵¹ The connection between the solidarity of the tribe and the modern combat group is developed in detail in Anthony Stevens, *The Roots of War and Terror* (2004), chapter 4, “Making Warriors.”

⁵² “At the level of the tribe or group, society has always found a way to cohere.... Civilizations have failed...to solve this problem.” George Homans, *The Human Group* (1950), 456.

⁵³ The “naturalistic fallacy,” as an issue in philosophical meaning, is exceedingly technical. See W.K. Frankena, “The Naturalistic Fallacy,” *Mind* (new series) 48.192 (October 1939) 464-477. This is the more mundane form of the fallacy, although it is certainly one that many philosophers commit, in which a previous state of “naturalness,” from either a religious or scientific view, is presumed to be the best, without considering how it actually meets human or sentient needs, without exploring how those needs are defined (which raises the technical issue in meaning), and without justifying what constitutes the presumed boundary between “natural” and “unnatural” human history. See Toni Massaro, “Gay Rights, Thick and Thin,” *Stanford Law Review* 49.1 (November 1996) 45-110, 96.

⁵⁴ This is the myth of origins, or deep hermeneutics of origins, an idol of the mind in both theological and postmodern discourse. Nietzsche attacks modern morality based on the etymological origins of the “good” in various languages. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, first essay, § 4 (pages 27-8), discussed in Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*,

dictatorship, war, and genocide come naturally to humans. Civilization is unnatural. That makes it all the more precious. It is wise, however, to recognize that getting from there to here is difficult, and that there are many inherent tensions in civilization.

The polarities of the West

This is particularly true for that complicated civilization called the “West.” The “West” or “Western Civilization” is a misleading name for a civilization which originated in the Mediterranean, which is based materially on a tradition of natural science which originated in the Ionian cities of Asia Minor, which is based spiritually on a Semitic religion from the Levant, which incorporated bits and pieces of traditions from all three continents bordering the Mediterranean, which then migrated northward to the Atlantic, which then became a transoceanic civilization, and which is now becoming the global civilization of the Earth. “If our own culture can claim to be the main stream,” Gordon Childe says, “it is only because our cultural tradition has captured and made tributary a larger volume of once parallel traditions.”⁵⁵

The mind of the West, the collective consciousness of Western Civilization, is bicameral. It consists of a philosophical tradition inherited from Greece which one might call the *logos* in Western thought, and a religious tradition inherited from Judea which one might call the *mythos* in Western thought.⁵⁶ But that is far too simple a

Frederick Lawrence, trans. (1987) [*Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, 1985], 125-6. Heidegger seeks to divine the meaning of modern man, history, and the universe in fine points of Greek philosophy and language corrupted by Plato and Aristotle. Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Basic Writings*, 218-9, 251; Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (1959) [*Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 1953, based on lectures at the University of Freiburg, 1935], 106. In more conventional historiography, it is what Marc Bloch calls the “Idol of Origins.” Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft* (1953), 29-30.

⁵⁵ Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History* (1961), 29.

⁵⁶ In the original Greek, both *mythos* and *logos* mean “speech.” See *μῦθος* and *λόγος* in Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*. Martin Heidegger asserts that *logos* and *mythos* were wrongly separated by Platonism as part of the original loss of Being at the beginning of Western philosophy. Martin Heidegger, “What Calls for Thinking” [“Was heisst Denken?” 1951-2], in *Basic Writings*, 375-6. They are commonly used in modern discourse as shorthand for conflicting ways of interpreting the world ~ *mythos* for a traditional religious and poetic interpretation, *logos* for a modern scientific and rational interpretation. See this use, and an excellent discussion of the meanings, in Karen Armstrong,

dichotomy, because the struggle between *logos* and *mythos* takes place in both traditions. In both traditions there is an intensely ambivalent attitude towards the city, a polarization which only became more intense when the two traditions were combined by Christianity in Rome. And that is also too simple a formulation. At the beginning of the process, which was not a true beginning, there was much which went into Greece and Judea, beyond what we think of as Greek or Jewish. At the other end of the process which came together in Rome, there was much which went into Rome, in addition to the Greek and Jewish contributions. Those other contributions are obscured by our religious faithfulness to Judea and our cult of the Greeks in philosophy and history. The West has inherited important ideas from both traditions.⁵⁷ But it is a mistake in analysis, founded on the tyranny of the simple idea and the myth of origins, to think that it is one or two essential ideas from those traditions which make the West unique. What makes the West unique, and makes a search for an origin or essence of the West so problematical, is the complexity of the mixture. It is also critical that such a multicultural mixture resists solidification or hegemony. Another way of putting it is to say that the West is built on internal contradictions (*Widersprüche*), as in the Hegelian or Marxist theories of historical dialectics. But one need not adopt either of those grand narratives to see that internal conflict has created a peculiar dynamic in the

The Battle For God (2000), xv-xviii. For a specific application of these terms in the context of the German problem, see Hermann Glaser, *The Cultural Roots of National Socialism*, Ernest A. Menze, trans. (1978) [*Spießer-Ideologie: Von der Zerstörung des deutschen Geistes im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 1964]. As with so many of these dichotomies, one must beware of misleading shifts in use. The *New Testament* uses *logos* for “word.” *En archê ên ho logos, kai ho logos ên pros ton theon, kai theos ên ho logos*. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” *Bible [Holy Bible, New International Version]* (1978), John, 1.1. But that reflected the heritage of Platonic and Stoic philosophy in Hellenistic Rome, by which the *logos* of the classical philosophers had been re-mythologized into another *mythos*. As part of that philosophical heritage, it also reflected the Christian attempt to rationalize Jewish tribalistic theology. Compared to the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament* is more logical in that sense, but it is still a form of myth from a modern perspective.

⁵⁷ William McNeill argues that West has two core historical ideas, individual autonomy and historical progress, and that both these ideas originate in both the “Graeco-Roman” and “Judaic” traditions. William McNeill, *The Rise of the West* (1963), 49-50.

West, a dynamic which, like it or not, led to Western domination of the Earth.⁵⁸

Germany was the same problem ~ only more so. Germany was plagued by unresolved polarities. It was a failed synthesis. This is what confuses analysis. It is useless to argue that Nazism was essentially “modern” or essentially “reactionary.”⁵⁹ As Peter Gay says of the intense polarities of Weimar Germany, “there were really two Germanies.”⁶⁰ To use a paradoxical term coined by Jeffery Herf, Germany since the Unification in 1871 developed a culture of “reactionary modernism.”⁶¹ That is as best a characterization that anyone has come up with so far, but what that means requires some explanation and refinement. It requires a theoretical framework for defining “modernity” and “reaction” ~ which is one purpose of the concept of polarity developed in § 4. In more specific historical terms, it is important not to be confused by simplistic interpretations of the self-conscious German rebellion against Western Civilization ~ variously represented by both Latin and English branches of the West. It was a rebellion full of *ressentiment*, mixed with admiration and a desire to imitate as well as a desire to destroy. This war for the mind of the West, this German spiritual struggle against Western materialism articulated as a conflict between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, was a civil war within Western Civilization, and an extreme manifestation of polarities long present in that civilization.

There were some specific ideas representing the spiritual polarity which found a welcome habitat in German culture because of that polarization. German romanticism (an ironic term) was a permutation on a major theme inherited from Rome, the myth of

⁵⁸ “Compared to the civilized societies of Asia, European civilization exhibited marked instability.... Quite possibly western civilization incorporated into its structure a wider variety of incompatible elements than did any other civilization of the world; and the prolonged and restless growth of the West, repeatedly rejecting its own potentially “classical” formulations, may have been more related to contrarities built so deeply into its structure.” McNeill, *Rise of the West*, 538, 539.

⁵⁹ See comments on the discourse about Nazism in Harold James, *A German Identity* (2000), 151.

⁶⁰ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider* (1968), 1.

⁶¹ Jeffery Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984).

rustic virtue.⁶² German romanticism, the cult of militarism, and the attraction of totalitarianism also owed much to the reaction against Athens and the idealization of the Spartans ~ *le mirage spartiate*, “the Spartan mirage.”⁶³ The German persecution of

⁶² See Susan Fleiss Lowenstein, “Urban Images of Roman Authors,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8.1 (October 1965) 110-123.

⁶³ From François Ollier, quoted in Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (2001), 169-70. The mirage was passed on to Germans by Rousseau and other French romantics. Rousseau twisted around a comment by Isocrates to proclaim that the Spartans were “demigods rather than men.” Rousseau, *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, first part, in *The First and Second Discourses*, 43. Isocrates was actually mocking those who praised Sparta “as though the demigods had there governed the state...” Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* [c. 340 BCE], 12.41, in *Isocrates*, vol. 1-3, George Norlin, trans. (1980), vol. 2. In fact (recalling the comment from Aristotle about gods and beasts) they were beasts who prefigured much of modern totalitarianism, in substantive and non-trivial ways, with a death squad, the *krypteia* or “secret service” designed to keep their Helots in a state of constant terror, with eugenics via the use of women as breeding machines and infanticide, with a cult of cruelty (not without a touch of homoerotic sadism), and with a generally deep contempt for human sensibilities. Most of this is presented in Plutarch’s *Lycurgus*. See also Xenophon’s *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* [*Lakedaimonion Politeia*, 4th Century BCE]. For modern descriptions of Sparta, see Frank Frost, *Greek Society* (1971), 35-7; Thomas Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times* (1996), 70-9; Michael Grant, *Rise of the Greeks* (1987), 96-8; Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*.

Although German romantics sometimes liked to claim that Berlin was the “Athens on the Spree” (as it actually became, to the disgust of traditionalists, during the Weimar Republic) the militaristic regime created in Prussia by Frederick Wilhelm I and Friedrich the Great (Friedrich II) has often been referred to as a Sparta of the Modern Age. Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 2.271; James Charles Roy, *The Vanished Kingdom: Travels Through the History of Prussia* (1999), 122; Eric Dorn Brose, *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia* (1993), 187-8; Lothrop Stoddard, *Into the Darkness* (1940), 146-7. In a case of projective reversal, the German historian Heinrich von Treitschke “tried to argue a bizarre parallel with modern history in which the conflict between Athens and Sparta matched the struggle of Prussia against Austria.” James, *German Identity*, 21. The true “New Sparta,” however, was the hyper-militaristic Third Reich, in which the fanatical elite warriors, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), were a state within the state, just as the Spartans were the elite rulers within the larger state of Lacedaemon, and in which institutions such as the *Hitlerjugend* (HJ) replicated the Spartan *agôgê*, a system for indoctrinating the youth. Hitler liked Sparta because it was supposedly “the purist racial state in history,” because the Spartans showed how a small minority of warriors could rule a great majority of slaves, because he liked their program of eugenics, because he liked their “fresh and healthy” cultivation of physical perfection, and because Nazi ideology had made the Dorian Greeks into a German tribe. Hitler quoted in Karl Ferdinand Werner, “On Some Examples of the National-Socialist View of History,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 3.2 (April 1968) 193-206, 193; and Hitler in Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (2000), § 63, 5 November 1941, evening, 116; Hitler quoted in Otto Wagener, *Hitler ~ Memoirs of a Confidant*, Ruth Hein, trans. (1985) [*Hitler aus nächster Nähe: Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauten 1929-1932*, 1978], 40; Hitler quoted in Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 143-4. The popular philosophical fathers of Nazism, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Alfred Rosenberg, invoked Sparta as a model for an Aryan state because they admired its system of militaristic racial dominance. Rosenberg also argued that the Spartan had preserved patriarchal dominance, in comparison to the feminized Athenians. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1-2, John Lees, trans. (1911) [*Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1899], 1.2.97, note; Alfred

the Jews was prefigured by the brutal rites of the Roman games in that both were extreme expressions of the narcissism of minor differences, an attempt to restore a fractured sense of tribal identity.⁶⁴ And, in what has to be one of the most terrible ironies of history, another significant historical precedent for Nazi genocide was the Jewish genocide during their conquest of more advanced urbanites in the Levant. Through the agency of Christianity, the Jews imbedded the *mythos* of hatred for the city deeply in the consciousness of the West. It was probably inevitable, however, whatever the genealogy, that the commercial and multicultural city which evolved in the West would have undermined the hegemony of any monotheistic god or universalistic spiritual identity.

Just as with the philosophers, the prophets and theologians have tried to recreate an ideal city, the *civitas Dei*, as Augustine classically framed it, in opposition to the *civitas terrena*. That only accentuates their hatred of the real city. The ungodliness of the city in the mind of the religious is somewhat ironic because cities probably began as shrines for the worship of gods and ancestors. Lewis Mumford wrote a massive study of *The City in History* (1961), a work permeated by his disgust with his subject. “The city of the dead antedates the city of the living,” he says, and he calls this the *necropolis*.⁶⁵ It is the temple on the hill, as in the Acropolis, or the “shrine city.”⁶⁶ Eventually, however, by bringing together many tribes and many gods, by fragmenting the tribe, by subverting religious tradition and community through material power and

Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of our Age*, James B. Whiskey, trans. (1982) [*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 1930], 3.2.302-5.

⁶⁴ “Roman blood sports legitimized, dramatically communicated, and reinforced the social and political order of the community.” Donald Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (1998), 265.

⁶⁵ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (1961), 7 (italics added). Mumford argues that in the long life of civilizations there is a cycle which begins with one type of *necropolis* and ends with another one, “the final cemetery...in which one civilization after another has met its end.” Mumford, *City in History*, 7. The same language is used by Don Martindale, a sociologist of the late 1950s, who speaks of the modern city as “the *necropolis*, the city of the dead from which all life has vanished.” Don Martindale, “Prefatory Remarks: The Theory of the City” (1958), 9 (italics added).

⁶⁶ Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, & the People of God* (2001), 35-6, et passim.

politics, the city becomes the place where all gods are transformed and undermined.⁶⁷

According to both the Jewish *Torah* and the Christian *Bible*, the first builder of a city was Cain, who was put “under a curse and driven from the ground”⁶⁸ for killing his brother, Abel. Carl Schmitt, one of the leading philosophers of Nazism, says that human history did not begin with the creation of Adam and Eve, but with the political struggle between Cain and Abel.⁶⁹ Cain, the farmer, represents the Agricultural or Neolithic Revolution, which led to the building of cities, trade, technology, individualism, and modernity.⁷⁰ So far, this is the most important revolution which has occurred in human history⁷¹ ~ except a sexual revolution which may have preceded and laid the ground for it, literally, in that women may have been the first to experiment with cultivation.⁷² Abel, the shepherd, represents the nomadic tribe.⁷³ Flavius Josephus, who is an excellent guide to what the Jewish scriptures meant to many Jews and Christians of the 1st Century CE, provides a number of helpful glosses which underline the relevance of the Cain and Abel story to modern feelings about technology and commercialism. He explains that God rejected Cain’s offerings of the produce

⁶⁷ Plato’s project begins with the problem in *Euthyphro*, where an over-abundance of gods brings all gods, and thus religion itself, into question. In both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, his solution is to create a city which bans the poets, and thereby avoids embarrassing permutations on the myths, while also tightly controlling trade and foreigners for the same purpose. On the reality of the basis for his dislike of the city, the effect of “value-diffusion” and “deviant subcultures” in the city, see Fischer, “The Effect of Urban Life on Traditional Values.”

⁶⁸ *Bible*, Genesis, 4.11.

⁶⁹ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (2003), 58.

⁷⁰ George M. Shulman, “The Myth of Cain: Fratricide, City Building, and Politics,” *Political Theory* 14.2 (May 1986) 215-238. The oldest known settlement is at Jericho, in the Jordan Valley, from 10,000 BCE. The first settlements were still quite small social groups, perhaps averaging around 300 members. Harold Morowitz, *The Emergence of Everything: How the World Became Complex* (2002), 163-4.

⁷¹ “The passage from nomadic to settled life was perhaps the most pregnant step up in the whole history of mankind.” George Sarton, *Ancient Science through the Golden Age of Greece* ([1952] 1993), 6. See also Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, “The First Economic Revolution,” *The Economic History Review* (new series) 30.2 (May 1977) 229-241.

⁷² Mumford, *The City in History*, 12. In his gloss on the Biblical version, Josephus adds that Cain “with his wife, built a city.” Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* [c. 93-4 CE], in *Complete Works*, William Whiston, trans. (1998), 1.2.2.60 (emphasis added).

from cultivation, which then set off the fight with Abel, because God was not pleased with “what was the invention of a covetous man, and gotten by forcing the ground.”⁷⁴ There is a distinctly Heideggerian flavor to that objection.⁷⁵ In building the city, Cain “first of all set boundaries about lands...and fortified it with walls.”⁷⁶ Rousseau, who hated modernity and created a modern myth of origins in the 18th Century CE, echoes this when he condemns the “first person who fenced off a plot of ground” as the “true founder of civil society,” and the originator of all “crimes, wars, miseries, and horrors.”⁷⁷ Josephus also says that Cain “introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness.”⁷⁸ The city is linked to quantitative technology and commerce, and also the division of labor.⁷⁹ The connection to commerce is ironic in

⁷³ “Throughout history...tribalism has consistently been associated with stockraising. It is the natural medium of subsistence both for a nomadic people and for a widely-scattered sedentary one; it is also a common form of wealth in insecure environments.” Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece*, 35.

⁷⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.2.1.54.

⁷⁵ “The revealing that rules in modern technology,” which Heidegger vehemently opposes, “is a challenging (*Herausfordern*), which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such.” Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt, trans. (1977), 14. Although Heidegger is condemning the technology of another age, and goes on to say that “The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the fields” (page 15), this is what occurs in the change from hunting-gathering to agriculture. Did Heidegger spend so little time with real peasants that he never heard about the problems of contamination and soil exhaustion which have plagued agriculture from the very beginning? Such a spurious exception to his own cosmic pronouncements is an example of his disdain for fact. But it also reflects the shift in the mythological position of the farmer.

⁷⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.2.2.62.

⁷⁷ Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality*, second part, in *The First and Second Discourses*, 141. Douglass North and Robert Paul Thomas agree with Rousseau in part, about the economic and legal implications. “The first economic revolution was not a revolution because it shifted man’s major economic activity from hunting to gathering to settled agriculture. It was a revolution because the transition created an incentive change for mankind of fundamental proportions.... It is this change in incentive that explains the rapid progress made by mankind in the last 10,000 years in contrast to his slow development during the long era as a primitive hunter/gatherer.” Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, “The First Economic Revolution,” *The Economic History Review* (new series) 30.2 (May 1977) 229-241, 240-1.

⁷⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.2.2.61.

⁷⁹ “The greatest division of material and mental labor is the separation of town and country. The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from

light of the later history of the Jews. But that was after many environmental shifts.

There has also been an environmental shift in the nomad-farmer dichotomy. Ironically, the farmer is now the representative of rustic virtue. The farmer (*Bauer*) became the antithesis to the citizen (*Bürger*) in German folkish (*völkische*) ideology. Weber says that the transformation of the peasant into “the distinctive prototype of the pious man who is pleasing to god” is a largely “modern phenomenon.”⁸⁰ We do not have many hunter-gatherers or nomadic herders in modern societies ~ although one of the most modern societies, the United States, clings to the myth of the herder in the form of the cowboy, the inner-directed character discussed in § 4 and admired by Hitler.⁸¹ More commonly, we now idealize the farmer instead. Contrary to Weber, that transition began early in the Classical Ages. Rousseau praises Rome for being “founded by a shepherd and made famous by farmers.”⁸² The Romans then clung to the myth of the farmer-soldier, personified by Cincinnatus, despite having replaced the farmer-soldier with the professional citizen-soldier, the true founder of their empire, at an early stage.⁸³

Idealization of the farmer was a central theme in Nazi ideology.⁸⁴ However, Nazi

tribe to State, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilization to the present day....” Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, 68-9.

⁸⁰ Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 83. Weber says that it is a “thoroughly modern phenomenon,” but then immediately goes on to discuss significant exceptions.

⁸¹ See Johnson, *History of the American People*, 517; David B. Davis, “Ten-Gallon Hero,” *American Quarterly* 6.2 (Summer 1954) 111-125. David Davis even points out that the American cowboy had a disturbing likeness, although it was “not quite” the same figure, to the Teutonic warrior who conquered native Slaves on the Eastern Frontier of Europe. “Ten-Gallon Hero,” 116. The cowboy mythology has recently reared its ugly head in American politics with a vengeance in the post-9/11 macho posturing and militancy of a pretend cowboy from Texas who is president of the United States. See Evan Thomas, with Tamara Lipper, “No Excuses: The Virtues and Vices of Bush’s Stubborn Resolve,” cover catch line, *Newsweek* 144.10 (6 September 2004). On Hitler’s love of American Western novels, see Koonz, *Nazi Conscience*, 23.

⁸² Rousseau, *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, first part, in *First and Second Discourses*, 40.

⁸³ Léon Homo, *Roman Political Institutions: From City to State*, M.R. Dobie, trans. (1930) [*Les institutions politiques Romaines: De la Cité à l’État*, 1927], 164; M.I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social & Economic History of the Roman Empire*, (1921), 25.

⁸⁴ Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1967), 448-50. Moore observes the same tendencies in Italian and Japanese fascism as well. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 451-2.

agrarian economic policies showed a peculiar favoritism toward livestock farmers and the Nazis received correspondingly greater political support from those modern herders, although they enjoyed high support from rural sectors in general.⁸⁵ Nazis also liked to invoke the more primordial image of the hunter. Hitler became a vegetarian in a bizarre reaction to the suicide or murder of his niece, Geli Raubal (Angela Maria Raubal), whom he had kept like a caged animal.⁸⁶ But Hitler also identified with the depiction of the god Wotan (Odin) in the “Wild Hunt” (*Wilde Jagd*). Like Wotan, he went by the name “Wolf” among intimates.⁸⁷ And he loved to wear *Lederhosen*, the leather shorts of a mountain herder.⁸⁸ Hermann Göring gloried in his role as “Reich Master of the Hunt” (*Reichsjägermeister*), and the trademark of his *Gestapo* was their ubiquitous long black leather coat. Hunter symbolism was perhaps most evident in the use of the words “hunt” (*Jagd*) and “hunter” (*Jäger*) in the names of military formations and ranks, especially in Göring’s *Luftwaffe*. The highly aggressive and romantic mentality of the *Luftwaffe* leadership impeded rational planning, training, safety, or long-term production, and led to gross strategic blunders.⁸⁹

The virtuous shepherd was a basic image throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, among Jews, Greeks, and others.⁹⁰ And it survives in the image of Christ.⁹¹ Consider,

⁸⁵ James K. Pollock, “An Areal Study of the German Electorate, 1930-1933,” *The American Political Science Review* 38.1 (February 1944) 89-95; William Brustein, *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party 1925-1933* (1996), 101, 106-9. See also Horst Gies, “The NSDAP and Agrarian Organizations in the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic,” in Henry A., Turner, Jr., ed., *Nazism and the Third Reich* (1972), which explains the divisions within the various types of farmers exploited by the Nazis.

⁸⁶ Wagener, *Hitler*, 221-6; John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (1976), 252-256.

⁸⁷ Waite, *Kaiser & Fuhrer*, 106; Joachim Köhler, *Wagner’s Hitler: The Prophet and His Disciple*, Ronald Taylor, trans. (2000) [*Wagners Hitler: Der Prophet und sein Vollstrecker*, 1997], 76. On the significance of Wotan as a German archetype, see Carl Jung, “Wotan” [1936], in *Essays on Contemporary Events: The Psychology of Nazism*, R.F.C. Hull, trans. (1989) [*Aufsätze zur Zeitgeschichte*, 1954 & 1964].

⁸⁸ Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (2004), 12.

⁸⁹ Williamson Murray, *The Luftwaffe 1933-45: Strategy for Defeat* (1996); Werner Baumbach, *The Life and Death of the Luftwaffe* (1960).

⁹⁰ See Mumford, *The City in History*, 23-4. Josephus says that Egypt was once ruled by Jewish “shepherd kings,” and he goes on for several sections about the importance of the identity of these people as shepherds. Josephus, *Against Apion* [c. 94-100 CE] in *Complete Works*, William Whiston,

also, its appearance in Heidegger, the philosopher of “Being” (*Sein*) who for a time enthusiastically praised Hitler as the fulfillment of Being, and who never renounced his belief in what he called the “inner truth and greatness of the movement.”⁹² The

trans. (1998), 1.14.82 et seq. This is an erroneous interpretation of Jewish and Egyptian history, but the relevant thing is the myth. Josephus also tells us that the Essenes, a puritan Jewish sect extant from the 2nd Century BCE to the 2nd Century CE, “entirely addict themselves to husbandry.” Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.1.5.19. The image of the noble leader as the “shepherd of the people” is common to the Greeks as well. Plato makes use of it (and Thrasymachus points out the problem with the metaphor) in Plato, *Republic*, 343b-345e. It also appears in a pseudo-Platonic dialogue, and in both works of Homer. Pseudo-Plato, *Minos* [c. 387-347 BCE], 321c; Homer, *Iliad* [c. 700 BCE], 1.263; *Odyssey* [c. 700 BCE], 4.532. The other great poet of Greek mythology, Hesiod, claimed to have learned of the gods from the Muses while tending sheep. M.L. West, translator’s “Introduction” to Hesiod, *Theogony and Works and Days*, M.L. West, trans. (1988) [*Theogonia and Erga kai Hēmerai*, c. 700 BCE], ix. It may be of some significance that Hesiod had been a merchant seaman, but had not been successful in that trade. Mumford argues that the shepherd is the friendlier face of the predator. He is still a predator. As William D. Hamilton points out, “Pastoralists tend to be particularly warlike.” William D. Hamilton, *Narrow Roads of Gene Land: The Collected Papers of W. D. Hamilton*, vol. 1-2 (1996), 1.345.

⁹¹ “The Lord is my shepherd....” *Bible*, Psalms, 23. It was also shepherds to whom the Angel of the Lord appeared to herald the birth of the Christ Child, in a manger, in the Christmas Story. *Bible*, Luke, 1.8-20. Although there is some dispute about who plagiarized from whom in the making of myths, it is clear that Mithraism, one of the competitors to Christianity in Rome, also had shepherds to attend the birth of Mithras. Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, Thomas J. McCormack, trans. (1950) [*Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, 1896-9], 132. And Jesus, of course, was commonly portrayed as a shepherd of his flock. This echoes the role of Able. “The murdered Able typologically represents the crucified Christ, and the fact “that he was the first shepherd stresses his identification with Christ, the Good Shepherd.” Madlyn Kahr, “Titian’s Old Testament Cycle,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966) 193-205, 195.

⁹² Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 199. See also Martin Heidegger, “Deutsche Studenten,” *Freiburger Studentenzeitung* 15.1 (3 November 1933), 1, quoted in Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, 118-9. Heidegger was a genuinely evil philosopher. That may be a rude thing to say in academic discourse, but it ought to be clearly said in this case. Others have already said rude things about Heidegger. He was “a rather nasty piece of work ~ a coward and a liar,” according to Richard Rorty, quoted in Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe* (1997), 101. But that misses the point. Heidegger’s personal failings were commonplace and tawdry. It is his anti-humanistic philosophy which is genuinely evil. See, generally, Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis, eds., *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics* (1992); Richard Wolin, *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (1995), part II.

Sein or “Being,” the supposed subject of Heidegger’s life-long inquiry, “is not in fact accessible as an entity....” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. (1962) [*Sein und Zeit*, 1927], § 1.3.20 (page 127) (italics in original). “Heidegger goes on about ‘the question about Being’ without ever answering it because Being is a good example of something we have no criteria for answering questions about.” Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 36. Being is the pea that is never there in his cosmic shell game, the Godot who never arrives in *Waiting for Godot*. The key to understanding Heidegger (if one can, or should even try, which is not a snide remark but a perfectly serious question about Heideggerian method) is to focus on his concept of man, to whom he gives the technical term *Dasein*, or *Da-sein* with one of those infectious hyphens that he begat to postmodernism. Again, language is a virus. See Paul Edwards, *Heidegger’s Confusions* (2004).

shepherd appears in his “Letter on Humanism,” written in 1947, his first important writing after the Nazi Holocaust, in which he rejects any standards of humanity which would require him to account for his support of Nazism. “Man,” he says there, “is the shepherd of Being.”⁹³ I will not pretend to know precisely what Heidegger means by this. But little is meant precisely in Heideggerianism.⁹⁴ That would be a *logos* which he rejects. This much seems clear, in my effort to interpret *mythos* with the tools of *logos*. The Heideggerian shepherd is a mythic hero,⁹⁵ much as Nazism was about *der Führer*, lauded by Heidegger as the embodiment of German *Dasein*.⁹⁶ He is the Nietzschean *Übermensch*,⁹⁷ or the Nietzschean *blonde Bestie*, to whom “nothing is

Dasein is an ordinary German word for “existence,” which could easily be an appropriate term of art for this purpose in English. There is, despite Heidegger’s denials, a close connection between Heideggerianism and Existentialism. See Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans., *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (1956). But that, as one of his admiring translators says, would not reflect the “dignity” that *Dasein* requires. He uses “being-there” instead. Ralph Manheim, translator’s note to Heidegger, *Metaphysics*, ix. Note Yahweh’s description of himself. “I am who I am.” *Bible*, Exodus, 3.14. The Hebrew, “’ehyeh ’asher ’e/ahweh,” is ambiguous, and might also be translated as “I am what I do.” Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (1995), 99. Also, the Hebrew name of God, *Yhwh*, is “an archaic form of the verb *to be*.” Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels* (1998), 109. Heidegger addresses the relationship between “Being” and “God” in a typically obscure manner. “The deity enters into philosophy through the perdurance (*Austrage*) of which we think as first as the approach to the active nature of the difference between Being and being.” Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Joan Stambaugh, ed. and trans. (2002) [*Identität und differenz*, based on lectures at the University of Freiburg, 1957], 71, 140. Heidegger has often been accused of making Being into God. John Macquarrie, *Heidegger and Christianity* (1994), 94-108, especially 99. That accusation is close, but it misses the mark. Heidegger’s project is not so much about a god as it is about a hero, a man mysteriously cursed or blessed by the gods. Most of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927), is actually about *Dasein*, the “being-there,” not about Being, *per se*, about the process of questioning Being, which is a function of that special self-conscious being called *Dasein*. See Joan Stambaugh, “Introduction” to Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 8.

⁹³ *Der Mensch ist der Hirt des Seins*. Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Basic Writings*, 245.

⁹⁴ Heidegger “lays around himself the taboo that any understanding of him would simultaneously be falsification.” Theodor W. Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will, trans. (1973) [*Jargon der Eigentlichkeit: Zur deutschen Ideologie*, 1964], 93. See also Paul Edwards, *Heidegger’s Confusions* (2004).

⁹⁵ It is an attempt to recreate a mythic hero, but in a modern world which does not recognize such heroes. The ultimate encounter of the hero is such a world is with only “the silences of his personal despair.” Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), 391.

⁹⁶ Heidegger’s “Rector’s Address” in Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, 99.

⁹⁷ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” § 7 (20). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* links Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* to Heidegger’s *Dasein*.

more tasty than a tender lamb.”⁹⁸ The shepherd is the archetype of the tribal, and of the rejection of the city. Heidegger lauds “the essential poverty of the shepherd,”⁹⁹ and he hates the city, especially Berlin, the Babylonian Whore to reactionaries in Weimar Germany.¹⁰⁰ He idealizes the Greek *polis* as the highest human achievement. But as Catherine Zuckert points out, his concept of the *polis* is religious, mystical, and “not very ‘political,’”¹⁰¹ much as the *Reich*, the German Empire, was “spiritual and transcendental” to Nazis.¹⁰² Again, idealization of the mythical city is a rejection of the real city.¹⁰³ Of all the people who should have understood Heidegger, although she never seemed to understand why he would not say he was sorry, the foremost was his Jewish student and mistress, who prostituted herself for him intellectually after the war by making excuses for his Nazism.¹⁰⁴ In a moment of unusual intellectual clarity, Hannah Arendt sums up Heidegger and the postmodernism he inspired as best as it can be. Heideggerianism is “the old hostility of the philosopher against the *polis*.”¹⁰⁵

German romantic poets of the *fin-de-siècle* period around 1900 called the modern city *großer Baal Kapital*.¹⁰⁶ In the feverish days of the Weimar Republic, Berlin was called a “Babylon.”¹⁰⁷ Hitler disparaged Vienna as a *Rassenbabylon*, “Race Babylon.”¹⁰⁸ In Genesis, it is the city of the tower, as much as the tower, which

⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, §§ 1.11, 1.13 (40, 45).

⁹⁹ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Basic Writings*, 245.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, “The City and the Country,” chapter 13.

¹⁰¹ Catherine H. Zuckert, “Martin Heidegger: His Philosophy and His Politics,” *Political Theory* 18.1 (February 1990) 51-79, 69.

¹⁰² Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich*, 115.

¹⁰³ See the postmodern apology for Heidegger in Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (1996), 252, where Heidegger is diagnosed as having fallen prey to “the dream that has inspired Western philosophy from its inception, the ‘dream of the city as a work of art’”

¹⁰⁴ See Elzbieta Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger* (1995), especially 9-10; Berel Lang, *Heidegger's Silence* (1996).

¹⁰⁵ Hannah Arendt, quoted in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* (1982), 303.

¹⁰⁶ In Detlev W. Schumann, “Motifs of Cultural Eschatology in German Poetry from Naturalism to Expressionism,” *PMLA* 58.4 (December 1943) 1125-1177, 1176.

¹⁰⁷ Anton Gill, *A Dance Between Flames: Berlin Between the Wars* (1993), 27, 46; Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 161.

¹⁰⁸ Karl Stadler, *Austria* (1971), 67, note 43.

Yahweh hates.¹⁰⁹ In the *Old Testament*, “Babylon was a gold cup in the Lord’s hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad....”¹¹⁰ In the *New Testament*, it was “Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes, and of the abominations of the earth.... The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”¹¹¹ Babylon is even mentioned by Aristotle as an overgrown city.¹¹² Paul Berman observes that the most vicious modern enemies of liberalism ~ including Nazis, Communists, Christian fundamentalists, and Islamic radicals ~ all share in the “ur-myth” of Babylon.¹¹³

Strangely enough, the Jews fared well during the Babylonian Diaspora. As Robin Cohen says, “The Jewish communities in Alexandria, in Antioch and Damascus, in Asia Minor and in Babylon itself became centers of civilization, culture, and learning.”¹¹⁴ Life in the big city had two contradictory effects. On one hand, it accentuated their need to protect their tribal identity. The Jews of Babylon fixed many of the petty laws of daily life, the *Halachah*. They boasted that they were the most pure of all the Jews in the world.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, they became more literate, philosophical, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan.¹¹⁶ “By a paradox which the course of Hebrew history makes perfectly intelligible,” says Sabatino Moscati, “the exile is a period of great religious exhalation. The political bonds have disappeared, and the way

¹⁰⁹ “So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.” *Bible*, Genesis, 11.8. See also Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.4.3.

¹¹⁰ *Bible*, Jeremiah, 51.7, 13.

¹¹¹ *Bible*, Revelation, 17.4-5, 18.3.

¹¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1265a. M.L. Finley says that “Babylon, about which he must have known very little, was for him an epithet, a symbol of elephantiasis, hence a negation of the true city....” M.L. Finley, “The Ancient City” (1977), 306.

¹¹³ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (2003), 47-51.

¹¹⁴ Robin Cohen, “Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers,” *International Affairs* 72.3 (July 1996) 507-520, 508.

¹¹⁵ Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (1987), 163.

¹¹⁶ Miles, *God*, 199.

is clear for religious universalism.”¹¹⁷ This was the period during which the oral teachings of the sages were written down in the *Talmud*. The *Talmud* became to some extent a Jewish counterpart to the *New Testament*, in that both of the newer texts ameliorated ~ although only partially ~ the brutal tribal ethos of the *Torah* and the *Old Testament*.¹¹⁸ As Weber says, “not until the city of Jerusalem had been conquered did the cult of Yahweh, with its Mosaic social legislation, become a genuinely ethical religion.”¹¹⁹ But that was only after the tribe made war against the city ~ and was corrupted by the city. The genocidal Jewish conquest of the Promised Land (13th Century BCE) was a victory for the tribe against the city. But the Jews cursed themselves in the process ~ according to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Paul Johnson argues that the Jews were fearful of the material strength of the Philistines and Canaanites. There “is an air of desperation about the Israelites’ conquest and this helps explain why they were so ruthless when they took a town.”¹²⁰ He is putting it much too politely. Their god called out loudly for plunder, rape, butchery, and all the other tactics of ethnic cleansing. As Matt Ridley says, looking at it without surprise in light of modern evolutionary theory, “genocide was as central a part of God’s instructions as morality.”¹²¹ One need only read the scriptures with open eyes.¹²² Nor is this adequately explained as a fear of a materially superior culture. The

¹¹⁷ Sabatino Moscati, *The Face of the Ancient Orient* (1962), 249. Moscati’s reference to the breaking of the “political bonds” may seem inconsistent with my basic theme here (which is why I included that in the quote). Moscati’s point, well taken, is that the religion could become universal once it was no longer the servant of a national interest. But that does not mean that the Jews in Babylon and the other cities of the Diaspora were becoming less “political” in a general sense. Quite to the contrary, they developed elaborate institutional structures and finely honed political skills in the environment of the cities. See Johnson, *History of the Jews*, 181-5.

¹¹⁸ The *New Testament*, read carefully, is still a terrifying document, with baneful implications for the mind of the West. See Shadia Drury, *Terror and Civilization: Christianity, Politics, and the Western Psyche* (2004).

¹¹⁹ Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 81.

¹²⁰ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, 30, 43.

¹²¹ Matt Ridley, *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation* (1997), 192.

¹²² *Bible*, Numbers, 31.13, 33.50; Deuteronomy, 2.34, 7.2, 13.12, 32.22, 32.25; I Samuel, 15.3, 18.25. Alan Bloom, in his diatribe on *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), sneers at the tendency of modern liberalism “to render the *Bible*, and other old books, undangerous” by treating them as

scriptures are more concerned with ritual purity and vengeance than with a rational material struggle.¹²³ “In no other religion in the world,” Weber says, “do we find a universal deity possessing the unparalleled desire for vengeance manifest by Yahweh.”¹²⁴ Weber ascribes that to Jewish *ressentiment* of the Canaanites, in an explicitly Nietzschean sense.¹²⁵ But this is an ironic reversal of the highest order. Although Nietzsche despises the Jews of the Modern Diaspora,¹²⁶ and blames them for Christian *ressentiment*, Nietzsche admires the unashamed brutality of the Jews in the *Old Testament*:

I do not like the “New Testament” that should be plain.... The *Old Testament* ~ that is something else again: all honor to the Old Testament! I find in it great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something of the rarest quality in the world, the incomparable naïveté of the *strong heart*; what is more, I find a people.¹²⁷

nothing but pretty literary works. Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 374. Not this liberal. I consider the *Bible* a rather dangerous book. That is why we should read it carefully, with open eyes, and contemplate its horror. For such a reading of the *Old Testament*, in addition to my discussion below, see Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (1995). For an honest look at the continuing nastiness of the *New Testament*, see Shadia Drury, *Terror and Civilization: Christianity, Politics, and the Western Psyche* (2004).

¹²³ “Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man.” *Bible*, Numbers, 31.17-8. And then, as to the loot, “Gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead and anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through that water. On the seventh day wash your clothes and you will be clean.” *Bible*, Numbers, 31.22-4. Ritual purity also played a part in the Jewish slaughter of the Moabites, which was justified by the idea that all Moabites were the product of an incestuous mating between Lot and one of his daughters. *Bible*, Genesis, 19.30-8. There is a description of the genocide in Josephus which is particularly striking because he was writing in the 1st Century CE, when such brutality might have been more embarrassing. After his description of the taking of the City of Bethel by the Jewish Tribe of Ephraim (7th Century BCE), he says that the Jews grew soft, and that this made their god angry, in part because they failed to pursue the genocide religiously (an adverb with an appropriately dual meaning here). This makes it clear that the policy of genocide was based on fundamental religious beliefs, not merely the desperation of a hard war. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 5.2.7.132-133.

¹²⁴ Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 112.

¹²⁵ Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 110.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, R.J. Hollindale, trans. (1993) [*Jenseits Gut und Böse: Vorspiel zu einer Philosophie der Zukunft*, 1886], § 1.7-10 (pages 34-9). The fact that Nietzsche also despised the German antisemites of his time (along with Christianity in general, which he saw as completely corrupted by Jewish *ressentiment*), an uncontested fact which is frequently raised in his defense, is quite irrelevant. He was an equal-opportunity despiser. I also recognize that there are other passages in which he expresses admiration for the Jews of his time. Again, however, that is for rather peculiar and backhanded reasons.

¹²⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, § 3.22 (page 144) (emphasis in original).

Admirers of Nietzsche, including some German Jews of his time, have used this passage to argue that he is not antisemitic.¹²⁸ They could not more completely miss the point. Let me assure the reader, by the way, that this work is not antisemitic. It is, without apology, anti-tribalistic. The cosmopolitan Judaism of the Modern Western Diaspora, which the Nazis hated so much, has little to do with the tribal *ethos* in the *Torah*.¹²⁹ As Anthony Snodgrass puts it in the context of Homeric Greece, “One of the greatest attractions of a Heroic Age is the impracticability of any return to it.”¹³⁰ One would wish that were entirely true. And one should also wonder about the strange attraction of these heroic myths. The tribal ethos has its own justification, which makes slaughtering foreigners no more sinful than torturing animals seems to most people today.¹³¹ As Randall Collins says, “in the world of mutually isolated tribal societies, injunctions on killing, stealing, lying and other offenses extend only up to the boundaries of each group.”¹³² Those who are outside the tribe are simply not fellow humans.¹³³ “In this tribal *Weltanschauung*,” says Robert Drews, using the anachronistic but appropriate German term for the specific Jewish tribal world view of

¹²⁸ See the literature reviewed in Steven Aschheim (who does not himself fall prey to this misconception) in *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990* (1992), 95, et passim.

¹²⁹ For an incisive study of the changing face of Yahweh and morality in the evolution of the *Bible* ~ and our amazing blindness about things which are evil and despicable but sanctified by tradition ~ see Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (1995). As John Stuart Mill says of the *Old Testament*, it has a certain system of morality, “a system elaborate indeed, but in many respects barbarous, and intended only for a barbarous people.” John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* ([1859] 1974), 112.

¹³⁰ Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece* (1980), 18. The apparently infantile behavior of the heroes is justified in relative terms as a function of shame culture in Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (1993). Yes, it is, of course, justifiable in that culture. But that would hardly be an argument for returning to such a culture. The important distinction between a traditional “shame culture” and a modern “guilt culture” in anthropology was first identified in the Greek context by E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951).

¹³¹ On our thoughtless abuse of animals, see Peter Singer, “Animal Liberation at 30,” *The New York Review of Books* 50.8 (15 May 2003), 23-6. Although one should not equate that with human genocide or war, as does Heidegger, it does show how far we yet are from a truly ethical culture. For Heidegger’s asinine comments on modern agricultural production, which do the movement for ethical treatment of animals little good, see Richard Wolin, *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (1995), 160.

¹³² Randall Collins, “Three Faces of Cruelty: Towards a Comparative Sociology of Violence,” *Theory and Society* 1.4 (Winter 1974) 415-440, 417.

the 13th Century BCE, “Canaanites...were...as distinct...from Israelites...as one animal species from another.”¹³⁴ A similar *Weltanschauung* appears in the heroic age of any civilization.

In addition to Homer,¹³⁵ consider the *Rig Veda*¹³⁶ and the *Bhagavad Gita*¹³⁷ of the Hindus which, despite later re-interpretations, were celebrations of conquest and slaughter during the Aryan Invasion of India (2000-1500 BCE).¹³⁸ Although it is somewhat muted in the *Qur’an*, perhaps because that text was written in a later age,

¹³³ Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), 41; Stevens, *The Roots of War and Terror*, 41-7.

¹³⁴ Robert Drews, *The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the Near East* (1988), 64. This mentality does linger on. One rabid fundamentalist in modern Israel says that “the body of a Jewish person is of a totally different quality...of all nations of the world.... The difference of the inner quality...is so great that the bodies should be considered as completely different species.” Quoted in Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (1999), 59-60.

¹³⁵ “Of them let not one escape sheer destruction and the might of our hands, nay, not the man-child whom his mother bears in her womb; let not even him escape, but let all perish together out of Ilios, unmourned and unmarked.” Homer, *The Iliad* [c. 700 BCE] A.T. Murray, trans. (1924), 6.57-60. “Wherefore let no man make haste to depart homewards until each have lain with the wife of some Trojan....” Homer, *The Odyssey* [c. 700 BCE] A.T. Murray, trans. (1919), 2.353-4.

¹³⁶ See the short description of the *Rig Veda*, in its historical context, in Romila Thapar, *A History of India* (1966), 28-49. The leading god in the *Rig Veda* is Indra, a heroic warrior. “Indra is the Indian Thor, the angry giant-killer, the god of war and conquest.” Donald Mackenzie, *Indian Myth and Legend* (1913), xxxi. In addition to killing giants and other mythological creatures, he leads the Aryans in their conquest of the natives. “And when the people stir themselves for battle, be thou their savior, Indra, and protector, And theirs, thy manliest of our friends, the pious, the chiefs who have installed us priests, O Indra. To thee for high dominion hath been for evermore, for slaughtering the Vrtras, All lordly power and might, O Holy Indra, given by Gods for victory in battle. So urge our hosts together in the combats: yield up the godless bands that fight against us.” *Rig Veda* [“Sacred Knowledge,” c. 1500 BCE], in Ralph T.H. Griffith, trans., *The Hymns of the Rigveda: Translated with a Popular Commentary* (1987), book 6, hymn 25, Indra, 7-9. See also *Rig Veda*, 1.33.1, 2.11.4, 2.20.6-8, 6.63.10, 7.30.1-2, 10.157.1-5.

¹³⁷ In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the god Lord Krishna says that, “For a warrior there, there is nothing better than a battle.... Blessed are the warriors who are given the chance of a battle like this....” The mortal warrior Arjuna protests, “Krishna, why do you keep on urging me to engage in this savage act?” The god replies, “Whatever you do, Arjuna, do it as an offering to me.... In this way you will be freed from all the results of your actions, good or harmful.... I am death, shatterer of worlds, annihilating all things.” *Bhagavad Gita* [*Song of the Blessed One*, 5th Century BCE ~ 1st Century CE], Stephen Mitchell, trans. (2000), 2.30-2, 3.1, 9.27-8, 11.32 (51, 61, 118-9, 138).

¹³⁸ Consider, also, the continuation of that heroic ethos into the stage of empire building. As Lewis Mumford puts it, both Mesopotamian and Egyptian monarchs “boasted on their monuments of their personal feats in mutilating, torturing, and killing with their own hands their chief captives. They did in person what sicklier paranoids like Hitler performed through their agents.” Mumford, *The City in*

this tribal viciousness is also embedded in Islam.¹³⁹ All of us have a vicious tribal creature inside us. That does not distinguish us in the least among humans ~ and probably would not distinguish us from extraterrestrial intelligents.¹⁴⁰ What distinguishes us is how far we have traveled from that time. Notice, however, that the Judeo-Christian scriptures, which express the hatred of the tribe for the city so vehemently, do not represent primordial animism or traditional tribal faith. As does modern fundamentalism, they reflect a later reaction.¹⁴¹

Isaiah condemns the Jews of Jerusalem in the 8th Century BCE because they “clasp hands with pagans,” because “they bow down to the work of their hands,” and because their women “are haughty.... walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes.”¹⁴² The complaint is not that foreigners are committing acts of conquest, plunder, rape, or butchery against the Jews. Quite to the contrary, they are providing the Jews with material wealth, which is corrupting the Jews and undermining traditional family values. This same complaint was made later by Hermann, when he argued with his brother Flavius about the benefits of Roman civilization, and it was taken up again by Fichte during the German reaction to the Enlightenment. This is the “rock and roll” of contact between spiritual and material cultures discussed in § 4. Note, especially, the Heideggerian complaint that “they bow down to the work of their

History, 44. And see the description of Alexander the Great, the paradigmatic conquering hero, as an ancient precursor to Hitler in Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture* (2001), 88-90.

¹³⁹ See Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (2004), chapter 4.

¹⁴⁰ See Jerome H. Barkow, “Do Extraterrestrials Have Sex (and Intelligence)?” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 907 (April 2000) 164-181.

¹⁴¹ The *Bible*, named after the scrolled books of Egyptian papyrus traded through the port of *Byblos*, ironically a city of the Canaanites, the maritime merchants whom the Jews resented, came long after the story began. Michael Grant, *The Ancient Mediterranean* (1969), 60. The Jews were not simple desert nomads, as Paul Johnson reminds us. They had lived in Egypt and they were not entirely immune to the attractions of its “flesh pots.” Johnson, *History of the Jews*, 30, 42. But that only accentuated a deep loathing and fear of foreign influences, which found its focus in their hatred of the Philistines and Canaanites. The fetishization of the *Bible*, instituted in Protestantism by Luther but similar to the earlier fetishization of the *Torah* by the Jews, reflects the wonder at the power of the new technologies of print (in Protestantism) or writing (in early Judaism) which is strongest in a non-literate or semi-literate culture. Thus the “word,” ironically *logos* in the *New Testament* because of the influence of Greek philosophy, became the most powerful *mythos*.

¹⁴² *Bible*, Isaiah, 2.1, 6-8, 3.8-9, 16.

hands.” Technology is a form of idolatry. Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz disagree with the “alleged antiurbanism of the prophets.”¹⁴³ But their disagreement emphasizes the main point. “The city is condemned by the prophets only ‘as a symbol of man’s attempts to provide for his own material security.’”¹⁴⁴ That is precisely the point.¹⁴⁵

Isaiah is often cited as a transitional figure, a prophet who is beginning the process of universalizing the Jewish religion,¹⁴⁶ and thus prefiguring Jesus for the Christians.¹⁴⁷ As Paul Johnson says, “The wilderness religion of Moses is beginning to mature into a sophisticated world faith, to which all humanity can turn for answers.”¹⁴⁸ If so, why is Isaiah condemning foreign influences? Such ambivalence and confusion should be expected with these sea changes in cultural orientation.

Although the occupation of Jerusalem was a transitional phase for the evolution of Jewish consciousness, that very process of transition provoked a need for an idealized and godly “city on a hill.”¹⁴⁹ As an ideal image, Jerusalem was contrasted with Babylon, a city of commerce on the River Euphrates. As Conn and Ortiz correctly argue, it is not just the city, *per se*, that is the hateful thing. It is a city of commerce,

¹⁴³ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 86.

¹⁴⁴ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 86, quoting Frank Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel* (1977), 231.

¹⁴⁵ In some places, also, although their study of the relationship between the city and Christianity is generally a reasoned and informative work, they slip into the sort of absurd apologetic exegesis which infects modern Biblical scholarship. “Even the Lord’s intervention at Babel recognizes the city’s common-grace potential for unification.” Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 88, citing *Bible*, Genesis, 11.6. There was potential there, to be sure, which eventually grew to the awesome power of globalization in the modern cosmopolis. But it was precisely that potential, which can in no reasonable way be a “grace” in the view of the god depicted in Genesis, which required that the city of man be destroyed. Conn and Ortiz are stretching beyond all reason to rewrite Genesis. But so were the later prophets such as Isaiah and Jesus.

¹⁴⁶ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, 160.

¹⁴⁷ *Bible*, Luke, 22.37, Acts, 8.26-35, I Peter, 2.21-25.

¹⁴⁸ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, 76.

¹⁴⁹ *Bible*, Matthew 5.14. Carl Becker turns the “city on the hill,” into *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (1932). He argues that the Enlightenment was essentially a deification of nature, which was in its own way as much a religious vision as was Christianity. Becker, *Heavenly City*, 63, et passim. This is in substance the argument of Eric Voegelin, who claims that all of science and modern rationality is a form of “gnosticism.” Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* [*Wissenschaft, Politik, und Gnosis*, 1959]. Both arguments depend on an essentialism which has little to

especially a city by the sea, such as Tyre or Byblos, or Athens, Rome, and London, which may be contrasted to a city hidden in the hills, such as Sparta, or a city on a hill, such as Jerusalem. Josephus says that the Jews “neither inhabit a maritime country, nor do we delight in merchandize, nor in such a mixture with other men as arises from it; but the cities we dwell in are remote from the sea, and having a fruitful country for our habitation, we take pains in cultivating that only.”¹⁵⁰ Just as Plato had recommended building cities away from the sea,¹⁵¹ Luther used the Jewish practice as an argument against the corrupting influence of commerce in Germany. “In olden days, God caused the children of Israel to dwell far from the sea, and did not allow them to engage in much commerce.”¹⁵² The topography of the Levant was a physical manifestation of a “cultural gradient” (*Kulturgefälle*). Michael Grant describes the connection between the physical and psychological space, and also the ambivalence:

While not wholly invulnerable and fairly close to the main caravan routes, Judea did not bestride them since they passed alongside on lower ground. Prophets complained that the country was too accessible to outside influences, and yet there remained at most times an element of detachment about such exchanges. The same judicious blend of isolation and accessibility was apparent in the choice of Jerusalem as the Hebrew capital....

The history of Israel, like its geography, oscillated between this externalizing, cosmopolitan element and a strong opposite tendency towards separateness and introversion.¹⁵³

Christianity was no less ambivalent about the city. Christianity was originally a subversive sect in Judea, based in the rural areas. Jesus came in from the countryside

do with concrete historical causes. See Peter Gay, “Carl Becker’s Heavenly City,” *Political Science Quarterly* 72.2 (June 1957) 182-199.

¹⁵⁰ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.12.60. Cited by Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* [*De l’esprit des lois*, 1748], Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone, eds. and trans. (1989), § 4.21.6 (359), in his discussion of the relevance of ancient commerce.

¹⁵¹ Plato, *Laws*, 4.704-5.

¹⁵² Martin Luther, “An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nobility as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom” [*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520], in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed., various translators (1962), § 27 (page 481).

¹⁵³ Grant, *Ancient Mediterranean*, 113-4.

to cleanse the Temple of Jerusalem of its commercialism,¹⁵⁴ but otherwise avoided entering the Hellenized cities of Judea.¹⁵⁵ The Essenes, who may have shared some connections with the Christians, were even more adamantly anti-urban.¹⁵⁶ In Rome, Christianity began as an urban religion,¹⁵⁷ and it appealed most strongly to alienated urbanites.¹⁵⁸ As it spread among Jews in the Hellenized Roman Empire, it inspired rural resentment of urban Jews.¹⁵⁹ It became part of the state under Constantine and depended on Roman cities for its spread in the provinces. But then the city began to fail in the West, and so did the temporary alliance with Christianity. Invoking the Cain and Abel story, and the hatred of Babylon, Saint Augustine condemned the “city of earth” (*civitas terrena*).¹⁶⁰ Augustine, a teacher in Rome and Milan, and Bishop of Hippo, was a sophisticated urbanite. Such is the element of self-hatred in this hatred of the city.

Just as there was a cultural gradient between the Jewish city on a hill and the Canaanite cities by the sea in the Levant, there was a larger cultural gradient between

¹⁵⁴ Bible, Matthew, 21.12.

¹⁵⁵ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 88, citing Bible, Genesis, 120.

¹⁵⁶ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 88, citing Bible, Genesis, 138; Stephen Hodge, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Rediscovered: An Updated Look at one of Archaeology's Greatest Mysteries* (2003), 184.

¹⁵⁷ Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (1964), 61; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (1971), 1.163 et passim; Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 83-5. Thus “pagan” (*paganus*), which originally meant a rustic, came to mean a non-Christian.

¹⁵⁸ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (1996), 161,191-208. Its appeal was widespread, including slaves, merchants, and the urban poor, and also women as a gender in particular, but its strongest appeal, despite many misunderstandings about the demographics, was in the middle and upper classes of the cities. The conventional view was that the “hard core” of early Christian church membership “lay in the humbler classes, people who were very far removed from higher education and at most controlled a very modest property of their own.” Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (1987), 301. See also Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 1.163 et passim; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, vol. 1-2 (1964), 1.96. That view, however, has been considerably revised by later scholarship. See the highly persuasive analysis in Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, chapter 2.

¹⁵⁹ Lellia Cracco Ruggini, “Intolerance: Equal and Less Equal in the Roman World,” *Classical Philology* 82.3 (July 1987) 187-205, 204.

¹⁶⁰ Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus), *The City of God*, Marcus Dods, trans. (2000) [*De Civitate Dei*, 426 CE], 15.1.479. Re Babylon, which Augustine contrasted to the godly vision of Jerusalem, see Augustine, “Symbolic Meaning of Jewish History (*On Psalm 92, 1*),” in *The Essential Augustine*, Vernon J. Bourke, ed. (1974), 224-5.

the Greek cities of the East and the Latin cities of the West in the Roman Empire.¹⁶¹ That is a major factor explaining why the empire fell in the West, a thousand years before it did in the East.¹⁶² In the Dark Age of Europe, cities became seats of bishops and reservoirs of the faith.¹⁶³ But this was a reversion of the city to the *necropolis*, in its decay with the fall of the Roman Empire in the West.¹⁶⁴ In the Late Middle Age, the church rebuilt itself in the universities of the cities. Those universities, with their

¹⁶¹ The nature of urban culture was different in the two halves from the beginning. "In some regions, particularly in the eastern provinces, the task was facilitated by the existence of an already thriving infrastructure of city-states founded by the Greeks.... In the West, the process of urbanization often proceeded entirely from scratch." Michael Grant, *The First Century: Emperors, Gods, and Everyman* (1990), 41. "A profound contrast between West and East manifested itself to the Romans in the earliest days." James Reid, *The Municipalities of the Roman Empire* (1913), 6. See also Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (1987), 28. The East, by virtue of its cities, "far surpassed" the West, "both in superiority of civilization and in a much higher level of economic development." Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade* (1925), 2. In the late 4th Century CE, "divisions between the Latin and Greek halves of the empire became more evident. The east far outshone the west in intellectual achievement, prosperity, and the number of and size of its cities...." Thomas Brown, "The Transformation of the Roman Mediterranean 400-900," in George Holmes, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval Europe* (1988), 1. See also Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 2.1065-6.

¹⁶² Many of the supposed answers to the question of why the empire fell in the West are immediately exposed to be non-answers when we ask a basic comparative question. If so, then why did not the same factor lead to the fall of the empire in the East, which in fact lasted for another thousand years? "It is no use claiming to detect a complete explanation of the fall of the Western Empire in any factor which applied to the Eastern Byzantine Empire as well...." Michael Grant, *Fall of the Roman Empire* (1976), 203. The ancient hatred of the tribe for the city, and for politics, continues to rear its ugly head in our modern image of the Eastern Empire as a corrupt organism, as "Byzantine." In fact, as Thomas Brown says, "The popular image of Byzantium as a monument to political and social immobility is in many ways the opposite of the truth." Brown, "Transformation of the Roman Mediterranean 400-900," 22. James Reid argues, persuasively, that the longer survival of the empire in the East was linked to the relative freedom and vitality of the Greek cities, called *Graecorum libertas*, the "liberty of the Greeks," by the Romans. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* [*Liber ad Atticum*, 50 BCE], 6.1.14, in *The Letters of Cicero*, Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans. (1899-1912) [1st Cent. BCE]; Reid, *Municipalities of the Roman Empire*, 374. Reid says that "the rise of the Roman power was furthered incalculably by the scope which it allowed to local freedom," and "so long as municipal liberty kept its vigor, the empire flourished...when despotism overflowed the municipalities, then the decay of the great imperial structure went on rapidly to its fatal issue." Reid, *Municipalities of the Roman Empire*, 9.

¹⁶³ Johnson, *History of Christianity*, 129.

¹⁶⁴ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 40. "Christianity became increasingly a rural religion as town life, independently, became less secure." Hugh Thomas, *A History of the World* (1978), 167. In addition, Western monasticism sought to isolate the faith from the corruption of the city. Escapist monasticism was primarily a phenomenon of the West rather than the East. The reason for this was probably the greater stability of the cities in the East. See W.H.C. Frend, "The Monks and the Survival of the East Roman Empire in the Fifth Century," *Past and Present* 54 (February 1972) 3-24, 23.

theological speculations, undermined orthodoxy and laid the ground for the Reformation.¹⁶⁵ Luther and Calvin were hostile to the worldliness of the real city, although Calvin attempted to create an ideal city in Geneva,¹⁶⁶ which then became Rousseau's "fantasized Sparta."¹⁶⁷ Protestantism spread through Europe via commercial cities, thus associating itself with capitalism. This was the basis for Weber's hopelessly confused theory of the "protestant ethic."¹⁶⁸ That process helped create a Modern Age in which the urban environment, with its commercialism and multiculturalism, is again fundamentally antithetical to religion.¹⁶⁹ But that is getting ahead of the story.

The world picture, geoculture, and urban mutations

Those are some of the significant permutations on the theme ~ expressions of the hatred of the tribe for the city, and of the spiritual reaction against materialism ~ in the highly polarized collective consciousness of the West. But now I should explain, more specifically, the material causes of that cultural polarization.

As mentioned before, no statements about a nation or culture are meaningful unless they can be put in a comparative context. And in the final reduction of a causal

¹⁶⁵ Don Martindale, *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory* (1981), 25-31.

¹⁶⁶ Luther, who took much of his theology from Augustine, had little to say about the city specifically (although he did have much to say against commercialism, and he inspired an agrarian revolt despite himself). Luther's ideal city "is a domain of peace and order, not a realm where citizens live in a community and are supposed to be politically active." Hans-Christoph Rublack, "Martin Luther and the Urban Social Experience," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16.1 (Spring, 1985) 15-32, 19. Calvinism, a more urban religion, although equally fanatical in its early phases, was a more complex formation. See Lewis Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559* (1985), 212-227; R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* ([1926] 2000), 102-32.

¹⁶⁷ J.S. McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought* (1996), 253.

¹⁶⁸ Max Weber, "Protestant Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" [*Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, 1905], in *Selections in Translation*, Eric Matthews, trans. (1978). A good short discussion of the issue can be found in Johnson, *History of Christianity*, 313-317. More detailed treatments are Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*; Kurt Samuelson, *Religion and Economic Action: The Protestant Ethic, the Rise of Capitalism, and the Abuses of Scholarship*, E. Geoffrey French, trans. (1993) [*Ekonomi och Religion*, 1957]; and S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (1968).

¹⁶⁹ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 161, et seq.

logic, all explanations for variations among nations or cultures are either racial or geographical.¹⁷⁰ Racial explanations linger on in vague invocations of culture or national character, and in some grand narratives promoted by both defenders and critics of the West.¹⁷¹ Entirely aside from political correctness, racial explanations are falsified by genetics.¹⁷² Any attempt to explain the peculiarities of German culture by putative characteristics of a Germanic “race” are also contradicted by Germanic peoples in the Netherlands, England, and Switzerland. So that, in the most general terms, leaves us with geography. It is not quite that simple, of course. We should avoid a simplistic “geographic determinism” by recognizing that geography is only the beginning of the story, not the end of it. Forms of “ethnicity” without a racial basis, based on history and language, take on a life of their own which is transplanted from

¹⁷⁰ See Daniel Chirot, “Causes and Consequences of Backwardness,” in Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century* (1989), 1-2. He adds political culture as a third possible basis, but neglects to offer a more basic cause for differences in political culture, which is the question here. Race and geography were the two alternatives, mixed together somewhat vaguely, that Aristotle offered for the success of the Greeks. Asians “have souls endowed with thought” while barbarian Europeans “are filled with spiritedness,” but “the stock of the Greeks shares in both ~ just as it holds the middle in terms of location.” Aristotle, *Politics*, 1327b. Race and geography continue to be conflated in modern discourse, although it may often be unintentional, but it may also be based on a deliberate evasion of the distinction, as in Thomas Sowell, *Race and Culture: A World View* (1994), xii-xiv.

¹⁷¹ See Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2004). “Today, segments of Western society repudiate racism. Yet many (perhaps most!) Westerners continue to accept racist explanations privately or subconsciously.” Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 19.

¹⁷² All *Homo sapiens* are so closely related as to preclude meaningful genetic boundaries between “races” or national groups of humans. This is called the “psychic unity of humankind,” which is misleading because it has to do with the biological potential of the human species, which allows for a great diversity of cultural forms and psychic states. “Nearly all sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists now assert the psychic unity of mankind; this is done not out of political correctness ~ a poor foundation for knowledge anyway ~ but simply because the biological evidence points in that direction.” John Cartwright, *Evolution and Human Behavior* (1998), § 1.5 (page 29). “Compared to other mammals, all humans are practically cousins. One troop of chimpanzees has more genetic diversity than all 6 billion human beings.” Katy Grannan, “Where Do We Really Come From?” *Discover* 24.5 (May 2003) 58-63, 61. This does not mean that there are no differences between races whatsoever, but that “the variation which does exist is overwhelmingly inter-individual and within-population, and not between ‘races’ or populations.” John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, “The Psychological Foundations of Culture,” in Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby, eds., *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (1992), 25.

one region to another.¹⁷³ The story of the Germans begins with the transplantation of Greco-Roman, and Judeo-Christian culture from the Mediterranean to Europe by the Romans. As C.R. Whittaker puts it, “social relations project themselves spatially,” but space “is political and ideological... a product filled by ideology.”¹⁷⁴ That may serve as a preliminary definition of “geoculture.”

Let us ascend in a *Zeitundgeistmaschine* to what Heidegger condemns as the “Age of the World Picture” (*Zeit des Weltbildes*).¹⁷⁵ This might frighten Heideggerians, as Heidegger was frightened by pictures of the Earth from the Moon.¹⁷⁶ But what follows is a more authentic encounter with Being. The purpose is to delineate the physical, biological, and economic foundations for the West, the Western European cultural gradient, and the German geoculture. Suppose that you are an extraterrestrial sociologist aboard an interstellar probe ship approaching a primitive blue planet. You are not a god, nor the final fulfillment of evolution. Your point of departure was not an “Archimedean point” in space.¹⁷⁷ But you have a wider perspective since your species developed bioengineering, artificial intelligence, and other technologies. Contact with

¹⁷³ Strabo observes that “as regards the various arts and faculties and institutions of mankind, most them, when once men have made a beginning, flourish in any latitude whatsoever and in certain instances even in spite of the latitude; so that some local characteristics of a people come by nature, others by training and habit.” Strabo, *Geography* [*Strabonos Geographicon*, c. 7 BCE], Horace Leonard Jones and John Robert Sitlington Sterrett, trans., vol. 1-8 (1917), 2.3.7. This seems to be main thesis in Thomas Sowell’s study of races and cultures in *Race and Culture: A World View* (1994), *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (1996), and *Conquests and Cultures: An International History* (1998).

¹⁷⁴ C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (1994), 12-3, emphasis omitted, quoting Henri Lefebvre, “Reflections on the Politics of Space,” *Antipode* 8.2 (1976) 30-7, 31.

¹⁷⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, especially the essay on “The Age of the World Picture,” 115 et seq.

¹⁷⁶ Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us,” 277. I would suggest that the best possible antidote to the disease of Heideggerianism is an encounter with Carl Sagan’s *Cosmos* (1980).

¹⁷⁷ The “Archimedean point,” a tiresome cliché of postmodernists, was the absolute beginning point for certain knowledge sought by René Descartes in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* [*Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*, 1641], in Lawrence Cahoon, ed., *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology* (1996), 34. They seem to assume, incorrectly, that modern empirical science is based on Cartesian or Kantian transcendentalism. Descartes took the metaphor from the discovery of leverage by Archimedes, which prompted Archimedes to say that “if he were given another world to stand on, he could move the earth.” There is little in the context described by Plutarch to suggest that Archimedes

other species has also given you insights into patterns of evolution common to intelligent life.¹⁷⁸ Your spectrograph tells you from light years away that this is a planet with plant and animal life, but the absence of artificial electronic emissions warns you that this may be a wasted deceleration from near-light speed. You stare at the developing picture of the blue planet on the screens, hoping to see some signs of intelligence and a clue as to where it is most efficient to land in hopes of finding whatever is the most advanced civilization on the surface of the planet. So, where do you land?

It is not that difficult to decide, if one is guided by some basic principles of evolution, biological and cultural. First, there is the fundamental fact that higher animals are parasites on plants and lower animals, and that the first major technology of an intelligent species is the biotechnology of parasitism. This goes by a more polite term, “domestication.” The constraints of available biological resources have had an overwhelming influence of the origins of civilizations ~ origins obscured by later transfers of those biological resources and later stages in technology. This biological basis for civilization, and the huge head start it gave to what became Western Civilization in the Mediterranean, is detailed in Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997).¹⁷⁹

was speaking of an absolutely privileged point in space. See Plutarch, *Marcellus* [*Vitae Parallelae*, c. 70-120 CE], 14, in *Makers of Rome: Nine Lives*, Ian Scott-Kilvert, trans. (1965).

¹⁷⁸ The more we understand the rules of evolution, the more likely it seems that extraterrestrial intelligents, whatever the strange appearance of their physiology, will have most of the same social conflicts known to humans in their own early history ~ although we can hope that they have developed better methods of dealing with them. The logic of evolution is independent of the media of life. See Barkow, “Do Extraterrestrials Have Sex (and Intelligence)?”

¹⁷⁹ In a general way, it is an update on Montesquieu’s *Spirit of Laws* [*De l’esprit des lois*, 1748], but given new shape and scientific basis by evolutionary theory. Diamond, like Montesquieu, is accused of “environmental determinism.” James M. Blaut, “Environmentalism and Eurocentrism,” *Geographical Review* 89.3 (1999) 391-408; Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (2001), 16-7; and Thomas Cahill, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (2003), 49. Diamond addresses the charge preemptively, although not in detail, at *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 408. See also the refutation of the charge as applied traditionally to Montesquieu in Karl Marcus Kriesel, “Montesquieu: Possibilistic Political Geographer,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 58.3 (September 1968) 557-574. Montesquieu seems to posit a one-to-one correspondence between climate and politics throughout much of *The Spirit of the Laws*, but

But that specific biological foundation for Western Civilization, which will not be reviewed in detail here, is only one level in the geocultural formation. The second fundamental fact is that civilizations advance most rapidly by a process of multicultural fusion, or what may be called “cultural sex.” A conventional ethnocentric view, by no means limited to racists and fascists, is that there was a “miracle of the Greeks,”¹⁸⁰ a mysterious wellspring of genius, which begat some essential spirit to the West.¹⁸¹ In an older version which is now more or less out of fashion, this is the idea that Greek culture was an expression of an inherent genius of the Aryan race which invaded India and Greece, thereby establishing a master race and a classical civilization in both areas.¹⁸² This followed a general theory of prehistory, which for some time had a

the main theme of the books, after all, is the “spirit” of the laws, which has to do with social institutions, and his thesis is actually that it is an interaction of spirit and climate which is determinative. Like the more general charge of “biological determinism” leveled at anyone who attempts to integrate the biological and social sciences, “environmental determinism” is only an expression of rigidity in thought. The biological and environmental foundations provide the basis for the development of complex cultural formations, which then take on a life of their own. The term “life” here, for culture, is not metaphorical, but quite literal. There is no simple one-to-one correspondence between environmental zones and cultures precisely because culture, once it develops and grows itself, has the ability to transfer natural and unnatural technologies to other zones. And an “overwhelming influence” is still not the same thing as a pre-determined final outcome. As biologists recognize in the study of evolution, there is a high level of “contingency” along the way. See Stephan Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (1989); Joel Mokyr, “Eurocentricity Triumphant,” *The American Historical Review* 104.4 (October 1999) 1241-1246, 1246.

¹⁸⁰ “In all of history, nothing is so surprising or so difficult to account for as the sudden rise of civilization in Greece.” Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945), 3. The Greek achievements in all areas of culture ~ science, art, and philosophy ~ have often been characterized as a “miracle” of history. See George Sarton, *Ancient Science through the Golden Age of Greece* (1993), 160. See also Diana Buitron-Oliver, *The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, The Fifth Century B.C.* (1992).

¹⁸¹ In its more polite current form, this might be called the “*How-the-Irish-Saved-Civilization* explanation of history,” after Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland’s Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (1995). Cahill criticizes Jared Diamond for his supposed biological and geographical determinism, but then resorts to a vague mysticism, asserting that Greek culture “just ‘happened to happen,’” in the course of asserting a strong version of cultural determinism, or cultural essentialism. Thomas Cahill, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (2003), 49. Cahill offers no explanation for the formation of Greek culture in the first place other than sheer accident. Diamond and others such as myself who look for the material foundations do not discount the importance of culture. We are merely seeking its causes. The Greeks were special. Or, more precisely, they became special. But what exactly made them so special?

¹⁸² A good current summary of this history of European ethnocentric scholarship is provided by Robert Drews, *The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the Near East*

scientific basis, called “diffusionism,”¹⁸³ although the apparent evidence for diffusionism in archeology, uncalibrated carbon dating, was actually of diffusion by more advanced civilizations in the Middle East to the hinterlands of Europe.¹⁸⁴ Diffusion is still a valid theory for the spread of *Homo sapiens* as a species.¹⁸⁵ However, cultural diffusionism and the Aryan myth of origins were both inspired by the same essentialism, the idea that innovations in culture must flow from an original wellspring. Against this was posed the theory of “independent evolution.” Neither theory was completely silly. But that simple dichotomy, “diffusion” versus “independent evolution,” obscured the difference between monocentric diffusion, in which all other groups learn from one superior culture, and polycentric diffusion, in which a significant level of interaction, a synergy, develops among many cultures. That confusion has continued to plague the “post-colonial” debates about the West. One of the worst things about Martin Bernal’s infamous *Black Athena* (1987), aside from its generally awful scholarship, was that he indulged in the same simple-mindedness by substituting an African myth of origins for the Aryan myth of origins.¹⁸⁶ As Maghan Keita says of the debate about *Black Athena*:

Inherent to their essential premises is a fact which both sides of the debate have failed to grasp in general in their search for “purity”: history is based on interaction (not “purity”); the geographical proportions of the Mediterranean world were not so

(1988). The whole matter of the Aryans or Indo-Europeans has so been screwed up by ethnocentrism and nationalism that one must consult the most recent scholarship on this most ancient question in order to get the straight story. Among other things, he notes the “unfortunate coincidence that studies of the Indo-European language community flourished at a time when nationalism, and a tendency to see history in racial terms, was on the rise in Europe.” Drews, *Coming of the Greeks*, 5.

¹⁸³ On the appeal of diffusionism to ethnocentric thinking, see James M. Blaut, “Diffusionism: A Uniformitarian Critique,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77.1 (March 1987) 30-47, 30-4. To my mind, however, Blaut goes a bit too far in the other direction, as do many in the “post-modern” and “post-colonial” era, and unduly politicizes what should be an empirical issue.

¹⁸⁴ See an extended discussion of the issue of diffusionism in archeology and the problem of carbon dating in Colin Renfrew, *Before Civilization: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe* (1973). See also John Howland Rowe, “Diffusionism and Archaeology,” *American Antiquity* 31.3, part 1 (January 1966) 334-337.

¹⁸⁵ That is the “Out of Africa” theory in anthropology. Steve Jones, et al., eds., *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution* (1992), 249, 392.

¹⁸⁶ Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (1987). See detailed criticisms in Mary Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, eds., *Black Athena Revisited* (1996).

expansive as to preclude such interaction, in fact, they encouraged it. And the Classical Age is replete with material which substantiates this and gives unity to the Mediterranean world of the time.¹⁸⁷

Keita identifies the defect in either a Eurocentric or Afrocentric explanation for the “miracle of the Greeks,” which is the search for a pure essence. Neither view acknowledges the multitude of influences on early Greek culture, which was represented by the extraordinarily syncretic nature of Athena, the god, and manifested in the relatively multicultural origins of Athens, the actual city.¹⁸⁸ Keita also correctly identifies the real factor of overwhelming importance, which is the geography of the Mediterranean.

¹⁸⁷ Maghan Keita, “Deconstructing the Classical Age: Africa and The Unity of the Mediterranean World,” *Journal of Negro History* 79.2 (Spring, 1994) 147-166, 148.

¹⁸⁸ “Athena” the god and “Athens” the city are non-Indo-European names. Both the god and the city clearly predate the Greek migration into what we now know as Greece. Grant, *Rise of the Greeks*, 35-6; M.W.M Pope, “Athena’s Development in Homeric Epic,” *The American Journal of Philology* 81.2 (April 1960) 113-135, 115, note 5; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, John Raffan, trans. (1985) [*Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* 1977], § 3.2.4, (page 140). The god’s association with birds is one hint, among others, that she has some connection with a Minoan god. Michael Stapleton, *The Illustrated Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology* (1986), 43. Snakes which guard her Acropolis are another, and it has been suggested that this links her specifically with a female snake god which is thought to have been a leading deity of the Minoans. There is a more definite link with the central god of the Minoans known as “Pontia,” the “Lady.” Burkert, *Greek Religion*, § 3.2.4 (page 139). Some sort of general Minoan connection seems persuasive. Rodney Castleden, *Minoans: Life in Bronze Age Crete* (1990), 124; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, §§ 1.4, 3.2.4, (pages 49-50,140). Plato also notes that she may have had a connection with the Egyptian god Saïs. Plato, *Timaeus* [c. 387-347 BCE], 21e. Wherever she came from, it is clear that she is a composite, and that she came from elsewhere in the Mediterranean before she settled in Athens. There is a possible allusion to this in the *Odyssey* where Homer says that “flashing-eyed Athena departed over the unresting sea, and...came to Marathon and broad-wayed Athens....” Homer, *Odyssey*, 7.78-80. The cult of the Greeks and a search for a myth of origins is at the heart of one of the major philosophical diatribes in the postmodern reaction against modernity, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, trans. [*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 1944]. In their phallogocentric focus on Odysseus, and their strange attempt to transform him into a proto-capitalist icon of an “enlightenment” which began in Ancient Greece, Horkheimer and Adorno fail to appreciate the more interesting and obvious role of Athena in Greek mythology, generally, and her specific role as the guide to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. She is a highly complex character, a composite, an incomplete synthesis which brings together many conflicting themes, in an unresolved tension which mirrors the cultural tension of Western Civilization. Among other things, she is a god of *polemos*, “war,” which makes her also a god of *thymos*, “spirit,” and at the same time the preeminent god of *sophia*, “wisdom,” in its first fully developed form. See Pope, “Athena’s Development in Homeric Epic.”

The extraterrestrial sociologist staring at a topographical and climatic map of the Earth might well find it important that the Mediterranean has what Earthlings call a “Mediterranean climate,” a climate with the highest potential for evolving useful annual grains such as wheat and barley because it encourages a peculiar evolutionary strategy among plants, in which they make heavy investment in seed rather than stalk. That is a major part of Diamond’s explanation, and that is an important starting point. But the extraterrestrial sociologist is interested in more than that. In predicting where the most advanced civilization will take off, the question is not so much the *origins* of resources as it is their *availability*. Taking into account natural migrations, unnatural transport by hunter-gatherers, and trade among agriculturalists, it is the shape of *channels of communication* that counts. This is where culture enters into the picture, although it is still strongly constrained by geography. The advantages of the Mediterranean include not only its climate but also its topography and its relative position on the planet:

The diversity of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean is the largest zone of the “Mediterranean climate” on the planet, and there is greater climatic variation within the zone, both spatial and temporal. It provides more environmental niches.

The size and orientation of Eurasia. The Mediterranean and the Black Sea unite the shores of Eurasia, which has two major advantages over other continents. It is the largest and most diverse. But diversity is of limited value without contact between the diverse zones. There is a contrast in the channels of communication or “axes” of the continents.¹⁸⁹ The topography of Africa and the Americas runs north and south, across the grain of climatic zones. Major parts of Eurasia run east and west, parallel with climatic zones. As J.R. McNeill and William H. McNeill sum it up, “Eurasia had the advantage of greater size, far more numerous domesticable species and, above all, a

¹⁸⁹ Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 176-91, especially figure 10.1, page 177.

more capacious communications web embracing its much larger population.”¹⁹⁰

Navigable rivers and the sea in the middle of the Earth. Eurasia as a whole was favorable to the development of civilization. But the Mediterranean and Europe had special advantages within Eurasia. Europe and the lands around the Mediterranean, the *Orbis Terrarum* or “Circle of Lands,” are especially favored with islands and large navigable rivers which join the land and the sea together.¹⁹¹ Africa, although the origin of the human species, is especially disfavored in this respect because of high escarpments dividing the coasts from the heartlands. The Mediterranean, as Keita argues, created a unique unity for the *Orbis Terrarum*. Hegel argues that for the “three quarters of the globe” that is dominated by the Eastern Hemisphere, the Mediterranean is “the uniting element and the center of “World-History.”¹⁹² It really is the “Sea in the Middle of the Earth.” It was a petri dish, a mixing bowl, or what may be called a “cultural krater” ~ after a *kratêr*, a Greek bowl for mixing water and wine at a symposium.¹⁹³

The material power of Western Civilization rests on its superior technology and science. Greek natural science arose in the Ionian cities on the islands and western coast of Asia Minor in the 6th Century BCE.¹⁹⁴ Looking closely at the shape of the sea and the topography of the surrounding coasts, the extraterrestrial sociologist might perceive that, within the larger krater of the Mediterranean, there is a smaller krater of particular interest created by the cluster of islands in the Eastern Basin of the Mediterranean. As some historians say, “the Aegean basin was the natural meeting

¹⁹⁰ J.R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (2003), 36.

¹⁹¹ It is also a relatively forgiving sea, which was more likely to encourage early experimentation. The early mariners were afraid to sail the Mediterranean in the winter, and also to sail out of sight of land. But it is nowhere nearly as deadly as the North Atlantic in winter, and it has a wealth of linking islands. See Michael Grant, *Ancient Mediterranean* (1969), 61-2.

¹⁹² G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, J. Sibree, trans. (1991) [*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1822], introduction, 87.

¹⁹³ A variation is *kratêria*, a mixing bowl for compounding drugs.

place for Eastern and Western influences.”¹⁹⁵ The Greeks were a “secondary civilization” which learned from Minoa, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Lydia.¹⁹⁶ Like the Philistines, the early Greek settlers of the Ionian Coast may have come largely from Crete, the first known maritime empire or “thalassocracy” (*thalassokratia*) in the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁷ They were involved in an active trade and movement of peoples throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, which brought with it a multitude of foreign influences.¹⁹⁸ The Lydians, one of the older nations on the Ionian Coast, were the first to coin money and create a retail trade.¹⁹⁹ They may have also been the origins of the sea-going Etruscans²⁰⁰ who had a strong influence on the Romans. Michael Grant says that, in their development of art, the Greeks were saved from the “sophisticated senility” of older civilizations they borrowed from.²⁰¹ Plato

¹⁹⁴ McClellan and Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History*, 59. But see also a contrary line of investigation, which indicates that there were early Eastern contacts on the mainland of Greece as well, in H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (1979), 84.

¹⁹⁵ Bernadotte Perrin, “The Oldest Civilization of Greece,” *The American Historical Review* 8.2 (January 1903) 331-332, 331.

¹⁹⁶ McClellan and Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History*, 57; Stephen Mason, *A History of the Sciences* (1962), 25.

¹⁹⁷ Sarton, *Ancient Science*, 160-1. Thucydides, *History* [*Historia*, c. 404 BCE], in *The Peloponnesian War*, Rex Warner, trans. (1954), 1.4; Strabo, *Geography*, 1.3.2; Plato, *Laws*, 706a-b. Sarton, *Ancient Science*, 103. Aristotle, looking at the big picture somewhat like the extraterrestrial, observes that Crete “seems naturally suited for rule in Greece.” Aristotle, *Politics*, 1271b. The seeds were there, and they might have born more fruit if not for the volcanic eruptions which cut short the early Minoan thalassocracy. “The Minoans...had grown rich through a complex agricultural and seaborne trade with the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. The Minoans pass on this tradition of intercultural contact with the civilization of the Mycenaeans.” Thomas Martin, *Ancient Greece* (1996), 17.

¹⁹⁸ Sarton, *Ancient Science*, 164-7.

¹⁹⁹ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.94.1; Grant, *Rise of the Greeks*, 291.

²⁰⁰ Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.94.7.

²⁰¹ Michael Grant, *The Ancient Mediterranean* (1969), 161. This falls into a general category of theories which might be called “limit of growth” theories ~ although these theories vary widely on the specific mechanisms for limits. As civilizations develop, they develop what the neo-Marxist historian Perry Anderson calls “endogenous contractions” or what the rational choice theorist Mancur Olson calls “sclerosis.” See Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (1974); Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (1982). An early theory of this type, tied to the idea that states have a natural life-span, analogous to organic creatures, is in Polybius, *Histories* [*Historiai*, c. 140 BCE]. Greeks such as Thucydides and Polybius tend also to phrase this in terms of “hubris,” or what in the Modern Age has often been phrased as “moral decline” in advanced states. See Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors*

disparaged Phoenician and Egyptian contributions to Greek science when he said that they were primarily motivated by the love of money, whereas the Greeks were lovers of wisdom.²⁰² But technologies of knowledge he loved a great deal, such as writing and geometry, arose from practical commerce and engineering among those Phoenicians and Egyptians. We can agree with Plato (or a Greek confused with him) when he claims “that whatever Greeks receive from foreigners they improve in the end,”²⁰³ just as Polybius explained the success of the Romans, in part, by the fact that “no people are more willing to adopt new customs and to emulate what they see is better done by others.”²⁰⁴ As in biological evolution, cultural sex generates better forms.

The rise of natural science in Ionia likely had to do with a cluster of economic and social factors. Those included not only the opportunity for cross-cultural fertilization and a maritime commercial economy but also the political independence of small city-states. We think of the *polis* as the most distinctive characteristic of classical Greek civilization, but this was also something that the Greeks probably learned from the “Canaanites” or “Phoenicians” on the shores of the Levant.²⁰⁵ One connection between the *polis* and natural science is that the dialectic of political debate among the citizens of a city-state crosses over to an open questioning of nature.²⁰⁶ This is an indication of the significance of overall cultural polarity. A more materialistic and pluralistic political order encourages a more materialistic and competitive approach to science and technology. (Francis Bacon, a Chancellor of England, imported much of the empirical

(1991). A modern version of that approach appears in Michael Grant, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1976). See also the application of the idea of limits to growth, explicitly drawing from Polybius, in the somewhat vague formulation in Robert Gilpin, *War & Change in World Politics* (1981).

²⁰² Plato, *Republic*, 436a.

²⁰³ Pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* [c. 387-347 BCE], 787d-e, in Plato, *The Complete Works*, John M. Cooper, ed. (1997).

²⁰⁴ Polybius, *Histories* [*Historiai*, c. 140 BCE], in *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, Ian Scott-Kilvert, trans. (1979), 6.25.

²⁰⁵ Grant, *Rise of the Greeks*, 296.

²⁰⁶ “A small step separates rational debate about political constitutions from inquiring into the constitution of nature....” McClellan and Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History*, 57.

method of English Common Law into his theory of modern science.) Or, put in a negative way, which actually points to the nature of the phenomenon better, city-states lacked the means for imposing ideological hegemony, as under empires with royal administration, priesthoods, and established religions.

It is not that a city-state, *per se*, or in its essence, is necessarily a more intellectually open form of polity. Quite to the contrary, many city-states, like many small communities of various types, such as the tribe or the modern small town, were terribly conservative and conformist. And as Tocqueville pointed out, even democracy is no guarantee of intellectual openness. The main point is that a large number of small city-states sharing a common civilization allows for competition, movement of individuals, and interchange within the civilization. As in the case with the association of the later medieval cities and newly independent nations with the “protestant ethic,” it is the *negative* effect of the political form and its associated ideology, the local spatial opposition or relational effect, not the essence of its content, which is critical to the development of a competition which produces the evolution. (This is the difference between the apparent and structural features of culture discussed in § 4.) An open and intellectually alive 6th Century Miletos or a Periclean Athens is a limited phenomenon, no more typical of a Greek *polis* than a repressive Sparta or a highly polarized Corinth. As Bertrand Russell says, “The level of civilization was very different in different parts of the Greek world, and only a minority of cities contributed to the total of Hellenic achievement.”²⁰⁷ But the system of *poleis*, as a whole, allowed for important mutations to arise. The most important philosophical point to draw from the thought experiment of the extraterrestrial sociologist is that it is the *mixing* as much the *materials*. In other words, in examining origins and sorting out causes and effects, we need to focus less on the *essence* and more on the *relationships*. The culture of the Greeks was built by multicultural synthesis, despite their apparent cultural unity, much as were the national cultures of the Dutch and the English in a later age. (See table 3.)

It is certainly no coincidence that the Dutch and the English were also great seafarers. The sea, to Plato's disgust, was a strong solvent of cultural boundaries. In order to participate most productively in the cultural sexual orgy of the Mediterranean (or a cultural "symposium" if one insists on being delicate about it) a people had to learn to sail the sea in the middle of the world. If there were any "essence" to the Greeks of the Classical Age, it surely would have something to do with the sea.²⁰⁸

Now, consider something about the sea from Carl Schmitt, the other big name in

²⁰⁷ Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 13.

²⁰⁸ "Greeks are settled around the sea." Aristotle, *Politics*, 1271b, lines 34-35. They are like "frogs round a swamp." Plato, *Phaedo*, 109b, in *Plato, The Complete Works*, John M. Cooper, ed. (1997). Plato and Aristotle dislike the sea and the commerce which comes with it. See Plato, *Laws*, 4.704-5, 8.842c-d, 847d, 915d-e, 919b-d, 12.949e-50a; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1257a-1258b, 1327a-b, 1278a, 1318b, 1328b, 1337b. But they both have an amusing tendency to use nautical metaphors in their discussions of politics. See the many entries under "pilot" (*kybernētēs*, κυβερνητής) in the index to the *Republic* translated by Allan Bloom (1968), and in the *Complete Works* edited by John Cooper (1997). See also *Republic*, 489a and *Laws*, 691c, 709c. The reference in *Republic* 489a is particularly significant. Plato presents the image of the philosopher as a pilot who refuses to take any actual hand in the navigation of the ship of state because "the true pilot will really be called a stargazer, a prater and useless to them by those who sail on ships run like this." It is amazing assertion, that a "true pilot" should be proud of refusing to take part in sailing the ship. It shows Plato's profound dislike of practical arts and his determination to keep the philosopher above politics. In Aristotle's *Politics*, see the analogy between ship and state, 3.1276b, lines 19-30; the analogy to pilots, 3.1279, line 3, 3.1282a, line 6; the analogy to a shipbuilder, 7.1325b, line 42; and the analogy between ship and state, 7.1326a, lines 35-42. There is also a particularly significant image of Pericles as a pilot in Plutarch, *Pericles [Vitae Parallelae]*, c. 70-120 CE], 33, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives by Plutarch*, Ian Scott-Kilvert, trans. (1960). (As Plutarch points out, Pericles was in fact an active commander at sea in his official position as a *stratēgos*, στρατηγός). No mention of the relationship between the Greeks and the sea would be complete without the most quoted line from Xenophon's *Anabasis*, where the Greek mercenaries escaping from Persia finally break through the hills, sight the Black Sea, and joyfully shout *Thalatta, thalatta!* "The sea, the sea!" Xenophon, *Anabasis* [386 & 377 BCE], 4.7.24. It may be more significant that the very name of his account, *Anabasis* (Ἀναβάσις), means "upcountry" or "inland march," thus indicating Xenophon's sense that this was a journey away from the home of the Greeks along the shores of the sea. Also, there is the assertion by Strabo, that human beings "in a sense...are amphibious, and belong no more to the land than the sea." Strabo, *Geographicon* [*Strabon's Geographicon*, c. 7 BCE], Horace Leonard Jones and John Robert Sitlington Sterrett, trans. (1917), 1.1.16. That is not something that a Jew or a Roman would have been likely to say. Josephus said that the Jews were "remote from the sea." Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.12.60. Livy, the great Roman historian who was Strabo's contemporary, pointed to this difference between the Greeks and the Romans when he said that the Greeks "were no more warriors on land than the Romans were at sea." Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita* [27-20 BCE], in *Rome and Italy*, Betty Radice, trans. (1982), 7.26.

German philosophy who was a card-carrying Nazi.²⁰⁹ And unlike Heidegger, he was accepted for a time as an intellectual collaborator by the Nazis. If we are to understand the phenomenon of Nazism, we must seek to seriously understand their “word view” (*Weltanschauung*). Schmitt is best known for his *Concept of the Political* (1932), written just before the Nazis took power in 1933, in which he argues that the essence of politics lies in conflict, or what he calls “the friend-and-enemy distinction” (*die Unterscheidung zwischen Freund und Feind*). But he also wrote an odd little essay during the Second World War called *Land and Sea* (1942). Much as *Concept of the Political* sums up all of politics in one simple dichotomy, the distinction between friend and enemy, *Land and Sea* sums up all of world history in one simple dichotomy, a conflict between the “autochthonous” people of the land and the “autothalassical” people of the sea, almost as if they were two different species of *Homo sapiens*.²¹⁰ “World history is the history of the wars waged by maritime powers against land or continental powers and by land powers against sea or maritime powers.”²¹¹

The idea of a basic conflict between the sea power of Britain and the land power of Germany was a common theme in the Third Reich.²¹² Schmitt says that the “land-sea dichotomy” is a fundamental opposition, especially in the conduct of warfare, and that “their opposition came to express the presence of two distinct worlds...”²¹³ One basic way in which these worlds differ is in their concept of “space.”²¹⁴ This is where he becomes rather Heideggerian. The different experiences of lives tied to the land or set loose on the sea create different pictures of the world, different concepts of political order, and different images of human identity. Although he is not explicit in making

²⁰⁹ “Schmitt, Heidegger, and Bäumler were the three most prominent German intellectuals to join the party.” Tracy Strong, forward to Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen*, 1932], xii, note 8.

²¹⁰ Carl Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, Simona Draghici, trans. (1977) [*Land und Meer: Eine Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung*, 1942], 3.

²¹¹ Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 5.

²¹² Hermann Rauschning, *Men of Chaos* (1942), 194, 293.

²¹³ Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 47.

²¹⁴ Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 28.

the connection between the city and the sea, he mentions that, “The inhabitant of a big city has a different image of the world than does a farmer.”²¹⁵ Much as Heidegger complains of global technology creating an alien “Age of the World Picture” (*Zeit des Weltbildes*),²¹⁶ Schmitt says that the Age of Discovery in the 16th and 17th Centuries was the last of a series of spatial revolutions created by the maritime half of the species, which undermined the nature of politics. “The dry-land order implies the subdivision into state territories, the high seas, in turn, are free.”²¹⁷ As discussed in § 8, this change in world-view during the Age of Discovery was of great relevance to the Protestant Reformation and Luther’s rebellion against Rome.

That, however, is another dichotomy which is a bit too simple. The relative importance of the sea is a function of technology. Upon coming down to a low orbit of the Earth and seeing little in the way of roads on the surface, the extraterrestrial sociologist would likely assume that the most advanced civilization on the planet would be based on the sea. However, if there were a network of roads in evidence around *Orbis Terrarum*, the extraterrestrial sociologist might take a closer look at the surrounding topography of the Mediterranean Basin. The sea is only one means of intercourse. And that intercourse is more productive if the city by the sea is positioned to draw upon a fertile area of land, such as the Plain of Attica in the case of Athens. So what the extraterrestrial sociologist is really looking for is a city on a plain by a sea which is positioned to unite the land and the sea. At one stage, that was Rome. At a later stage, it was potentially the North Italian cities and Venice, although they failed in that integration.²¹⁸ A little later, it was the cities of the Netherlands which succeeded in

²¹⁵ Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 28.

²¹⁶ Heidegger, *Question Concerning Technology*, 115 et seq.

²¹⁷ Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 46.

²¹⁸ See the discussion of the failure of Italy to integrate into a modern nation-state below. Venice, although primarily a sea power, depended on economic connections to the Northern Italian mainland, especially the Plain of the Po. It occasionally dominated some the Northern Italian Cities, from which it drew considerable revenues, and it attempted unsuccessfully to establish hegemony over them in order to secure its land base. Its failure to do so was a substantial factor in its eventual decline in the Modern Age. See Frederic Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic* (1973), 225-9, 237-9, 248-9.

that. And after that, it was London. To a lesser extent, it was Paris. But not Madrid. Not Moscow. And not Berlin. That is at the core of the issue. Or, to be more specific, the “core areas” created by cities of the Netherlands, London, and Paris in Late Middle Age of Europe provided the basis for the first nation-states.²¹⁹ (See map 3.)

The link between the Mediterranean and Europe, materially and spiritually, was Rome. It provided the most direct and influential basis of modern civilization in Western Europe ~ much more so than the Greeks, despite the cult of the Greeks in philosophy and history, or what Nietzsche calls the “German silliness” (*niaiserie allemande*) even while besotted with it himself.²²⁰ Rome was also the most internally conflicted or polarized culture within the West before the Germans. It was the most rational political order of the time, with the most flexible and inclusive forms of citizenship.²²¹ Rome developed, to a definitive degree, the concept of secular and rational law.²²² This was a clear change in polarity from a spiritual or political form of

²¹⁹ N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball, “Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 54.1 (March 1964) 24-40. Some amendments to their scheme are discussed in the notes to map 3.

²²⁰ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* [*Götzen-Dämmerung*, 1889], § 3 (page 118), in *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, R.J. Hollingdale, trans. (1990).

²²¹ See A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (1939).

²²² See, generally, Barry Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law* (1962), and the highly illuminating discussion of the parallels between early Roman law and the English Common Law in R.C. Van Caenegem, *The Birth of the English Common Law* (1988). Some historians say that Roman law was the single most important Roman invention. See R.H. Barrow, *The Romans* (1949), 205. J.M. Kelly says that “the Greeks, so fertile in so many areas of the intellect, never produced a practical legal science; the Roman jurists were to be the first to give this to the world.” J.M. Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory* (1992), 5. This, like the “Greek miracle,” is somewhat overstated. Roman law had many precedents among Greeks and other sea traders in the Mediterranean. Rhodes, which became the leading commercial state of Greece during the 3rd Century BCE, developed a body of international maritime law which was respected by the Roman jurists despite the fact that Rhodes got on the wrong side of Rome during the Third Macedonian War (171-168 BCE). Michael Rostovtzeff, “The Hellenistic World and its Economic Development,” *The American Historical Review* 41.2 (January 1936) 231-252, 242; Amos S. Hershey, “The History of International Relations During Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” *American Journal of International Law* 5.4 (October 1911) 901-933, 917; Erich S. Gruen, “Rome and Rhodes in the Second Century BC: A Historiographical Inquiry,” *The Classical Quarterly* (new series) 25.1 (May 1975) 58-81. The Greeks took many of the first steps in the development of a rational legal system, including (1) the secularization of law, (2) the public promulgation of written codes, (3) the movement from personal rights of “status” to universal rights of “contract,” and (4) the development of procedural rules. See Henry J.S. Maine, *Ancient law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas* (1883), 165; Michael Gagarin, *Early Greek Law* (1986), chapter 6,

law to a material or economic form of law, by which law became a practical technology instead of a source of spiritual inspiration. But Rome was also the incubator for Christianity. Rome was for the most part a relatively generous conqueror ~ which is to say that it was a rational conqueror. But Rome was also quite vicious on occasion, especially when it felt betrayed. Rome, in other words, played a hard version of “Tit-for-Tat,” a winning strategy in modern game theory.²²³

And Rome created one of the most obscene monuments to sadism, the massive and bloody exhibitions (*munera*) known loosely as the “games.”²²⁴ The Nazi Holocaust is

“The Emergence of Written Law,” 121-41. However, even though the law slowly took on a more secular polarity in Greece, it did not seem to ever disengage from a Greek concept of the purpose of law. The *eunomia* or “good order” of Sparta, which can also be translated as “loyalty to divine law,” reflected the idea that the purpose of law was to form and educate citizens, not merely protect their rights or their property. Kitto, *Greeks*, 94, 92-5.

²²³ Livy justly refers to what he calls their “anciently established custom of sparing the conquered.” Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 33.12, in *Rome and the Mediterranean*, Henry Bettenson, trans. (1976). That might seem inconsistent with a Briton’s complaint that the Romans “create a desolation and call it peace,” in Tacitus, *Agricola* [c. 98 CE], 30, in *The Agricola and the Germania*, H. Mattingly and S.A. Handford, trans. (1970). But Tacitus wrote *Agricola* in praise of Cneius Julius Agricola, a Roman general and governor in Britannia, whom he lauds for his wise combination of force with justice, and for giving the Britons reasons to appreciate the material advantages of peace. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 19-20. The key to long-term Roman success, especially in its wars against Carthage and in the conquest of Greece, but beginning earlier, with its expansion in Italy, was its mixed game strategy. It was a policy of “prudent generosity.” B.H. Warmington, *Carthage* (1964), 166. “Neither entirely altruistic nor entirely cynical.” Grant, *Ancient Mediterranean*, 267. Or, in somewhat more cynical terms, a “unite-and-share-the-plunder policy.” John Garraty and Peter Gay, *The Columbia History of the World* (1972), 193. Jacqueline de Romilly says that the Greeks, like Machiavelli, believed that one had to make a choice between two opposite styles of rule, that “one can govern by force and by fear, or one can be kind and reckon on the goodwill of those to whom one has been kind.” Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors*, 76. See also Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* [*Il principe*, 1532], Leo Paul S. De Alva, trans. (1989), chapter 17 (pages 100-6). But the Romans managed to do both. They could be remarkably generous to conquered peoples, even making them part of the Roman polity and granting them Roman citizenship. But they could also be quite brutal. As Gibbon puts it, in his inimitable way, “The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperor. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines that they were as little disposed to endure as to offer an injury.” Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1-6, Hugh Trevor-Roper, ed. ([1776-1788] 1994), 1.1.12. That is a good definition of “Tit-for-Tat.” On that, see Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (1984).

²²⁴ *Munus*, singular, and *munera*, plural, is the common term applicable to a variety of public exhibitions including blood shows, gladiatorial combats, and animal hunts. *Munus* also means “public duty” or “public gift.” The circus, as in the famous phrase, *panem et circenses*, the “bread and circuses” mocked by Juvenal (*Satires*, 10.81) were quite different. For a detailed examination of the games, which were actually worse than portrayed in most modern movies, see Roland Auguet, *Cruelty and*

a huge blot on the pages of modern history. But the Roman games, which had a definite similarity to Nazi rituals,²²⁵ are usually treated as little more than a footnote in classical history. We have historical myopia about butchery.²²⁶

Rome was by far the most efficient material culture to yet arise on the face of the planet. It had better plumbing, better roads, better military technology, and better laws than anyone else at that time. But it was also, in some ways, the most degenerate culture. For those who detest modernity and believe that it is inherently inhuman, Rome is an under-exploited case for polemics. More importantly, Rome is the classical model, the direct precursor, and the actual progenitor, of the extreme internal cultural conflicts which led to fascism in the Modern Age. This, then, is another one of those grand dichotomies. But it is not a simple one. The dichotomy of Rome & Germany is ambivalent and dialectical. To properly understand it, we need to be clear on the similarly ambivalent and dialectical dichotomy of Greece & Rome. In terms of cultural relationships and reactions, they fit into one of those analogous relationships used in scholastic aptitude tests:

GERMANY : ROME :: ROME : GREECE

Germany was to Rome and Western Europe as Rome was to Greece and the Eastern Empire. In the course of praising German resistance to Roman civilization, but drawing in part from Tacitus to describe the Germans of the time as noble savages, Johann Gottlieb Fichte says that “the Romans handed on the description they had taken upon themselves, and found among the Teutons the same unquestioning simplicity as they themselves had shown toward the Greeks.”²²⁷

Civilization: The Roman Games, translator not given (1998) [*Cruauté et Civilisation: Les Jeux Romains*, 1970]; and Donald Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (1998).

²²⁵ George L. Mosse, “Caesarism, Circuses, and Monuments,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 6.2 (1971) 167-182.

²²⁶ Victor Davis Hanson gives other good examples of this myopia and lack of moral judgment about butchers such as Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Charlemagne in *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (2001).

²²⁷ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, R.F. Jones and G.H. Turnbull, trans. (1968) [*Reden an die deutsche Nation*, 1808], address # 5, 7.336 (page 70).

To the Greeks and Romans, Italy seemed to have some natural geographic advantages supporting the Roman bid for empire.²²⁸ To the extraterrestrial sociologist, the Plain of Latium might not necessarily have been the best candidate for the development of a new and more advanced form of polity. The large islands of Crete, Rhodes, and Sicily, or Magna Graecia in Southern Italy, might have seemed more likely. And there were, of course, important developments in those places. Other coastal areas, such as the area of “Africa” around Carthage (a more fertile area in that time) or Egypt (which gave us the shining light of Alexandria in the Hellenistic Age) might have also seemed better candidates. Carthage gave Rome a very good run for it. Contrary to Polybius and our simplistic essentialism about our Judeo-Greco-Roman tradition, it could have been, with different luck, a Canaanite-Phoenician-Carthaginian tradition which became the “West,” with everything that implies, and perhaps not much different except for the names.

Still, the extraterrestrial sociologist might see that the Italian Peninsula, which is a land route penetrating the heart of the Mediterranean Sea much as the Rhine River is a water route penetrating the European Continent, was the most likely physical protrusion engendering a similar synergy of cross-cultural fertilization. To look at the geography another way, there is a physical analogy between the Levant and Italy.²²⁹ Both strips of land provided a means for cross-cultural fertilization and mutation. The Levant gave rise to the city-state. Greece refined it, and also experimented with city-state leagues shortly before succumbing to Rome. Rome took the next step, to a new

²²⁸ Strabo and Livy touch on the geocultural factors of interest to my extraterrestrial sociologist. Rome, “since it lies intermediate between the largest races on the one hand, and Greece and the best parts of Libya on the other, it not only is naturally well-suited to hegemony, because it surpasses the countries that surround it both in the valor of its people and in size, but also can easily avail itself of their services, because it is close to them.” Strabo, *Geography*, 6.4.1. “Not without reason did the gods and men chose this spot for the site of our City ~ the salubrious hills, the rives to bring us produce from inland regions and sea-borne commerce from abroad, the sea itself, near enough for convenience yet not so near as to bring danger from foreign fleets, our situation in the very heart of Italy.” Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 5.54, in *The Early History of Rome*, Aubrey de Sélincourt, trans. (1971).

form of city-state empire which had some significant attributes of that strange and powerful creature of the Modern Age, the nation-state. As H.G. Wells puts it, Rome “was the first of modern self-governing national communities,” although it “was certainly the ‘Neanderthal’ form of them.”²³⁰

The most important changes were the uniquely international character of Rome and the inclusiveness of Roman citizenship. Between earlier cities, as Fustel de Coulanges says, “there was something more impassible than mountains...there were the series of sacred bounds, the difference of worship, and the hatred of the gods towards the foreigner.”²³¹ Among the Greeks, one generally could not adopt citizenship and one could never lose the stigma of being a slave, although the Athenians came closest to allowing such things. The Germans struggled for a long time with this concept, as evidenced by the fact that Germany continued to tie citizenship almost exclusively to ethnicity until reforms in 2000.²³²

Among the Greeks, tribal exclusivity retained the strongest hold in Sparta,²³³ in

²²⁹ This analogy is strengthened when one considers that “the Alps were always much less of a barrier than their height suggested: of the twenty-three main passes, seventeen were already in regular use under the Romans.” Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (1994), 9.

²³⁰ H.G. Wells, *Outline of History* ([1921] 1971), 379.

²³¹ Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, translator not given (1980) [*La Cité antique*, 1864], book 3, chapter 14, page 194.

²³² Until 2000, German citizenship was governed by the *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* of 1913 (with some minor adjustments in 1990), under which the primary principle of citizenship was *jus sanguinis*, “right of blood,” rather than the *jus soli*, “right of soil,” recognized in France, the United States, and many other Western Nations. (The 1913 law allowed for some naturalizations, but they were quite limited and discretionary with officials.) The *Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* of 2000 established the first right of naturalization for long-term alien residents and provided citizenship for second-generation persons born in Germany to long-term legal residents. The process of reform was hard fought. See Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992); Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany* (2002).

²³³ For the “Spartans,” who were a small exclusive warrior-nobility among the larger population of “Lacedaemonians,” this was eventually disastrous. It was a good example of a Marxist “contradiction” (*Widerspruch*). To sum it up most concretely, as Aristotle did, the Spartan state “was ruined through its lack of manpower.” Aristotle, *Politics*, 1270a. This helps explain the extraordinary independence of Spartan women, which Aristotle saw as degenerate. Modern historians are still having difficulty with the titillating accounts of Spartan girls being trained to throw javelins and wrestle naked with the boys. See Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (2001), 114. Paul Cartledge speculates, plausibly, that this had much to do with the homosexual ethos of the Spartans. He notes, particularly, that the Spartan image of

which it took the form of a self-conscious reactionary mutation, and it was most fragmented by commercial sea power in Athens.²³⁴ Rome was built on the Plain of Latium and connected with the Mediterranean via the Port of Ostia, as Athens connected through the Port of Piraeus. Like Athens, it was near enough to take advantage of sea trade, but sheltered from attack by sea.²³⁵ A common saying in the Middle Ages was that “All roads lead to Rome.”²³⁶ To be more precise, Rome was built where the roads came together, at a ford of the Tiber, on the Plain of Latium. It may have been the roads more than the river which originally brought foreign commerce to Rome, and this may account for their long-standing status as landlubbers.²³⁷ But they enjoyed the benefit of sea commerce brought to them by others, just as they later won the Punic Wars at sea with the help of their naval allies (*socii navales*).²³⁸ Strabo says that Rome was founded in “a place suitable more as a matter of necessity than of choice,” because it did not have access to enough resources

ideal womanhood emphasized flat chests and strong shoulders, and that there was other distinct evidence of the masculinization of Spartan women. The more fundamental explanation of the phenomenon is not sex, or gender identity, but war, and the needs of war determined by tribal identity. Aristotle says that the Spartan state was of a type which “preserve themselves when at war, but once having acquired [imperial] rule they come to ruin; they lose their edge, like iron, when they remain at peace.” Aristotle, *Politics*, 1334a. But Aristotle also notes some basic defects in the Spartan way of war. The strength of the Spartans was in their close, tribalistic, fanatical military society. They were the pure warriors, in a quite heroic way. But only a few members of the state could be warriors, for sake of maintaining purity, and that elite population could not be sustained over time, in either war or peace. War depleted their ranks, even in victory. And victory was in some ways worse than defeat, because it brought about the wealth and corruption which fundamentally undermined the elite warrior ethic. Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 110-2. This fits in nicely with the Greek concept of hubris. Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors* (1991).

²³⁴ See Philip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (1990), 7, citing M.J. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens* (1981-1983); Pseudo-Xenophon [“Old Oligarch”], *Athenaion Politeia* [c. 431-425 BCE], 1.10, in Hartvig Frisch, ed. and trans., *The Constitution of Athens: A Philological-Historical Analysis of Pseudo-Xenophon’s Treatise de re Publica Atheniensium* (1942).

²³⁵ James Reid, *The Municipalities of the Roman Empire* (1913), 28.

²³⁶ An anonymous proverb from the 14th Century. Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Introduction to the Romans* (1991), 90.

²³⁷ Tenney Frank, *An Economic History of Rome* (1962), 22-3.

²³⁸ On commerce, see Frank, *Economic History of Rome*, 26, et passim. On the Punic Wars, see Polybius, *Histories*, book 1; and J.H. Thiel, *Studies on the History of Roman Sea-Power in Republican Times* (1946).

for independent existence.²³⁹ That emphasizes the necessity, which the Romans turned into a virtue, of trade and cooperation. Latium, like the Levant, was a natural cultural crossroads.²⁴⁰ And Rome was a synoecism of several villages and ethnic groups, with different political constitutions.²⁴¹ This was critical in the unique evolution of the Roman polity. A.N. Sherwin-White, in his detailed study of *The Roman Citizenship* (1939), points to the relationship between geography and politics:

The difference between the Greek *polis* and the Latin *civitas* corresponds to the difference between the mountains of Greece and the hills of Latium. The Latin city-states were not isolated from their neighbors by impassable mountains.²⁴²

There are many plains where people came together without inventing a state which conquered much of the known world. The geographic factor was important because Italy was already colonized by relatively advanced secondary civilizations, the Greeks and the Etruscans. Polybius says that one of the strengths of the Romans was that “no people are more willing to adopt new customs and to emulate what they see is better done by others.”²⁴³ He is speaking of their quickness to adopt military technology from their enemies. But what was even more remarkable was their openness to other religions.²⁴⁴ The Romans overcame what Fustel de Coulanges calls the “hatred of the gods towards the foreigner.”²⁴⁵ The Romans recognized that they were a “secondary civilization,” and they celebrated it in foundational myths such as Virgil’s *Aeneid* (30-19 BCE) and Livy’s *Ad Urbe Condita* (27-20 BCE). Livy says that Rome was “a place of asylum for fugitives. Hither fled for refuge all the rag-tag-and-bobtail from the neighboring peoples: some free, some slaves, and all of them wanting nothing but a fresh start. That mob was the first real addition to the City’s strength, the first step to

²³⁹ Strabo, *Geography*, 5.3.2.

²⁴⁰ “...an essential element of the relationship” between Rome and other Latins was “freedom of movement between one community and another.” Michael Crawford, “Early Rome and Italy,” in John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray, eds., *The Oxford History of the Roman World* (1991), 21.

²⁴¹ Homo, *Roman Political Institutions*, 4-5, 363; Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 1.8.

²⁴² Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*, 5.

²⁴³ Polybius, *Histories*, 6.25.

²⁴⁴ Crawford, “Early Rome and Italy,” 25.

²⁴⁵ Fustel de Coulanges, *Ancient City*, book 3, chapter 14, p. 194.

her future greatness.”²⁴⁶

But Romans reacted against foreign influence at the same time these foundational myths were written, near the end of the Republic. That *ressentiment* appears in Livy himself, who characterizes the Greeks as “a race more vigorous in speech than in action.”²⁴⁷ Plutarch tells us that Cato the Elder ~ a vicious prig who enjoyed abusing slaves and demanded the destruction of Carthage, in part because of its commercial maritime wealth ~ was one whose “patriotic fervor made him regard the whole of Greek culture and its methods of education with contempt.”²⁴⁸ In a tirade “Against the City of Rome,” Juvenal says that “I can’t stand a Greekized Rome (*Graeca urbs*)...into the Tiber pours the silt, the mud of Orontes, bringing its babble and brawl (*lingua et mores*)...bringing also the tarts who display their wares at the Circus.”²⁴⁹ Horace admits that “the Greek captive captivated the uncultivated conqueror and introduced art to rustic Latium.”²⁵⁰ But he also says that Greece “abandoned war and turned to amusements, lapsing into frivolity as fortune smiled upon her.”²⁵¹ This is a variation on the theme from the Book of Isaiah. It is pervasive in Latin Literature.²⁵² And it rears its ugly head even in Cicero, who denies the importance of Greek cultural

²⁴⁶ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 1.8.

²⁴⁷ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 8.22.

²⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Cato Major*, 22-3 (pages 144-6), in *Makers of Rome*.

²⁴⁹ Juvenal, *Satires* [100-28 CE], 3.21-2, 60-6, 77-8, 99-100, 109-11, 114-5, 119, 162-3 (pages 34-9), in *The Satires Of Juvenal*, Rolfe Humphries, trans. (1958)

²⁵⁰ *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio*. Horace, *Epistles* [c. 20-13 BCE], 2.1.156-7 (my translation).

²⁵¹ Horace, *Epistles*, 2.1.93-4.

²⁵² “Latin literature can easily give the impression that the city was viewed as the seedbed of immorality rather than the seat of civilization.” Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (1987), 26. “...authors from the days of the Republic to the period of the Empire decried the ways of the metropolis and extolled, in contrast, life in non-urban surroundings.” Lowenstein, “Urban Images of Roman Authors,” 110. The poet’s hatred for the city is ageless. Lowenstein’s analysis of Roman poetry is quite similar to Robert Walker’s analysis of the poetry of the “Gilded Age” from 1876 to 1906 in the United States, in which he found that poems condemning the city outnumbered those praising it by a ratio of four to one. Robert H. Walker, “The Poet and the Rise of the City,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49.1 (June 1962) 85-99.

influence while writing his *Republic*, in direct imitation of a Greek.²⁵³ Such are the ironies of local spatial and temporal oppositions. Had Plato been Roman, he no doubt would have joined with Cato in condemning Greek corruption of Roman rustic virtue.

The Rhône, the Rhine, the cultural gradient, and the three Germanies

The Roman Empire had an overwhelming influence on the later geoculture of Germany through the development of trade routes, roads, cities, and cultural zones in Western Europe. Without the expansion of Rome, without the Romanization of Gauls, Rhineland Germans, and Britons, without the failure of Romanization among the Germans further east, and without the Roman defense of a Rhine trade route which connected Rome to London, there would not have been a Germany as we know it.

Hajo Holborn begins his multi-volume treatise on the *History of Modern Germany* (1982) with a paragraph worth quoting in full:

Germany cannot be described in clear-cut geographical terms. During more than a thousand years, the boundaries of Germany have continuously and drastically changed, as has the area settled by Germans. Usually Germany is simply said to be the country in the center of the European continent. But it is doubtful whether Germany can be called the heart of Europe. The expression overlooks the frontier character that was a determining factor through many centuries of German history. As a matter of fact, Germany came into being as an extension of the Roman-Western world to the east and northeast of Europe.²⁵⁴

The factors Holborn touches on here are depicted graphically in maps 1-10. There is nothing unusual about the boundaries of a nation changing over time, and that was certainly true of the Netherlands and Britain. But Germany differed from other Western Nations in its lack of a commercial and urban “core area” for the consolidation of a modern state.²⁵⁵ (See map 3.) What “Germany” is, has always been contested, in

²⁵³ Cicero, *The Republic* [*De Republica*, 52 BCE], 2.28-9, in *The Republic and the Laws*, Niall Rudd, trans. (1998).

²⁵⁴ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 1.3.

²⁵⁵ Pounds and Ball, “Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System,” 38. Pounds and Ball argue that the Netherlands and Belgium also developed without “core areas.” I disagree with that interpretation. Nevertheless, they agree that Germany lacked geographic unity. Indeed, the way that the Netherlands broke off from the Holy Roman Empire is an aspect of that. See also James J.

both a geographic and cultural sense. It became a part of Europe, and of Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and Western Civilization. But it was born on the frontiers of that civilization. And it was something which was often defined, from the first bloody birth of an entity called *Germania* by the Romans to the fiery end of the Third Reich, as something opposed to Rome and the West. Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), who saw himself as a stranger to his native land, called the Holy Roman Empire of Germany a “hybrid creature” (*Zwitterwesen*).²⁵⁶ In Hegelian-Marxist terminology, it was a nation plagued by internal “contradictions” (*Widersprüche*).²⁵⁷ These arose from its position on the steepest slope of the “cultural gradient” (*Kulturgefälle*) in map 4.

The expansion of the Roman Empire into Europe, shown on map 2, created the geoculture which created Germany. As the Roman legions came, mainly for conquest rather than trade, they built roads for military purposes and created local centers of trade for the supply of the legions. That in turn stimulated more agriculture, industry, trade, and city building. The *castrum*, a fort, became an *oppidum*, a fortified town, and then later, as it took root in the local economy and society, a true *civitas*. By a synergistic process which evolved slowly over centuries, what J.R. and William McNeill call a “human web,”²⁵⁸ the trade routes and cities built by the Romans in Western Europe gradually became an interacting system with a life of its own, an *oikoumenê*, a “civilized world.” The trading links of this human web extended far into the east as well, but the cities, the hard nodes which held it together, were limited by the Rhine and the Danube during Roman times. The cultural gradient lasted into the beginning of the Modern Age, but it was always on the move, eastward, deeper into

Sheehan, “What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History* 53.1 (March 1981) 1-23.

²⁵⁶ Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* ([1844] 1995), chapter 17, line 40.

²⁵⁷ See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (1990) [*Das Kapital: Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, vol. 1, 1867], 1.531; Gary Young, “The Fundamental Contradiction of Capitalist Production,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 5.2 (Winter 1976) 196-234; Adam Schaff, “Marxist Dialectics and the Principle of Contradiction,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 57.7, Polish number. (March 1960) 241-250. The concept of “endogenous contradictions” is used throughout Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (1974).

Germany. This eventually resulted in the late but rapid industrialization and urbanization of Germany shown in graph 1. That late industrialization and urbanization was in turn one of the primary causes of the radicalization or polarization of Germany in the Modern Age.²⁵⁹

Let us begin again with the basic geography as it might be observed by the extraterrestrial sociologist. Strabo hints at the importance of European geography in saying that “this continent has a natural advantage...for the whole of it is diversified with plains and mountains, so that throughout its entire extent the agricultural and civilized element dwells side by side with the warlike element.”²⁶⁰ Putting aside the proposition that agriculturalists are less warlike than herders in the mountains, the more general point is that European geography facilitated cross-cultural connections between fertile areas. The lowlands at the mouth of the Rhine, the Netherlands, in combination with the English Channel and the lowlands of Southeast England, eventually formed another cultural krater, the “Atlantic krater” shown in map 3. It was to be expected that peoples who had learned to reap the rewards of maritime commerce in the Mediterranean would eventually explore the wealth of navigable rivers and connections to the outer seas in Europe.

Connections are of little value unless there is something worth connecting. To begin with, therefore, it was vital that Europe is a generally temperate zone with a wide variety of easily accessible natural resources, both biological and mineral. And there may also be something to the environmental argument E.L. Jones makes in *The European Miracle* (1981). (Like the “miracle of the Greeks,” it is no “miracle” once we understand the physical and biological foundations.) He argues that Asians adopted an “r-strategy” of maximum reproduction leading to overpopulation and crashes (this again is the problem of the environmental S-curve and limits to growth) because it was insurance against the high incidence of natural disasters in Asia, whereas Europeans,

²⁵⁸ J.R. and William McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (2003).

²⁵⁹ Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* ([1915] 1990).

beginning with the early Germans described by Tacitus, adopted a “k-strategy” of self-limited reproduction, and correspondingly higher investment in capital accumulation (the “k” in the term), because Europe provides a more stable and safe environment.²⁶¹ But the thing of utmost importance was the pattern of connections facilitating trade and migration. As Norman Davies points out in his carefully considered review of the historical implications of European geography, it is a continent in which “the ratio of shorelines to landmass is exceptionally high” and a continent in which “localities are linked by a network of natural pathways which primitive man must have found more of an invitation than a barrier.”²⁶²

The leading edge of Mediterranean civilization moved first upon the sea, and it was probably seafarers who made the first significant connections to the northern reaches of Western Europe.²⁶³ The dominance of the Carthaginian sea route around the

²⁶⁰ Strabo, *Geography*, 2.5.26.

²⁶¹ E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle* (1981), 13-21.

²⁶² Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (1997), 49, 51. “One should not underestimate the lengthy process whereby the highways and byways of Europe were opened up to human movement and settlement. On the other hand, there is no comparison between the relative ease of travel in Europe and that in the greater continents.” Davies, *Europe*, 51. More generally, much in line with Diamond’s theory, although he does not cite him, Davis argues that “Europe’s landforms, climate, geography, and fauna have combined to produce a benign environment that is essential to understanding its development.” *Europe*, 47. Davies is not a geographical determinist. “For geography only determines what is possible; it does not determine which possibility will triumph.” *Europe*, 188. But he makes a strong case that “Even so, it is impossible to deny that Europe has been endowed with a formidable repertoire of physical features.” *Europe*, 47. N.J.G. Pounds generally concurs in his *Historical Geography of Europe*, one of the best basic guides to the subject. “It has been a feature of Europe in the historical period that transport and communication could be developed and maintained relatively easily. The only significant barrier to movement, the Alpine system, was so broken up by gaps and crossed by passes that it was rarely a serious obstacle.” N.J.G. Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe* (1990), 20. See also, generally, Max Cary, *The Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History* (1949).

²⁶³ The Bronze Age depended on tin to meld with copper, and some of the most valuable sources of tin were on the west coast of Europe, on the Atlantic shores of Spain, Brittany, and Britain. Max Cary, “The Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 44, part 2 (1924) 166-179, 166; Pounds, *Historical Geography of Europe*, 21. The Etruscans, who had settled in an area of Italy with good sources of various metals, critical to their early economic development just as tin and other metals would be later to the Anglo-Saxons, did have a source of tin in the Campigliese, but one which was inadequate for all their needs. Michael Grant, *The Etruscans* (1980), 13. Tin was being extracted from Brittany in northwest France and Cornwall (Belerium) in southwest Britain as early as 2000 BCE. James D. Muhly, “Sources of Tin and the Beginnings of Bronze Metallurgy,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 89.2 (April 1985) 275-291, 287-8. It shipped to the Mediterranean as early as

outside of Europe declined as Greeks and Romans developed the land routes.²⁶⁴ The Greeks were forced to cart tin through Gaul to Brittany, via the Seine and the Rhône, despite its weight, because they were closed off from the Atlantic by the Carthaginians for two centuries.²⁶⁵ The Greeks were also drawn up the Rhône, and to the Rhine and the Elbe, by a higher value-to-weight cargo, the amber originating on the shores of the Baltic.²⁶⁶ Other metals, gold in Ireland and copper in Cornwall, also drew them northward.²⁶⁷ With the introduction of iron, tin and copper became somewhat less important, although Cornwall was mined for tin until the Modern Age. The Romans suspended the mining of tin in Britain during the 1st and 2nd Centuries CE because they found a closer source, in Spain, at that time. But they developed good high-grade sources of iron in Britain during that same period.²⁶⁸ Cornwall tin became an important resource, not only in its own right, but also as a catalyst for other trade, in

500 BCE. The tin was probably traded through middlemen on land, but the Carthaginians probably opened up a direct sea trade around the same time. Cary, "Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic," 167-8, 179. Some historians express doubts about the early primacy of the Carthaginian sea route in Warmington, *Carthage*, 82-3; and David Soren, Aicha Ben Abed Ben Khader, and Hedi Slim, *Carthage: Uncovering the Mysteries and Splendors of Ancient Tunisia* (1990), 73. The alternative theory is that the Rhône-Seine route was developed earlier. Cary, however, gives good reasons to the contrary which are not addressed in these later criticisms. All of them agree that the Rhône, connecting first to the Seine and then to the Rhine, was the primary land route for early Greek and Roman penetration. Also, some historians (perhaps too taken with technical determinism) have supposed that the development of the stern-post rudder in the Middle Ages was a necessary prerequisite to Atlantic trade routes. Later study, including actual experiments with steering oars, has indicated that this was not a critical factor. Kevin Greene, *Archaeology of the Roman Economy* (1986), 28. Technology is an important factor, of course. But individual tools such as stern-post rudders (or stirrups, horse collars, ploughs, windmills, gunpowder, or other items which have played large in simplistic explanations of historical change in Europe) are less important than the evolution of large economic and political systems (including technology as a larger social system). See R.H. Hilton and P.H. Sawyer, "Technical Determinism: The Stirrup and the Plough," *Past and Present* 24 (1963) 90-100.

²⁶⁴ The tin route from Cornwall to the mouth of the Rhône apparently continued into the late 1st Century BCE, when reported in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliothékês Historikês* [c. 20 BCE], 5.22, 38, in *Diodorus of Sicily: The Library of History*, C.H. Oldfather, trans. (1933-67).

²⁶⁵ Cary, "Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic," 168, 170.

²⁶⁶ Cary, "Greeks and Ancient Trade with the Atlantic," 173. See also Francis Owen, *The Germanic People: Their Origin, Expansion, and Culture* (1960), 67.

²⁶⁷ Herdman F. Cleland, "Commerce and Trade Routes in Prehistoric Europe," *Economic Geography* 3.2 (April 1927) 232-238, 235, et passim.

²⁶⁸ Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 268.

the remarkable resurgence of Anglo-Saxon England under Alfred the Great.²⁶⁹ Mediterranean traders also went to Europe in prehistoric times for furs, salted meats, and other foods.²⁷⁰ In historic times, German products shipped to Rome included “soaps, cosmetics, cloth, beeswax, amber, furs,” and other things.²⁷¹ Strabo lists the products of Britain as “grain, cattle, gold, silver, and iron...also hides, and slaves, and dogs.”²⁷² He also mentions that the Veneti were concerned about Caesar’s invasion of Britain “since they were using the emporium there.”²⁷³ Tacitus mentions Londinium (London), perhaps that emporium, as a city which “did not rank as a Roman colony, but was an important center for businessmen and merchandise.”²⁷⁴ The Thames valley produced wheat which was sailed across the Channel and up the Rhine to feed Roman legions guarding the frontier.²⁷⁵

The first great land route from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic entered through the Rhône Valley because this is what Ellen Churchill Semple calls the “Rhône-Saône-Doubs groove.”²⁷⁶ (See photo 1.) The Mediterranean is an “enclosed sea...enclosed not only by the land, but by barrier forms of the land.”²⁷⁷ As Davies puts it, the Mediterranean is a “marvelously secluded sea...a self-contained geographic unit.”²⁷⁸ In eastern Africa and the Levant, the “barrier boundary” is mainly deserts, broken by a

²⁶⁹ J.R. Maddicott, “Trade, Industry and the Wealth of King Alfred,” *Past and Present* 123 (May 1989) 3-51.

²⁷⁰ Cleland, “Commerce and Trade Routes in Prehistoric Europe,” 236.

²⁷¹ Melvin Knight, Harry Elmer Barnes, and Felix Flügel, *Economic History of Europe* (1928), 74.

²⁷² Strabo, *Geography*, 4.5.2. Dogs, oddly enough, were also a notable export in 1027. Maddicott, “Trade, Industry and the Wealth of King Alfred,” 51.

²⁷³ Strabo, *Geography*, 4.4.1. See also Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC ~ AD 1500* (2001), 405.

²⁷⁴ Tacitus, *Annales* [c. 117 CE], in *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, Michael Grant, trans. (1989), 14.33. This statement in Tacitus is supported by “archeological evidence of huge quantities of imports together with wharves, jetties, warehouses, and ships.” Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, 409-10.

²⁷⁵ James Westfall Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300-1300)*, vol. 1-2 (1928), 1.14.

²⁷⁶ Ellen Churchill Semple, “The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin and Its Northern Breaches as Factors in History,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 5 (1915) 27-59, 46, et seq.

²⁷⁷ Semple, “The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin,” 27.

²⁷⁸ Davies, *Europe*, 56.

few major rivers. On the European littoral and western Africa, the barrier consists mainly of the “Alpine System.” As Norman Pounds says, “The Mediterranean Sea is itself almost ringed by the Alpine system,” which “constitutes a great divide, not only climatic but also cultural.”²⁷⁹ This may overstate the obstruction posed by the Central Alps, which proved to be permeable in early times.²⁸⁰ But there is no doubt that the most favorable gateway into Europe was the Rhône.²⁸¹ The Rhône valley is the only large natural breach of the barrier between the Mediterranean Basin and Europe west of the Julian Alps at the head of the Adriatic, and it is far more hospitable for migration than the other breaches. In terms of trade, it was especially valuable because it led easily into the heart of Europe, where it made a connection with the Rhine and the outer seas, the Atlantic and the Baltic:

It made Gaul, and later France, one great transit land. Through it Roman civilization penetrated into Gaul, and spread from the radiating passes at the head of the Rhône-Saône Valley west and north over all that province into Britain, and finally eastward over the Rhine into Germany. The location of the Alpine Barrier and the Rhône breach combined to retard the dissemination of Roman culture into Germany, and at length admitted it only in a Gallicized form.²⁸²

The usefulness of the network of rivers in Gaul, and of the Rhône in particular, is recorded by Strabo:

Now the whole of this country is watered by rivers.... The river-beds are by nature so well situated with reference to one another that there is transportation from either sea to the other.... The Rhodanus [Rhône] offers an advantage in this regard; for not only is it a stream of many tributaries...but it also connects with Our Sea [the Mediterranean]...and traverses a country which is the most favored of all in that part of the world. ...the voyage which the Rhodanus affords inland is a considerable one, even for vessels of great burden, and reaches numerous parts of the country....²⁸³

Thus, through Burgundian Gate (*Trouée de Belfort*), and the Alpine passes as well,

²⁷⁹ Pounds, *Historical Geography of Europe*, 15.

²⁸⁰ Davies, *Europe*, 57; Ian Barnes and Robert Hudson, *The History Atlas of Europe* (1998), 38; Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (1994), 9. But see Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 108.

²⁸¹ Pounds, *Historical Geography of Europe*, 14.

²⁸² Semple, “The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin,” 47-8.

²⁸³ Strabo, *Geography*, 4.1.2, 4.1.14. See also Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, map 8.1, page 312.

the Romans came north.²⁸⁴ Caius Marius fought successful campaigns against the Teutones and Cimbri in 102 and 101 BCE. Julius Caesar, who marched his armies up the Rhône Valley to the Rhine, finally pacified all of Gaul in 58 to 50 BCE.²⁸⁵ Caesar also probed tentatively into Germany and Britain, but did not attempt to stay in either area. Caesar seemed to be at pains to justify his decision not to assert Roman rule on the east bank of the Rhine. He asserted that it was an accepted boundary between Roman and German influence, almost as though he were greatly concerned to preserve a legal principle.²⁸⁶ But prudence seemed to play a big part. His side-by-side descriptions of the Celts in Gaul and the Germans on the other side of the Rhine make it clear that he considered the Germans the more dangerous foes despite his long struggles with the Celts in Gaul.²⁸⁷ The Romans did eventually conquer Britain. But their attempts to pacify the Germans east of the Rhine led to disaster.

What the Norman Invasion of 1066 is to the English, the Battle of Teutoburgerwald in the year 9 is to the Germans ~ but for opposite reasons and with opposite consequences. Giving precise dates to the turning points of large historical movements is always a somewhat nominal exercise, against which we should apply something like a historical uncertainly principle. But it is fairly accurate to say that we know when the first consciousness of something we would call “Germany” was born ~

²⁸⁴ Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 249. Romans concerned themselves primarily with politics and war, and preferred to leave commerce to others, such as Etruscans and Greeks. But trade was important to the empire nevertheless. See M.I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social & Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1921), 145; Stéphane Lebecq, “Routes of Change: Production and Distribution in the West (5th-8th Century),” in Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown, eds., *The Transformation of the Roman World: AD 400-900* (1997); Coleman H. Benedict, “The Romans in Southern Gaul,” *The American Journal of Philology* 63.1 (1942) 38-50; Norman Pounds, “The Urbanization of the Classical World,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 59.1 (March 1969) 135-157, figure 6, page 149.

²⁸⁵ Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 253.

²⁸⁶ Caesar, *Gallic War* [*De bello Gallico*, 51-2 BCE], 4.16, in *The Conquest of Gaul*, S.A. Handford and Jane Gardner, trans. (1982).

²⁸⁷ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.11-24. Historians have spoken of the “moral barrier of Rhine and Danube,” demarking the natural boundary between Romans and barbarians. But that begs the question of what caused that moral conception, which is likely to be found in economic and social factors. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 122.

although only in inchoate form, and it would be centuries before it became a political entity. It happened in the Teutoburgerwald, about 100 kilometers or more east of the Rhine, in September or October of 9 CE.²⁸⁸ (See map 2.) Hermann the Cherusci, who had served as an officer in the Roman legions under the name of “Arminius,” led a rebellion against the Romans. Actually, “Arminius” is the only name documented in history, written by Romans, but later Germans supposed that this was a Latinization of “Hermann,”²⁸⁹ which might be linguistically related to “German,”²⁹⁰ although Hermann, if that was his name, probably did not think of himself as a “German.”²⁹¹ Tacitus, writing near the beginning of the 2nd Century CE, describes him as “unmistakably the liberator of Germany. Challenger of Rome.... To this day the tribes sing of him.”²⁹² The Battle of Teutoburgerwald is known to the Germans alternatively as the *Hermannsschlacht* or the *Varusschlacht*, and it took on great symbolic importance for them, although not so much in the Middle Ages as later on, after the rediscovery of Tacitus in the early 16th Century and rise of German Romanticism in the late 18th Century. Heinrich von Kleist wrote a patriotic play about it, “Die Hermannsschlacht,” in 1809, which thanked the god Wotan for the victory over the Roman giant from the Mediterranean.²⁹³ A grand monument called the *Hermannsdenkmal*, featuring Hermann with his sword raised high and facing the West, was built atop a mountain in the Teutoburgerwald in 1875-6 to celebrate the German

²⁸⁸ It was only in the 1980s that the actual location of the battle was confirmed by archeologists, about 50 miles away from the monument. Derek Williams, *Romans and Barbarians: Four Views from the Empire's Edge, 1st Century AD* (1999), 67. But the mystery of the exact location only heightened the mythic import of the battle. For example, alternative theories for the possible lines of march followed by the doomed Romans were prominently featured in a German school atlas, *Historischer Schul-Atlas*, published in 1935. F.W. Dukgers, *Historischer Schul-Atlas* (1935), 44.

²⁸⁹ Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 66.

²⁹⁰ Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 80.

²⁹¹ Thomas Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. ~ A.D. 400* (2003) 24; Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, Thomas Dunlap, trans. (1997) [*Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, 1990], 4-5.

²⁹² Tacitus, *Annales*, 2.88 (119).

²⁹³ Heinrich von Kleist, “Die Hermannsschlacht” [1809], in *Sämtliche Werke* (1968), 669, 752.

Unification of 1871.²⁹⁴ This continued to be an important icon for the Germans in the 1930s. Hitler disliked Gothic Romanticism in general, and this monument in particular. That did not prevent the Nazis from invoking the memory of Hermann when they campaigned in Lippe in 1933.²⁹⁵

Although Hermann served as an officer in the Roman legions, he came to resent them, and to organize a rebellion. He lured three legions under the command of Publius Quintilius Varus into the depths of the Teutoburgerwald, a thick forest on the edge of a mountainous region in Lower Saxony, where he slaughtered them. As Derek Williams puts it, this was “the first clear, large-scale failure of Roman imperial expansion.”²⁹⁶ The three legions constituted a tenth or more of the main battle force of the empire, and the Romans were so shocked that they feared a German invasion of Italy.²⁹⁷ Cassius Dio says that Augustus (emperor 28 BCE ~ 14 CE) “rent his clothes...and was overcome with grief.”²⁹⁸ More importantly, he abandoned any plans to extend the boundaries of the empire beyond the Rhine and the Danube. In his will, upon his death five years later, “He gave it as his view that they should be satisfied with the possessions they now held, and should in no way seek to enlarge the empire beyond its present limits.”²⁹⁹ Excepting some minor tactical adjustments, mainly to round the corner of the Rhine and the Danube, and some limited punitive raids into German territory, that was the policy followed by Tiberius (emperor 14-37 CE) and

²⁹⁴ Siegfried Fischer-Fabian calls this “Germany’s most popular monument.” Fischer-Fabian, *Die ersten Deutschen: Über das rätselhafte Volk der Germanen* (2003), 289-90. See also Malcolm Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), 266.

²⁹⁵ Henry Ashby Turner, *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (1996), 57.

²⁹⁶ Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 8.

²⁹⁷ Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Rhōmaikē Historia* [c. 214-6], 56.23, in *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, Ian Scott-Kilvert, trans. (1987). There were 28 regular legions, augmented by some auxiliaries, under Augustus before the loss of the three legions in 9 CE. Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (1976), 85. The numbers of the three legions lost in Germany, XVII, XVIII, and XVIII (as the Romans actually wrote them), were never again used by the Romans, and “For centuries to come, the date of the German disaster was remembered as an official day of mourning.” Michael Grant, *The First Century: Emperors, Gods, and Everyman* (1990), 81.

²⁹⁸ Cassius Dio, *Historia*, 56.23.

²⁹⁹ Cassius Dio, *Historia*, 56.33.

other successors.³⁰⁰ (See map 2.) Significantly, Claudius (emperor 41-54 CE) did conquer Britain in 43 CE. But no emperor ever crossed the Rhine to stay.³⁰¹

Now, to be clear, if neither Hermann nor Varus had ever existed, the geoculture probably would have worked out about the same. This was one of many battles between the Germans and the Romans along the area of the Rhine, both before and after 9 CE, and the east bank of the Rhine was a natural frontier for the limits of the empire because of the lack of major rivers drawing the Romans further east, with the exception of the Danube, far to the south of the North European Plain. So this not to say that one battle, however momentous, was historically decisive in the sense that it was the essential cause for all that followed. Alternatively, supposing that the Romans had not accepted the Rhine as the “natural” frontier, and had been successful in pushing further on to the Elbe, that does not necessarily mean that the geocultural configuration of Europe would have been fundamentally different. The “German problem” may have become a “Polish problem” or a “Russian problem.” (One can argue that an analogous “Russian problem” did in fact develop later, thereby leading eventually to the contemporary problem of “Weimar Russia.”) Think in terms of relationships, not essences.

The creation of Germany was a rebellion against Rome.³⁰² In the Middle Ages, ironically, the Germans claimed the heritage of the Roman Empire. They called

³⁰⁰ “For centuries, the legacy of Augustus determined Roman frontier and military policy.” Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, 38. See also Owen, *The Germanic People*, 88-9. The importance of this battle might be indicated by C.R. Whittaker’s assertion that “it is impossible...to detect anything like a frontier policy before the emperor Augustus.” Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 11. However, Whittaker also recognizes that the Rhine was in fact seen as a natural boundary by Julius Caesar. Caesar, *Gallic War*, 4.16; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 74. As to the long-term consequences of the defeat in the Teutoburgerwald, see also Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 207.

³⁰¹ Tacitus nicely sums up the abandonment of any attempt to penetrate the region between the Rhine and the Elbe when, near the beginning of the 2nd Century CE, he speaks of “the Elbe, a river well known and much talked of in earlier days, but now a mere name.” Tacitus, *Germania* [c. 98 CE], 41, in *The Agricola and the Germania*, H. Mattingly and S.A. Handford, trans. (1970).

³⁰² Thomas Mann explicitly links the two events, Hermann’s rebellion against Rome and Luther’s rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church, in his modern manifesto of German nationalism, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, 25.

themselves the *Römische Reich*, the “Roman Empire,” more popularly known as the “Holy Roman Empire.” Their emperor took the title of *Kaiser*, a Germanization of the Latin *caesar*. More substantially, the medieval Holy Roman Empire was for long afflicted by an entanglement in Italy, the struggle of German emperors to claim dominion over the Pope and the Lombard city-states of North Italy. Germany claimed the inheritance of Rome even while rebelling against it, much like a son rebelling against his father and attempting to seize the estate. Or, to change the familial metaphor slightly, it was a dispute over the inheritance between two brothers, later represented by the West and East Frankish successors to Charlemagne’s Empire.

That metaphor is particularly appropriate, because, in a wonderfully symbolic accident of history, Hermann happened to have a brother who had also trained with the Romans. We know him only by his Latin name, “Flavus.” He made the opposite choice, to remain with the Romans. The two brothers met, seven years after Teutoburgerwald, on opposite sides of the Weser, and had a shouting match recounted by Tacitus:

Flavus spoke of Rome’s greatness, the emperor’s wealth, the terrible punishment attending defeat, the mercy earned by submission ~ even Arminius’ own wife and son were not treated like enemies. His brother dwelt on patriotism, long-established freedom, the national gods of Germany ~ and their mother, who joined him in imploring that Flavus should not choose to be the deserter and betrayer, rather than the liberator. The discussion soon became abusive: blows would have followed ~ in spite of the river barrier ~ if Lucius Stertinius had not hastened up and restrained Flavus, who was angrily calling for his horse and weapons. Across the river Arminius was to be seen, shouting threats and challenges to fight ~ a good many of them in Latin.³⁰³

This foreshadows the later theme of German *Kultur* versus Western *Zivilisation*, of tribal loyalty opposed to material rationality. Indeed, the argument was taken from the text of Tacitus by Johann Gottlieb Fichte in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808), in the course of his highly ambivalent reception of the Enlightenment in Germany:

³⁰³ Tacitus, *Annales*, 2.10 (pages 81-2).

...our earliest forefathers, the original stock of the new culture, the Germans as the Romans called them, bravely resisted the on-coming world domination of the Romans. Did they not have before their eyes the greater brilliance of the Roman provinces next to them...? Were not the Romans willing enough to let them share in all these blessings? In the case of several of their own princes...did they not experience proof of the belauded Roman clemency?

....

Had they no appreciation of the advantages of Roman civilization...?

....

Freedom to them meant just this: remaining German and continuing to settle their own affairs independent and in accordance with the original spirit of their race, going on with their development in accordance with the same spirit.... All those blessings which the Romans offered them meant slavery to them, because then they would have had to become something that was not German, they would have to become half Roman.³⁰⁴

It is significant that, in both the original account related in Tacitus and in the revisiting of the argument in the early 19th Century by Fichte, the Germans seem to recognize that the Romans are reasonable conquerors who can offer material advantages to the Germans. The resistance is not motivated by fear of oppression, as Greeks or Romans would have understood it, in material terms. It is motivated by fear of loss of identity, in the same way that many modern fundamentalists in underdeveloped cultures resist the advantages of globalization because of the threat to their traditional values, and in the same way that Jewish prophets reacted against the materialism of the Philistines. This is the sense of “cultural rape” discussed in § 4. It is also interesting to note that Hermann shouted threats in Latin. This is symbolic of the way in which modern German philosophy, imbued with classicism, and also dominant in the philosophical traditions of other Western nations, has used the idiom of the Greeks and Romans to oppose the civilization they created.

This might be the place for the usual quotes, from Caesar and Tacitus, about the primitive and warlike character of the Germans.³⁰⁵ As Derek Williams notes, “German

³⁰⁴ Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, address # 8, 7.388-90 (pages 122-3).

³⁰⁵ The usual quotes can be found in Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.21-8; and throughout Tacitus, *Germania*.

savagery was a stock Roman cliché.”³⁰⁶ It is worth noting that such observations, as they appear in many of the Roman historians, and especially in Tacitus, express admiration as well as disdain for the barbarousness of the Germans. But all of that ~ whether presenting a view of the Germans as ignorant and indolent hunter-gathers, or as noble warlike savages ~ is beside the point for the basic reason that all of the barbarians civilized by the Romans, such as the Celts in Gaul or the Britons in Britannia, were barbarians before they were civilized. There was nothing essentially different about Germans, compared to Celts or Britons, before their contact with Romans. The question is why the Romans succeeded in conquering the Celts and the Britons, but were unsuccessful in conquering the Germans. A simple answer, certainly correct as far as it goes, is that the Germans were on the other side of the Rhine. In that sense, the first statement with which Tacitus begins *Germania*, not so often quoted, is the most important thing to say about the Germans. “The various peoples of Germany are separated from the Gauls by the Rhine.”³⁰⁷ That seems to have also been the bottom line for Caesar. Thomas Burns says that “‘German’ meant something for Caesar but it was not an ethnographic term as we would understand it today. Simply put, Germans were not Celts. He had conquered the latter; the former remained outside the Roman domain, within reach and under its influence, revealed to his critics as too primitive to be worth the sacrifice needed to subdue them.”³⁰⁸ But why was that such a problem for the Romans?

The Roman tide had to reach its limit somewhere. (This is another example of the environmental S-curve.) To use a phrase from a humiliating German defeat of a Western army on the Rhine in the Modern Age, the crossing of the Rhine by Varus in 9 CE could be said to have been simply “a bridge too far.”³⁰⁹ But the question remains, nevertheless, why crossing the Rhine was so difficult. If it were merely a matter of

³⁰⁶ Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 80.

³⁰⁷ Tacitus, *Germania*, 1.

³⁰⁸ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 137. See also James, *Franks*, 34.

imperial overstretch, or merely a matter of Romans disliking boats, then they should not have been able to conquer those fierce Britons, a few years after the Germans defeated them on the Rhine, in 43 CE. Why were the Germans such a problem for the Romans? A simple answer, but one that is quite wrong, is that Germans were inherently more fierce than Celts and Britons. Although Julius Caesar strongly contrasts Germans and Celts, he does not rely on a racial or ethnic explanation. He argues instead that the Celts in Gaul had been corrupted by Roman wealth:

There was a time when the Gauls were more warlike than the Germans, when they actually invaded German territory.... Nowadays, while the Germans still endure the same life of poverty and privation as before, without any change in their diet or clothing, the Gauls, through living near the Roman Province and becoming acquainted with sea-borne products, are abundantly supplied with various commodities. Gradually accustomed to inferiority and defeated in many battles, they do not even pretend to compete with the Germans in bravery.³¹⁰

This is again the Roman myth of rustic virtue, and the corresponding belief in the corruption of sea trade. It appears all the more strongly in Tacitus, who says that the formerly fierce Britons were pacified because “the population was gradually led into the demoralizing temptations of arcades, baths, and sumptuous banquets.”³¹¹

But that brings us back to the comparative question. Why did the same strategy of military strength combined with civilizing wealth, which worked so well with Gauls and Britons, not work with the Germans? It is instructive to see that Cassius Dio, who may be the most objective among all the Roman historians of his period ~ although he seems to be underrated because he is less romantic in style ~ answers this question in a way which nicely anticipates the theory of unstable development later applied to Imperial Germany by Thorstein Veblen.³¹² The basic Roman strategy was working on the Germans, he says, except that Varus was foolishly pushing the process too rapidly:

The Romans had a hold on parts of it [Germany], not whole regions....

³⁰⁹ That was the Battle of Arnhem on 17-26 September 1944. See Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far: The Classic History of The Greatest Airborne Battle of World War II* (1995).

³¹⁰ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.24. See also Strabo, *Geography*, 4.4.2.

³¹¹ Tacitus, *Agricola* [c. 98 CE], 21.

³¹² Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (1915).

Meanwhile bodies of troops were in the habit of wintering there, and cities were being founded; the barbarians were gradually re-shaping their habits in conformity with the Roman pattern, were being accustomed to hold markets and were meeting in peaceful assemblies. But they had not forgotten their ancestral customs, their native manners, their independent way of life, nor the power they had enjoyed through their strength in arms. So long as they were unlearning their customs little by little, by indirect means, so to speak, and were under careful surveillance, they did not object to the change in their manner of life, and were unconsciously altering their disposition.

But when Quintilius Varus became governor of the province of Germany, and in the exercise of his powers also came to handle the affairs of these peoples, he tried both to hasten and to widen the process.³¹³

This, Cassius Dio then tells us, led directly to the rebellion and the great defeat in the Teutoburgerwald, in 9 CE. There was nothing new about Roman defeats. Their history was filled with great defeats which they came back from, to win the last battle against their enemies. Being badly defeated was almost a standard methodology in the Roman learning process. So the question is why it was that the Romans did not seek to avenge Teutoburgerwald except for some carefully limited punitive raids under Tiberius? Again, there is something to a theory of imperial overstretch. This may have simply been an unusually severe defeat suffered at a critical psychological point, when Rome was becoming weary of constant expansion. But that, again, is inconsistent with the later Roman conquest of Britain. If there were anyone the Romans would have wanted to have a grudge match with ~ and Romans were certainly big on grudge matches ~ it would have been the Germans.

The better explanation is that the Romans saw the Germans, in contrast to the Britons, as not worth the trouble. As Max Cary says in his *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History* (1949), the Romans saw the dark forests and swamps of Germany ~ lands “deeply recessed from the main roads of ancient commerce,” where there were no easily accessible mineral deposits and little in the way of cleared agricultural land ~ as not likely to produce the same material rewards. “Contrary to their early delusions about Britain, the Romans never imagined Germany as an

³¹³ Cassius Dio, *Historia*, 56.18.

Eldorado, and their interest in it was almost exclusively one of frontier defense. From the economic point of view the Rhine appeared to be the limit of profitable expansion, and with its strong and equable flow of water it formed a good barrier against invasion....”³¹⁴ The bottom line, so to speak, was the bottom line.

That is simple enough as far as it goes. But now we must complicate matters a bit by drawing a few more lines on the map. A problem with history, and with any theorizing about historical problems, as in this work, is the lack of quantitative data.³¹⁵ The ancients were not in the habit of producing economic reports and opinion polls. Recent archeology has made great progress in uncovering patterns of distribution ~ counts of artifacts such as sunken ships, amphora, and coins ~ which do say something about quantitative economic and social relationships. But we too often are still forced to rely on incidental and sometimes obscure references in ancient authors who rarely thought in quantitative or comparative terms. We therefore tend to think about these problems in qualitative terms, in terms of essentialist characterizations and hard lines of demarcation. Nevertheless, the really important factors at work, the actual historical causes, most probably had a quantitative aspect which is critical to the analysis. The most important differences in the Roman influences on the comparative cases of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and England were matters of degree rather than matters of essence. More specifically, it was the *slope* of the cultural influence on the frontiers between Rome and Germany, in comparison to an almost non-existent slope in Gaul and a much less intense slope in Britain, the differential in the *gradients*, which created a significantly greater tension between the tribe and the city in the evolution of the German consciousness. Although it is a quantitative question, we cannot answer the question with quantitative data. What we can do is show that there were underlying causes which logically led to such a quantitative difference, and that there were also resulting patterns of development which, albeit impressionistic, fit the theory

³¹⁴ Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 274.

empirically. Such patterns have indeed been noticed by eminent historians with no interest in the theory propounded here.

The great routes for the penetration of Europe from the Mediterranean ~ mainly water routes before the building of the Roman roads, although there were some native Gaelic roads ~ were the Atlantic, the Rhône, and the Rhine. The Atlantic and the Rhône, with the Seine and Loire, in combination with the easily accessible resources of Gaul and Britain, created a western center of gravity in the development of Europe.³¹⁶ After the Roman penetration of Gaul and the development of the Rhine route to Britain, there was a partial shift to the east, with the Rhine drawing up much of the trade which had previously moved along the Atlantic coast, because of consumption along the Rhine itself.³¹⁷ This shift was assisted by the network of Roman roads in Gaul,³¹⁸ and may also have been affected by the Roman dislike of the sea.

The influence of the Rhine on Germany was not the same as the influence of the Rhône on Gaul. The Rhine did not lead the Romans into the heart of Germany as the Rhône had led them into the heart of Gaul.³¹⁹ When the Romans developed the Alpine route, those roads led to the headwaters of the Rhine, where they linked up with roads from the Burgundian Gate and followed the west bank of the Rhine down to the sea, to Britain and the Atlantic krater. Germany, on the other side of the Rhine, “never became a land of Roman cities,” as James Reid puts it.³²⁰ But the west bank of the Rhine became the most developed region of Gaul. It was not only a natural route of trade, but also the line of defense where the Romans built forts, which drew traders to them, and which became cities with developed areas around them. Thus, *castra*

³¹⁵ As Pierre Chuvin puts it, “ancient history remains wholly refractory to quantitative evaluations.” Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans* (1990), 12.

³¹⁶ See Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, map 8.1, page 312.

³¹⁷ Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, 417.

³¹⁸ The roads became significant in part because the Rhine was not easily navigable above Cologne (*Colonia Claudia*). Cary, *Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History*, 260.

³¹⁹ James Westfall points out, for example, that “the absence of any great river in Gaul flowing east prevented cheap transportation of grain out of central Gaul.” Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, 1.14.

became *civitates*. The Rhine and the Danube, the rivers defining the boundary of the Roman Empire in Europe, were “outposts of urbanism on the very edge of barbarism,” as Norman Pounds says. The Rhineland, especially, “became the chief avenue of trade and also one of the most highly urbanized areas of Europe.”³²¹ As shown in photo 2, that effect would be visible to an extraterrestrial sociologist approaching the planet today.

Although the *Limes Germanicus* was a military boundary, it was not a solid wall. It was permeable to trade laterally, east and west. Derek Williams speaks of “three zones” of *Barbaricum*.³²² Various objects of trade, revealed by archeology, were transmitted for hundreds of miles east of the Rhine. But there was a distinct difference in the nature of the trade between the near-Rhine zone and areas farther east. Close to the Rhine, and along it, the trade was mundane commerce in a wide variety of goods, bulk as well as precious, whereas trade further east was mainly in small luxury items, which may not have been trade as much as gifts and tribute.³²³ The effect was the creation of three zones of Roman influence, or lack of it, in Germany. (See map 4 and table 3.) These were western, central, and eastern zones of Germany, more or less, although they were also determined in part by distance north of the Danube and south of the Atlantic. (Note the curve of the *Limes Germanicus* on map 2.)

Western Germany. Western Germany, roughly the Rhineland and the Rhine Delta or the Netherlands, was a zone of extensive Romanization. Or, to be more precise, it was a zone of modernization which was in some ways more Romanized than Rome, more modern than the Romans themselves meant to be. This was the land of the “Romanized Germans” who eventually became the Dutch.

Central Germany. The second zone, Central Germany, roughly the land between the Rhine and the Elbe, was an area of successful resistance to Roman imperialism, but

³²⁰ Reid, *Municipalities of the Roman Empire*, 194.

³²¹ Pounds, *Historical Geography of Europe*, 53, 129; Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, 417.

³²² Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 11.

an area in which the Germans were well aware of Rome, and involved with Rome by trade as well as warfare. (Commerce and war are both means of cultural sex.) “Far removed from direct contact with Romans,” Thomas Burns says, “barbarian societies in the hinterlands were also being influenced by the expanding Roman infrastructure along the frontiers. The archeological data suggest a gradually increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer families and the use of Roman import items to display power relationships among the military-political elites.”³²⁴

Eastern Germany. The third zone, Eastern Germany, roughly Germany beyond the Elbe in Roman times and Germany beyond the Oder in the Middle Ages, was created later, by colonization of Slavs during a long process of eastward expansion. Prussia, the areas of Weimar Germany voting most heavily Nazi, and the East Germany created after the Second World War, roughly corresponded to this zone of colonization in the Middle Ages. (See maps 7, 10, and 12.)

This description of the three zones parallels the description of Germany at the beginning of the Reformation in Holborn’s *History of Modern Germany*.³²⁵ Similarly, Geoffrey Barraclough’s *Origins of Modern Germany* (1984) stresses the differences among the West and East of the Frankish Empire, and the area later colonized.³²⁶ Hans Kohn’s *Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (1960) speaks of the western, central, and eastern parts of Germany strongly affected by the degree of Romanization.³²⁷ The resulting cultural gradient can be seen in maps 3 and 4. The curve in map 4 is not based on a quantitative calculation. But the combination of significant indicators of development used there ~ cities, universities, scientific discoveries, technical inventions, and early printing presses ~ supports the informed judgments of the historians. This shows that there was such a thing, a steep cultural

³²³ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 122-3; Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 214; Williams, *Romans and Barbarians*, 11.

³²⁴ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 185.

³²⁵ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.3-5.

³²⁶ Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (1984), chapters 1 and 10.

³²⁷ Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (1960), 18-9.

gradient between the Rhine and the Elbe in Western Europe. That, alone, does not prove that it had a special effect on German culture. The rest of the argument lies with the comparative logic. The next section is concerned with proving the likelihood of such an effect through a comparison of cases.

§ 6. The comparative logic

It is meaningful to speak of a German *Sonderweg* if it can be validated by comparisons to other cases. Tables 3-5 summarize such comparisons. The two cases of most obvious relevance are Britain and the Netherlands, the two “most similar” cases.¹ These are other nations in the same region, of Germanic ethnicity, but positioned differently on the cultural gradient. Conversely, we should make “most different” comparisons to Germany, some comparisons to nations with other languages and cultures in which fascism also arose. Cultural gradients and polarities relate to fundamental structural relationships in a culture, not to the superficial appearance of a culture. Thus, we should be able to see similar effects elsewhere, where there are polarizing gradients affecting nations of different ethnicity. The two “most different” nations of use in this respect are Italy and Japan.

Some other “partly similar” case comparisons to Germany are of relevance to sorting out the causes of fascism in the “fascist era” between the World Wars. A null hypothesis which can be posed against the proposition that Nazism arose from a German *Sonderweg* is that it arose instead from the immediate circumstances of national humiliation and economic chaos which generated fascist movements in other European countries during the same period. For purposes of testing that hypothesis, it is useful to compare similar circumstances of the same period in Ireland and Austria, and also similar circumstances currently occurring in Russia, but with different results due to the different geocultural relationships.

¹This refers to the methodology pioneered in Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* ([1915] 1990). The “most similar systems” method and the “most different systems” method come from Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (1970). They correspond respectively to what John Stuart Mill called the “Method of Difference” and the “Method of Agreement” in *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* ([1843] 1881).

The “Romanized Germans” in the lowlands of the Atlantic krater

Despite 9 CE and all that, there were two significant groups of Germans who came into the orbit of Roman civilization at an early time. They participated in the Atlantic krater in map 3 and they lived on the crest of the cultural gradient in map 4. They were lowlanders, seafarers, merchants, and urbanites. They developed the first “trading state” empires in Europe.² And, although they were rivals (for the same reason as were Greeks and Carthaginians) who fought a series of limited naval wars over trade, they eventually established a long-lasting alliance. This was one of the earliest examples of the “democratic peace” between materialistic polyarchies.

Those two groups of “Romanized Germans” were those who became the “Dutch” and the “English,” or perhaps more properly, the “Netherlanders” and the “British.”³ This terminological difficulty is a clue to an important factor. In both cases, there is not always a satisfactory name for the place or the people because where it was and who they were mutated so much. And it was as much a matter of their contacts with others as their internal constituency. There were some other peoples who participated in the Atlantic krater substantially. Those included the Belgae and the Flemish, in Flanders to the southwest of the Dutch and sometimes closely associated with them, the Danes or “Normans” of Normandy in France who conquered England in 1066, and the Frisians and Saxons to the northeast, other Germans who also participated in the Rhine trade from an early time. The Dutch and the English were merely the ones who benefited the most from the trade and intercourse of the Atlantic krater.

² See Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (1986).

³ The English gave the name “Dutch” to the Netherlanders, because they confused them with *die Deutschen*, the name the Germans gave to themselves. Flora Lewis, *Europe: A Tapestry of Nations* (1987), 264. Netherlanders do not always appreciate the association. They call themselves *de Nederlanders*. “English,” from *Angelcynn*, “the land of the Angles,” reflects the Anglo-Saxon roots of the English, but does not reflect their considerable mixture with others, such as Britons and Danes. “British” is more proper, but is too inclusive when speaking of the early history. For a long pedantic complaint about this problem of terminology, see the introduction to Norman Davies, *The Isles: A History* (1999). On the Netherlands, see Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (1997), 9.

The term “Romanized Germans” may be somewhat misleading. An important element, but not essentially characteristic of Roman civilization, was the system of commercial and maritime connections based on prehistorical connections but accentuated during the Roman occupation of their lands. So they were the “commercialized Germans.” Both were relatively urban. The Dutch had city-states, although city-states of a limited kind. England had no city-states.⁴ Instead, England developed a territorial national state at a remarkably early time, before any other nation in Europe, in the 9th Century.⁵ But English culture was strongly affected by international trading ports, especially London. Although the Netherlands eventually became the most heavily urbanized country during the Late Middle Age, England developed the highest urban density, in the Southeast Lowlands, in the period before the Norman Conquest of 1066.⁶ So they were the “citified Germans.” But any of those labels may be somewhat misleading, because what was also important was the great multiplicity of different influences that each nation managed to absorb and incorporate into a coherent national culture. So they were the “multicultural Germans.” Or, in terms of the later Nazi fetish about racial and cultural purity, they were the “impure Germans.” During one of their limited naval wars, a bit of English propaganda called

⁴ Max Weber thinks it is of significance that “the English city which, as distinguished from the German and Italian, never formed a city-state and with rare exceptions never was able or never sought to dominate the surrounding countryside or extend its jurisdiction over it.” Max Weber, *General Economic History* [*Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1923], in *Selections in Translation*, W.G. Runciman, ed., Eric Matthews, trans. (1978), 333. A rare exception, when London may have had some sort of jurisdiction over the nearby countryside in the 11th Century, is discussed in H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *The Governance of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (1963), 24, 35. Peter Ackroyd refers to London as a “city-state” in some periods during the Middle Ages because of the considerable independence to manage its own affairs it won from English kings. Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (2000), 44, 53. But London always recognized the residual sovereignty of kings, even if it was often insolent to them. Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, 35.

⁵ Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Crucible of Europe: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries in European History* (1976), 126. Many other historians, who might not agree that England was a consolidated nation state as early as the 9th Century, because what meets that test is a matter of varied opinion, would nevertheless agree that, by whatever test, and whatever century is chosen, England consolidated earlier than any other nation in Europe. See Asa Briggs, *A Social History of England* (1985), 53; David Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700* (2003), 58.

⁶ Nicholas, *Urban Europe*, 4-5.

the Dutch the “indigested vomit of the sea.”⁷ In similarly crude terms, R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Myres, Oxford historians, say that England is “a refuse heap on the edge of the ocean into which are swept the outworn relics of ethnic migrations and spiritual formulations.”⁸ And Tennyson was saying much the same thing about the English, except in more savory language, when he wrote a poem welcoming a Danish princess to the marriage of an English king in 1863:

Sea-King’s daughter from over the sea....

 For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
 We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee....⁹

Despite tumultuous conflicts about religion and ideology leading to rather complicated and indecisive civil wars in each case, and in part precisely because of those conflicts, both of these nations supported by maritime commerce were compelled to develop a national culture which was generally materialistic in polarity. The two polarities are not entirely symmetrical. A spiritualistic culture must be substantially monocultural. Because it is primarily dominated by a spiritual or ideological self-consciousness, it cannot tolerate multiple conceptions in that self-consciousness. This is why the spiritualistic tribe hates a commercial city with foreigners and foreign ideas. A spiritual culture which is exposed to contrary cultural influences, though either trade or war, the two main forms of cultural sex, is faced with two alternatives. If it is to remain a spiritual culture, pure and certain in its self-conscious cultural identity, the dominant culture within the mix must make war on the other influences on it. It must conduct a cultural war (a *Kulturkampf*, in a general sense), which may take on the form of either a foreign or a civil war. In other words, it must become hegemonic.

⁷ Andrew Marvell, “The Character of Holland,” 1.7, in *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681), quoted in Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987), 263.

⁸ R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (1949), 4.

⁹ Alfred Tennyson, “A Welcome to Alexandria” (7 March 1863), first and last three lines, in *The Complete Poetical Works of Alfred Tennyson* (1898), 257-8.

Alternatively, perhaps after discovering that such wars are unproductive, it may become a materialistically polarized culture, a culture founded on individual material rationality rather than spiritual visions and communal solidarity. Such a culture will not necessarily lead directly to a liberal democracy. It may be ruled by an oligarchy, as was Rome, as were the Netherlands and Britain. But it will tend to be polyarchic. In the Netherlands and Britain, this outcome was strongly influenced by the material base, especially the maritime trade. But polyarchy was also forced upon them by the multiplicity of influences. (See table 3.) It is difficult to disentangle from the mix which specific factor, material base or cultural sex, was more determinative of the final outcome. But both factors, closely related, arose from geocultural position.

It is impossible to do justice to the rich and deeply layered history of either nation in the space available. Because the significance of the Netherlands is less well appreciated in popular history and academic literature, the great weight of this discussion will focus there.

The Netherlands. The “Netherlands,” which means the “lowlands,” might also be called the “Land of Nehalennia.”¹⁰ Nehalennia was a Celtic god whose ancient shrines were widely spread around the Rhine Delta. She was known as the “steerswoman,” a god who protected travelers by both sea and land.¹¹ There could be no more appropriate god for the people who became the leading seafarers and traders of Europe. From Roman times, if not before, peoples in the delta exploited the natural advantages of the Atlantic trade and the Rhône-Rhine trade route, which continued to be important in the Dark Age.¹² As Henri Pirenne puts it, these lands “at the extremity of the

¹⁰ “Nehalennia” is apparently related to “Nehellenia,” meaning “Nether Moon,” and a variation on the god “Hel” or “Holle,” which is related to the name “Holland.” Barbara Walker, *The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (1983), 720.

¹¹ Audrey Lambert, *The Making of the Dutch Landscape: An Historical Geography of the Netherlands* (1985), 55; Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (1998), 267; Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, 419.

¹² C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (1994), 229, et passim; Adriaan Verhulst, “The Origins of Towns in the Low Countries and the Pirenne Thesis,” *Past and Present* 122 (February 1989) 3-35, 18.

‘commerical axis’ of France and also at the extremity of the great plain of Northern Germany, and fronting England along the whole length of their coasts...form the meeting-place of the great lines of communication of the West.”¹³ Fernand Braudel says that the Dutch Republic of 1648 “was above all the creation of the sea.”¹⁴ That is very true, but not entirely so. It was also of great value to the cities of the Netherlands and Flanders that they were situated in the middle of the North Plain of Europe, a flat, open, and fertile plain.¹⁵ As in the case of Athens and Rome, and the cities of Southeast Britain, the cities of the Netherlands connected the land with the sea.¹⁶ The Rhine Delta provided good anchorages, and there was trade between the Rhine Delta and the Thames Estuary in the Bronze Age.¹⁷ Before the arrival of the Romans, some of the tin from Britain went down to Massilia (Marseille) through the Netherlands.¹⁸ The Romans, who conquered the area under Julius Caesar in 58 to 50 BCE and established the province of Germania Inferior there, followed their usual policy of not interfering with local political forms, and positively encouraged the trade.¹⁹

Germans invaded the Netherlands well before the nominal fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 CE. The invasion of the “Franks,” which is an indefinite name for various German groups, including the “Saxons,”²⁰ took place over centuries

¹³ Henri Pirenne, “The Place of the Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” *The Economic History Review* 2.1 (January 1929) 20-40, 20.

¹⁴ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, vol. 1-3, Siân Reynolds, trans. (1981-1984) [*Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme: XV^e-XVIII^e siècle*, 1967], 3.188.

¹⁵ Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, Julia Barrow, trans. (1988) [*La Civilisation De L'Occident Médiéval*, 1964], 74.

¹⁶ L.J.R. Milis, “Counts, Cities, and Clerics: The Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Centuries,” in J.C.H. Blom, and Emiel Lamberts, eds., *History of the Low Countries*, James C. Kennedy, trans. (1999) [*Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 1982], 36; David Nicholas, “Of Poverty and Primacy: Demand, Liquidity, and the Flemish Economic Miracle, 1050-1200,” *The American Historical Review* 96.1 (February 1991) 17-41, 40.

¹⁷ Lambert, *Making of the Dutch Landscape*, 55.

¹⁸ Pirenne, “Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 20.

¹⁹ Adrien de Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, G. Gordon, trans. (1962) [*Histoire de Belgique*, 1928], 16.

²⁰ Edward James, *The Franks* (1988), 1-10, 34-8, et passim.

and was usually a process of mixture rather than displacement.²¹ William McNeill says that “Separation between Roman and German populations was less marked in the Frankish state than in other barbarian kingdoms.... Romans as well as Franks were appointed to official positions and intermarriage must frequently have occurred.”²² Pirenne says that “In the course of the history of the Netherlands, in fact, no event is to be found which presents the appearance of a race-struggle.”²³ The Franks invaded the delta, including Frisia and Batavia, in 275-6 CE.²⁴ The Saxons later gave their name to the adjacent area of “Lower Saxony.” (See map 11.) The exact relationship between Frisians and Saxons is one among many difficulties in “a long and tiresome series of difficulties” about tribal identities, as B.H. Slicher van Bath puts it.²⁵ We can avoid delving into such difficulties because it is clear that the history and archeology is confused by close contacts between the two groups and a sharing of cultural material, whether or not there was a close biological relationship. It is also important to note that both Frisians and Saxons in this area had extensive dealings across the English Channel with Britain.²⁶ Both sides of the English Channel were invaded by Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. All of these were tribes of Germans, and the distinctions among them may be notional. Areas along both sides of the English Channel were known as the *Litus saxonicum*, the “Saxon shore.”²⁷

Clovis (or Chlodwech, reigned 481-511 CE), chieftain of the Salian Franks, conquered Gaul and created the first Kingdom of the Franks in 486 CE. At that time,

²¹ L.J.R. Milis, “A Long Beginning: The Low Countries through the Tenth Century,” in Blom and Lamberts, *History of the Low Countries*, 6.

²² William H. McNeill, *History of Western Civilization: A Handbook* (1986), 217.

²³ Henri Pirenne, “The Formation and Constitution of the Burgundian State (Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries),” *The American Historical Review* 14.3 (April 1909) 477-502, 481. See also Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.248, et seq.; James, *The Franks*, 107.

²⁴ H. Schonberger, “The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 59.1-2 (1969) 144-197, 178.

²⁵ B.H. Slicher van Bath, “Dutch Tribal Problems,” *Speculum* 24.3 (July 1949) 319-338, 319.

²⁶ Slicher van Bath, “Dutch Tribal Problems,” 323.

²⁷ Milis, “A Long Beginning,” 6.

much of the Netherlands and Lower Saxony did not become part of the kingdom.²⁸ Therefore there was then a political distinction, if not an ethnic one, between Franks and other Germans such as the Angles and Saxons, or Anglo-Saxons,²⁹ who inhabited the Channel shore and who would come to dominate Southeast Britain. The Kingdom of the Franks expanded significantly under Charlemagne (reigned 768-814 CE), who nominally established the Holy Roman Empire when he was crowned Emperor in the West by Pope Leo III, after having embroiled himself in Italian politics, in 800 CE. On his way to that momentous historical marker (and the creation of an “Italian problem” which would long plague the Holy Roman Empire) Charlemagne conducted a brutal campaign of conquest and conversion among the Saxons in the Netherlands and Lower Saxony lasting from 772 to 804 CE, thereby expanding the Empire of the Franks to the Elbe. (See map 5.) He also conquered Frisia in 784-5 CE.

Adrien de Meeüs asserts that “The Carolingians used the Low Countries as the center of their Empire.”³⁰ Although Charlemagne was a roving king and emperor, and became emperor through his activities in Italy, his capital was at Aachen, near the Netherlands, and his leading counselor was Alcuin of York (c. 735-804 CE), from Britain. The “Carolingian Renaissance,” a partial revival of trade and culture during his reign, was probably supported in large part by the trade of Frisians and Saxons.³¹ The Frisians had trade connections with Venice and the Byzantium Empire, by which they brought products such as pepper up the Rhine, but the European economic center of gravity began to shift northward, from Italy to the growing cities of the

²⁸ William McNeill, *History of Western Civilization: A Handbook* (1969), 210.

²⁹ The term “Anglo-Saxon” properly reflects our lack of any real knowledge about whether “Anglos” and “Saxons” were separate tribes, and, if so, when they might have combined. See D.J.V. Fisher, *The Anglo-Saxon Age, c. 400-1042* (1973), 25. See also Peter Hunter Blair, *Roman Britain and Early England, 55 B.C. ~ A.D. 871* (1963), 169.

³⁰ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 41.

³¹ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 40-1. “Carolingian commerce ranks among the most controversial issues in medieval economic history.” McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 2. But most of the dispute involves the Pirenne thesis about the effects of the division of the Mediterranean, on the degree of the decline in economic activity in the southern parts of the Carolingian Empire. There

Netherlands.³² There was also a slight shift from west to east in the main route from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, from the old Rhône route to the connection between Italy and the Rhine via the Alpine passes.³³

Although the Franks benefited from this trade, it conflicted with their warrior ethos. As Michael McCormick says, “A disdain for merchants and their ways nevertheless pervades many a Frankish writing.”³⁴ As McCormick points out, the word *commercium*, “commerce,” was commonly used for both trade and illicit sexual “intercourse.”³⁵ This prefigured modern German uses of the word *Verkehr*, “traffic.” The general hostility toward trade was part of the ideological legacy to the Holy Roman Empire of the Germans. McCormick also notes that the Anglo-Saxons, although certainly warriors in their own right, seem to have been less stricken with this hostility toward trade.³⁶

In the early 9th Century, Danes or “Vikings” attacked both sides of the English Channel, in Anglo-Saxon England and the Netherlands. They destroyed Dorestad around 837 CE, and generally ravaged the Netherlands and Flanders until halted by Arnold of Carinthia at Louvain in 891 CE. The Rhône-Rhine route for trade now became a convenient route for invasion which suffered some of the worst depredations by the Magyars in the 9th and 10th Centuries.³⁷ For some time after, in the 10th Century,

is little doubt about the economic activities of the Frisians in the north. *Origins of the European Economy*, 14.

³² Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 41; McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 3, et passim. The port of Dorestad, near the later medieval city of Duurstede, where the northernmost branch of the Lower Rhine splits into the Lek and the Kromme Rijn, became an especially prominent link between inland and sea trade at this time. Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC ~ AD 1500* (2001), 485-6. “It is well known that in no country of western Europe did cities spring up more quickly than in the basins of the Scheldt and the Meuse,” rivers which connect to the Rhine Delta.” Pirenne, “Formation and Constitution of the Burgundian State,” 486.

³³ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 79.

³⁴ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 13. See also Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 50.

³⁵ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 13.

³⁶ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 13.

³⁷ Geoffrey Barraclough and Richard Overy, *Hammond Atlas of World History* (1999), map 1, page 107.

the area of the Netherlands and Northern Gaul was a “wasteland.”³⁸ This breakdown in the commercial and city life was also a major factor in the degeneration to a manorial economy and feudal polity. Just as happened in England, however, invasion and destruction was followed by settlement and reconstruction. The Norseman Danes in Flanders became the “Normans.”³⁹ Commercial cities with walls (*burgs*) arose around the end of the 9th Century and trade grew in the 10th Century. Bruges became a center of European trade during this period.⁴⁰ As Pirenne says, “The geographical situation of the country was too favorable for their eclipse to last long...”⁴¹ Trade and city life, which had never died out completely, revived during the “12th Century Renaissance” which began about 1050 CE.⁴² “The Low Countries were the last great urban region of western Europe to develop” around this time, according to David Nicholas, “but they quickly became the most important concentrations of towns north of the Alps.”⁴³

Leading cities in this revival were Bruges, Ypres, Gent, and Antwerp.⁴⁴ They were examples of the “occidental city” which Weber sees as critical to the evolution of capitalism and modernity in the West.⁴⁵ There were considerable similarities between the North Italian city-states and the cities in the Netherlands, the two main nodes of the trade routes between the Western Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.⁴⁶ But there were some significant differences as well. One of the distinctive features of the cities

³⁸ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 45.

³⁹ Pirenne says that “It may even be asked if the Normans themselves did not contribute to the revival” of the Netherlands economy, because “Their invasions had only been the violent prelude to the period of maritime supremacy which they exercised in the North Sea and the Baltic....” Pirenne, “Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 24.

⁴⁰ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 45-8.

⁴¹ Pirenne, “Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 24.

⁴² McNeill, *History of Western Civilization*, 267-70.

⁴³ Nicholas, *Urban Europe*, 5.

⁴⁴ Lambert, *Making of the Dutch Landscape*, 136.

⁴⁵ Max Weber, *The City*, Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, eds. and trans. (1958) [“Die Stadt,” 1922]. See also Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, Richard Mayne, trans. (1993) [*Grammaire des civilisations*, 1987], 321.

⁴⁶ Braudel, *History of Civilizations*, 319. See also Pirenne, “Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 35.

in the Netherlands was the separation of feudal estates identified by Weber.⁴⁷ The medieval city-states of Italy were almost recreations of classical *poleis* or *civitates*, in that they were actually states, as well as cities.⁴⁸ This was precisely why the North Italian cities, such as Milan, were such a thorn in the side of German emperors such as Friedrich I (Barbarossa), as was never so much the case with the German cities. Although the cities in the Netherlands traded in agricultural goods and depended on the surrounding countryside economically, and also introduced advanced methods of farming to the countryside,⁴⁹ the leaders of the cities were not generally lords of the land. They were true burghers. They did have some political power, but it was the power to manage their own affairs, blessed by charters of independence they obtained from the feudal nobles.⁵⁰

The Dutch cities prized their *vrijheid*, “freedom,” which was not so much individual freedom, at this time, as it was the privilege of the municipality, a collective freedom from feudal control.⁵¹ But a more universal and individualized sense of *vrijheid* would later become a common watchword among Dutch citizens.⁵² *Vrijheid* became a talisman for reformers in Japan, and it reappeared as the Allied “V for victory” in the Second World War. In Flanders, the growing urban consciousness led to early popular communes and democracy.⁵³ It led to the ultimate outrage against

⁴⁷ “Within the western world we find during the middle ages a sharp contrast between the cities of the south and those of the north. In the south the knighthood was generally settled in the city, while in the north the opposite is the case; from the beginning they had their dwellings outside or were even excluded.” Weber, *General Economic History*, 332.

⁴⁸ “The towns of Italy are to be distinguished from those of other parts of Europe by the fact that the noble landowners quite generally came to live in the towns and become citizens themselves.” McNeill, *History of Western Civilization*, 272.

⁴⁹ By 1500, the Netherlands had reached record levels of urbanization ~ up to 40% of the population in Flanders and Holland. At the same time, agriculture became a highly scientific and intensive enterprise, tied to the international trade. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.178-9.

⁵⁰ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 50-1; Pirenne, “Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 25.

⁵¹ Milis, “Counts, Cities, and Clerics,” 39.

⁵² Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (1998), 4; Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.274.

⁵³ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 68-9; John Murray, *Antwerp in the Age of Plantin and Brueghel* (1972), 29, et seq.

feudal sensibilities, burgers taking up arms against knights ~ and sometimes succeeding, as in the famous Battle of the Spurs at Courtrai, on 11 July 1302, in which Flemish burgers on foot massacred French knights and then piled up their spurs as a symbol for the downfall of mounted warriors. This resulted in what William Blockmans calls “nothing less than a social and political revolution.”⁵⁴ But the cities of Flanders were less protected by geography than the cities of the Dutch Netherlands to the northeast, and they were forced to succumb at various times to the domination of France, Burgundy, and Spain.

Although the burgers of the Netherlands developed an independent urban life in cities which slowly grew in size and power, they were nevertheless subject to the whims of feudal and dynastic politics throughout the Middle Ages. One could say that every major power in Western Europe except England owned the Netherlands, or a piece of them, at one time or another. And England often intervened to protect its interests in this area of Europe most critical to its economic and military security.⁵⁵ The history of the Netherlands during the Middle Ages defies any simple summary. The details are not all that significant. That it is such a confusing story, is significant.

After being conquered by Clovis and Charlemagne, the Netherlands became part of the inchoate Holy Roman Empire. But when Charlemagne’s first version of the empire fell apart, the Netherlands were left in an in-between zone, the “Middle Kingdom” of Lothar I, carved out by the Treaty of Verdun in 843 CE, between the Kingdom of the West Franks (*Francia Occidentalis*) and the Kingdom of the East Franks (*Francia Orientalis*) ~ which became France and Germany. This Middle Kingdom also included “Burgundy,” which consisted of several duchies or kingdoms astride the old Rhône-Saône Valley and the Burgundian Gate which connected the

⁵⁴ William P. Blockmans, “The Formation of a Political Union,” in Blom and Lamberts, *History of the Low Countries*, 62-3.

⁵⁵ Blockmans, “Formation of a Political Union,” 57.

valley to the Rhine.⁵⁶ In 1477, Mary of Burgundy addressed complaints about the abrogation of provincial privileges by granting the Netherlands a charter known as the “Great Privilege.” But that was a “good news, bad news” sort of deal, because then, in the same year, Mary made a dynastic marriage to Archduke Maximilian, who became Emperor Maximilian I of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Netherlands thereby passed into the House of Hapsburg. This resulted in Emperor Charles V handing them over to Philip II of Spain in 1555. Charles V was himself a Netherlander, and a moderate emperor who presided over the beginning of the Wars of Religion with great reluctance. But Philip II was a reactionary and absolutist monarch who made the mistake of thinking the burghers would submit to the divine right of kings. He sent the Spanish Inquisition to purify them of the influence of Calvinists fleeing from France into Flanders.⁵⁷ This is the point in the story when the Netherlanders seem to have decided that they had quite enough of this feudal nonsense. There was, as Blockmans says, “a cultural divide ~ widened by physical distance ~ between the stubborn and narrow monarch with his centralizing vision for a world empire, and the dynamic, pluriform society of the Low Countries which Spanish courtiers could hardly imagine.”⁵⁸ The Netherlanders rebelled against Philip II. In the course of doing so, they invented the Modern Age.

The rebellion began first among the Flemish, in the southern provinces of the Netherlands, in 1562. The Dutch in the northern provinces joined in, to make it a general rebellion, in 1572. At the Union of Utrecht, in 1579, the northern provinces formed the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which became a republic in 1588, and thereby became known as the “Dutch Republic.” This was a loosely federated state, a

⁵⁶ “The threefold division of the Carolingian Empire by the treaty of Verdun (843) is explicable only in the light of the Rhône Valley breach. This geographical fact is the key to what otherwise appears to be an arbitrary and erratic allotment of the territory of the three heirs.” Semple, “The Barrier Boundary of the Mediterranean Basin,” 58.

⁵⁷ Lambert, *Making of the Dutch Landscape*, 177.

⁵⁸ Blockmans, “Formation of a Political Union,” 128. See also Pirenne, “Formation and Constitution of the Burgundian State,” 501.

polity which was still substantially a set of “tiny urban republics,” as Braudel puts it, which “inclined toward the archaic.”⁵⁹ But the republic managed to do quite nicely, taking care of business, while Germany was devastated by the Thirty Years War (1618-48).⁶⁰ The Dutch had their own terribly complicated religious conflicts, mainly between varieties of Protestantism, especially “Remonstrantism” and “Counter-Remonstrantism.” But it was all rather mild by comparison to the butchery taking place to the east.

At the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, commonly used as the nominal marker for the beginning of the modern nation-state system by political scientists,⁶¹ the Dutch Republic was granted formal independence. The southern provinces, now known as the “Spanish Netherlands,” remained under the control of Spain, and subject to the Counter-Reformation, which thereby sent a new wave of Protestant refugees northward to the Dutch Republic (and to England as well). Throughout its history, the Dutch Republic was affected by foreign pressures, invasions, threats of invasions, and interventions in internal disputes. However, as Simon Schama says, it “was for the most part free from the kind of tumult and disorder that was chronic in other European societies.”⁶² Hugh Trevor-Roper hypothesizes that the rebellion against Philip II, “by which the top-heavy apparatus of state had been purged,” gave the Dutch the political flexibility to survive following political disruptions in the 17th Century without fundamental upheaval.⁶³

The Dutch Republic was an oligarchy, a republic dominated by nobles and aristocratic burgers.⁶⁴ But it provided a space for the most radical ferment of the age. It would be tedious to attempt a comprehensive list of the great literati, scientists,

⁵⁹ Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.193.

⁶⁰ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 333.

⁶¹ See Daniel Philpott, “The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations,” *World Politics* 52.2 (January 2000) 206-245.

⁶² Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 569.

⁶³ H.R. Trevor-Roper, “The General Crisis of the 17th Century,” *Past and Present* 16 (November 1959) 31-64, 55.

⁶⁴ Charles Wilson, *The Dutch Republic and the Civilisation of the Seventeenth Century* (1968), 35.

philosophers, and artists who appeared there during this age ~ such as Erasmus (c. 1466-1536), that most distinctively Dutch thinker,⁶⁵ Grotius (1583-1645), Spinoza (1632-77), Huygens (1629-95), and Rembrandt (1606-69), or others who came there, such as Descartes (1596-1650), from France, and John Locke (1632-1704), from England.⁶⁶ The baroque naturalism of Rembrandt and other Dutch and Flemish artists is a perfect example of what Pitirim Sorokin calls “visualism” and “empiricism” in art, the indicators of a highly developed “sensate” culture,⁶⁷ or a material culture. Despite the strong influence of Descartes, Dutch science turned towards Baconian empiricism instead.⁶⁸ Grotius (Huigh de Groot) promoted a naturalistic and empirical legal theory,⁶⁹ the logic for “an entirely secular natural law,”⁷⁰ as well as writing the seminal work in international law, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625). Although the Dutch adopted Roman Law, they took a leading role in legal studies because they combined Roman and customary law creatively, melding traditions in the manner of the English rather than promulgating codes by edict in the manner of the Germans.⁷¹

This was a highly multicultural ferment. The republic attracted immigrants.⁷² The expanding maritime economy drew in many foreign workers, including Germans from the east who became known as *Hollandgänger*, “Holland goers.”⁷³ Relative religious and political freedoms also drew in Jewish merchants and scholars, and political exiles

⁶⁵ Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 145-6; Istvan Bejczy, “Erasmus Becomes a Netherlander,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28.2 (Summer, 1997) 387-399.

⁶⁶ Descartes said that there is no other place “where one can enjoy so whole a liberty.” Quoted (in French) in Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 3.

⁶⁷ Pitirim Sorokin, *Social & Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law, and Social Relationships* (1957 one-volume revision of the four volumes published in 1937-1941), 123-30.

⁶⁸ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1045.

⁶⁹ Peter Stein, *Roman Law in European History* (1999), 99.

⁷⁰ J.M. Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory* (1992), 226.

⁷¹ Stein, *Roman Law in European History*, 97-101, 111-123. On Germany, see also Franz Wieacker, *A History of Private Law in Europe: With Particular Reference to Germany*, Tony Weir, trans. (1995) [*Privatrechtsgeschichte Der Neuzeit: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Deutschen Entwicklung*, 1967], chapter 6.

⁷² Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (1973), 105.

⁷³ Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.184-6.

from all of Europe. In Holland, contrary to the typical rule in Germany, Jewish traders were not limited to peddling and money-lending.⁷⁴ As Charles Wilson puts it, the republic was “a pivot of internationalism,” a nation “born out of international wars at the cross-roads of Europe,” a nation which was “immensely receptive and absorptive.”⁷⁵ The Dutch benefited from the technical skills refugees from the Wars of Religion brought with them, especially as the richest Huguenots favored either England or the Netherlands as their choice of exile from France.⁷⁶ After the development of printing by Gutenberg and others in Mainz around 1455, the new technology spread up and down the Rhine and eastward toward the Elbe in Germany. But it was the Netherlands, because of its political and religious freedoms, which became the true center of European printing.⁷⁷

Modern historians refer to the “Dutch phenomenon.”⁷⁸ There was a widespread recognition at the time that something new and upsetting was happening there. Jonathan Israel summarizes reactions by foreign visitors:

Early modern observers were especially struck by the innumerable “novelties” and innovations which one encountered there....

Needless to say, the wonder foreigners expressed was rarely unmixed with criticism, resentment, disdain, and sometimes outright hostility.... many were appalled by the diversity of churches...and the freedom with which religious and intellectual issues were discussed. Others disapproved of the excessive liberty...accorded to specific groups, especially women, servants, and Jews.... Foreign noblemen were apt to scoff at the bourgeois flavor of Dutch life and politics and the lack of proper social hierarchy. Many a foreign gentleman...was disconcerted to find the most ordinary of folk casually engaging him in conversation.... A German observer noted, in 1694, that servant girls in Holland behaved and dressed so much like their mistresses that it was hard to tell which was which.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Jacques Godechot, “The Business Classes and the Revolution Outside France,” *The American Historical Review* 64.1 (October 1958) 1-13, 6.

⁷⁵ Wilson, *Dutch Republic*, 18, 41.

⁷⁶ Warren C. Scoville, “Spread of Techniques: Minority Migrations and the Diffusion of Technology,” *The Journal of Economic History* 11.4 (Autumn 1951) 347-360, 357, et passim.

⁷⁷ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1046-7; Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, 162.

⁷⁸ Peter Burke, “Republics of Merchants in Early Modern Europe,” in Jean Baechler, John A. Hall, and Michael Mann, eds., *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988), 228.

⁷⁹ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1-2. See also Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.196-7.

This last German remark about the Dutch servant girls who could not be distinguished from their mistresses by their dress is an echo from the “Old Oligarch” who complained that slaves could not be distinguished from their masters on the streets of Athens in the 5th Century BCE.⁸⁰ The cause, which the Old Oligarch identified, is the same. Social equality and freedom promotes productivity, and is also a result of the mixing of foreign elements in a maritime power. “The overseas trade brought more to the Netherlands than profit,” as more than one historian has said, “it made windows in the mind.”⁸¹ Wilson also invokes the analogy to Athens in saying that “the Amsterdam citizen might have justly claimed, as Pericles had claimed for Athens: ‘Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in on us.’”⁸² In the 17th Century, according to R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, “the Dutch were the most bourgeois of all peoples. They were not the only republicans in Europe, since the Swiss Cantons, Venice, Genoa, and even England for a while were republics, but of all republics the United Provinces was by far the most wealthy, the most flourishing, and the most preeminently civilized.”⁸³ Civility was evidenced by the freedom enjoyed by women of all classes, the restraints on violence against women and servants, the peacefulness of the streets, and the prohibitions on university students wearing arms.⁸⁴ This restraint on student dueling, instituted in Leiden in the 1590s, contrasts with the cult of dueling among German students in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

“By the mid-seventeenth century,” Audrey Lambert says, “the Dutch were indisputably the greatest trading nation in the world.”⁸⁵ After four limited naval wars

⁸⁰ Pseudo-Xenophon, *Athenaion Politeia*, 1.10.

⁸¹ Audrey Lambert, quoting C.R. Boxer, in Lambert, *Making of the Dutch Landscape*, 219.

⁸² Wilson, *Dutch Republic*, 27, with his translation from the Funeral Oration, at Thucydides, *History*, 2.38.

⁸³ R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (1971), 167.

⁸⁴ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 677-8.

⁸⁵ Lambert, *Making of the Dutch Landscape*, 199. The Dutch Republic was the “first modern economy.” Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (1997). “The Dutch during the early modern period became the economic leaders of Europe.... In point of fact, the Netherlands was the first country to achieve sustained economic growth....” North and Thomas, *Rise of the Western World*, 145. “In the

against England from 1652 to 1784,⁸⁶ the Dutch Republic entered into a historic alliance with England, a long-term strategic cooperation between trading states which prefigured the later alliance that Britain made with the United States.⁸⁷ Niall Ferguson points out that it “had the character of an Anglo-Dutch business merger.”⁸⁸ Around the same time, the Dutch had the Patriot Revolution of 1780-7. This was a confused and indecisive event put down by Prussian troops, which prefigured and helped stimulate the French Revolution of 1789.⁸⁹ At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the republic was reconstituted as the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Since then, according to Lowell Field, the Netherlands has been a “representative-consensual” regime.⁹⁰ Other political scientists classify the modern Netherlands and Belgium as Western democracies of a special type, a “consociational democracy.”⁹¹ The Dutch have their own term for their multicultural polyarchy ~ the “pillar system” (*zuilensystem*). This term arose from internal conflicts about church, state, and

past four centuries there have been only three lead countries” in terms of economic and technical development. “The Netherlands was the top performer until the Napoleonic Wars...” Angus Maddison, *Dynamic Forces in Capitalist Development* (1991), 30. See also Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and Its Lessons for Global Power* (2003), 18, et seq.

⁸⁶ “Every time, Holland registered the blow,” Braudel says, but the Dutch “always sought to placate the English.” Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.260. The Anglo-Dutch wars, although a challenge to the “democratic peace theory,” were “minor by comparison with the titanic struggles for survival that the English and Dutch waged against the monarchies of Spain and France during this period,” and were cases of misperception in which “a shaky republic sought an alliance, and when rebuffed...classified the other’s leaders as monarchist sympathizers.” Spencer Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (1998), 155, 146-63. See also H.M. Scott, “Sir Joseph Yorke, Dutch Politics and the Origins of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War,” *The Historical Journal* 31.3 (September 1988) 571-589; Wilson, *Dutch Republic*, 68, 201.

⁸⁷ P.J. Blok “England and Holland at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century,” *The English Historical Review* 29.114 (April 1914) 327-332; T.G. Otte, “‘It’s What Made Britain Great’: Reflections on British Foreign Policy from Malplaquet to Maastricht,” in T.G. Otte, ed., *The Makers of British Foreign Policy: From Pitt to Thatcher* (2002), 3-4; William Manchester, *The Last Lion, Winston Spencer Churchill: Alone, 1932-1940* (1983), 93; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (1987), 87-8.

⁸⁸ Ferguson, *Empire*, 24.

⁸⁹ Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3.274-6.

⁹⁰ Lowell Field, *Comparative Political Development: The Precedent of the West* (1967), 100.

⁹¹ This is “government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy.” Arend Lijphart, “Consociational Democracy,” *World Politics* 21.2 (January 1969) 207-225, 211-22, 216. See also Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (1975).

education around 19th Century *fin-de-siècle*. It was similar to Bismarck's "cultural struggle" (*Kulturkampf*). But the Dutch resolved their disputes with much less rancor. Another name they use for their style of domestic reconciliation, which needs no translation, is *pacificatiepolitiek*. Domestic peace was reflected in international pacifism. For the Dutch, as Joris Vooroeve puts it, "non-alignment, non-participation in international politics, and neutrality became obsessions."⁹² When Germany occupied the Netherlands in the Second World War, the Nazis offered the Dutch the favored status of fellow Teutons, and there was a native fascist party,⁹³ as there were in most European nations.⁹⁴ But the Dutch as a whole showed little inclination towards Nazi ideology. In a unique display of opposition, the Dutch population went on a general strike to protest antisemitic laws.⁹⁵ The Dutch historian Louis de Jong claims, with some justification, that "there was not a country in Europe, and perhaps the whole Christian world, where there was less anti-Semitism than in the Netherlands."⁹⁶ The Dutch became very different *Deutschen*.

If space permitted, it would be instructive to make some comparisons between the Dutch and the other small nation of Germanic multicultural traders on the other end of the Rhine, the Swiss. But it is more important to say a few things about the English.

⁹² Joris J.C. Vooroeve, quoted in Luigi Barzini, *The Europeans* (1983), 210. There was a certain unrealistic idealism, or hypocrisy, to that. But it was an idealism which the Dutch could rationally afford because, whether they would admit it or not, they enjoyed a *de facto* alliance with their long-standing competitor and trading partner, England, which made it a primary principle of foreign policy that no power on the continent would be allowed to seize control of the Low Countries. Manchester, *Last Lion*, 93. Indeed, a major cause of the last naval war between England and the Dutch Republic in 1780-4 may have been English frustration at the refusal of the Dutch to pull their own oar in the common defense of their joint interests on the continent. Scott, "Origins of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War."

⁹³ The *National-Socialistische Beweging der Nederland (NSB)*. It was, relative to other fascist parties, relatively moderate. At the beginning, it was almost entirely free of antisemitism. As the Nazis gained power in Germany, the NSB was encouraged to become more extreme, but lost support among the Dutch as a result. It received 8% of the Dutch vote in 1935, but only 4% in 1937 and 1939. Blom, "The Netherlands Since 1830," in Blom and Lamberts, *History of the Low Countries*, 436.

⁹⁴ F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (1967).

⁹⁵ Louis de Jong, *The Netherlands and Nazi Germany* (1990), 8.

⁹⁶ Jong, *Netherlands and Nazi Germany*, 22. Although some cooperated with the extermination of the Jews in all occupied countries, including the Netherlands, "there was more opposition here than anywhere else." Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (1994), 512.

England. England, or more precisely the Southeast Lowlands of Britain, was the other lowlands, the other shore of the *Litus saxonicum*, in the Atlantic krater. London was a friendly haven for foreign traders from all over Europe, especially Dutch, Frisian, and Flemish traders who set up business there from an early time.⁹⁷ The English commercial connection to Bruges and Flanders was quite strong in the 12th to 14th Centuries, and this connection drew trade away from the German Hanseatic League in the 14th Century.⁹⁸ In the 15th Century, Dutch and Flemish cities competed against each other for business with English traders from London.⁹⁹ In the 16th Century, as F.J. Fisher puts it, “It was a commonplace of the age that English commerce was overwhelmingly dependent upon the Low Countries and that economically London was a satellite of Antwerp.”¹⁰⁰ In the early 18th Century, Dutch bankers played a substantial role in funding the expansion of the British Empire.¹⁰¹ Before the English, the Dutch became the leading shipbuilders and seafarers of Europe. And the English also learned something of the arts of politics from the Dutch. Queen Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603) told the Dutch ambassador that the republic was “so full of good order and policy so as to surpass by far in its wisdom the intelligence of all kings and potentates. We kings require ~ all of us ~ to go to school in the States General.”¹⁰² Elizabeth I, a master of practical politics herself, was not above insincere diplomatic flattery. But Adam Smith, a great cynic who flattered no one, is also fulsome in his praise of the Dutch Republic in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). This is “a country which had acquired that full complement of riches which the nature of its soil and climate, and its situation with respect to other countries, allowed it to acquire....

⁹⁷ Postan, *Medieval Economy and Society*, 210.

⁹⁸ J.A. Van Houtte, “The Rise and Decline of the Market of Bruges,” *The Economic History Review* (new series) 19.1 (1966) 29-47, 29, 32, 34, 43, et passim.

⁹⁹ L.V.D. Owen, “England and the Low Countries 1405-1413,” *The English Historical Review* 28.109 (January 1913) 13-33, 20, et passim.

¹⁰⁰ F.J. Fisher, “Commercial Trends and Policy in Sixteenth-Century England,” *The Economic History Review* 10.2 (November 1940) 95-117, 97.

¹⁰¹ Vries and Woude, *First Modern Economy*, 142-7.

¹⁰² Elizabeth quoted in Wilson, *Dutch Republic*, 21.

perhaps no country has ever yet arrived at this degree of opulence.”¹⁰³ Thomas Hobbes expresses a grudging admiration in *Behemoth* (1668), where he accuses the Dutch of inspiring the English Civil Wars because “the city of London and other great towns of trade, having in admiration the great prosperity of the Low Countries after they had revolted from their monarch, the King of Spain, were inclined to think that the like change of government here, would to them produce the like prosperity.”¹⁰⁴

There may have been no other nation so like the Netherlands as England.¹⁰⁵ It is England, however, which has long been the paradigm for the origins of modernity, and a current model for development.¹⁰⁶ Many historians maintain that England became the first nation-state in Europe.¹⁰⁷ As Robert Reinhold Ergang puts it, “The English were the first people in Western Europe to develop a national self-consciousness.”¹⁰⁸ The English genesis of modernity is stressed in accounts of historical economics and sociology in Karl Marx,¹⁰⁹ Max Weber,¹¹⁰ Karl Polanyi,¹¹¹ and Barrington Moore.¹¹²

¹⁰³ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1976), 1.1.9.106.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament* ([1668] 1969), dialogue 1, pages 3-4.

¹⁰⁵ “In many ways, the area most like England in the reign of Elizabeth’s reign was the Low Countries.” Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, And Social Transition* (1978), 171.

¹⁰⁶ In a side-by-side comparison of countries which are otherwise “most similar” cases with similar resources in the historical laboratory of Latin American colonies, Lawrence Harrison makes a strong case that former English colonies have done much better economically and politically than former Hispanic and French colonies because of cultural differences. Lawrence Harrison, *Underdevelopment is a State of Mind: The Latin American Case* (1985).

¹⁰⁷ See Briggs, *Social History of England*, 53; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, vol. 1-2, L.A. Manyon, trans. (1961) [*La société féodale*, 1939], 2.430; Barraclough, *Crucible of Europe*, 126; Ernst B. Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism and Progress: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism* (1997), 64, et seq. March Bloch, the esteemed French historian of the Middle Ages who has no reason to be biased in favor of England, sums up a historical consensus when he says that, “England was a truly unified state earlier than any continental kingdom.” Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 2.430.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Reinhold Ergang, *Emergence of the National State* (1971), 29.

¹⁰⁹ Marx explicitly follows previous writers in using England as his *locus classicus* for the birth of capitalism in *Das Kapital* (1867). Marx, *Capital*, volume 1, preface to the first edition, page 90.

¹¹⁰ For Weber, England was “the first and most highly developed capitalist country.” Max Weber, “Bureaucracy,” [from *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1922], in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. and trans. (1946), 218.

¹¹¹ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* ([1944] 1957).

England is generally recognized as the “cradle of capitalism,”¹¹³ the home of the Enlightenment,¹¹⁴ the home of the Industrial Revolution,¹¹⁵ the home of the “Westminster Model” of democracy,¹¹⁶ and a highly successful world empire which managed to survive its eventual decline without disaster.¹¹⁷ Although it did not become the most democratic or liberal state in the West (in fact, it still retains a deeply embedded aristocracy and a conservative suspicion of social revolution) it literally wrote the instruction books for modern economic and political liberalism.¹¹⁸ England also managed to be on the winning side in the great continental wars of modern Europe, the Napoleonic Wars and the two World Wars.¹¹⁹ In all these ways (with possible quibbles about the Napoleonic Wars) England contrasts sharply with Germany.

And it was Britain which became the primary antithesis to the Third Reich in the cumulating conflict between materialism and spiritualism in the World Wars. This is what the Germans characterized as the war between *Händler und Helden*, between “traders and heroes.”¹²⁰ In the Modern Age, Britain became the paradigm of the

¹¹² Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1967).

¹¹³ Alan Macfarlane, “The Cradle of Capitalism: The Case of England,” in Jean Baechler, John A. Hall, and Michael Mann, eds., *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988).

¹¹⁴ Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (2000).

¹¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age Of Revolution, 1789-1848* (1962), chapter 2.

¹¹⁶ Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (1999), chapter 2.

¹¹⁷ Ferguson, *Empire*.

¹¹⁸ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776); John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1690); John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859). Kant’s work can also be interpreted as a philosophical basis for modern liberalism. But the lesson was largely lost on the Germans.

¹¹⁹ Technically, Prussia was on the winning side at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. But Germany was humiliated by the Napoleonic occupation of the Rhineland, and Prussia was frustrated by Austria in both territorial ambitions and the desire for revenge against France at the Congress of Vienna. See Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (1957), 139, 174, 183, 234, et seq.

¹²⁰ Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen* (1915).

“trading state,” whereas Germany became the paradigm of the “power state.”¹²¹ But the German-English relationship was filled with ambiguities. Many Germans, including Wilhelm II and Hitler, resented the English all the more intensely because they also admired them, because they felt a sense of alienated kinship. The term *ressentiment*, as Nietzsche used it,¹²² as he evidently felt for the English himself,¹²³ is especially appropriate. It was, in a figurative sense for many Germans, and in a literal sense for Wilhelm II, the sort of intense resentment which arises within a family.

Alexis de Tocqueville complained that England resists any simple analysis.¹²⁴ There are interminable historiographic debates about “continuities” in English history, from Britons to Normans. There is a terribly confused debate about the nature of “feudalism” in England. There are many debates about the birth of capitalism. I will forego those fascinating issues. I will instead propose that the analytical difficulty articulated by Tocqueville is, in itself, the solution to the analysis. The most important thing to understand about the complexity of English history is precisely that, its complexity.

As with the Dutch, the political culture of the English arose from their position in the Atlantic krater, maritime commerce, and contact with the Dutch, among others. It seemed like the edge of the world to the Romans.¹²⁵ But it was less remote than those

¹²¹ Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (1986).

¹²² Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* [*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887], in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1987), § 1.10, et passim.

¹²³ See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, R.J. Hollindale, trans. (1993) [*Jenseits Gut und Bös: Vorspiel zu einer Philosophie der Zukunft*, 1886], § 252-3 (pages 183-5), and *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (1968) [*Nachgelassene Werke: Der Wille zu Macht, Versuch einer Umwertung aller Wert*, 1901, posthumous], § 4.944 (page 494).

¹²⁴ Tocqueville, quoted in J.P. Mayer, “Introduction” to Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland* (1958), 18.

¹²⁵ Catullus calls it *ultima Britannia*, “furthest Britain.” Catullus, *Carmina* [c. 50-5 BCE], 29.4 (my translation). Horace prays to the Lady of Antium to watch over Caesar as he ventures to *ultimos orbis Britannos*, to “Britain, furthest in the world.” Horace, *Carmina* [c. 13 BCE], 1.35.29-30 (my translation). Even in the 6th Century CE, Gildas says that, “The island of Britain lies virtually at the end of the world (*in extremo ferme orbis*).” Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain* [*Liber Querulus de Excidio*

landlubbers thought. Many modern historians have explained the success of England with the “insular thesis.” This is an argument that England benefited both economically and politically from less need to maintain a large standing army on an island.¹²⁶ That is a bit too simplistic. While partly true, it must be amended by the fact that few islands have been invaded by so many different peoples. “Throughout its history,” as Michael Wood says, “Britain has been a refuge or a goal for tribes pushing westwards, and the successive immigrants have left their mark, shaping the landscape, culture and language over 5000 years.”¹²⁷ George Macaulay Trevelyan begins his three-volume history of England, first written in 1926, with the statement that, “It is a commonplace to say that the British are a people of a mixed race.”¹²⁸ It is not so much a commonplace today, when the British are more likely to be seen as having been pale white oppressors of peoples of color. But the important issue is culture, not race. The unique position of the British Isles, on the edge of the European Continent, but at the

Britanniae, 540 CE], 3.1, in Michael Winterbottom, trans., *Arthurian Period Sources: Gildas, The Ruin of Britain, and Other Documents* (1978).

¹²⁶ See Otto Hintze, *Military Organization and the Organization of the State*, in Felix Gilbert, ed., *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* (1975), 199. See also Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (1981), 158; Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974), 123. The first formulation of the insular thesis, and one that is far from simplistic, may be in Halford MacKinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* ([1919] 1996), 39-40, et passim. His version is criticized on grounds which MacKinder largely anticipated in Donald W. Meinig, “Heartland and Rimland in Eurasian History,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 9.3 (September 1956) 553-569. What may be the classic formulation, emphasizing the lack of a large standing army in an island nation, was probably in Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, trans. (1947) [*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, part 1, 1922], 277. For a good modern analysis with statistical comparisons, see Manus I. Midlarsky, “Environmental Influences on Democracy: Aridity, Warfare, and a Reversal of the Causal Arrow,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39.2 (June 1995) 224-262.

¹²⁷ Michael Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages* (1987), 15. “At the time of the Roman conquest, the culture of Britain had something like fifteen hundred to two thousand years of development behind it ~ although the prehistorians are greatly divided on the details.... In the last 600 years before Christ, Britain adopted many of the characteristics of the successive phases of the Continental Iron Age, though often with insular variations. This has led to an unresolved debate among the prehistorians as to whether the changes that succeeded one another primarily reflect actual invasions on a substantial scale, the arrival of relatively small numbers of influential or conquering newcomers (such as the Normans), or the exchange of ideas through travel and trade.” Peter Salway, “Roman Britain (c. 55 BC ~ c. AD 440),” in Kenneth O. Morgan, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (1984), 1, 4.

¹²⁸ G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, vol. 1-3 (1952), 1.13.

intersection of the two most important trade routes of Europe, the Rhine and the North Atlantic routes, both of which were links between the Mediterranean and Europe, gave to England a “cosmopolitan insularity,” to coin an oxymoron.

In the basic outline of its history, there is no question about the multiplicity of the cultural waves washing up over the shores of the Southeast Lowlands. (See table 3.) Beginning with (1) whatever tribes and ethnic groups were present in prehistoric times, mostly a mix of Celtic Briton tribes and Celtic-Germanic Belgae traders laid over some Iberians, there followed (2) a period of pagan Romanization and partial urbanization, from the establishment of the Province of Britannia under Claudius in 43 CE to the withdrawal of central Roman administration around 410 CE, which brought immigrants from various areas of Europe under Roman aegis, and which overlapped with (3) a period of limited Christianization beginning around 340 CE, then (4) a Dark Age of upheaval and Anglo-Saxon invasion, continuing up through (5) a limited re-Romanization of Britain, mostly in the form of re-Christianization, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, and the development of Latin literature beginning around 597 CE, (6) a large-scale invasion by Danes beginning in 865 CE, at the same time as there was increasing consolidation of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex, leading up to the settlement of the Danelaw between Alfred the Great and Guthrum in 886 CE, (7) further Danish incursions in the 10th Century leading up to the conquest of all England under the Danish Kingdom of Canute in 1016, and, finally (8) the Norman Conquest of 1066.

The Norman Conquest was the last great invasion of foreign peoples, but England, as well as the Netherlands, became a favored haven for refugees from the Wars of Religion, and benefited greatly from the technical skills which those refugees brought with them, in the 16th Century.¹²⁹ These refugees tended to concentrate in London and

¹²⁹ Scoville, “Spread of Techniques,” 353-7, et passim. John Morrill adds that, in the 17th Century, it was the turn for refugees from religious conflicts in England to leave for America, but England did welcome Jews and French Huguenots in the 17th Century. John Morrill, “The Stuarts (1603-1688),” in Morgan, *Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*, 295.

other large cities in England, thereby having a cultural influence disproportionate to their absolute numbers, although those were substantial. It is also significant that there was, throughout British history, a close economic and political relationship with the Netherlands immediately across the English Channel ~ beginning with the early Belgae and Frisians, continuing through the Middle Ages with Flemish and Dutch commercial companies in London and Dutch capital financing of British enterprises, and ending in a strategic alliance, after a period of intense competition, in the Modern Age.¹³⁰

As emphasized before, it is the mixture of elements which is more important than any one essential element in a culture, and it is often the negative effects of a mixture, the breaking apart of traditions in a secondary civilization, which provides the key to unlocking material progress. This is what happened in England, and it began to happen much earlier than assumed in much of the mainstream or Marxist historiography. Contrary to the image of England as a typically feudal regime in the Middle Ages, a good number of historians now agree that “Money, pay, and taxation had...enjoyed a long history in England by 1066.”¹³¹ Some historians, most notably Alan Macfarlane, have uncovered strong evidence of the existence of “individualism” ~ a related constellation of social, legal, and economic elements inconsistent with tribal and family identities ~ present in England at an early time. This may have appeared as early as the Danish-Anglo-Saxon period ending in the 11th Century, and most certainly by the later years of the Anglo-Norman fusion in the 13th Century.¹³²

¹³⁰ Slicher van Bath, “Dutch Tribal Problems,” 337; Van Houtte, “The Rise and Decline of the Market of Bruges,” 29-29-34; Pireene, “Place of the Netherlands in the Economic History of Mediaeval Europe,” 26; John J. Murray, “The Cultural Impact of the Flemish Low Countries on Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England,” *The American Historical Review* 62.4 (July 1957) 837-854; Fisher, “Commercial Trends and Policy in Sixteenth-Century England,” 97; Ferguson, *Empire*, 24.

¹³¹ J.O. Prestwich, “Anglo-Norman Feudalism and the Problem of Continuity,” *Past and Present* 26 (November 1963) 39-57, 52.

¹³² Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, And Social Transition* (1978). Consistent with this individualism, there is also evidence that women enjoyed a relatively high degree of independence in England in the Middle Ages. In an examination of records from Battle in Sussex, for example, Eleanor Searle finds that “nothing is more striking in the town’s records that the independence and activity of its women.... When a woman inherited, she took herself the oath of fidelity to the abbot...in thirteenth century Battle woman could, and did, remain unmarried

The material basis for this early individualism was the fragmenting effect of multiple invasions and multicultural amalgamations, the foreign influences brought into the mix by cosmopolitan trading cities, and the availability of income through trade, made possible by the institutional protection provided for trade, investment, and industry by a national state which funded itself with that trade. W.G. Runciman proposes that dynamic evolution and social mobility in Anglo-Saxon England was stimulated by a combination of factors, including invasion and commerce, which led to social differentiation and individualism:

During the six hundred years between the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain and Harold's defeat by William of Normandy in 1066, English society was in a state of continuous change and frequent upheaval. Although it remained throughout that period an overwhelmingly agrarian society in which social position was principally determined by possession of, or control over, land, it never conformed to the ideal type of a traditional social order.... On the contrary, the standard modern accounts of the periods all bring out, with differing shades of emphasis, the instability and disruption resulting from internal warfare and external invasion, land reclamation and settlement, urbanization, the expansion of manufacture and trade, the introduction of coinage, the increasing sophistication of government, the spread of Christianity and monasticism, the revival of learning, and the progressive evolution of new forms of social differentiation.¹³³

One particular aspect of individualism of great practical importance is the legal and economic separation of the individual and his or her property from the tribe and the family. Restrictions on the "freedom of alienation," as it is known in property law, were typical in the Germanic customary law in both Germany and England, but began to break down in English law around the 7th Century.¹³⁴ Individual control of property is a concrete aspect of modernity ~ a fragmentation of tribal structures which requires a corresponding confidence in more modern legal and political institutions. It is notable

landowners, buying and selling lands and rent charges as freely and as often with no less rigor than men." Eleanor Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu, 1066-1538* (1974), 118, quoted in Macfarlane, *Origins of English Individualism*, 134. There is also some evidence that women enjoyed a higher status at an earlier stage, in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the Dark Age, than they did later after the influence of the central church became stronger. Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger, *The Year 1000: What Life was Like at the Turn of the First Millennium* (1999), 164-75.

¹³³ W.G. Runciman, "Accelerating Social Mobility: The Case of Anglo-Saxon England," *Past and Present* 104 (August 1984) 3-30, 3, and numerous citations therein.

that the Nazis attempted to reverse individualism by reviving the ancient rule of “entailment,” under which family farms could not be legally alienated by individual owners.¹³⁵ As mentioned above, E.L. Jones agrees that the early Germans adopted a “k-strategy” of self-limited reproduction, and correspondingly higher investment in capital accumulation because of a more stable and safe environment in Europe.¹³⁶ The environment determining the most productive game strategy for survival includes the human cultural environment as well. Ironically, if in fact the Germans ever were once committed to such k-strategy in prehistoric times, the Nazis in the 20th Century, perhaps in part as a response to the disasters of previous wars, adopted an r-strategy of maximizing reproduction which was also consistent with their tribalistic values.¹³⁷

The critical factors which made the Netherlands and England the first modern states in Europe were geography, multicultural invasions and syntheses, trade, cities, and a corresponding fragmentation of tribal, feudal, and ecclesiastical structures. This geoculture created material polarity. Germany was split across a western area, where some of these factors were present, but affected by peculiar distortions, and central and eastern areas, in which these factors appeared in only a lesser scale. That made the German passage to modernity much more difficult.

Other fascisms in Italy and Japan: Crossroads and islands

The comparison of the “Romanized Germans” to Germany raises a contrary case, the “least similar” case of Italy, which should have benefited from the influences of Latin culture, commerce, and strong city-states, but which failed to form an early

¹³⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Common Law* (1881), 355-9.

¹³⁵ *Reichserbhofgesetz* [State Hereditary Farm Law] (29 September 1933), in Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., translators not given, *Nazism, 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader*, vol. 1-4 (1990), § 209 (page 2.125), et seq.

¹³⁶ E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle* (1981), 13-21.

¹³⁷ Whatever the effect of previous disasters on German attitudes to reproduction, the desire for population growth was also a common part of fascist ideology shared by the Italian Fascists. German and Italian policies, and some similar policies in France, are described in Maria Sophia Quine,

nation-state, and later became fascist ~ although not genocidal, nor nearly so militant as Germany. A flippant answer might be that the cities by the sea did not fail Italy. Italy became the most successful proto-nation-state of the ancient world, the Roman Republic. But why did not the same factors benefit Italy in the Middle and Modern Ages? They did, but they were overwhelmed by other geocultural factors. Italy, in these later ages, became a battleground.¹³⁸ The Italian Peninsula became the analogue to Sicily in the Classical Ages, when the advanced maritime city-states on that otherwise well-placed island were torn apart by rivalries among Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans. One of the powers dividing Italy in the later ages, but only one among many players, was the Holy Roman Empire of the Germans. This curse of excessive geopolitical attention occurred to Italy in part because of the ideological importance of the Papacy in the West, in part because it was at the center of a Mediterranean now split into three areas by the Western successor states, the Eastern Empire, and the Arabs, and in part simply because the Italian city-states were rich prizes. To use another analogy, Italy became the Western Mediterranean equivalent of the long-suffering Levant, which never benefited much from the fact that it was where commercial maritime city-states were invented. Sometimes, being on the crossroads means getting run over. Again, it is a quantitative question. Cultural sex is productive in breaking apart traditional structures and promoting evolution of new forms, but it can be too much of a good thing. Some insularity is also nice. The Italian case highlights the advantages of England. It benefited in part from being an island state to the side, partially protected from the violent forces pushing back and forth on the North Plain of Europe. Similarly, the Netherlands benefited significantly from the special protection of its rivers, dikes, and flood plains.¹³⁹

Population Politics in Twentieth-Century Europe: Fascist Dictatorships and Liberal Democracies (1996).

¹³⁸ See Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (1994), 61, et passim; Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The Medieval Centuries 400-1250: A Political Outline," in George Holmes, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Italy* (2001).

¹³⁹ Charles Wilson, *The Dutch Republic and the Civilisation of the Seventeenth Century* (1968), 13.

The case of the Netherlands is in some ways the exact opposite of Japan. Despite living in the cockpit of continental wars, the Netherlands managed to become a relatively advanced and highly liberal commercial maritime republic. In contrast, and inconsistently with the insular thesis, Japan became a strongly militaristic and absolutist state which self-consciously turned away from maritime commerce despite its advantages as an island nation.¹⁴⁰ By a historical accident which is oddly appropriate, it was Dutch traders who made some of the most significant early cross-cultural contacts with the Japanese in the 19th Century. For some time, their primary access to Western technology and ideas was through the Dutch language and what they called *Rangaku*, “Dutch studies.”¹⁴¹ Some Japanese liberals became fascinated with the word *vrijheid*, “freedom” in Dutch.¹⁴² However, as their ideological self-consciousness developed in the 20th Century, it was German philosophers such as Nietzsche and Heidegger whom many Japanese intellectuals found more inspiring.¹⁴³

Japan is an interesting comparative case because, as Richard Storry points out, “Japan has been called, at different periods in modern times, the Britain and the Germany of the Far East.”¹⁴⁴ In terms of geography it was more like Britain, but in terms of culture it was more like Germany. The explanation of this contradiction is that Japan suffered from excessive insularity. Being an island nation like Britain obviously assisted Japan, as in the case of Britain, in achieving early national unification, only more so. Unlike Britain, however, that national unification came so early and was so complete that it engendered an extreme cultural rigidity. For a long

¹⁴⁰ In a useful but somewhat misleading discussion of the term, Robert Bellah argues that “absolutism,” sometimes applied to the Tokugawa regime (1603-1867), is inappropriate because the shoguns, although quite powerful, and intrusive in all levels of society, still delegated power to local lords. He suggests instead the term “centralized feudalism,” although he admits that this “approaches being a contradiction in terms.” Robert Bellah, *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation* (2003), 23. The error is in assuming that “absolutism,” as that term comes from European history, was all that absolute. In fact, European “absolutism” had similar characteristics of “centralized feudalism.” See Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974).

¹⁴¹ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 22; Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853-1964* (2003), 15.

¹⁴² Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 25.

¹⁴³ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, chapter 3.

time, despite violent internal struggles for power, the overall ethnic and cultural homogeneity of Japan allowed it to cultivate a version of feudalism more perfect than the Western model, and a totalitarian system of cultural control which Western kings, despite talk of “absolutism,” could only dream of. Japan is the only important case in history of a nation which was actually able to temporarily avoid the competitive pressure for innovation in military technology for the sake of preserving feudal traditions. Its rulers learned the technology of the firearm from the West, and they made some use of it, but they self-consciously controlled its spread in order to preserve the traditional status of the Samurai. As G.B. Sansom says, “The dominating idea of the rulers of Japan from the close of the sixteenth century was, having achieved stable institutions, to see that they were not changed. They therefore resisted, consciously or unconsciously, any innovation which tended to alter their existing arrangements, finally taking the extreme step of closing the country completely so as to exclude all alien influences.”¹⁴⁵ The Tokugawa shogunate, which created an internal police state known as the *bakufu* system, also adopted a general policy of isolation called *sakoku* in 1793, fixed by a formal Expulsion Edit of 1825.¹⁴⁶ The construction of deep-sea vessels was forbidden, and Japanese were forbidden to travel abroad. The surprising thing is not that this policy of isolation and cultural rigidity was bound to eventually fail, as did a similar policy in China, but that it was as successful as it was for so long in Japan.

Somewhat like Britain, Japan later became the industrial and commercial powerhouse of its region. But the closer analogy is to Germany, as Thorstein Veblen points out, in that Japan went through a late and rapid industrialization and urbanization in the 20th Century which had a radicalizing effect.¹⁴⁷ (See graph 1.) The Japanese analogies are particularly striking, and theoretically significant, because they

¹⁴⁴ Richard Storry, *A History of Modern Japan* (1982), 21.

¹⁴⁵ G.B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (1952), 422.

¹⁴⁶ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*, 86, note 1.

show that developments had much more to do with ideology, identity, and self-conscious perceptions of reality than with military or physical realities. Japan achieved a victory of sorts over a Western power in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Nevertheless, despite the material advantages won by Japan in that war, the victory of 1905 became for Japan the political and ideological equivalent to the German defeat in 1918. It even included a Japanese version of the German *Dolchstoßlegende* (“stab in the back legend”). The Japanese, like the Germans, felt that they had been deprived of their rightful place in the sun, due to them by virtue of their racial and culture superiority, through the sly machinations of Anglo-Saxon imperialism.¹⁴⁸ As in the case of Germany, which despised and feared the Slavic hordes, the Japanese despised and feared the Asian masses in China and Korea. As in Germany, they simultaneously despised the corrupt materialism of the West even as they worked to master it, and greatly resented not receiving the recognition they sought from the West. Oddly, but logically, in this odd logic of cultural dialectics, Germany was one of the Western nations which the Japanese most admired, but was deeply offended by.¹⁴⁹ Japan was to Germany as Germany was to Rome.

As in Germany, there were considerable cross-currents within the developing nation of Japan as it went through its rapid industrialization and urbanization. There were progressive and liberal voices advocating liberalization, universal values, and Westernization at the same time that nationalistic and ethnocentric elements campaigned and agitated, often violently, against Westernization. Even more so than the Germans, the Japanese developed a cultural split personality which was visually apparent in fashions on the street. Men adopted Western dress. Women retained

¹⁴⁸ Robert Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War* (1961), 16, et passim; Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 69.

¹⁴⁹ They “liked to see in Germany the model for their Westernization.” Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 3.307. See also Edwin Reischauer, *The Japanese* (1977), 88. But they were among those most offended and confused by the erratic *Weltpolitik* rhetoric of Wilhelm II. They were “overwhelmed with friendship one day and heaped with contumely the next.” Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978), 244-5.

traditional costume. (Note the curious analogy to dress in some modern fundamentalist Islamic cultures, in which the men are free to adopt Western blue jeans, running shoes, and T-shirts, but the women are still condemned to wear the *hijab* or *burka*.) Science and technology were imported with great enthusiasm. Western philosophy and religion were banned. The slogan was “Western science, Japanese essence.”¹⁵⁰

Beginning with Commodore Perry’s voyage to Japan with his “black ships of evil”¹⁵¹ in 1853 and the Yokohama treaty of 31 March 1854 opening up Japan to foreign trade, some Japanese called for *bakumatsu*, which meant the “end of *bakufu*.” *Bakufu*, literally “tent government,” was a system of oppressive military policing established at the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. The breakdown of this system in the 20th Century, toward the end of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, provoked an ominous cultural tumult which, as Ian Buruma observes, had similarities with developing cultural conflicts in Western Europe:

Bakumatsu shares the giddy, somewhat salacious connotations of “*fin de siècle*,” but it also has a darker, more violent image, expressed in brilliantly sinister Kabuki plays and, much later, in countless swordfight movies. The end of *bakufu* was a time of violent intrigues and murderous plots, of rebellions and countercoups, of feudal lords from the southwest maneuvering against the Tokugawa loyalists, ending in civil war. It was a time of popular hysteria and millenarian cults.¹⁵²

This internal conflict arose again, with particular force, in the struggle to come to terms with modernization, a new role in international politics, and the disappointments of the victory in 1905. Under a weak emperor, Yoshihito Taishō, who formally reigned from 1912-26, but who was declared mentally incompetent and subjected to a regency in 1921, Japan experienced a partial and highly contested period of liberalization. Tokyo became a city of artistic freedom and sinfulness, depending on one’s point of view, with a strong likeness to Weimar Berlin, complete with cabaret shows and half-naked chorus girls.¹⁵³ It thereby confirmed the traditional suspicion of

¹⁵⁰ Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 20.

¹⁵¹ Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 11.

¹⁵² Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 26.

¹⁵³ Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 67.

the city, commerce, and the bourgeois class which was always a strong theme in Japanese culture as well as the West.¹⁵⁴ The *chônin*, “townsman class,” was looked down upon, despite its modern success, as culturally inferior.¹⁵⁵ Modern reactionaries reached back to the *samurai* class of the Japanese Feudal Age and recreated *bushido*, the “way of the warrior,” as a romanticized and idealized ethic by which to oppose the corruption of the bourgeoisie.

By means of violence and conspiracy, much as in the Weimar Republic, they undermined constitutional order and orchestrated a Japanese version of the German *Revolution von oben*. In this revolution from above, the new emperor Hirohito, who assumed the regency over his disabled father, Yoshihito Taishô, in 1921, played much the same part which Hindenburg played in Germany. He pretended to be the national unifier who was above the fray even while conspiring with the militarists.¹⁵⁶ One of the militant nationalistic factions, the *Kôdô* or “Imperial Way” faction which demanded expansion in the Pacific, also called for what they called the “Shôwa Restoration” under Hirohito. Ironically, *shôwa* means “enlightened peace.” But what they actually wanted, and got, was a return to the dictatorship and imperialism of the Meiji Restoration. The culture war inside Japan led directly to an irrational and self-destructive foreign policy, in which the conquest of China was a “holy war,”¹⁵⁷ part of Japan’s “Divine Mission.”¹⁵⁸ Militarists called themselves the “soldiers of god” (*shinpeitai*). In their manifesto, they declared that they “denounce all institutions and activities which are based on liberalism and socialism.... aim at the annihilation of the leaders of the financial groups, the leaders of the political parties,” and “proclaim the

¹⁵⁴ Sansom, *Japan*, 477, et passim; Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 21. “Traditionally minded Japanese tended to lump parliamentary institutions, big business, individualism, and the liberal style of life emerging in the cities as related signs of the corrupting influences of the West.” Reischauer, *Japanese*, 97.

¹⁵⁵ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 127.

¹⁵⁶ Herbert Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (2000).

¹⁵⁷ Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War*, 331.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Montgomery, *Imperialist Japan: The Yen to Dominate* (1987), 269.

Imperial Rule throughout the world.”¹⁵⁹

In addition to reaching back into their own history for romantic myths of martial glory, the modern Japanese militants also reached out to German *Kulturwissenschaft* and philosophy for ideological justification of their reaction against modernity. Ferdinand Tönnies, Oswald Spengler, Nietzsche, and Heidegger were all useful sources for them. In lectures and publications first given to the Japanese Naval College in 1943, Watsuji Tetsurô ~ who studied with Heidegger and adopted German *Hermeneutik* method, called *kaishakugaku* in Japan ~ drew on Spengler to contrast Japanese *bunka* or “culture” versus American *bummei* or “civilization,” and Japanese *kyôdôtai* or “community” versus American *rieki shakai* or “profit culture.”¹⁶⁰ These were substantively parallel to *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation* and *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*. From Heidegger and other Germans, Watsuji adopted the idea of cultural relativism. Each culture, German or Japanese, has its own essence, rooted in its soil and climate, which cannot be compared to others by means of universal principles.¹⁶¹ Other Western scholars of Japan note this rejection of universalism as a characteristic of a “nonaxial civilization” as opposed to the “axial civilizations” of the West.¹⁶²

Robert Bellah relates this rejection of universalism directly to the development of fascism in Japan. Consistent with the analysis of fascism in § 4 above, although in slightly different terms, he argues that:

...fascism in its most typical form involves a triple regression compared to most modern societies: divinity is reembedded in the state, the state is reembedded in society, and individual autonomy is engulfed in the fused totality. Regression in this case does not imply simply a return to an earlier, less-differentiated historical moment, which would be impossible in any case. Rather, regression at the symbolic level was accompanied by an intense mobilization, involving all the modern technological capacities of the nation. Only a highly mobilized modern society could attempt the antimodern symbolic and structural de-differentiation that fascism implies.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War*, 58.

¹⁶⁰ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 125-6.

¹⁶¹ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 132.

¹⁶² Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 7, et passim.

¹⁶³ Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 45.

This is the Japanese version of “reactionary modernism.” As in Germany, a reactionary spiritualism attempted to use the material tools of modernity to recreate a mythical unity of the tribe. Reactionary modernism and the terrible irrationalities which result from it in a highly spiritual culture ~ extreme nationalism, militarism, fascism, imperialism, and genocidal racism ~ are not limited to one civilization or ethnicity. The Japanese words are different, but the concepts are the same.

The null hypothesis: Comparisons to Austria, Ireland, and Weimar Russia

Finally, let us briefly consider an explanation of the German problem which would dispense with all the theorizing about geoculture, cultural polarity, and the *Sonderweg*. This is the theory of a “historical accident” (*Betriebsunfall*), or what has been called the “spanner in the works” theory.¹⁶⁴ According to this view, the extreme reaction of Nazism was simply the result of extreme political and economic circumstances after the First World War, a combination of national humiliation and economic chaos.¹⁶⁵ No reasonable historian or social scientist would argue that those immediate circumstances were not highly relevant. (See diagram 2.) However, there is still the fact, as Jill Stephenson says, that “the German reaction to the problems of the early twentieth century was so much more extreme than anywhere else.”¹⁶⁶ History has not provided perfect cases for comparison, but there are three of relevance.

Austria. Like Germany, Austria was humiliated by its defeat and dismemberment at the end of the First World War. As in Germany, a period of relative economic and

¹⁶⁴ Jill Stephenson, “The Rise of the Nazis: *Sonderweg* or Spanner in the Works?” in Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990* (2001).

¹⁶⁵ Detlev Peukert argues that “there is no need to explain the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of National Socialism chiefly in terms of a ‘special’ long-term process of development.” Detlev J. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, Richard Deveson, trans. (1987) [*Die Weimarer Republik*, 1987], xiii, et passim. However, inconsistently, Peukert invokes cultural traditions and historical continuities to explain what he calls the “crisis of modernity” in Weimar. See also a review of the thesis in Niall Ferguson, “The German Inter-War Economy: Political Choice Versus Economic Determinism,” in Fulbrook, *Twentieth-Century Germany*, 37.

¹⁶⁶ Stephenson, “The Rise of the Nazis,” 78.

political stabilization was followed by the economic devastation of the Great Depression in 1929. Unemployment reached a maximum of 29.9% in Germany.¹⁶⁷ But it actually reached 38.0% (1.27 times the German level) in Austria.¹⁶⁸ Austrian inflation after the war did not reach quite the same absurd heights as it did in Germany, where money was devalued by a factor of trillions. But it did reach a factor of ten thousand to one¹⁶⁹ ~ at which point, the mathematical difference is of little practical relevance because the savings of a middle-class citizen are destroyed in either case. Austria had its own German Nazis, and homegrown reactionary parties such as the *Heimblock* and the *Vaterländische Front*. Much like Germany, Austria attempted to establish a democratic regime after the war, which was undermined by political conflict (and by pressure from Germany and Italy). But the conservative regime which replaced it was a “corporatist” state modeled loosely along the lines of Italian Fascism. For lack of a better term, it has been called “Austrofascism” or “clerico-fascism.”¹⁷⁰ It was reactionary, but it was traditional, especially in its faithfulness to Christianity, and it was far from totalitarian to the degree of either Nazism or Stalinism. It was more like the Franco regime in Spain. Hugh Seton-Watson argues that it was “without doubt reactionary, but it is hard to say whether it was fascist.”¹⁷¹

In a comparative study of fascism throughout Europe in the period, Francis Ludwig Carsten concludes that “Austria did not become a fascist and totalitarian state....” The *Vaterländische Front* “had no revolutionary fervor, it was too bourgeois and too conservative.”¹⁷² Peter Davies and Derek Lynch, in a comparative analysis of fascism which has no particular bone to pick with either the German *Sonderweg* or the

¹⁶⁷ V.R. Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (1982), 284, table 18.

¹⁶⁸ Wolfgang Maderthaner, “12 February 1934: Social Democracy and Civil War,” in Rolf Steininger, Günter Bischof, and Michael Gehler, eds., *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (2002), 46.

¹⁶⁹ Stadler, *Austria*, 123; Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria: Empire and Republic, 1815-1986* (1987), 176.

¹⁷⁰ Stadler, *Austria*, 126.

¹⁷¹ Hugh Seton-Watson, “Fascism, Right and Left,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1.1 (1966) 183-197, 191, citing Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (1993), chapter 5.

peculiarities of Austrian history, classify “Austrofascism” as “para-fascism,” which they do not consider a true fascism. “Para-fascism” is:

a form of right-wing politics that looks like fascism but is not really all that fascist under the surface. Examples here might include the Antonescu regime in wartime Romania or Franco’s dictatorship in Spain, Salazar’s regime in Portugal and the authoritarian rule of Dollfuss in Austria. These movements or regimes sought to placate hardcore fascists or impress Nazi Germany, for instance, but lacked the extremism, the totalitarianism or the “fire in the belly” of the real thing. Para-fascist regimes were common in Central Europe at the height of Nazi power, as they kept the Germans at bay and avoided the pitfalls of full Nazification. For [Roger] Griffin, they were “aping fascism” with a poor imitation of fascism itself, frequently with concealed anti-fascist motives. Of course, precisely because they were ambiguous about their real purpose and their true nature, there is scope for debate on which of them were really para-fascist and which were simply traditional conservative dictatorships.¹⁷³

That is the view from the large-scale comparative perspective. Evan Burr Bukey, who approaches it from the opposite level, from the perspective of a closely focused study of that particular phase in Austrian history, in *Hitler’s Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945* (2000), comes to consistent conclusions. It was a “Christian Corporate regime” which “turned out to be little more than a throwback to the bureaucratic absolutism of the nineteenth century.... It enjoyed the support of the army, the bureaucracy, and the Catholic Church. It could also rely on the rural masses, various Habsburg loyalists, and most of Vienna’s large Jewish population.”¹⁷⁴ Barbara Jelavich agrees with this characterization, and she also points out that, “To a large extent the old political groupings continued to function.... Right up to the entrance of the German army in 1938, conversations were held among representatives of all the political viewpoints.”¹⁷⁵ In other words, strangely enough, consistent with the observation that many conservative regimes were “aping fascism” for protective coloration in the analysis of Davies and Lynch, there was actually some polyarchy in

¹⁷² F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (1967), 227, 228.

¹⁷³ Peter Davies and Derek Lynch, *The Routledge Companion to Fascism and the Far Right* (2002), 3-4.

¹⁷⁴ Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler’s Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945* (2000), 14.

¹⁷⁵ Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 204.

Austria during this time, attempting to survive by concealing itself from predatory Nazis.

Ireland. If there were any nation which has been part of the West, a modern state, but one which has been humiliated and impoverished, torn apart by civil strife, and which would have reason to resent Anglo-Saxon cultural domination, that would be poor Ireland. The Catholics of Ireland were humiliated by the failure of the 1916 Eastern Rising during the First World War, and were aggrieved by the fact that home rule after the war was accompanied by partition of Northern Ireland.¹⁷⁶ Ireland also suffered severely from the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s.¹⁷⁷ As might be expected, these conditions engendered agitation, rebellion, and terrorism. But the thing they did not engender was fascism. As Patrick O'Mahony and Gerard Delanty sum it up simply, "Ireland never experienced a serious fascist threat."¹⁷⁸

Russia. And then there is Russia. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been considerable concern about the obvious analogy between interwar Germany and post-Soviet Russia. Again, national humiliation, loss of status, and resentment of the West has been accompanied by severe economic chaos. This obvious analogy has been articulated as the problem of "Weimar Russia."¹⁷⁹ The "Liberal Democratic Party of Russia" (LDPR) is a radically nationalist

¹⁷⁶ T.G. Fraser, *Ireland in Conflict, 1922-1998* (2000), 15, et passim; David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870," in R.F. Foster, ed., *The Oxford History of Ireland* (2001); R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (1988), 477-93.

¹⁷⁷ Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870," 218; Fraser, *Ireland in Conflict*, 15-6; Mike Cronin, "The Blueshirts and the Irish Free State, 1932-1935: The Nature of Socialist Republican and Governmental Opposition," in Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott, eds., *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe* (1999), 94.

¹⁷⁸ Patrick O'Mahony and Gerard Delanty, *Rethinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology* (1998), 144.

¹⁷⁹ See Stephen E. Hanson, and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, "The Weimar/Russia Comparison," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13.3 (July-September 1997) 252-283, and literature cited therein; George Breslauer, et al., "Weimar and Russia: Is There an Analogy?" forum at the Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley (13 April 1994); Christian Caryl "Is this Weimar Russia? Eerie Parallels to Germany during Hitler's Rise to Power," *On Line US News and World Report* (16 November 1998); Dan Gardner, "Weimar Germany? It's Worse Than That," *The Ottawa Citizen* (23 October 1998). See also Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival* 35.1 (Spring 1993), 5-26, where Snyder argues that the Weimar thesis is misleading as applied to Russia, although valid in

and xenophobic party, led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky,¹⁸⁰ which has as little to do with liberalism or democracy as the National Socialist Workers Party had to do with socialism. In the 1993 election for the State Duma,¹⁸¹ the LDPR won 14.2% of the total seats allotted according to a combination of general popular votes for the party list and votes in single-member districts. Fortunately, as of 2005, although we certainly cannot say that Russia is out of the woods yet, Zhirinovsky has been marginalized, as has the revived Communist Party. Zhirinovsky, although a genuinely scary figure with similarities to Adolf Hitler,¹⁸² has never done as well as his 14.2% in the 1993 Duma election despite continued economic distress and frustrations since that time. His LDPR won 9% of the seats in the 2003 Duma election, and he did not run in the 2004 presidential election after receiving only 2.7% of the vote in the 2000 presidential election which reelected President Vladimir Putin by 71.2%.¹⁸³ (See graph 2.) Russia seems to be settling into a traditionally conservative and autocratic regime under Putin.

some important ways for other post-soviet states. However, as Hanson and Kopstein note, “neither those analysts skeptical of the Weimar analogy nor those more intrigued by it have explored it in much detail.” Hanson and Kopstein, “The Weimar/Russia Comparison,” 252.

¹⁸⁰ As was the case with the Nazis and Hitler, the LDPR is a party formed around a leader rather than a party with a clear program independent of the leader. Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics: The Management of a Postcommunist Society* (2000), 48.

¹⁸¹ The State Duma is one of two legislative bodies in the new Russian state, roughly equivalent to the US House of Representatives or the House of Commons in many parliamentary systems. The other house, the Federation Council, represents the republics and regions by appointment rather than election. See White, *Russia's New Politics*, 37-9.

¹⁸² Zhirinovsky combines a radically nationalistic agenda with a personal style of politics which exhibits open contempt for the norms of legal and peaceful competition. See White, *Russia's New Politics*, 68. The party program of the LDPR is rather vague (as was that of the Nazis, who also never quite explained how their “nationalism” and “socialism” were intended to fit together). The published party programs of the LDPR are typically rants against the evils of the other parties and complaints about the oppressions of the West, rather than a statements of an actual agenda. Zhirinovsky makes up for that in his frequent public statements and appearances. “Rising Czar? Part Clown, Part Clever Pol, Vladimir Zhirinovsky is Breaking all the Rules in His March on the Kremlin,” *TIME Domestic* 144.2 (11 July 1994); Evgueni Volk, “Communists on the Offensive Against Yeltsin, Democracy,” *Dateline Moscow* (18 November 1998). *The Economist* calls him “Russia’s de facto court jester” who is “more of a lightning rod for the authorities than a serious political force.” “Russia: Are the (Mini) Parties Over?” *The Economist* 358.8204 (20 January 2001) 45, 45.

¹⁸³ Centre for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP), University of Strathclyde, Levada Center, Russia, *Russia Votes 2003/4* (2004); United States Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook 2004* (2004), “Russia ~ Government ~ Legislative branch.” There are serious questions about the fairness of that election. “Observers Condemn Russia Election,” *BBC News Online*, news.bbc.co.uk (15 March 2004).

According to Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, in a 2004 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Russia has become a “normal country.”¹⁸⁴ It is no liberal democracy. It is an oligarchy at best. But it is far from Stalinism, and from the extreme militarism and genocidal racism of Nazism.

Although these are very brief summaries of the comparative cases, they should be sufficient to indicate that the null hypothesis is not plausible. The combination of national humiliation and economic distress is not enough, alone, to explain the extremism of Nazism. Moreover, although lack of space prevents a detailed analysis, the elements of the theory of geoculture discussed so far provide plausible grounds for explaining the differences in the political cultures of Austria, Ireland, and Russia. Austria was a crossroads of trade,¹⁸⁵ and had a natural urban core, Vienna.¹⁸⁶ Modern Austria was a multicultural empire.¹⁸⁷ Ireland had an urban core at Dublin,¹⁸⁸ and it participated, although on the margins, in the multicultural mixing of the Atlantic krater.¹⁸⁹

Russia is a more complicated case geoculturally. It did in fact feel the strain of being on a cultural gradient, although from a safer distance, on less steep a slope, and it

¹⁸⁴ Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, “A Normal Country,” *Foreign Affairs* 83.2 (March/April 2004) 20-38.

¹⁸⁵ Austria was “at the gateway of a two-way cultural traffic between East and West and, to a lesser degree, between North and South.” Robert Kann, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History: From Late Baroque to Romanticism* (1960), xv.

¹⁸⁶ During Middle Ages, Berlin was merely a small town. But 17th Century Vienna was “a city of world renown, the only central European rival to Paris or London.” James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (1989), 55.

¹⁸⁷ Austria was situated “across some of the most important highways of Europe,” in an area in which “peoples of vastly different characteristics swept over the country, settled, and intermingled; and which later, under the Hapsburgs, turned the multinational Empire into a melting-pot of race.” Karl Stadler, *Austria* (1971), 21, 24. Unlike Germany, where the relationship between Germans and Slaves such as Poles was mainly a one of conquest and domination in the area of Colonial Eastern Germany, the Slavs and other groups were part of a genuinely multinational empire in Austria-Hungary “characterized by ethnic-linguistic diversity.” Hermann J.W. Kuprian, “On the Threshold of the Twentieth Century: State and Society in Austria before World War I,” in Rolf Steininger, Günter Bischof, and Michael Gehler, eds., *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (2002), 15.

¹⁸⁸ Pounds and Ball, “Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System,” figure 3, page 29.

did in fact have a similar angst about its cultural identity in the West. This is sometimes expressed as the question, *Chto est' "my"?* or "What are 'We'?"¹⁹⁰ The totalitarian and genocidal extremes of Stalinism had much to do with that. However, keeping this in a comparative perspective, one can see the same problem (and a parallel resentment of the United States) in Canadian identity as well. The German problem was different in degree, if not in kind, because German culture was physically torn apart by the cutting edge of Roman and Western European civilization. Marxism was more of a mixed bag than was Nazism, and the Russian reaction against the West, although vehement, was less irrational. It never involved a fetish of racial purity or a pursuit of unlimited war. (See table 5.) In accordance with the theory of geoculture, the likely factors ameliorating the Russian period of totalitarianism under Stalin were probably the greater distance from the crest of the Western cultural gradient, the local spatial opposition to Germany, and the substantially multicultural makeup of Russia, under both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.¹⁹¹ These things, manifested by the more materialistic ideology of Marxism in comparison to Nazism, impeded the radical reaction of the spiritual polarity in Russia.

¹⁸⁹ See Katherine Simms, "The Norman Invasion and the Gaelic Recovery," in Foster, *Oxford History of Ireland*, 44, et seq.

¹⁹⁰ L.N. Vdovina, "What are 'We'?" *Russian Studies in History* 37.2 (Fall 1998), 25-35.

¹⁹¹ "The Soviet Union was perhaps the most extensive single case of the conflict and coexistence of national groups in history. While precise estimates vary, there were more than a hundred nations in the Soviet Union, *most* of which laid claim to Soviet territory as their homeland." Ian Bremmer, "Reassessing Soviet Nationalities Theory," in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds., *Nations & Politics in Soviet Successor States* (1993), 3.

§ 7. Empires and myths

Previous sections have developed the theory, identified the historical causes, and made the case for the theory by means of comparative analysis. The remaining sections of this work (§§ 7-11) examine the resulting effects in German history. The purpose is to identify specific elements in the evolution of German culture, not to retell the whole history.¹ Some chronological frameworks are provided by diagram 2 and table 6. The specific elements of interest to be examined in this section are the problem of particularism, the repression of urban culture in the Holy Roman Empire, and the associated atavism of German political culture, in which dreams of empire and spiritual fantasies took the place of practical political strategies. The segment on “Empires, nation-states, and the stunted cities of Germany” presents the most concrete manifestation of the cultural gradient, manifested in forms of urbanization and national consolidation (or lack of it). This discussion of concrete political and economic structures will be continued, later in time, in § 9. The segment on “The myth of the Holy Roman Empire” shows how the lack of viable urban culture and lack of rational national consolidation allowed atavistic and pathological myths to flourish. The leadership and institutions of the Holy Roman Empire remained traditional and charismatic, rather than legal-rational, in terms of Weber’s polarities in § 4.

Empires, nation-states, and the stunted cities of Germany

Continuing with a comparative approach to the German problem, a fundamental historical question is why it was that Germany became a nation-state so much later

¹ For concise summaries of German history, see Martin Kitchen, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Germany* (1996); Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (1990). For more weighty masterworks, see Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (1984); Friedrich Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, Janet Sondheimer, trans. (1968) [*Das Heilige Römische Reich*, 1916]; Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982); James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (1989); Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978).

than France, Britain, and the Netherlands.² This question bears directly on the nature of the modern state and the highly polarized political culture, a “spiritual” political culture in terms of the theory presented in § 4, which resulted from late consolidation, industrialization, and urbanization in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Instead of becoming a nation-state in the Middle Ages, Germany became a strange and somewhat mystical thing known as the “Holy Roman Empire,”³ an entity described as a “pathological phenomenon,”⁴ a “monstrosity,”⁵ a “skeleton,” and a “ghost.”⁶ It was an empire that never was, more of a “sacral-political order” symbolizing a myth than an effective political order.⁷ The fragmentation of Germany, which was accentuated by the later spread of feudalism, the Investiture Contest, the Reformation, and the Thirty Years War, has been widely characterized as the problem of *Kleinstaaterei* or “particularism” in Germany. What does it mean to say that medieval Germany was an “empire” rather than a “nation-state,” and what difference did it make to the modern German state?

Some of the political orders found in history, often mentioned but rarely defined in comparative terms, include the simple tribe, the tribal chiefdom, the city-state, the

² Joseph Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (1970), 35.

³ *Sacrum Romanum Imperium* in Latin or *Heiliges Römisches Reich* in German. Also known as *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*. Although the empire began with the crowning of Charlemagne in 800, according to conventional dating, it did not become customary to speak of it as the “Holy Roman Empire” until the time of Barbarossa (Friedrich I, 1152-90), and the addition of the phrase *Nationis Germanicae* or *Nationis Teutonicae*, “of the German Nation,” intended as a restrictive definition, did not become customary until after the Councils of Constance (1414–18) and Basel (1431-49). See Holborn, *Modern Germany*, 1.24, 1.28; Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 39.

⁴ Gerhard Masur, quoted in Roger Wines, “The Imperial Circles, Princely Diplomacy and Imperial Reform 1681-1714,” *The Journal of Modern History* 39.1 (March 1967) 1-29, 1.

⁵ Samuel Pufendorf, quoted in Sheehan, *German History*, 15.

⁶ Quotes from unnamed sources in Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 1. Voltaire famously described it as “neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire.” François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Essay sur les moeurs [Essay on Customs]* (1756), chapter 70, quoted in Wines, “Imperial Circles, Princely Diplomacy and Imperial Reform,” 1. Heinrich Heine, a liberal Jewish-German poet who expatriated himself from Germany, came closer to it in the 19th Century when he called the empire a *Zwitterwesen*, a “hybrid creature.” Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* ([1844] 1995), chapter 17, line 40. “Dear Holy Roman Empire,” Goethe asks in *Faust*, “What holds you still together?” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* [1808 and 1832], in *Goethe’s Faust*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (1961), 1.2090-1. Heinrich von Treitschke called it “a hateful lie.” Quoted in Sheehan, *German History*, 23.

⁷ Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 3.

tribal kingdom, the empire, the feudal lordship, and the misnamed “nation-state.”⁸ Those are not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive categories, and we should be nominalistic and comparative rather than essentialist or absolutist about these terms. Say that a simple tribe is a homogenous group with close biological kinship, typically governed by a crude participatory democracy of the assembled tribe, often dominated by male warriors. A tribal chiefdom would be an expanded form of a tribe, because it has a rudimentary hierarchy consisting of a sanctified chief and his immediate assistants, and it may or may not include domination or enslavement of other tribes. A tribal kingdom, which might be the only authentically “national” state, is a tribal chiefdom writ large. Although it may have other ethnic groups within its territorial boundaries, these are dependent peoples or slaves, not members of the national community. A city-state is a synthesis or “synoecism” of tribes which adopt a common “civic” identity. This is one reason why the transition from tribe to city was such a fundamental step ~ and an incomplete one.⁹ We are still struggling to adapt to the city as a species. In a general sense, all other permutations in political orders are merely different ways of structuring the relationship between tribal and civic identity ~ which is why political scientists draw a distinction between “ethnic nationalism” and “civic nationalism” in modern “nation-states.”¹⁰

The path from tribe to empire is neither uniform nor unidirectional. A tribal chiefdom may grow into a tribal kingdom and an empire by conquest without significant urbanization or synoecism, even if it conquers or builds cities. These imperial cities may be merely *necropoleis*, which are religious and political capitals

⁸ See the listing in Robert Gilpin, *War & Change in World Politics* (1981), 18.

⁹ Patricia Springborg, “Politics, Primordialism, and Orientalism: Marx, Aristotle, and the Myth of the *Gemeinschaft*,” *The American Political Science Review* 80.1 (March 1986) 185-211; V.G. Kiernan, “State and Nation in Western Europe,” *Past and Present* 31 (July 1965) 20-38, 25.

¹⁰ See V.A. Tishkov, “From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism,” *Russian Studies in History* 38.1 (Summer 1999) 18-24; Jack Snyder, “Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State,” *Survival* 35.1 (Spring 1993), 5-26, 16-8.

without an organic economic and social base.¹¹ Or a developed *civitas* may revert to a *necropolis*, as happened to many cities after the fall of Rome in the West. Similarly, a city-state or empire may revert to a tribalistic form in which a class based on kinship or pseudo-kinship is a dominant caste, as happened in Sparta, in city-states and empires of India, and in the degeneration of the later Roman aristocracy into a hereditary feudal nobility. These are all possible permutations in the long back-and-forth struggle between the tribe and the city.

Lord Bryce argues that the Roman Empire differed significantly from past empires which “did nothing to assimilate the subject races.”¹² As emphasized in § 5, one of the most important characteristics of the Roman Empire was the inclusiveness of its citizenship, although that was not without terrible tensions and reactions in Rome. Now we come to an important point about the Holy Roman Empire which is obscured by the labels. The empire was a self-conscious imitation of Rome. But there are two ironies in that. One, mentioned before, is the ambivalence and resentment in this relationship. The claim to the inheritance of Rome, and a dependence on ecclesiastical administration, was accompanied by a resistance to Latin culture, a long struggle with the Roman Papacy, and a deep hostility toward the cities of North Italy.

The other irony is that, while the Holy Roman Empire may well have resembled many ancient empires, although it was far less effectual than most, the one “empire” it most certainly did not resemble in basic structure was the Roman Empire. It covered a wide area and pretended to rule over many ethnic groups. But it did not promote multicultural synthesis. To the contrary, with its “particularism,” with the reversion to the “stem duchies,” the Holy Roman Empire was a regression from the Roman

¹¹ Using somewhat misleading terminology, in which he speaks of “civilizations” in place of “empires,” Frederick Gamst says that “civilization with its elite and peasants is also found when cities are absent, as in Mayan Mesoamerica, nonexistent or not vital, as in early Dynastic Egypt, or atrophied into uninhabitable ruins, as in Ethiopia. Indeed, cities were neither numerous nor large throughout the time of Bronze Age civilizations. Cities and civilization are thus not always related.” Frederick C. Gamst, “Peasantries and Elites without Urbanism: The Civilization of Ethiopia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12.4 (October 1970) 373-392, 373-4.

¹² James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire* ([1904] 1961), 93.

evolution. It might be argued that the early development of the stem duchies did not distinguish Germany from England and France in the Dark Age.¹³ Eventually, however, in England and France, one of the few competing kingdoms became the basis for the consolidation of the nation-state. The question is why none of the German stem duchies did so. One or more of them, most notably Saxony, did make a bid for that historic role. But they all failed miserably. France, England, and the Netherlands all became “nation-states” in the Middle Ages. But this is another terminological misdirection. If “nation-state” properly implies a principle of “ethnonationalism,” the idea that the “nation” belonging to a state is a homogenous group with one common history, language, religion, and self-conscious cultural identity, then there have been very few modern “nation-states.”¹⁴ Again, one of the great strengths of the Dutch and English was their success at multicultural synthesis, which required a non-hegemonic, non-spiritual culture. The same evolution occurred in Switzerland, France, and, with less success, in Spain.

To pile irony on irony, the major example of a homogeneous ethnic state in Modern Europe was the German *Kleindeutschland* of 1871, the Second Reich or *Kaiserreich*. As early as 1901-4, two English historians, Lord Acton and Lord Bryce, warned that the *Kaiserreich* was fundamentally different, and dangerous, because it identified too much with one nationality.¹⁵ And then there was the Third Reich, which

¹³ England was divided into several Anglo-Saxon and Danish kingdoms with shifting boundaries. The early kings of France, the Capetians, began as Dukes of Francia centered in the Île-de-France, a small territory around Paris, one feudal kingdom among many. And they faced a strong challenge from the Dukes of Burgundy, the potential re-creators of the “Middle Kingdom.”

¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (1990), 17; Ernst Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism and Progress: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism* (1997), 41; Charles Tilly, “Entanglements of European Cities and States,” in Charles Tilly and Wim P. Blockmans, eds., *Cities & the Rise of States in Europe, AD 1000 to 1800* (1994), 5; Max Weber, “Structures of Power,” [from *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1922], in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. and trans. (1946), 172. To be sure, the concept of homogeneous ethnonationalism has had an influence, usually bad, as in well-meaning but usually futile attempts to create new national states with “natural” boundaries, or in concerted attempts at ethnic “cleansing.” That nasty term, from *cišćenje* in Serbo-Croatian, is evocative of the purity and hegemony sought by a spiritual culture.

¹⁵ Viscount James Bryce, with quotes from Baron John Dalberg-Acton, in Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, xxxv.

became an “empire” in a pre-Roman sense by conquest, but which sought to become a *Volksreich*, a “national empire,” a contradiction in terms, by extermination of Slavs in the East and incorporation of “Nordic” cousins in the West. That would have been a multi-cultural assimilation, and could not have been accomplished while maintaining *völkische* purity. The Germans who actually accomplished such an assimilation were the Anglo-Saxons who became the English and British.

The fundamental reason for the German failure to form an early nation-state was the cultural gradient.¹⁶ (See map 4.) To put it most simply, Germany did not have a London or a Paris.¹⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) complained that there was “no city...nay no country of which we could decidedly say: *Here is Germany.*”¹⁸ N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball point out that, in Germany, “ultimate unity was not the result of a gradual expansion from any recognizable core-area.... It was achieved almost suddenly by the strongest of many small states which made up nineteenth century Germany....”¹⁹ That state was Prussia, a state without a major urban area, and

¹⁶ “The differences of development can be traced easily by the nature, the magnitude, and the chronology of the urbanization process, mainly from West to East.” Peter Moraw, “Cities and Citizenry as Factors of State Formation in the Roman-German Empire of the Late Middle Ages,” in Tilly and Blockmans, *Cities & the Rise of States*, 101. See also Geoffrey Barraclough, *Factors in German History* (1946), 6. In the later part of the Dark Age, that is, up until the temporarily regressive effect of the Norman Conquest in 1066, London and the southeastern Lowlands of England had the highest urban density in Northern Europe. The Flemish cities began to grow rapidly in the next period, the beginning of the Late Middle Age, around 1100, and the Dutch Netherlands followed thereafter. Paris also grew steadily, and by 1300 Paris was the largest city in Europe, although it lacked the greater network of smaller cities associated with London and the major cities of the Netherlands. As of the 14th Century, the middle of the Late Middle Age, the largest city was Paris, at about 200,000, followed by London and Ghent, each about 80,000, and followed by Cologne, at about 50,000. David Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700* (2003), 4-5, 13. The Thirty Years War in the 17th Century and economic stagnation in Germany in the 18th Century further retarded urbanization. And “at the beginning of the nineteenth century the total population of all the free cities and universities towns of Germany was scarcely the equivalent of the population of Paris.” Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 414.

¹⁷ “Germany did not grow as did the Roman Empire, or medieval and modern France, from a single point, the city of Rome or the Île-de-France, around which in ever widening circles the realms expanded. Nature did not endow Germany with such unity.” Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.12-3. See also Kiernan, “State and Nation in Western Europe,” 32.

¹⁸ Quoted in Sheehan, *German History*, 3, emphasis in original.

¹⁹ N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball, “Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 54.1 (March 1964) 24-40, 38. See also

with a capital, Berlin, which was primarily a military encampment, with a population of only 12,000 in the early 16th Century.²⁰ There were some potential core areas for a German state to the southwest in Franconia, and perhaps to the northwest in Lower Saxony. (See map 3.) After the Unification of 1871, Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805-1871) suggested that if Germany would establish its new capital at the commercial seaport of Hamburg, a city closely connected with British trade, it could become a German London.²¹ However, as Pounds and Ball say, it “was around none of these nuclei that Germany was in the end united, but instead around a relatively poor and backward area which was even outside the limits of the early German Empire.”²²

Although there were a large number of important German cities along the Rhine, and a few along the Baltic Coast, they lacked a web of connections comparable to the Southeast Lowlands of England or the Lowlands of the Netherlands. The Hanseatic League of German cities was a significant attempt to create such a web. However, “great as the commercial and cultural achievements of these city-states were,” as V.G. Kiernan says, “politically they were a blind alley.”²³ Moraw points out that the German cities “found it extremely difficult to protect the vital trade routes,” especially on land.²⁴ Beginning in Carolingian times, German lords and knights disrupted the trade routes by onerous tolls, monopolization of markets, outright robbery, and warfare among themselves.²⁵ The balkanization of trade did not end until the formation of

E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (1981), 105, et passim.

²⁰ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.38. See also Sheehan, *German History*, 116.

²¹ Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (1960), 171.

²² Pounds and Ball, “Core-Areas,” 39.

²³ Kiernan, “State and Nation in Western Europe,” 26. (His comment also applies to the Italian city-states.) On the lack of progressive development in German cities, see also Sheehan, *German History*, 119, et passim.

²⁴ Moraw, “Cities and Citizenry as Factors of State Formation,” 107.

²⁵ Kurt F. Reinhardt, *Germany: 2000 Years*, vol. 1-2 ([1950] 1961), 1.51. “Cities were held captive by those obdurate natural and man-made barriers that divided Germans from one another: poor roads and treacherous rivers, political fragmentation and social unrest, omnipresent tolls and tariffs, and a monetary system so complex that, as one bewildered traveler complained, ‘it would require profound skill in calculation to pass without detriment from Düsseldorf to Mayence [Mainz].’” Sheehan, *German History*, 106. See also Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.68.

various customs unions (*Zollvereine*) from 1818 to 1834. Max Weber observes that German kings engaged in a long struggle to remove the Rhine tolls, “which however was futile in the main, in view of the great number of petty lords along the river.”²⁶

The Hanseatic League was more successful at sea, the natural environment for traders.²⁷ That sea trade, high in bulk but low in profit margins, sustained them for some time. However, they eventually succumbed to the competition from the English “Merchant Adventurers,” who had the advantage of military protection from a unified nation-state.²⁸ The Hanseatic League was a league for self-protection formed by the cities against the princes and the emperor. Commerce was not chartered by the king and protected by a common law, as in England. Closer to home, and on land, the Hanseatic League was also undermined by growing competition from the commercial cities of the Netherlands.²⁹ If there were neither an England nor a Netherlands immediately to the west, drawing away the trade, the Hanseatic League might have evolved into something greater.

There was a rich urban culture in spots along the Rhine, but it was repressed by princely and ecclesiastical domination. Mainz, Cologne, and Trier, and large segments of the surrounding countryside in the Rhineland were ruled by ecclesiastical princes who were powerful electors of the empire, and many Rhineland cities were *Bischofsstädte* plagued with priests.³⁰ This was an atavistic legacy from the

²⁶ Max Weber, *General Economic History*, Frank H. Knight, trans. (1961) [*Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1923], 346. See also Tom Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany, 1300-1600* (2002), 118; W.R. Lee, “Economic Development and the State in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *The Economic History Review* (new series) 41.3 (August 1988) 346-367; W.O. Henderson, *The Zollverein* (1939); Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (2004), 126, 170.

²⁷ Moraw, “Cities and Citizenry as Factors of State Formation,” 107.

²⁸ Hyman Palais, “England’s First Attempt to Break the Commercial Monopoly of the Hanseatic League, 1377-1380,” *The American Historical Review* 64.4 (July 1959) 852-865; C. Brinkmann, “England and the Hanse under Charles II,” *The English Historical Review* 23.92 (October 1908) 683-708; E. Gee Nash, *The Hansa: Its History and Romance* (1929), 212, et seq.; Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.82-4.

²⁹ William L. Winter, “Netherlands Regionalism and the Decline of the Hansa,” *The American Historical Review* 53.2 (January 1948) 279-287.

³⁰ Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany*, 28, et seq.; Adrien de Meeüs, *History of the Belgians*, G. Gordon, trans. (1962) [*Histoire de Belgique*, 1928], 127.

degeneration of the *civitas* into the *necropolis* during the decline of Rome. This ecclesiastical domination was resented by the rising bourgeois in the Late Middle Age, and that was a major reason for the popularity of the Reformation in German cities.³¹ But German cities were often inhospitable to religious refugees during the Reformation, and they thereby deprived themselves the benefit of multicultural influences.³² Because they were held as feudal domains, the cities were not consolidated into rational economic regions.³³ Some of the German cities resembled Italian city-states in that they themselves held feudal domain over the surrounding countryside.³⁴ But this was another impediment to rationalization, another disincentive to developing the autonomous bourgeois culture which Weber and others see as a critical catalyst for modernity in the West.³⁵

Why did not a league of German cities, such as the Hanseatic League, successfully rebel against feudal interests and establish a modern nation-state in the Rhineland? The answer in part is that it did happen, at the mouth of the Rhine, in the Netherlands. The fact that it did not happen in areas further south and east, or perhaps along the Baltic Coast, was the result of the countervailing anti-urban influence of the Holy Roman Empire and the stem duchies. The Netherlands (like Switzerland, another case of successful rebellion against feudalism) enjoyed some natural protection. More importantly, the Netherlands came solidly into the orbit of the Atlantic krater. The markedly more successful cities of the Netherlands were for a while part of the Holy

³¹ This hostility, even before the Reformation, often resulted in *Pfaffenstürme*, or anti-clerical riots. Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany*, 220.

³² Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.79.

³³ "Mainz, the largest and most cohesive of the ecclesiastical states, was composed of five distinct territorial units, most of which contained smaller sovereignties." Sheehan, *German History*, 41.

³⁴ Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany*, 196.

³⁵ Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany*, 22. "By 1100 most cities of western Europe were making the transition 'from seigniorial to economic urbanization' and were market centers with recognized legal rights," but "Those of Germany east of the Elbe and Scandinavia were exceptions, only developing a significant urban merchant class in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." Nicholas, *Urban Europe*, 9. On Weber and the city, see Max Weber, *The City*, Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, eds. and trans. (1958) ["Die Stadt," 1922], 91 et seq.; John A. Hall, "States and Societies: The Miracle in

Roman Empire, but they operated in a distinctly separate realm.³⁶ Rivers may function as either agents of economic unity or as military and political boundaries.³⁷ The Rhine was more a boundary, and more of a connection to the West. James Sheehan points out that “if anything, the Rhine drew Germans away from one another, north towards the Low Countries and the sea, south towards Switzerland and the Alps.”³⁸ A rough analogy to astronomy might clarify the effect. Between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter there is a belt of planetesimals, the Asteroids, which are the debris of a planet which failed to form from the solar nebula. They are rocky and hard, like the inner planets. But the gravitational disruption of the gas giant on the outside, Jupiter, prevented those planetesimals from becoming a fifth inner planet.³⁹ In this analogy, Britain, France, and the Netherlands, the nation-states, are the inner planets. The Holy Roman Empire is Jupiter. And the Rhineland cities are the Asteroids.

It did all come together briefly, under charismatic leadership, in the Carolingian Empire, which is now the historical inspiration for the European Union. But charisma is an unreliable basis for holding together any state, much less a multinational empire with such different halves.⁴⁰ The futile attempt to recreate an empire based on charismatic leadership would plague the Germans throughout the Holy Roman Empire and beyond, to the Third Reich. As Geoffery Barraclough says in his study of *The Origins of Modern Germany* (1984), which he argues must be found in the Dark Age, “The Carolingian Empire was not a homogeneous state with a uniform political tradition.”⁴¹ Again, what divided it most concretely was the difference in urbanization.⁴² But there were other factors, less tangible, also important. In the West,

Comparative Perspective,” in Jean Baechler, John A. Hall, and Michael Mann, eds., *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism* (1988), 33,

³⁶ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.81.

³⁷ Hajo Holborn makes this point in *History of Modern Germany*, 1.12.

³⁸ Sheehan, *German History*, 2.

³⁹ Patrick Moore, *Astronomy Encyclopedia* (2002), “asteroid.”

⁴⁰ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.44.

⁴¹ Geoffery Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (1984), 6; Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.45.

⁴² Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.44; Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 6.

there were “five centuries and more of Roman provincial life,”⁴³ which provided a basis for the comparatively peaceful blending of Frankish, Celtic, and Roman traditions. In the West, the Frankish emperors were able to use Christianity as a unifying ideology. The Saxons beyond the Rhine were Christianized, but in a campaign of brutal conquest which left long-standing resentments,⁴⁴ and a lingering tradition of “expansion by war and brutality.”⁴⁵ The different character of life beyond the Rhine was also affected by the fact that the frontier was never secure. Throughout the Middle Ages, there was warfare with Slavs and Turks on the eastern marches.⁴⁶

In what might appear to be contradictory trend, the Romanized areas in the West were the first to fragment into small territorial units, which became feudal domains of the prototypical form.⁴⁷ As emphasized before, the negative effects may be as important as the positive effects. The previous history of multicultural mixing under the Romans broke down traditional tribal affiliations, recreated in only a pseudo-tribalistic form in feudalism, and thereby cleared the ground for future transfer of loyalties to a national monarch. There was a period of time, around the 10th Century, when the remnant of the old Province of Gaul was more fragmented in comparison to Germany.⁴⁸ This was also the period during which the English were successfully struggling against disintegration under the impact of the Danish invasions. But the early weaknesses in France and England became later strengths, because they opened the way for the “nation-state,” whereas the early strength of the stem duchies in

⁴³ Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 7.

⁴⁴ Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 10. See also Bernhard Schmeidler, “Franconia’s Place in the Structure of Medieval Germany,” in Geoffrey Barraclough, ed. and trans., *Mediaeval Germany, 911-1250*, vol. 1-2 (1938), 1.73-4. “In the thousand-year history of Christianity’s missionary efforts in Europe, I doubt if there is any page as brutal as that of Charlemagne’s thirty-three year war of conversion and conquest...” Ronald Murphy, *The Saxon Savior: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century Heliand* (1989), 11.

⁴⁵ F. Dvornik, “The First Wave of the Drang Nach Osten,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* 7.3 (1943) 129-145, 132.

⁴⁶ Horst Fuhrmann, Fuhrmann, Horst, *Germany in the High Middle Ages: c. 1050-1200*, Timothy Reuter, trans. (1986) [*Deutsche Geschichte im hohen Mittelalter*, 1978], 21.

⁴⁷ Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 7.

Germany became a later weakness, because they prevented national consolidation.⁴⁹

The “stem duchies” included six great duchies, Franconia, Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, Lorraine, and Thuringia.⁵⁰ (See map 11). The term comes from *Stamm*, meaning “stem” or “tribe,” and they can also be called the “tribal duchies.”⁵¹ There is some doubt about how “tribal” or ethnically homogeneous they were.⁵² Thompson argues that they represented “a recrudescence of ancient tribal consciousness.”⁵³ Thompson is on point to speak of the “consciousness” of the “nations,” because it was more a question of self-conscious identity than racial unity, although the duchies may have originated in tribes with close kinship.⁵⁴ These early kingdoms or duchies were then the bases for the great principalities and *Länder* of Germany ~ but with fragmentation, reorganization, and shifting of boundaries and names throughout the history of the Holy Roman Empire. The “problem of the duchies,” as Barraclough puts it, was key to the problem of empire in Germany.⁵⁵

In many cases, such as Henry I and his successors from Saxony, the emperor was the duke of a powerful German duchy. But this did not solve the problems of administration, because other duchies resisted claims to hegemony. Attempts to delegate power to the dukes, in the way feudalism is theoretically supposed to work, merely strengthened the autonomy of the dukes. That was often unavoidable,

⁴⁸ James Westfall Thompson, “German Feudalism,” *The American Historical Review* 28.3 (April 1923) 440-474, 440.

⁴⁹ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.19.

⁵⁰ Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 24. Thuringia, an early stem duchy, was later absorbed into Saxony. Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 24, note 1. F. Dvorník lists five early German tribes as the bases for the stem duchies, “Saxons, Franks, Suabians, Bavarians and Lotharingians.” Dvorník, “The First Wave of the Drang Nach Osten,” 133. Bryce refers to “five or six great tribes or tribe-leagues.” Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 121.

⁵¹ The duchies were “of a geographical and racial or tribal character.” Schmeidler, “Franconia’s Place in the Structure of Medieval Germany,” 1.73. See also Paul Joachimsen, “The Investiture Contest and the German Constitution,” in Barraclough, *Mediaeval Germany*, 1.99.

⁵² Spruyt, *Sovereign State and Its Competitors*, 53.

⁵³ Thompson, “German Feudalism,” 441.

⁵⁴ Peter Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa: A Study in Medieval Politics* (1969), 316; Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.19.

⁵⁵ Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 27.

especially because the dukes were needed as warrior leaders on the eastern marches. The emperors also attempted to establish a parallel system of administration through ecclesiastical lords.⁵⁶ This was much more difficult in the East than in the West, where kings could adopt Roman institutions.⁵⁷ The church, which provided the closest thing to a rationally trained and literate bureaucracy, although crude and limited, was theoretically loyal to the sacred authority of the emperor. That was why the Investiture Contest was of such practical importance in Germany. But many of the bishops became largely independent feudal lords,⁵⁸ and they were noticeably more militant than in England and France.⁵⁹ As discussed, their domination of major cities in the Rhineland had a regressive effect. The monarch was deprived of his natural allies in state building, the burgers.

Barraclough sees the Investiture Contest of 1075-1122 ~ a prologue to the Thirty Years War of 1618-1648, and nearly as disastrous for Germany ~ as the fateful turning point. This was a crisis “which destroyed all Henry IV’s early plans for the establishment of a strong centralized monarchy, and irrevocably changed the forms of government and social texture of Germany.”⁶⁰ A struggle between pope and monarch was not unique to Germany. In both England and France, kings relied heavily on clerical support, to serve as both ideological and administrative handmaidens to the state. In all countries, there was a long-term struggle for control of the national hierarchy, and the first complete national break from Roman control of the hierarchy came with the English Reformation of 1534. But the relationship between the monarch and the church hierarchy was different in Germany, where the emperor was far more dependent on the church hierarchy for imperial administration, separate from secular

⁵⁶ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.19. Bishops and abbots are as essential a part of rising feudalism as counts and dukes.” Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 67.

⁵⁷ Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 8.

⁵⁸ “In the eleventh century a full half of the land and wealth of the country, and no small part of its military strength, was in the hands of Churchmen...” Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 127.

⁵⁹ Thompson, “German Feudalism,” 446.

⁶⁰ Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 12-5.

feudal hierarchies or independent duchies and principalities, compared to more integrated feudal administrations in England and France. The conflicts between emperors and popes were also more virulent because of physical proximity and the involvement of German emperors in Italian politics. For England and France, the struggle between kings and popes was serious and sometimes bloody. But it was not a matter of life and death for either the national polity or the central church. When the emperors and the popes clashed, by contrast, each saw it as a matter of survival for their respective institutions (and their persons on occasion).⁶¹

The problem was not feudalism, *per se*. Nor was it even the violence and disruption which brought it about, *per se*. Violence and disruption can have a creatively negative effect, especially when combined with immigration and trading contacts which, as in the case of England, broke up older forms and cleared the way for a new national identity.⁶² In Germany, however, the violence and the resulting institution of feudalism benefited the princes rather than the emperor, and thereby accentuated particularism. As of 1250, as Barraclough puts it, “the whole organization of German government, which had been ahead of the rest of Europe at the close of the eleventh century, was extraordinarily retrograde....”⁶³

Particularism was codified in the Constitution in Favor of the Princes (*Constitutio in Favorem Principum*), granted by Friedrich II in 1231,⁶⁴ and by the Golden Bull (*Bulla Aurea*), granted by Charles IV in 1356, which Holborn calls the “largest single act of medieval legislation, which to the end of its existence formed the central piece of

⁶¹ As Barraclough puts it, in terms which understate the existential threat, “The papacy found little difficulty in compromising with the kings of England and France over the control of episcopal appointments; but it could not compromise with the German ruler without injuring its own position in Italy.” Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 35.

⁶² Strayer makes the point, specifically with regard to the consolidation of the English nation-state, that “a long series of conquests has prevented the rise of strong provincial rulers or the development of deeply entrenched provincial institutions.” Strayer, *Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, 36. That does not mean, I hasten to note, that I therefore join with Nietzsche in celebrating violence and conquest. I would much prefer to accomplish the same effect through peaceful trade and immigration ~ which some modern critics of liberalism consider a form of existential violence.

⁶³ Barraclough, *Factors in German History*, 26.

the German constitution.”⁶⁵ The Bull confirmed the internal jurisdiction of great princes and repressed the medieval privileges of the lesser nobility and the cities. It outlawed associations formed between cities or burgers without permission of the lords or the emperor, thus discouraging alliances such as the Hanseatic League.⁶⁶ It revoked the customary right of subjects to gain freedom by moving to cities, the principle that *Stadtluft macht frei*.⁶⁷ It had many provisions to preserve feudal honors, but little to promote commerce.⁶⁸ This contrasted sharply with the urban privileges and the protections of trade in the English *Magna Carta* of 1215. Holborn calls the Bull “the magna charta of German particularism.”⁶⁹ Lord James Bryce says that the Bull “codified anarchy and called it a constitution.”⁷⁰

Later conflicts only did further injury to this weak imperial structure. The Reformation was taken up strongly in many cities chafing under the domination of the church, but that also had a strong strain of anti-urban and anti-commercial reaction.⁷¹ The devastation of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) set back economic development and urban life.⁷² The Peace of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years War, and which became the nominal marker for the nation-state system of Europe, was another victory for the princes and a defeat for the cities.⁷³ If the states system was born at Westphalia, then Germany was Westphalia’s bloody afterbirth.

⁶⁴ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.94.

⁶⁵ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.27.

⁶⁶ Golden Bull [1356], chapter 15, in Ernest Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (1896).

⁶⁷ Golden Bull [1356], chapter 16, in Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*.

⁶⁸ See Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.35-6.

⁶⁹ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.28.

⁷⁰ Bryce, quoted in Oliver Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal, *A Source Book for Mediaeval History* (1905), 284.

⁷¹ Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany*, 203, et seq.

⁷² Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.359.

⁷³ “The territorial rulers of Germany were the chief winners....” and “The cities had become so powerless...that they were incapable of playing an important role in the political affairs of the Empire after 1648.” Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.371.

The myth of the Holy Roman Empire

Kurt Reinhardt begins his treatise on the cultural history of Germany, written in 1949, with the assertion that Germany was from the beginning opposed to the “widespread naturalism and materialism” of Roman civilization, which “was lacking in spiritual depth and cultural initiative.” By contrast, he argues that Germany was from the beginning characterized by an “inwardness” (*Innerlichkeit*) and “mystical idealism” which “permeates German thought and German life.” “It has been said,” he also says, perhaps distancing himself slightly from such characterizations, “that these mystical and romantic yearnings, a longing which is infinite by its very nature, is of the essence of the German mind.”⁷⁴ Now, to be clear, we should always maintain a strong skepticism towards statements about “the essence” of a national culture. The romantic reading of Tacitus by German Humanists in the 16th Century says more about 16th Century Germany than about primitive Germans in the 1st Century CE. In the same way, this self-referential characterization of German culture might say as much about the culture of Reinhardt and other German historians in the Modern Age as it does about Germany in the Middle Ages. But let us give due respect to his knowledge of German history, however romantic or ethnocentric his interpretation, and follow his lead down this path.

The Holy Roman Empire was, among all the Western states, the one in which the sword was most closely combined with the cross ~ in the early crusades against pagans in the east, in the use of the church as an institution for secular rule, and in its own self-conscious sense of being a spiritual state. Although it was not the place in which generic “protestantism” first arose, it was the place in which Protestantism as a major historical movement began, in self-conscious reaction against Rome and a Roman Catholic Church which Germans believed to have become too worldly. It was also a state which made war on the church early on, for crass political purposes and idealistic purposes alike, a state whose emperors were most often at odds with popes in all

periods.⁷⁵ The “Italian problem” was an obsession of the German emperors beginning with Otto I (the Great) and his conquest of Northern Italy, then Henry III and his disposition of popes, Henry IV and the Investiture Conflict, then the wars against the popes and the North Italian cities of Lombardy by Friedrich I and II.⁷⁶ This was part of the “accursed inheritance” of an empire founded on a sacred ideal and dependent on ecclesiastical administration. Heer emphasizes a fact which the modern mind (or mine, at least) has some difficulty with. The Holy Roman Empire, the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium*, really was conceived of as a sacred institution, with a special significance for the life and salvation of humanity:

The idea that while the Holy Roman Empire still existed...the end of the world and the Last Judgment would be postponed was the great theme of the medieval theologians of the Holy Roman Empire and of its poets and literary champions at critical moments in its history. This conviction concealed within itself the realization that the Holy Roman Empire was the last manifestation of an age-old sacral-political order in which the ‘gods,’ men, beasts, and all living things, dwelt together under the protection of one or more great houses.⁷⁷

Note the internal contradictions or ambiguities. The specific eschatology of the Christian cosmology, with its linear time and its claim to exclusivity, often enforced with barbarous crusades and vicious persecutions of heretics, is mixed up, incoherently, with an underlying current of paganism ~ the ghosts of the resentful old gods, not quite gone, still resisting the religion imposed by the Romans. Thus, in the *Heliand*, an anonymous story of the early 9th Century, “Christ is depicted as a great king and heroic leader.”⁷⁸ Thus, Barbarossa, an emperor, a sacred office second only to the pope,⁷⁹ dies while on a Christian crusade in the 12th Century. But then, after

⁷⁴ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.xxvi-xxvii.

⁷⁵ Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 1-2.

⁷⁶ Horst Fuhrmann, “*Quis Teutonicos constituit iudices nationum?* The Trouble with Henry,” *Speculum* 69.2 (April 1994) 344-358, 348, et passim.

⁷⁷ Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 3.

⁷⁸ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.57. “To interpret the passion and death of Christ, the author...returns to the old epic stories of the warrior culture and depicts Christ and his disciples as an embattled warrior group making their last brave stand against a superior enemy force.” Ronald Murphy, *The Saxon Savior: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century Heliand* (1989), 95.

⁷⁹ Fuhrmann, “The Trouble with Henry,” 352.

transformations of a myth originally associated with his grandson, Friedrich II, Barbarossa becomes a pagan hero, associated with the god Wotan, who sleeps in a cave under the Kyffhäuser Mountain, waiting for a time when Germany would need a great leader for its salvation in some apocalyptic struggle.⁸⁰ Whether that apocalyptic struggle will have a Christian or pagan nature is an interesting ambiguity. Germany was in some ways the most Christian nation ~ the place where there were the most intense struggles with Christian theology and the most extensive wars over theology. But the pagan element never disappeared.⁸¹ The geographic and cultural *Land der Mitte* was also a metaphysical or theological *Twilight Zone* where all these elements were jumbled together with a dreamlike quality. But that, of course, is the nature and allure of myth. It is unconstrained (in the technical sense discussed in § 4) by the mundane restrictions of logic.

Barbarossa, before he became a myth, was a real emperor (Friedrich I, king or emperor 1152-90) who sought, as Reinhardt says, “to resurrect the ancient glory and power of the Roman Empire under German leadership.”⁸² The means by which he chose to attempt this grand idea, ultimately self-defeating,⁸³ was a series of wars against the cities of North Italy, or Lombardy, from 1154 to 1183. This reflected the relative poverty of cities in Germany. There appeared to be more wealth to steal from Italy than could be gained from making bargains with cities in Germany. It also reflected the entanglement of the Holy Roman Empire with the Roman Church. If he could conquer Italy, he could control the pope, exercise more control over the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Germany, and overawe the secular princes of Italy ~ at least in theory. (Barbarossa also attempted to impose Roman law at home, in order to foster

⁸⁰ Peter Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa: A Study in Medieval Politics* (1969), chapter 1.

⁸¹ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.76.

⁸² Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.90.

⁸³ “Barbarossa (1152-90) was the greatest of German kings since the days of Henry III, but like him he mortgaged Germany’s future to achieve that greatness.” David Whitton, “The Society of Northern Europe in the High Middle Ages, 900-1200,” in George Holmes, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval Europe* (1988), 158.

imperial unity, but was frustrated in that by particularism.⁸⁴) In terms of both wealth and power, the cities of Lombardy were an alluring stash of *Rhinegold*. His wars against the cities also expressed the ancient hatred of the tribe for the city, manifested by a sense of outrage that Italian burgers failed to respect their feudal overlords. Otto of Freising, a contemporary biographer and propagandist for Barbarossa, describes the burgers of Lombardy as follows:

In the governing of their cities, also, and in the conduct of public affairs, they still imitate the wisdom of the ancient Romans. Finally, they are so desirous of liberty that, avoiding the insolence of power, they are governed by the will of consuls rather than rulers.

....

Also, that they may not lack the means of subduing their neighbors, they do not disdain to give the girdle of knighthood or the grades of distinction to young men of inferior station even some workers of the vile mechanical arts, whom other peoples bar like the pest from the more respected and honorable pursuits. From this has resulted that they far surpass all other states of the world in riches and power. They are aided in this not only, as has been said, by their characteristic industry, but also by the absence of their princes, who are accustomed to remain on the far side of the Alps. In this, however, forgetful of their ancient nobility, they retain traces of their barbaric imperfections, because while boasting that they live in accordance with the law, they are not obedient to the laws. For they scarcely if ever respect the prince to whom they should display the voluntary deference of obedience or willingly perform that which they have sworn by the integrity of their laws, unless they sense his authority in the power of his great army.⁸⁵

And so Barbarossa sought to teach the insolent burgers a lesson. But his feudal army was less reliable than the militia of the burgers, and the cities banded together, under the leadership of Milan, to form the Lombard League. Traders proved to be more competent at war than warriors. There was a complicated series of battles, sieges, negotiations, capitulations, occupations, rebellions, and a razing of Milan in

⁸⁴ “Nothing is more melancholy and more futile than the legislative activity of Frederick Barbarossa.... So far as the reign of law is concerned, in Germany the triumph of feudalism prevented the spread of any single, uniform system of law. This is exactly the opposite to the tendency in France....” James Westfall Thompson, “German Feudalism,” *The American Historical Review* 28.3 (April 1923) 440-474, 460.

⁸⁵ Otto of Freising and Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, Charles Christopher Mierow and Richard Emery, trans. (1953) [*Gesta Friderici I imperatoris*, c. 1177], 2.127, 128.

imitation of the destruction of Carthage.⁸⁶ For this futile attempt to conquer the cities of North Italy, Barbarossa was lauded by the Germans. He was compared to Otto the Great and Henry III, who had also tried to subdue Italy without result. “He was esteemed,” as Lord Bryce paraphrases from an early chronicle, the *Volksbuch* (1519), as “second only to Charles in piety and justice.”⁸⁷ At the Diet at Roncaglia, there was “a chorus of gratulations over the re-establishment of order by the destruction of the dens of unruly burgers.”⁸⁸

He thought he had seized the magic ring. But it fell from his grasp. The Lombard League defeated Barbarossa decisively at Legnano in 1176, and he was forced to recognize their liberties in the Peace of Constance in 1183. He assuaged his honor by throwing a huge feast at Mainz, the *Mainzer Hoffest*, in 1184. This was famous, as H.J. Hahn says, as an expression of his “idealized concept of chivalry and courtly life,” and it “became the standard for poetic feast descriptions.”⁸⁹ Then he went on a crusade and drowned in a river in 1190. He was considered a great charismatic leader, but he so weakened the structure of imperial government at home in Germany that his grandson, Friedrich II (reigned 1220-50) was forced to make significant concessions to the German princes, the Pragmatic Sanction, at the Diet of Frankfort, upon his accession in 1220. That was not an end to the long imbroglio with the Italian problem. Friedrich II revenged Barbarossa by defeating the Lombard League at Cortenuova in 1237, but the war in Italy continued until his death in 1250. Defeating the Lombard League did little good for the imperial cause, because the cities of the fractured league then became spoilers maintaining a rough balance of power on either side of the continuing conflicts between emperors and popes. Meanwhile, back in Germany, which both Friedrich I and II badly neglected, particularism grew stronger. Friedrich II was forced to grant the

⁸⁶ Susan T. Stevens, “A Legend of the Destruction of Carthage,” *Classical Philology* 83.1 (January 1988) 39-41, 41.

⁸⁷ In Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 177. See also, Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, 17.

⁸⁸ Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 178.

⁸⁹ H.J. Hahn, *German Thought and Culture: From the Holy Roman Empire to the Present Day* (1995), 15.

Constitution in Favor of the Princes in 1231.⁹⁰

Another significant institutional development grew out of the Italian problem and romantic crusading under Friedrich II. This was the establishment of the Teutonic Knights (*Deutsche Orden*) in Prussia, and the beginning of their leadership in the conquest of pagan Slavs in Prussia, part of the German drive to the east or *Drang nach Osten*. It was also part of the creation of a “Polish problem,” which was to plague the Germans and encourage a reactionary authoritarian culture among Prussian Junkers. (See § 9.) The crusading spirit engendered a lack of realism about reasonable compromises with Polish interests, what Harald von Riekhoff calls a “Faustian mentality.”⁹¹ The last Grand Master was Albert Hohenzollern of Brandenburg, who became a Protestant and dissolved the order under the direct influence of Martin Luther, and became the first Duke of Prussia in 1525. The Hohenzollern dynasty ruled Prussia, and then the German Empire, up through Wilhelm II (1888-1918), who invoked the memory of the knights against the Poles,⁹² and who was besotted by their heroic medieval imagery.⁹³ Wilhelm II made a castle at Marienburg (Malbork) headquarters of the knights, an imperial residence where he posed as a grand master, dressed up his guardsmen as knights, and held Wagner concerts.⁹⁴ The Nazis

⁹⁰ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.94.

⁹¹ In the period between the two World Wars, “Germany’s uncompromising demand for a revisionist solution constituted a refusal to bow to the dictates of reality and may be said to have demonstrated a natural German tendency, as the philosopher [Hermann von] Keyserling sees it, of according imagination precedence over reality. Perhaps in her mystical crusading spirit against the Versailles treaty...the Faustian qualities of the German mentality...in its perpetual romantic strivings for an unattainable ideal come to the surface.” Harald von Riekhoff, *German-Polish Relations, 1918-1933* (1971), 383.

⁹² After his relatively liberal chancellor, Leo von Caprivi, attempted to make concessions to Poles in the German Empire, Wilhelm II sided with reactionary Junkers resisting Polish equality and “When visiting Marienburg Kaiser Wilhelm II called on the spirits of the death Teutonic Knights to ‘join the fight against Polish impudence....’” Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-year History of the Poles and their Culture* (1987), 304.

⁹³ “Kaiser Wilhelm II took part in ludicrous pageants at the restored Knights’ castle, Marienburg, and dressed himself up as Grand Master.” Norman Stone, *Europe Transformed, 1878-1919* (1984), 124.

⁹⁴ James Charles Roy, *The Vanished Kingdom: Travels Through the History of Prussia* (1999), 58; Stone, *Europe Transformed*, 124.

established “Order Castles” (*Ordensburgen*) for training the *Hitlerjugend*,⁹⁵ and Nazi propagandists to evoked the knights during Operation Barbarossa (*Unternehmen Barbarossa*) in 1941.⁹⁶ Reinhardt describes the *ethos* of the Teutonic Knights, with their strict code of militant monasticism, as a “spiritualistic absolutism,” which was originally linked to the Roman Church, but was then adapted to the “secular totalitarian ambitions of the Empire.”⁹⁷ They did not establish a truly totalitarian state. But they made a major contribution to the militarization of German culture and helped strengthen the hold of heroic spiritualism on German consciousness.

Reinhardt calls the forays of Friedrich II into Italy the “final act of the Hohenstaufen tragedy.”⁹⁸ It was, indeed, a tragedy born of hubris. Upon the death of his successor Conrad IV in 1254, the Holy Roman Empire entered an Interregnum without a recognized emperor until the election of Rudolf I in 1273. Conrad IV was the last of the Hohenstaufen (or Staufen) dynasty, to which Friedrich I and II belonged. The dynasty was brought down in part because of the hostility of Pope Innocent IV, who sponsored a rival emperor. The pope, in other words, was paying back the German emperors in kind for their meddling in Italy. The Interregnum was also a manifestation of the long-term growth of particularism in the empire. It was during this Interregnum, this *kaiserlose* and *schreckliche Zeit*,⁹⁹ which was considered a spiritual crisis as well as a political crisis,¹⁰⁰ that the Kyffhäuser myth was generated. The myth, which latter attached to Barbarossa, was at first associated with Friedrich II, who was lauded as the Messiah and also condemned as the Antichrist because of his war with Rome.¹⁰¹ It is important to understand that myths about charismatic leaders ~ as in the case of the “Hitler Myth” created during the Third Reich ~ have much more to

⁹⁵ Brenda Ralph Lewis, *Hitler Youth: The Hitlerjugend in War and Peace, 1933-1945* (2000), 51.

⁹⁶ Johannes Steinhoff, Peter Pechel, and Dennis Showalter, *Voices from the Third Reich: An Oral History* (1989), 129.

⁹⁷ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.113.

⁹⁸ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.93.

⁹⁹ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.96.

¹⁰⁰ Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 87-8.

¹⁰¹ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.93-6.

do with the needs of the believers and the charisma they attribute to the leaders than with any inherent charismatic qualities of the leaders.¹⁰² Peter Munz makes this point about the Kyffhäuser myth, and also provides a good explanation as to why the myth actually took shape:

In Germany, Frederick II had neither been popular nor greatly important and his sudden death did not create much of an impression ~ and there is no very obvious reason why such a legend should have arisen. Nevertheless, two special reasons emerge. The first is provided by the existence of Waldensian and other dualistic sectarians who all believed that the world of matter and flesh was totally evil.... Their teachings belonged to the mainstream of twelfth and thirteenth century heresy and had been for almost a century the object of active ecclesiastical persecution. It appears that Friars Minor carried the story about Frederick's return from the dead, or more the mountain, to Germany, and that the image of Frederick was transformed from that of an Antichrist into that of a protector of the persecuted heretics. If Frederick as Antichrist was the enemy of the church, he was likely to be welcomed by other enemies of the church as a Messiah. The story was thus adapted to suit both the heretics and the partisans of the Staufen [Hohenstaufen].

....

In this program the mingling of religious and economic ideals is apparent, and is combined with a longing for religious purity as well as for social justice.

....

The second explanation...is based on much more concrete political circumstances. There lived in Thuringia from 1269 to 1324 a grandson of Frederick II, Friedrich der Freidige, who, after Conradin's death in 1268, was considered the natural heir of the Staufen cause. At the end of the *Interregnum* there were people who even considered the possibility of electing him emperor. Nothing came of such plans. But already in his lifetime there were stories abroad in Italy and in Thuringia that this Friedrich would be the third Frederick and that under him the Staufen empire would be restored. After his death the legend that sooner or later a Frederick would return and inaugurate the golden age gained ground.¹⁰³

Both reasons for the myth, as identified by Munz, were manifestations of spiritual angst and millennial dreams. It really mattered very little which specific figures the mythological hopes might be attached to, and it made as much sense, or as little, for the myth to later migrate into the possession of Barbarossa, as happened by the time of the appearance of the *Volksbuch* of 1519. The significant thing to notice is that this

¹⁰² Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (1987), 45; Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (1998), 349-50.

¹⁰³ Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, 7-11.

spiritual resistance to Rome, born of the medieval struggles between emperors and popes, and the failed dreams of a holy empire among the Germans, was alive and well, all the more virulent for having assumed a mythological status, in the early 16th Century. The Kyffhäuser myth, in other words, foreshadowed the Reformation. That is discussed in the following section.

§ 8. Reformation and reaction

This section continues with the theme of German reaction against the West, which then manifested itself in the German Reformation, a reaction against the Renaissance, and German Romanticism, a rebellion against the Enlightenment. The segment on “The Reformation: The two brothers of the Reformation,” continues with the theme of the mystical ideology of the Holy Roman Empire, and the reaction to modernity leading up to Luther and the Reformation. Luther and Erasmus are presented as paradigms of the conflict between “prophetic” and “priestly” phases in religions (per Weber in § 4) and between “unconstrained” and “constrained” thinking (per Sowell in § 4). The connection between the spiritualism of Luther and the spiritualism of Hitler is made, carefully, with appropriate qualifications ~ not to say that Luther was responsible for Hitler, but that both represented the same spiritual reaction against modernity. The segment on “Dark enlightenment: The shadow of Britain and France,” is a discussion which could well be of much greater length and detail ~ and would be, if not for limitations of space ~ but which is very briefly summarized here, with emphasis on the comparative analysis, because the philosophical history of the German romantic reaction to the Enlightenment is well-worn territory, and because the analysis here does not require expression of any important disagreement with that familiar literature. It should be obvious how the German romantic rebellion against the Enlightenment fits into the general polarity of spiritualism versus materialism and the specific avatars of polarity in § 4. The more specific and interesting manifestations of this romantic reaction in later concepts of science and technology in Germany will be addressed in § 9 below.

The Reformation: The two brothers of the Reformation

The Kyffhäuser myth, discussed in the previous section, was not the only sign of the spiritual storm on the horizon. In 1200, Joachim of Fiore predicted the beginning

of a “third age,” an age of the Holy Ghost, to follow the ages of the Father and the Son in a historical manifestation of the Trinity. It was shortly after this prophecy, as A.G. Dickens points out, that “the Mendicant Orders were founded and gained great influence.”¹ Spiritual revival at the grass roots contrasted with rot in the high politics of the church. The ongoing conflicts between emperors and popes, political and military, which had occurred from the beginning of the relationship in 800 CE, were bad enough. The temporary capture of the pope by the king of France, the “Babylonian Captivity” at Avignon from 1309 to 1378, further undermined the authority of Rome. More fundamentally, a rising tide of heresy, and an increasingly vicious reaction to it, undermined the spiritual synthesis of Christendom. The Cathari arose throughout Europe in the 12th Century. As the Albigenses in France, they provoked the pope to launch the Albigensian Crusade in 1208, and the beginning of the Papal Inquisition in 1233. The Waldenses also arose in France at the end of the 12th Century, and began to be burned in 1211. Eike von Repkow published the *Sachsenspiegel*, the first law book in German, which called for burning heretics, and which generally manifested the “Biblical spirit in medieval German law,” sometime between 1221 and 1224.² Shortly after setting the Teutonic Knights on their crusades in the Golden Bull of Rimini (1226), Friedrich II decreed, in 1232, that any heretics in the empire should be burned or have their tongues cut out.³ At the beginning of the 14th Century, southern Germany became a “center of mysticism,” represented by Meister Johannes Eckhardt (circa 1260-1328) and others. The mystics sought, as Holborn says, “to restore the direct relationship between the soul and God which was spoiled and dimmed by the world.”⁴ The Lollards, inspired by John Wyclif, who produced the first widespread vernacular translation of the *Bible*, arose in England in the late 14th Century. Parliament passed a

¹ A.G. Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther* (1974), 9.

² Kurt F. Reinhardt, *Germany: 2000 Years*, vol. 1-2 ([1950] 1961), 1.136; Guido Kisch, “Biblical Spirit in Mediaeval German Law,” *Speculum* 14.1 (January 1939) 38-55.

³ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.136.

⁴ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 1.102. See also Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.147.

statute authorizing them to be burnt in 1401, although few actually were. The Hussites arose in Bohemia in the early 15th Century and provoked the Hussite Wars of 1419-78. The Spanish Inquisition began in 1478.

This was also the period in which witchcraft, not previously a matter of mortal concern, was persecuted with great paranoia and viciousness. Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull empowering witch hunters in 1484, and the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of Evil*), the handbook of witch hunting, appeared in 1486-7. Critics of modernity have seen this, perversely, as a symptom of the Renaissance and technological instrumentalism.⁵ It is far more logical, however, to see the obsession with witchcraft as a symptom of the religious fever and reaction of the age, as part of the unease with the modernity manifested in the Renaissance. In a carefully focused and persuasive analysis of the issue, Rodney Stark shows that the Reformation and the reaction of the Counter-Reformation were the primary causes for the rise of witch hunting.⁶ It is also interesting to note that Luther was especially vehement about the need to burn witches.⁷ Some historians seem to find it mystifying that “superstition came to a head when humanism and the scientific revolution were supposedly working in the opposite direction.”⁸ In terms of the polarity of culture, it is no mystery. The outbreak of religious fanaticism and violent superstition is the expected reaction of a spiritual culture under attack from the materialistic side.

Revivalism, mysticism, schism, heresy, and witch hunting were all precursors to

⁵ An unfortunate metaphor Francis Bacon used, about torturing nature on the rack to reveal her secrets, is often used to good rhetorical effect in this line of argument. See Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980), 168-9, et passim. See a rebuttal to this line of argument in Alan Soble, “In Defense of Bacon,” in Noretta Koertge, ed., *A House Built On Sand: Exposing Postmodernist Myths about Science* (1998), 203-4, et passim. Better evidence of Bacon’s real attitude toward nature can be seen in Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Peter Urbach and John Gibson, eds. and trans. ([1620] 2000), page 29, and part 2, aphorism 3, page 43. See also the similarity of his method to Aristotelian dialectic in Alfred W. Benn, ““The Relation of Greek Philosophy to Modern Thought,” *Mind* (old series) 7.25 (January 1882) 65-88, 76.

⁶ Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (2003), 250-1, et passim.

⁷ Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (2000), 27.

⁸ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (1997), 567.

the Reformation. Whether or not Martin Luther actually nailed the 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg at noon on Halloween, 31 October 1517,⁹ that was neither the beginning nor the necessary cause. It had been a long time coming, and it was overdetermined by three large-scale factors. First, there was the basic cycle of decay and reform in all large institutions. In religious institutions, this is the cycle of “prophetic” and “priestly” authority identified by Max Weber. New beliefs grow out of charismatic, otherworldly, prophetic breaks from decayed traditions, then become a new traditions, with priestly bureaucracies and rituals, and worldly attachments, until they are no longer spiritually satisfying. Then comes another prophetic break. This happens in all the great religions of the world, and had happened in the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Middle Ages on a small scale in the form of new heresies, either repressed or incorporated, new monastic orders, which usually became corrupt and were always tamed over time, and attempts at papal reform which always failed to achieve their lofty goals. Eventually a larger prophetic break occurs, bringing about a new religion from the old, as Buddhism grew out of Hinduism and Christianity grew out of Judaism. Other factors peculiar to the West made it a special problem for the Catholic Church. The second factor was the long-term, slow, but generally positive accumulation of technical and scientific knowledge in the West which began to pick up momentum by the time of the 12th Century Renaissance. Third, the specific thing that made it happen when it did, was the Renaissance and the Voyages of Discovery in the 15th Century.

“When the Renaissance crossed the Alps...” as Reinhardt puts it, as an advocate of German spiritualism, “it underwent a transformation.... The Italian Renaissance was too much and too essentially a culture of external form and a philosophy of sensuous beauty to suit the serious and introspective mood of the northern mind. The Germans in particular were traditionally much more concerned with the substances than with the

⁹ See Marius, *Martin Luther*, 137-9.

appearances of things.”¹⁰ The Renaissance and the Reformation were the two brothers, the Flavius and Hermann, of the 16th Century. It was a basic conflict between material and spiritual polarities in the West. This was obscured by several things. There were local spatial oppositions. The Reformation, a reaction against the religious authority of the Catholic Church as well as its materialistic corruption, inadvertently helped break down religious faith. Conversely, many Humanists and other materialists of the Renaissance clung to the church, from pragmatic love of the tradition, and from fear of the fanaticism unleashed by Protestantism. That was the conflict personified by the great argument between Erasmus and Luther. The polarity was obscured by temporal displacements. Luther drew deeply on the theology of Augustine (354-430 CE), the preeminent theologian of the church, to criticize a church which had evolved considerably, and all to the worse in his view, since that time. There was a later stage, manifested in the war between Philip II of Spain and Elizabeth I of England, in which the polarities had shifted, so that a fanatical Catholic Counter-Reformation seeking to restore a mythical Holy Roman Empire was now the agent of spiritualism, versus the materialism of an increasingly secular state. But the main intent and motivation of the Protestant Reformation, given voice by Luther in Germany, was a desperate desire to regain a lost spiritual wholeness in the face of a growing materialism which had been undermining Catholic Christendom for some time. The alignments were also confused by Calvinism, the form of Protestantism which had the greater influence among the urbanized Germans of the Netherlands, and Britain. Protestantism was adopted in those more developed areas of the West, but not in the Lutheran form, and it became, after a process of conflict, evolution, and migration, a much less authoritarian form of Protestantism.¹¹

¹⁰ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.248.

¹¹ Calvinism also made a major contribution to the Reformation, although it came along after Lutheranism. Calvinism presents an interesting but complicated variation on the theme, which I merely note here for sake of brevity. John Calvin (1509-64) was French and began his studies of theology at the University of Paris (after having turned away from the study of law, like Luther) but found receptive audiences for his theology in borderland German cities, Basel, Strasbourg, and Geneva. As a species of

In *A Conflict of Visions* (1987), discussed in § 4, Thomas Sowell points out that our modern liberal social contract in multicultural societies deliberately fuzzes over and avoids the logical connections between ontology and morality.¹² We seek to render philosophical and religious conflicts harmless by artificially segregating them from the practical problems of government and commerce. It is not a bad thing to do, even if impure. This is the reasonable pragmatism and empiricism of liberalism. The alternative, the attempt to obtain purity and ideological wholeness, tends to result in burning people. That was the horrible result of religious fanaticism in the Late Middle Age, and also of ideological fanaticism in the 20th Century, or what Eric Hobsbawm calls the “Age of Extremes.”¹³ These were two “mixed” periods, or transitional periods, of extreme conflict in cultural polarity.

This is the very real, substantial, fundamental connection between Luther and Hitler in the peculiar history of Germany. Luther surely would have been horrified at the thought of being any sort of inspiration for Hitler. And it was among some of the Protestant Churches in Germany that there arose the most determined resistance to

Protestantism, Calvinism was the favorite choice of Romanized Germans in Switzerland and the Netherlands. Although it shared much of the fanaticism of Lutheranism at an early stage, particularly in the doctrine of predestination, it was always more closely associated with cities, and rapidly transformed into a more bourgeois and cosmopolitan version of Protestantism. “Calvinism was largely an urban movement...” R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* ([1926] 2000), 104. In part perhaps because it developed in Geneva, at a connection with the old Rhône trade route, “Calvinism was to become the most international form of Protestantism.” Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (1964), 270-1. In the long run, however, it did not thrive in those same cities where it was first received for its revolutionary appeal. Daniel Walker Howe, “The Decline of Calvinism: An Approach to Its Study,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14.3 (June 1972) 306-327. “The fact is that the doctrine of Biblical obedience which Luther preached was exactly the same as that of the other Reformers, even of Zwingli and Calvin. But while the Swiss Reformers lived in free urban communities, in which their political authority as advisors and censors was virtually unlimited, Luther ~ a German professor in a town that was almost a village ~ was one of the subjects of a dynastic territorial state. And more important: the Calvinist churches, after immense sufferings and not without severe conflicts of conscience, tore themselves free of the bond of obedience because they had to fight for survival against merciless persecution; whereas the Lutheran churches in Germany were, in fact, the creations of pious Protestant rulers, whom therefore they had not the least reason to oppose.” Gerhard Ritter, *The German Problem: Basic Questions of German Political Life, Past and Present*, Sigurd Burkhardt, trans. (1965) [*Des deutsche Problem: Grundfragen des deutschen Staatslebens gestern und heute*, 1962], 11.

¹² Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (1987), 217.

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (1994).

Nazism, just as some Protestants in the Late Middle Age became the most determined protesters against oppressive authority. But it was also among the Protestant Churches that the Nazis found the most enthusiastic collaborators in the creation of a totalitarian “German Faith” (*Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*). On the whole, neither Protestants nor Catholics acquitted themselves well in the Third Reich. Most of the opposition that arose was an effort to maintain organizational and doctrinal independence rather than to obstruct the crimes of the regime.¹⁴ Protestants inhabited the most extreme areas on the continuum between resistance and collaboration.¹⁵ The Catholic Church tended to live more in the middle ideological ground in Germany, engaging in more incremental evasion or acquiescence.¹⁶ One can argue either way which response was more moral or sinful on the whole, and it is an irrelevant argument for our purposes. The point is that many religious leaders among both collaborators and resisters shared with the regime a strong desire to recover a lost wholeness and spirituality in opposition to the materialism of the age.¹⁷ That is not pretty. That is not nice to say. But let us not forget that the only thing preventing holocausts on a modern scale during the Inquisitions and Wars of Religion was the lack of suitable technology. The will to burn was certainly there.¹⁸ The extent to which the butchery did take place, up close and personal, with sword, rack, tongs, and fire, should dispel the idea that genocide is

¹⁴ See Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (2000), 717-28; Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, Jean Steinberg, trans. (1970) [*Die deutsche Diktatur: Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, 1969], 379-90; Shelley Baranowski, “Consent and Dissent: The Confessing Church and Conservative Opposition to National Socialism,” *The Journal of Modern History* 59.1 (March 1987) 53-78.

¹⁵ On the limited but sometimes admirable resistance, see Burleigh, *Third Reich*, 720, et seq. See also Christine King, “Strategies for Survival: An Examination of the History of Five Christian Sects in Germany 1933-45,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 14.2 (April 1979) 211-233. King points out that, in many cases, those who resisted had no choice, because the Nazis had already decided to suppress their sects as deviants. On the *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*, which was often promoted by believers inside the churches rather than government policy, see Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (1996).

¹⁶ Michael Burleigh says that “grey ambiguities characterized the Catholic Church,” and that “The official Church strategy was ‘loyalty without enthrallment.’” Burleigh, *Third Reich*, 476-7, 721.

¹⁷ Burleigh, *Third Reich*, 719; Baranowski, “Consent and Dissent,” 75.

¹⁸ See Shadia Drury, *Terror and Civilization: Christianity, Politics, and the Western Psyche* (2004).

inherently the product of a technological or bureaucratic culture.

Among the hundreds of studies on Martin Luther, the best might be Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (2000). Marius approaches his subject as a critical skeptic, but does not make the mistake of failing to take Luther's theology seriously. As Marius argues, one cannot explain the Reformation by simply pointing to the specific incidents of corruption in the church, such as the sale of indulgences or the corruption of the clergy in Rome. That sort of thing had been going on for centuries. The difference, around the beginning of the 16th Century, was that "Germany was going through a revolution that made money the measure of value and that created strife and in the absence of outright violence, a smoldering fear that society might explode in disorder."¹⁹ It was an objection, in other words, to an early "globalization" of the fragmented German states which was aggravated by the retarded political and cultural development of the cities. "The combination of ecclesiastical corruption with an outflow of cash in an age of expanding capitalism made for a volatile mix. Flourishing capitalism brought rich and poor close together in the cities, the classes made daily dependent upon one another, and thrown into inevitable conflicts."²⁰ Luther gave voice to the ancient hatred of the tribe for the city. Rome was a Sodom. And so was Leipzig.²¹ Like Plato and the *Old Testament* prophets, Luther detested cities, commerce, and especially cities by the sea which promoted multicultural contacts:

In olden days, God caused the children of Israel to dwell far from the sea, and did not allow them to engage in much commerce....

....

there is urgent need of a general order and decree on behalf of the German people against the overflowing abundance and the great expensiveness of the clothing worn by so many nobles and rich folk.... In the same way, the spice traffic ought to be reduced.... we must surely bridle the Fuggers and similar trading companies.... it would be much more godly to increase farming and decrease

¹⁹ Marius, *Martin Luther*, 11.

²⁰ Marius, *Martin Luther*, 11.

²¹ Hans-Christoph Rublack, "Martin Luther and the Urban Social Experience," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16.1 (Spring, 1985) 15-32, 21.

commerce....²²

This was a widespread sensibility. “One cannot help being impressed,” Holborn says, “with how neatly Lutheran social ethics, with its hankering for a static medieval society, without capitalist enterprises and expansionist power politics, corresponded to the general needs, particularly of central and northeastern Germany. This predominantly agrarian society...found in the Lutheran religion and ethics a natural expression.”²³ To these material factors, Marius points out, we must add the “revolution in thought” stirred up by Renaissance science and the Voyages of Discovery.²⁴ Copernicus and Columbus together shattered the image of the universe received from Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy. Both Luther and Calvin objected to Copernicus with passion, and tried to prove him wrong by citing scripture.²⁵ The cultural universe was also changed, and multiculturalism was forced into the consciousness of Christendom, by the “discovery of a multitude of non-Europeans who worshiped strange gods.”²⁶ Another factor was the printing press, which “gave a thousand tongues to the protests of the age.”²⁷ It does not matter that the book most widely published was the *Bible*. The *Bible* is full of internal contradictions and problems for interpretation, as well as outright absurdities. The priestly hierarchy long tried to keep it out of the hands of believers, knowing that it would undermine belief. Of all the miscalculations Luther made, the most arrogant was his belief that every man could be his own priest, could read the plain word of God himself, and that this would result in an incontestable agreement on doctrine as he held it. That was the profound hubris behind the tragedy which followed ~ a violent

²² Martin Luther, “An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nobility as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom” [*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520], in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed., various translators (1962), § 27 (481-2).

²³ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 1.261. See also Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.128, et passim.

²⁴ Marius, *Martin Luther*, 12.

²⁵ A.G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (1966), 194.

²⁶ Marius, *Martin Luther*, 12.

²⁷ Marius, *Martin Luther*, 13.

outbreak of disunity and rebellion which dismayed and enraged him, but which he himself had a hand in provoking.

For Luther, and for many of his followers, the central crisis was theological or ideological. Looking at it from the outside, as a historical phenomenon, it is clear that many material factors provoked the Reformation. Among the reformers, however, in their own self-conscious view of the world, the main issue was spiritual ~ and spiritual at the level of absolute doctrine and faith. Lewis Spitz agrees with Richard Marius in characterizing it as a “revolution in thought” rather than merely a response to specific concrete abuses in the church:

The Reformation was not in the first instance directed against abuses or toward moral reform.... Luther made his intention clear, for, he declared, if the church of Rome had practiced its cult with the purity and rigor of the hermits, and of Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, Bernard, Francis, and Dominic, the Reformation would still have been necessary for the correction of Rome’s false doctrine. The real aim of the reformers transcended earthly goals....²⁸

A way to understand Luther and the German consciousness he articulated is to contrast it with Erasmus and the more cosmopolitan consciousness of the “Romanized Germans.” This was, in more general terms, the conflict between the Humanism of the Northern Renaissance and the Reformation of the Germans.²⁹ There was a Humanist movement in Germany. But it was never as strong, and it became “a Teutonic Humanism, turning ever more from the Latin to the German language,” as A.G. Dickens says. More to the point, “Many of these Humanists failed to share the European cosmopolitanism of Erasmus.”³⁰ All Humanists, or most of them, also considered themselves devout Christian believers. And the momentous material changes in the world were affecting all members of Christendom. But the reaction to the changes was significantly different in England and the Netherlands.

²⁸ Lewis Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559* (1985), 347.

²⁹ Their personal conflict has been justly called “the prototypical instance of Humanism vs. Reformation,” although there are certainly some qualifications to be made to any such simple dichotomy. John W. O’Malley, “Erasmus and Luther, Continuity and Discontinuity As Key to Their Conflict,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5.2 (October 1974) 47-65, 48.

³⁰ Dickens, *German Nation and Martin Luther*, 41.

Desiderius Erasmus (circa 1466-1536) and Martin Luther (1483-1546) were both monks who preferred teaching and writing to a life of seclusion, both highly educated by the standards of the time and steeped in the controversies of the day, both brilliant minds with a talent for writing profound but pithy and popular works, and thinkers who were allies and friends, for a time, in their opposition to the abuses and pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church. But they fell out, and became like Flavius and Hermann, yelling at each other across the river in Latin, because they represented the two worlds on either side of the cultural gradient and the polarities of culture. Erasmus was a cosmopolitan, a prototypical Netherlander in many ways, despite sometimes finding some of his own countrymen a little too crude and Germanic, who was at home in Paris, London, Venice, and Rome.³¹ He was instinctually an incrementalist, an empiricist, and a moderate ~ in other words, a liberal of his time. He was skeptical and critical, and he attacked the church with acid wit. But he always wished to be a reformer, never a rebel. In contrast to Luther, the angry prophet, he represented the priestly mode of Protestantism as it would become, as a new church in the future.³² As John O'Malley puts it, "it is a pattern of continuity in Erasmus and a pattern of discontinuity in Luther,"³³ or in conventional terms, it was the contrast between liberal reform and radical revolution. He was the perfect example of the "constrained" thinker.³⁴ Luther, on the other hand, was the "unconstrained" absolutist. Sheldon Wolin observes that Luther was taken with a "simplistic imperative" ~ the dangerously simple idea taking root in a simple mind. Wolin says that "the end-point of the revolt against the authority of philosophy and received wisdom was a religious primitivism...in the name of a return to original Christianity.... a kind of revival of the ancient controversy between 'nature' and 'convention' with scripturalism replacing

³¹ Johan Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation*, F. Hopman, trans. (2001).

³² Mansfield, "Erasmus in the Nineteenth Century," 198.

³³ O'Malley, "Erasmus and Luther," 48.

³⁴ Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (1987).

nature as the basic norm.”³⁵

An absolute ideal meant an absolute condemnation of the enviable failure to meet the ideal. Following Augustine, who described all human life as originating in piss and shit (*inter urinam et faeces nascemur*),³⁶ Luther described himself, in a typically German fashion,³⁷ as a shit of a man (*fex hominum*).³⁸ The mind of the devout believer cannot bear the restraints of the biological organism which is full of messy urges and fears. Erasmus puts his finger on Luther’s problem in *The Praise of Folly* (1509), where he asks, “can a man love anyone who hates himself? Can he be in harmony with someone else if he’s divided in himself, or bring anyone pleasure he’s only a disagreeable nuisance to himself.”³⁹ It prefigured Faust’s complaint that “two souls, oh, live in my breast.”⁴⁰ Johan Huizinga sums up the cultural divide represented by the two men in metaphorical terms which relate perfectly to the geocultural polarity. “Erasmus, the man of the fine shades, for whom ideas eternally blended into each other and interchanged, called a Proteus by Luther; Luther the man of over-emphatic expression in all matters. The Dutchman, who sees the sea, was opposed to the German, who looks out on mountain tops.”⁴¹

The most fundamental theological issue which caused Luther to fall out with Erasmus was free will. Denying the existence of free will, as did Luther, aggravates the problem of evil in Christian theology ~ the problem of explaining why an

³⁵ Sheldon S. Wolin, “Politics and Religion: Luther’s Simplistic Imperative,” *The American Political Science Review* 50.1 (March 1956) 24-42, 31.

³⁶ Quoted, with a more polite but less literal translation, in J.S. McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought* (1996), 100.

³⁷ See Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, addendum 1, “Scatology in German Life and Letters.”

³⁸ Quoted in Marius, *Martin Luther*, 139.

³⁹ Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, Betty Radice, trans. (1993) [*Moriae Encomium*, 1509], 35.

⁴⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* [1808 and 1832], in *Goethe’s Faust*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (1961), 1.1111-2 (my translation). Faust also complains that *so ist mir das Dasein eine Last, Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhaßt*, “thus existence is for me a weight, Death is desirable, and life I hate.” *Faust*, 1.1570-1 (Kaufmann translation).

⁴¹ Johan Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* (2001), 164.

omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibeneficent god would create a world full of evil.⁴² Luther's insistence on an absolute theodicy displays the claim to domination of over external reality made by the spiritual self-consciousness polarity. "What God wills is not right because He is or ought, or was bound, so to will; on the contrary, what takes place must be right, because he so wills it."⁴³ Whatever the logic of this argument in Christian theology, which is not the issue here, this is sociologically parallel to the tribalistic *Old Testament* standard of morality discussed in § 5. What is good or bad is not testable by a universal, rational, empirical, or external standard. If your god commands you to commit genocide and ethnic cleansing in order to promote the interests of the tribe, then genocide and ethnic cleansing is not only permissible, but also a positive duty ~ although perhaps an "accursed duty," as Weber saw the First World War and Himmler saw the Holocaust. In the larger cosmology of Augustine, Martin Luther, Calvin, and many other followers in the Reformation who insisted on predestination as an essential doctrine, good is whatever serves God's plans for the elect, entirely apart from any terrestrial or humanly understandable standards for judging whether or not the predestined elect actually deserve to receive their pre-paid first-class tickets to heaven. The only question is whether you are in or out of the elect group, just as in the more primitive form of this theology the only question was whether or not you were a member of the tribe.

This is a theology which takes us "beyond good and evil," exactly as Nietzsche meant it in the context of praising *Old Testament* tribal morality, and which logically justifies vindication of the elect by virtue of their raw power. In view of these doctrines dear to Augustine and Luther (justification by faith alone, predestination, and

⁴² There is, of course, no consensus on solutions to the great theological problem of evil, which goes back to the problem of good and the gods stated by Plato in *Euthyphro* ~ which I believe to be basic to all of Plato's project. But it is probably fair to say that "the most successful response to it has been the free will defense." *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (1999), "philosophy of religion," page 699.

⁴³ Luther, "The Bondage of the Will" [*De Servo Arbitrio*, 1525], in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, 195-6.

absolute theodicy) Shadia Drury justifiably argues, in her study of *Terror and Civilization: Christianity, Politics, and the Western Psyche* (2004), that “Christianity has failed to replace the hostile gods of primitive or pagan religion with a benevolent or loving God.”⁴⁴ That is not entirely true. There are many Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, who have interpreted the *New Testament* differently. But they are implicitly condemned by Augustine and Luther, and those who take these doctrines seriously, as heretics. True Christianity, for Augustine and Luther, means absolute subordination of human standards of rational morality to a vengeful and capricious God, and to a faith which can justify any horror in the name of purity of belief. It is not pretty. It is not nice to say. But the theology is clear. Justification for genocide and ethnic cleansing is a result ~ not an inevitable result, but one which easily derives ~ of a morality which insists on immunity from worldly, empirical, practical standards of good and evil. This is the same mentality by which Hitler and other Nazis could easily believe in the goodness of the Holocaust.

There were other specific aspects of Luther’s political writings congenial to Nazism, particularly his doctrine of absolute princely authority and his support for brutal repression by the nobility in his infamous track “Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants” (*Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern*, 1525), written the same year as his tirade against Erasmus in *The Bondage of the Will* (*De Servo Arbitrio*, 1525). There was his call for a national savior, a *Wundermensch* or “miracle man,” as he put it, which seemed to foreshadow a *Führer*.⁴⁵ This provided convenient propaganda for the Nazis.⁴⁶ “In the eyes of the enthusiastic supporters of Hitler...” as Harold Grimm admits in the course of arguing that history has been unfair to Luther, “he was the ‘prophet of the German people’ who opposed

⁴⁴ Drury, *Terror and Civilization*, 40.

⁴⁵ Harold J. Grimm cites such items but argues that they are overblown in “Luther’s Conception of Territorial and National Loyalty,” *Church History* 17.2 (June 1948) 79-94, 93-4.

⁴⁶ In a sense, it was his own fault if he was taken to be an advocate of dictatorship against his intent. Luther’s political thought was “a tangle of intricate qualifications and balances which has confused observers ever since.” Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (2004), 160.

democratic individualism and parliamentary government, 'preached to his nation respect for the great leaders chosen by fate,' and demanded a national *Führer*."⁴⁷

But those specific points, although relevant, are not the main issue. Luther was the voice of a spiritual protest against the growing materialism of the West, represented in the German mind by the Roman Church (however much the Roman Church was opposed to the Renaissance). This spiritual protest, acted out with great violence and destruction in Germany during the Thirty Years War, was another result of the "accursed inheritance" of Germany.

Dark enlightenment: The shadow of Britain and France

The next great ideological movement in Western Civilization was the Enlightenment. The 16th Century European Renaissance began first in Italy, in the 15th Century, and then moved northward into Western Europe, where it had a different reception on either side of the Rhine cultural gradient, and helped provoke the Reformation in Germany. The 18th Century Enlightenment was a return wave from the northern end, originating first in Britain in the 17th Century, then spreading to France, Italy and, incompletely, to Germany.

This was determined in large part by the pattern of urbanization previously discussed. Peter Gay argues that the Enlightenment "could flourish only in the city, and in fact the typical *philosophe* was eminently, defiantly, incurably urban."⁴⁸ France, and Paris in particular, was the geocultural center of Western European literati, the coffeehouse of Europe. "But while Paris was the modern Athens, the preceptor of Europe," as Gay puts it in his treatise on *The Enlightenment* (1966-9), "it was the pupil as well." Paris was the center of the world for the literati, but it was London, "a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth," which was actually generating the material changes

⁴⁷ Grimm, "Luther's Conception of Territorial and National Loyalty," 80.

⁴⁸ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1-2 (1966-9), 1.14.

driving the Enlightenment.⁴⁹ Roy Porter, who argues for the primacy of the British role in *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (2000), points out that foreign visitors were impressed by the fact that “there was quite literally more light” in London, because of the commerce and wealth of the city.⁵⁰

Although Britain was the powerhouse for commerce and science, it was less articulate. The new British science, as Porter says, had a “distrust of what the Royal Society’s apologist Thomas Sprat dubbed ‘the cheat of words.’ Taking their cue from the ‘new science.’ enlightened thinkers set *res* over *verba*; words must not be reified, reality must replace rhetoric.”⁵¹ On the other hand, “French philosophers were the great popularizers,” as Gays says, “transmitting in graceful language the discoveries of English natural philosophers and Dutch physicians...”⁵² The French, while authentically adding to the process, served as the more eloquent philosophers of the process, the more idealistic or poetic voice of the muted empiricism in England. They also supplied an eloquent voice of opposition to science and technology in the case of Rousseau, whose romanticism resonated strongly in Germany.⁵³ French philosophers are currently serving a similar function, as the interpreters of the German reaction against the “Enlightenment project,” with fashionable language more appealing to Anglo-Saxons.⁵⁴

Once again, the wave of modernity, while reaching Germany, provoked a different reaction there. One might say that the Enlightenment was too bright for Romantics

⁴⁹ Joseph Addison, quoted in Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (2000), 40.

⁵⁰ Porter, *Creation of the Modern World*, 44.

⁵¹ Porter, *Creation of the Modern World*, 54.

⁵² Gay, *Enlightenment* (1966-9), 1.11.

⁵³ His reaction against the Enlightenment is especially clear in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *First Discourse* [*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, 1750], second part, in *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. and Judith R. Masters, trans. (1964). On his reception in Germany, see Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 2.324; Fritz Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair* (1961), xvii.

who lived in the dark forests of Germany beyond the Rhine. “If the *philosophes* had championed the coming of the light,” as Alexandra Richie puts it, “the Romantics preferred the murky world of apparitions and darkness.”⁵⁵ Jacob Burckhardt, the great Swiss historian of the Italian Renaissance, warned a German friend in 1848 that, “The darkest elemental spirits (*dunkelsten Elementargeister*) dwell in you and drive you on.”⁵⁶ The one word which best describes the reaction in Germany is a French word coined as a term of art by Nietzsche and adopted as a significant analytical concept by Weber ~ *ressentiment*. The sense of resentful cultural inferiority went back at least as far as Luther, who said that “No nation is more depised than the Germans. The Italians call us beasts, and France, Italy, and all the other countries heap ridicule upon us.”⁵⁷ That sense of inferiority was deepened by the devastation of Germany in the Thirty Years War, the failure of national consolidation in Germany, the fact that Germany and the Holy Roman Empire were increasingly anachronistic in the Westphalian system, and the Napoleonic conquest. Wolf Lepenies and Barbara Harshav, in a comment on literature in Germany, say that “Germany’s socio-political backwardness compared to her western neighbors was the continual theme of German self-examination up to the twentieth century.”⁵⁸

And yet, oddly enough, as Western Europe moved into the Modern Age, it was Germany which began to dominate the self-conscious realms of the modern mind. Germany became *das Land von Dichtern und Denkern*, “the land of poets and thinkers,” and the Germans became the leading philosophers of the West, much as the

⁵⁴ See Mark Lilla, “The Politics of Jacques Derrida,” *The New York Review of Books* 45.11 (25 June 1998) 36-41, 36; Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding, trans. (1980) [*Le Même et l’autre*, 1979].

⁵⁵ Alexandra Richie, *Faust’s Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (1998), 105. She goes on to say that “Hundreds of works were written on the themes of sunset and nightfall” in Germany, and to give many examples. More substantially, she substantiates the German Romantic obsession with “themes of fate and death.” *Faust’s Metropolis*, 105-6.

⁵⁶ *Die dunkelsten Elementargeister ihr Wesen mit Euch treiben*. Burckhardt, quoted in Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (1960), 141.

⁵⁷ Luther, quoted in Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.264.

German theology of Luther had transformed the religion of the West. Weber argues that Germany became a leading *Kulturvolk* or “culture nation” because “The ideas of our classic writers originated in an *unpolitical* epoch.”⁵⁹ In a fundamental structural sense, in terms of polarities, this recapitulated the capture of the materialistic Hellenistic cosmopolis of Greece and Rome by spiritual movements from the east, Judaism and Christianity. Similarly, German philosophy identified with the Greeks rather than the Romans because it was the Greeks, even while failing to master the art of politics as well the Romans, who conquered Roman philosophy and literature.

At the end of the 19th Century, during what became known as the European *fin-de-siècle*, the German romantic reaction to the Enlightenment became part of a general introspection, angst, liberation, decadence, boredom, and cultural pessimism which some seemed to think was the end of civilization.⁶⁰ This overlapped a period called the “Gilded Age” in the United States, from 1876 to 1906, when increasing urbanization of a previously rural nation caused a cultural reaction against the city, expressed in American poetry by overwhelming condemnation of the city for its “unhealthy ugliness, for its examples of economic inequalities, for its affinities with crime, drunkenness, sexual excess, amorality, and artificiality.”⁶¹ It was the same reaction to urbanization in Germany, only more so. Detlev Schumann says that the transition “from naturalism to expressionism” in German poetry at this time “forecasts of a coming doom of modern civilization, especially of its most representative exponents: city and machine.”⁶² Schumann calls this movement in Germany “cultural

⁵⁸ Wolf Lepenies and Barbara Harshav, “Between Social Science and Poetry in Germany,” *Poetics Today* 9.1 (1988), 117.

⁵⁹ Max Weber, “Suffrage and Democracy in Germany” [“Wahlrecht und Demokratie in Deutschland,” 1917], in *Political Writings*, Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, trans. (1994), 123.

⁶⁰ See Mike Jay and Michael Neve, eds., *1900: A Fin-De-Siècle Reader* (1999).

⁶¹ Robert H. Walker, “The Poet and the Rise of the City,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49.1 (June 1962) 85-99, 85, 86, 98-9.

⁶² Detlev W. Schumann, “Motifs of Cultural Eschatology in German Poetry from Naturalism to Expressionism,” *PMLA* 58.4 (December 1943) 1125-1177, 1126.

eschatology.”⁶³ The city was the *großer Baal Kapital*, the “great capital of Baal,” a god of Canaan.⁶⁴ A core element in the *Volk* Movement, which was a direct outgrowth of the earlier Romantic Movement,⁶⁵ but more crude and racist, was hatred of the city. Berlin, in particular, was the *asphaltiere Monster*, the “asphalt monster,” and an urbanite was an *Asphaltmensch*, an “asphalt human being.”

Fritz Stern identifies three major figures who were agents of “cultural despair” or *Kulturpessimismus* during this period in Germany. Those were Paul de Lagarde (1827-91), Julius Langbehn (1851-1907), and Arthur Moeller van der Bruck (1876-1925), author of *Das dritte Reich* (1922).⁶⁶ Lagarde and Langbehn were both directly influential on Nazi ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg.⁶⁷ The relationship with Moeller was more complicated. Many saw his *dritte Reich* as an inspiration for the Nazi state, but it envisioned something more spiritual, and the Nazis eventually disowned it as “unrealistic ideology.”⁶⁸ These three figures “enumerated the discontents of Germany’s industrial revolution and warned against the loss of faith, unity, of ‘values.’ All three were foes of commerce and cities as well...”⁶⁹ Langbehn despised Berlin for being “a big and loathsome city,”⁷⁰ an “an abode of rationalism...an enemy of creative education.”⁷¹ For Moeller, Berlin was “the essentially ugliest city there is.”⁷²

This attempt to sum up major historical movements in a few pages is bound to be somewhat oversimplified. The reception of the Enlightenment in Germany, and the

⁶³ Schumann, “Motifs of Cultural Eschatology,” 1126, et passim.

⁶⁴ In Schumann, “Motifs of Cultural Eschatology,” 1176.

⁶⁵ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* ([1961] 1981), 13.

⁶⁶ Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*.

⁶⁷ Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 295.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 298. See also Anton Gill, *A Dance Between the Flames: Berlin Between the Wars* (1993), 38.

⁶⁹ Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, xi.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 15.

⁷¹ Quoted in Andrew Lees, “Critics of Urban Society in Germany, 1854-1914,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40.1 (January March 1979) 61-83, 71.

⁷² Quoted in Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 186.

reaction to it in the form of Romanticism, were complex and mixed phenomena. Kant is justly seen by many as the preeminent philosopher of the Enlightenment, although his ponderous critiques of knowledge sometimes seemed to kill enlightenment with over-analysis. So is Hegel by some, although he has only his own mystical obscurantism to blame for his many misinterpretations. And Nietzsche can only be understood by what he was against, which was both Enlightenment and Romanticism. All of these great minds were quite German in style, in that they did not so much embrace the Enlightenment as wrestle with it, in an intellectual life and death struggle. Frederick Beiser elegantly sums up their problem in an article on “The Enlightenment and Idealism” for *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (2000):

Toward the close of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment began to show signs of a crisis. The more it extended its fundamental principles, the more they seemed to lead to dire consequences. The fundamental principles of the Enlightenment were rational criticism and scientific naturalism. While criticism seemed to end in skepticism, naturalism appeared to result in materialism.

....

There were few *Aufklärer* in Germany ready to admit such disastrous consequences....

....

German Idealism grew out of this crisis of the Enlightenment. All its various forms ~ the *transcendental idealism* of Kant, the *ethical idealism* of Fichte, and the *absolute idealism* of the romantics ~ were so many attempts to resolve these *aporiai* of the Enlightenment.⁷³

But why are naturalism and materialism “disastrous consequences” which must be fought by any means? As with failed proofs for the existence of God or the problem of evil in Christianity, the logic is a disaster only if one insists on clinging to the myths. To make an obvious observation which is lost in the subtle pretensions of philosophy, there was no philosophical problem. The only problem was a psychological problem, the pathology of denial. This was a covert war of religion against science, a heroic and futile quest to regain a lost paradise, in the German war for the mind of the West.

⁷³ Frederick C. Beiser, “The Enlightenment and Idealism,” in Karl Ameriks, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (2000), 18.

§ 9. Traders and heroes

This section discusses the militarization of Prussia and Germany, through revolutions from above, and the development of reactionary modernism in Prussia and the Third Reich. The segment on “Militarization, *Revolution von oben*, and the *Gründungszeit*” is a continuation of the analysis of the political structure of the German polity begun in § 7 above, now seen later in time. This segment shows how the failure of urban culture in Germany allowed the consolidation of rule by an atavistic feudalistic military aristocracy through revolutions from above. A particularly significant element in this analysis is how the desire to maintain an atavistic self-image actually interfered, in materially rational terms, with the aristocracy’s need for a stronger state and military. The analysis here relates back to the S-curve and the “cliff effect” in § 4. Bismarck, and his fairly rational form of politics, is presented as an ironic counterpoint, a demonstration of what a materially rational policy might have been, and an indication of the forces of reaction overwhelming his efforts. The end of this segment introduces Veblen’s thesis of late industrialization as a cause of radicalization of German political culture ~ a specific manifestation of the cultural gradient which is perfectly consistent with other theory here. The segment on “Reactionary modernism and the fetishization of technology” is longer than the related discussion of ideology and romantic reaction presented in § 8 above, because, although based on the best of recent scholarship on technology and war in modern Germany, the analysis directly contradicts the common myth of German technological competence in war. It shows how German “reactionary modernism” became a “fetishization of technology” which used the tools of modernity, but poorly, in a spiritualistic and heroic approach to war ~ articulated by the Germans themselves as conflict between “heroes” and “traders” during their two world wars against Britain.

Militarization, Revolution von oben, and the Gründungszeit

As discussed in § 7, a major reason for the failure of Germany to consolidate into a modern nation-state was the failure of urban culture in Germany ~ which, in turn, was caused by the cultural gradient in Germany. In place of the burgers, it was a Prussian agrarian aristocracy, the Junkers, who performed the historic role as the class supporting national consolidation. Because Germany was unified and dominated by Prussia, it was also infected by the legacy of militarism in Prussia. Emilio Willems, an anthropologist, argues that there was a Prussian culture of militarism, which forms a continuity from the Teutonic Knights to Hitler, in *A Way of Life and Death: Three Centuries of Prussian-German militarism* (1986). Prussia developed a culture “in which *all* sectorial structures and institutions were gradually shaped to support the exigencies of the preparation for war.” This militarism was “unique among the European nations.” And it gradually evolved “from the functional to the dysfunctional and nonadaptive as war tended to become *total* war and, consequently, a lethal threat to national survival.”¹ Prussian-German militarism was a strategy which was originally adaptive in the environment of the Prussian state, but which became nonadaptive and counterproductive as it was carried beyond reasonable limits in the later international environment of Germany. Without using those particular terms, Willems describes Prussian-German militarism as a maladaptive strategy which carried Germany over the edge of the cliff in diagram 1.

Many of the leading historians of Germany agree that Prussia and Germany were distinctively militaristic states. Gerhard Ritter, for example, is a German historian who has expressed reservations about the *Sonderweg* thesis, but who nevertheless documents a significant tradition of Prussian militarism running from Friedrich the Great to Hitler in *The Sword and the Scepter* (1954-68). In his seminal study of *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (1964), Gordon Craig stands with many

¹ Emilio Willems, *A Way of Life and Death: Three Centuries of Prussian-German militarism, An Anthropological Approach* (1986), 12-3.

others in asserting that “the Prussian army made the Prussian state” and “the subsequent political development of Prussia and Germany was dependent, to a far greater extent than is true of any other country, upon the organization of the army, its relationship to the sovereign power, and the will of its leaders.”²

The Junkers, as Hans Rosenberg puts it, “represent the only governing class produced by Germany that has maintained a virtually unbroken record of social and political pre-eminence throughout modern times.”³ In 1895, Max Weber warned that the power of the Junkers “was in the long term incompatible with the interests of the nation,” and that it was even more dangerous that the bourgeoisie had not gained the political maturity necessary to take it from them.⁴ The Junkers were typically holders of *Rittergüter* or “knight estates” east of the Elbe who exercised strong “seigniorial jurisdiction” over those estates, and over the nearby countryside and small towns as well, into the later half of the 19th Century.⁵ Historians can easily become wrapped up in pointless debates about the “feudal” nature of their power. Let us simply call their power “feudalistic,” for lack of a better term. The important point is that they gained seigniorial jurisdiction, and political power in the central state, rather than losing it, as

² Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (1964), xiv-xv. Craig, it should be noted, strongly rejects “the theory that the Germans are by nature subservient to authority, militaristic, and aggressive.” He agrees with Franz Neumann in arguing that these manifestations of German militarism are “products of a structure which vitiated the attempts to create a viable democracy.” *Politics of the Prussian Army*, xiii, quoting Franz Neumann, “Germany and the Western Union,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 23.3 (1949) 35-45, 42 [262].

³ Hans Rosenberg, “The Rise of the Junkers in Brandenburg-Prussia, 1410-1563,” parts 1-2, *The American Historical Review*, 49.1-2 (October 1943, January 1944) 1-22, 228-242, 1.1.

⁴ Max Weber, “The Nation State and Economic Policy” [*Der Nationalstaat und die Volkswirtschaftspolitik*, 1895], in *Political Writings*, Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, trans. (1994), 21.

⁵ Frank J. Goodnow, “Local Government in Prussia,” parts 1-2, *Political Science Quarterly* 4.4, 5.1 (December 1889, March 1890) 648-666, 124-158, 2.124 et seq. *Junker*, which has become a term of art in English, originally meant a “young nobleman.” A common translation, although somewhat misleading, is “squire.” There is a good analogy between the German Junkers and the colonial or oligarchic “planters” of the American plantations or *latifundia*. “Junkers and planters can be termed ‘gentlemen farmers,’ though not in the sense of English landlords living off tenant rents. They were gentlemen farmers in that they were freed not only from the necessity of manual labor but also of the need to serve as full-time supervisors of work in the fields.” Shearer Davis Bowman, “Antebellum Planters and Vormärz Junkers in Comparative Perspective,” *The American Historical Review* 85.4 (October 1980) 779-808, 780-1.

Prussia moved into the Modern Age.⁶ Perry Anderson argues that the European “absolutist state” arising in the 16th Century “was never an arbiter between the aristocracy and the bourgeois, still less an instrument of the nascent bourgeois against the aristocracy: it was the new political carapace of a threatened nobility.”⁷ That was certainly the case in Germany.

Friedrich Wilhelm the Great Elector (reigned 1640-1688) held disparate dynastic territories, mostly east of the Elbe, mostly agricultural, and adversely affected economically and socially by the Thirty Years War.⁸ Unlike an English king, he did not have an urban commercial core to build on. Although he had some holdings in the more urbanized lands near the Rhine, the particularism discussed above had deprived those areas of strength and unity. Unlike the English kings, but like the Holy Roman Emperors, he turned away from the cities and to the landed aristocracy, in this case the Prussian Junkers, for support. They were not naturally inclined to be his allies. Consistent with the previous history of particularism, Junkers had been opponents of the Prussian monarchy and Friedrich Wilhelm had actually preferred burgers to aristocrats in his civil service.⁹ Nevertheless, for the sake of building military power, he made a Faustian bargain, confirmed in the *Landtags-Recess* of 1653, by which the Junkers solidified their continuing seigniorial jurisdiction, a feudalistic power which was to last far longer into the Modern Age than any similar privileges in England or France, in exchange for financial and personal support for the central state and the army.

With this support, Friedrich Wilhelm built a new army and turned Prussia into “a

⁶ William W. Hagen, “How Mighty the Junkers? Peasant Rents and Seigniorial Profits in Sixteenth-Century Brandenburg,” *Past and Present* 108 (August 1985) 80-116, 81, et passim; William W. Hagen, “Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Brandenburg: The Thirty Years’ War, The Destabilization of Serfdom, and the Rise of Absolutism,” *The American Historical Review* 94.2 (April 1989) 302-335; Rosenberg, “The Rise of the Junkers”; Goodnow, “Local Government in Prussia.”

⁷ Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974), 18.

⁸ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 1.

gigantic garrison,” as it appeared to some.¹⁰ “Throughout the Great Elector’s reign,” as Sheehan says, “the army played a central role, not simply as the end but also as the means of state-building.”¹¹ By 1740, when Friedrich the Great inherited what Friedrich Wilhelm and intervening kings had built, “the army included every twenty-fifth person in the population, in contrast with France, whose army included one of every 150,” or a comparative ratio of 6:1 in *per capita* military service.¹² Moreover, Friedrich Wilhelm began the tradition of using the Junkers as the favored source for the officers in his army. They became a “service nobility.”¹³ The close comradeship of the aristocratic officer corps ~ a pseudo-tribalism ~ was one of his principal means for overcoming the initial hostility of the Junkers to the monarch and cementing their loyalty.¹⁴

Over time, as this practice was self-consciously and defiantly confirmed by succeeding Prussian kings, despite its increasing irrationality in terms of military efficiency and the larger needs of the nation, the Junkers became a virtual military caste. The Junkers were not wealthy. Their eastern lands were underdeveloped, and their feudalistic methods, often dependent on oppression of ethnic Polish workers, were inefficient. They were stereotypically viewed, with justification, as provincial and stupid. That only made them more dependent on the historic bargain with the king. The more Germany modernized, and the more that the Junkers became an atavism, the more tightly they clung to their special privileges. In evolutionary terms, the Junker military caste was a path-dependent “peacock’s tail.” They provided a dedicated cadre of military leaders who advanced the interests of Prussia and Germany up to a point,

⁹ Walter L. Dorn, “The Prussian Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century,” parts 1-3, *Political Science Quarterly* 46.3, 47.1, 47.2 (September 1931, March 1932, June 1932) 403-423, 75-94, 259-273, 3.262.

¹⁰ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 19.

¹¹ James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (1989), 60.

¹² Uli Linke, “Folklore, Anthropology, and the Government of Social Life,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.1 (January 1990) 117-148, 132.

¹³ Willems, *Way of Life and Death*, 21.

¹⁴ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 10-1, et passim.

but who corrupted the political development of the polity and eventually led the state to disastrous military defeats.

The competitive advantage of the Junker military appendage to the state was reinforced by the successful wars of Friedrich the Great (Friedrich II, 1740-1786). He postured as an “enlightened dictator.” He kept Voltaire as his court pet for a while, he was fascinated by the new French philosophy, and he held some genuinely enlightened ideas. But the enlightenment of the dictator did not translate into an enlightened state.¹⁵ He reinforced the medieval social estates in Prussia, and he insisted that his officer corps remain aristocratic.¹⁶ Although the system seemed to work well for Friedrich the Great, it broke down under the assault from Napoleon, who disestablished the Holy Roman Empire and replaced it in part by his Confederation of the Rhine, which included most of the German states except Austria and Prussia, on 6 August 1806. Napoleon then inflicted a humiliating defeat on Prussia at Jena on 14 October 1806. According to Hegel, Jena was the “completion of History.”¹⁷ More to the point, it created a military, political, and social crisis in Prussia. Also, the ideals of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution were thereafter contaminated as the ideals of the foreign conqueror in Germany.¹⁸

Friedrich Wilhelm III (reigned 1797-1840) was faced with a choice between alternative paths, as in the alternative evolutionary strategies after the catastrophic break depicted in diagram 1c. The older path established by Friedrich Wilhelm the Great Elector and reinforced by Friedrich the Great promised glory for the state and

¹⁵ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 2.270-1.

¹⁶ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 19, 16-7. “The philosophes discovered soon enough that the Athens of the North was only a frigid Sparta after all; the philosopher-king was more the militarist king than the pacific philosopher.” Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1-2 (1966-9), 2.484. Holborn points out, quite incisively, that the primary constraint on Friedrich’s genuine desire to reform Prussian society was his warmaking. Much as with Napoleon, he could not square the circle between wanting to be an absolute autocrat and successful warlord, but also wanting to be a progressive reformer. Holborn, *Modern Germany*, 2.271.

¹⁷ See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, James H. Nichols, Jr., trans. (1969) [*Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 1947], 44.

¹⁸ Sheehan, *German History*, 260-1.

affirmation of traditional feudal values. A new path would have been less glorious, and would have brought undesired incremental changes to the social structure of the nation, but would have protected the national security better in the long run. A group of progressive military reformers, including General Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Karl vom Stein, and Karl von Clausewitz, advocated a new course which involved putting the army on a wider social and political footing, in the Napoleonic model.¹⁹ They noticed that the people of Prussia had shown little loyalty to the regime in the face of the Napoleonic conquest.²⁰ Clausewitz's most famous dictum in his classic work, *On War (Vom Kriege, 1832)*, is that "War is a mere continuation of policy by other means."²¹ This principle, too often ignored by military minds in all nations, was an attempt to counter an endemic tendency to get it backwards, to make statecraft subservient to militarism, to imbue politics with an essential spirit of militarism, in Prussia and Germany.²² The reformers understood the relationship between politics

¹⁹ General Scharnhorst played a leading role in the Military Society, founded in 1802 for this purpose. Karl Friedrich von Knesebeck drew up a formal plan for reform in 1803. Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 28.

²⁰ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 21; Michael Howard, *Clausewitz* (1983), 18.

²¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, J.J. Graham, trans. (1968) [*Vom Kriege, 1832*], 1.24.119.

²² John Keegan argues that Clausewitz's doctrines in *On War* "are, in a sense, words to the unwise. It is inconceivable that Alexander or Caesar or Fredrick the Great or even Wellington should have needed to be reminded that a general should husband his resources and expend them only for good purposes.... It is even less conceivable that any should have needed reminding...that 'war is the continuation of policy by other mean.'" John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (1988), 3-4. Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937), a popular general responsible for much of the debacle in the First World War and an important early supporter of Hitler during the Weimar Republic, perversely argued for the reversal of Clausewitz. "War was the highest expression of the national 'will to live,' and politics must therefore be subservient to the conduct of war." B.H Liddell Hart, summarizing Ludendorff, in *Strategy* (1974), 209. See also Vincent J. Esposito, "War as a Continuation of Politics," *Military Affairs* 18.1 (Spring, 1954) 19-26. In a more rarified philosophical manner, all the more perverse for that, Carl Schmitt also reverses the doctrine in his fascist "concept of the political." Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen, 1932*], 34, 45, et passim. As is often when sorting out the polarities, there is a semantic confusion about war and politics. What Ludendorff and Schmitt advocated was actually the spiritualization of politics. Politics was to be made subordinate to war as a spiritual imperative, according to the *Ideen von 1914*, the "ideas of 1914," in Weimar and the Third Reich, a rabid romanticization of war expressed in works such as Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel (In Stahlgewittern, 1920)*, which praised the sacrifice of war and the spiritual value of the confrontation with death, "the ultimate reality." In Dagmar Barnouw, *Weimar Intellectuals and the Threat of Modernity* (1988), 197. Mastering the thick prose of *On War (Vom Kriege, 1832)*, a highly dialectical tome, may require a heroic determination. And it includes some inspiring and oft-quoted

and war when they sought to unify the nation behind a popular army. In addition, they advocated abolishment of serfdom, inclusion of burgers in local town government, and a representative legislature.²³

Friedrich Wilhelm III reluctantly adopted some reforms, in both the army and the state, but his acquiescence was incomplete and temporary. He insisted on returning to an aristocratic officer corps when the national emergency was past. Non-aristocratic officers were tolerated only at the margins, in technical specialties such as engineering, artillery, and supply. Aristocrats, conversely, were barred from civilian commerce and industry, because technical skills were viewed as inconsistent with the warrior ethos of the aristocracy.²⁴ The reformers advocated modern education for the officer corps. The response was that “too much learning kills character.”²⁵ It was a self-conscious reaction against bourgeoisification. One way the reformers sought to create a popular army was by the creation of a national militia, a *Landwehr*, with service from all classes of society, to augment the professional and mercenary army, the *Heer*. The military aristocracy viewed this as an unacceptable competition, much as they would later view the SA under Hitler as a force which must be eliminated at all costs. The king saw it as a threat to his personal dynastic control over the military. A *Landwehr*

slogans which warriors still love to repeat without contextual understanding, as if quoting scripture. “War is an act of violence pushed to its utmost bounds.” *On War*, 1.1.3.103. “Let us not hear of generals who conquer without bloodshed.” *On War*, 4.11.345. But it also includes curious references to the analogy between war and “commerce.” That appears, indeed, as part of the discussion on war and politics. *On War*, 1.1.24.119. “It would be better,” he also says of war, “instead of comparing it to any Art, to liken it to business competition...” *On War*, 2.3.3.202. The term he uses in German which is usually translated as “commerce” is *Verkehr*, which also means “traffic” in German, often in disreputable sense, as in *Analverkehr* and *französischer Verkehr* for anal and oral sex. See also Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, Don Reneau, trans. (2002) [*Verhaltenslehren der Kälte: Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen*, 1994], 29. In general, *On War* presents a disembodied and theoretical approach to war quite inconsistent with the instinctive passions of the warrior. “Clausewitz views war a rational instrument of national policy. The three words ‘rational,’ ‘instrument,’ and ‘national’ are the key concepts in his paradigm.” Anatol Rapoport, “Editor’s Introduction” to Clausewitz, *On War*, 13. As Sheehan puts it, Clausewitz tried to strip war of “idealistic bombast and rhetorical fancy.” Sheehan, *German History*, 231.

²³ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 40-1.

²⁴ Sheehan, *German History*, 69.

²⁵ In Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 44.

was created, but only by means of what amounted to a coup. As Napoleon was retreating from Russia in 1812, a number of officers dissented from the ineffectual leadership of the army and Stein summoned the Prussian *Landtag*, which proceeded to call up a *Landwehr* to fight Napoleon. The king was forced to formally endorse the *Landwehr* and support the popular “war of liberation” against Napoleon.²⁶ This popular support and more technical reforms in the army were significant factors in the defeat of Napoleon in 1814.²⁷

The reformers may have saved his throne, but the king was less than grateful, and he was fearful of popular sentiments in the new army.²⁸ After 1815, the *Landwehr* was reduced in size, undermined as an effective force, and incorporated into the *Heer*.²⁹ The *Landwehr* was a less progressive force than the reformers had hoped in any case because the new officers, even when from bourgeois backgrounds, tended to identify with the aristocracy and develop a strong personal loyalty to the king. The king also rejected proposals for a national representative legislature and substituted a set of separate provincial *Landtage* which were advisory councils dominated by the aristocracy.³⁰ Although the reformers sought to sell the idea of a militia on the grounds of national security, all sides to the dispute understood the more fundamental political implications of a correlation going back to naked members of the *demos* rowing Athenian warships. The king and the aristocracy maintained monopoly over the army in order to maintain political monopoly over the state. The foot soldiers were peasants or mercenaries. But the relationship between the Junker officer and the foot soldier self-consciously replicated the relationship between the two classes on the *Rittergut*. The primary purpose was to exclude the bourgeoisie and the urban proletariat. It was another permutation on the hatred of the city.

This insistence on exclusive control of the military by the king and the aristocracy

²⁶ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 59-60.

²⁷ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 62-5.

²⁸ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 66-7, 74.

²⁹ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 75.

carried over to the civilian bureaucracy. Beginning with Friedrich the Great, aristocrats and retired military officers, rather than the burgers, were preferred for civil service.³¹ Under the *Kaiserreich*, as Germany by necessity adopted a modified form of a *Landwehr* as an army reserve, more open to the bourgeoisie, this resulted in a curious atavism, the militarization of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. Instead of succumbing to civilian influences as the state became more modern, the military caste and its ethos came to dominate civil society as well as the state. The *Kaiserreich*, as Paul Johnson says, “was in many ways the most militarized society on earth.”³²

This was in part a deliberate effect of an army reorganization promoted by Count Albrecht von Roon, Minister of War to Wilhelm I and an early supporter of Bismarck. Roon, as Edward Crankshaw sums it up, “neatly reversed the Scharnhorst-Boyen dream: instead of bringing the civilian spirit into the army, civilian life was to be injected with the military spirit...”³³ Whether in government service or private business, having a military uniform and a suitable rank in the reserves became a highly desired mark of professional status.³⁴ After the Unification in 1871, the selection of bourgeois officers for reserve commissions in the *Landwehr* became more selective, even while the officer corps expanded, in order to insure that they had the proper social attitudes and that the burgers so admitted identified with the aristocracy. Reserve officers, as well as regulars, were required to take a personal oath of allegiance to the *Kaiser*, their *Kriegsherr* or “warlord.” They were encouraged to participate in politics in support of the government’s policies, but expected to resign their commissions if

³⁰ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 76.

³¹ Dorn, “Prussian Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century,” 3.262, et seq.

³² Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* (1983), 108.

³³ Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck* (1981), 110.

³⁴ “Uniforms were everywhere. The Kaiser referred contemptuously to ministers, politicians, and diplomats as ‘stupid civilians.’ To raise their prestige, members of the government affected military dress. Bismarck sported the rig of a cavalry general. When Bethmann Hollweg first appeared as Chancellor in the Reichstag, he dressed as a major.” Johnson, *Modern Times*, 108. See also Willems, *Way of Life and Death*, 42-6.

they joined the opposition.³⁵ And they could be brought before a “court of honor” for expression of improper political opinions.³⁶ Although there was some resistance, the great majority of the officer corps seems to have happily complied. “The reserve officer corps regarded itself as a social elite,” as Ritter says, “and it became the ambition of every young German to have status as a member of ‘society’ confirmed by a reserve commission.”³⁷

Bourgeois craving for military rank continued into the Weimar Republic.³⁸ Uniforms, military insignia, and ceremonial swords appeared in a wide variety of professions. It was a cult of militarism. German bureaucrats and businessmen put a strong emphasis on formal titles and strict hierarchies.³⁹ “One could almost say,” as Talcott Parsons does say in 1942, “that the predominance of formal rank and titles which we feel to be appropriate to armed services applies in Germany to the whole occupational world...”⁴⁰ Willems describes a “militarization of rural society,” by which peasants were treated as if they were soldiers by Junkers, the “urbanization of the military,” by which towns became garrisons and the military culture was imposed on burgers, the “militarization of the bureaucracy,” by which the civil service was run as a military service, and the “nobility of ascent,” by which the bourgeoisie were admitted into the ranks of the nobility, partially, grudgingly, as they adopted military manners.⁴¹ Businesses such as Krupp were run as if they were feudal dominions, with

³⁵ Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978), 159-60.

³⁶ Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, vol. 1-3, Heinz Norden, trans. (1969) [*Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk: Das Problem des “Militarismus” in Deutschland, 1954-68*], 2.105.

³⁷ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, 2.102.

³⁸ “The uniform was very important to us, and everyone had one,” said an East Prussian German about life even as recently as the Weimar Period, “Prussia created loyalty by giving us benefits and giving us a position to serve the country. Army status was very real. No matter how long or short your actual duty, you had the right to wear your uniform the rest of your life.” Quoted in James Charles Roy, *The Vanished Kingdom: Travels Through the History of Prussia* (1999), 197. Roy also says that “the ethos of the army wound its way into the very fabric of everyday life....” *Vanished Kingdom*, 169.

³⁹ Johnson, *Modern Times*, 108.

⁴⁰ Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* ([1954] 1964), 111. See also Sheehan, *German History*, 126.

⁴¹ Willems, *Way of Life and Death*, 36-46.

private police, civic ceremonies, dynastic and dictatorial management, and strict worker discipline.⁴² University students adopted the manners of the *satisfaktionsfähige Gesellschaft*, the “satisfaction-capable society,” in which the readiness to duel was a prerequisite of social status and dueling scars were the “green beards” signifying membership in the tribe.⁴³ Parsons calls the German phenomenon a “feudalized bourgeois.”⁴⁴ This is the wider implication of the popular gibe that “Prussia is not a country which has an army; it is an army which possesses a country.”⁴⁵

Modernization and reform could not be forever repressed, but it was diverted into regressive directions by the military aristocracy. One of many historical turning points at which the Germans diverged from Western liberalization was in their response to the revolutionary ferment which arose throughout Western Europe around the year 1848 ~ a turmoil which, notably, did not include Britain and the Netherlands.⁴⁶ Events in Prussia were a reaction to the fall of Metternich in Austria in March 1848. In both countries, revolutionary unrest was soon put down by a combination of partial reforms and repression by the military. “In the tumultuous political activity of 1848,” as Gordon Craig says, “the Prussian army played a decisive, if not the decisive role.”⁴⁷

⁴² William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp* (1968).

⁴³ Norbert Elias, *Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell, trans. (1996) [*Studien über die Deutschen*, 1989], 44-119; Max Weber, ““Suffrage and Democracy in Germany” [“Wahlrecht und Demokratie in Deutschland,” 1917], in *Political Writings*, 115, et passim; Lenore O’Boyle, “Learning for Its Own Sake: The German University as Nineteenth-Century Model,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25.1 (January 1983) 3-25.

⁴⁴ Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, 107; Wolfgang Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920* (1984), 94.

⁴⁵ J. Ellis Barker, quoted in Stephen Van Evera, “Why Cooperation Failed in 1914,” *World Politics* 38.1 (October 1985) 80-117, 96.

⁴⁶ David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (1997), 138; R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (1971), chapter 12; Christopher Harvie, “Revolution and the Rule of Law (1789-1851),” in Kenneth O. Morgan, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (1984), 459. There were rebellions and unrest throughout Europe this year, beginning in February in France, then spreading to Sicily, Hungary, Austria, and Germany. It was also the year of the publication of the Communist Manifesto, which, ironically, was drafted in Britain, the least revolutionary state. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Samuel Moore, trans. (1985) [*Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, 1848].

⁴⁷ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 82.

Gegen Demokraten, helfen nur Soldaten, they said, “Against democrats, only soldiers help.”⁴⁸ Berlin was for a time more radical than Frankfurt ~ a factor which undermined the prospects for a friendly bargain between the king and the burgers who gathered at the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848-9. In this small but relatively concentrated island of urbanity, long resentful of the military domination of the city, the people took to the streets. With a strong sense of the repressive role of the army in Prussian politics, the crowds in Berlin shouted for *Militär zurück!* ~ for the regular military to withdraw from their intimidation of the proceedings.⁴⁹ But they were isolated from their allies in the Rhineland. In response to continued unrest in Berlin, to unseemly democratic proposals in the Prussian National Assembly, and to the liberal ideas of the Frankfurt Assembly, Friedrich Wilhelm IV retrenched and brought the regular army back into Berlin.

Meanwhile, the focus shifted to the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848-9. It was liberal burgers in the Rhineland who were creating the most worries for Prussia.⁵⁰ The Frankfurt Assembly was the great “might have been” of German history, the liberal nationalist revolution which failed to happen. From the beginning, however, it was undermined by German particularism and the lack of a core area for the consolidation of power by the rising but yet weak bourgeoisie. David Blackbourn sums it up well in observing that they were disadvantaged by “the absence of a single revolutionary capital like Paris.”⁵¹ The liberal movement was strongest in the western German states, especially in the cities of the Rhineland. But these were not the states which counted in Germany, and the bourgeois base, even in those areas, lacked structure. Too much of the local economic and political organization of the small states was still dominated by

⁴⁸ Quoted in Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.87. See also Craig, *Germany*, 172.

⁴⁹ Sheehan, *German History*, 667.

⁵⁰ “The influence of the Rhineland liberal bourgeois on the course of revolution in Prussia was momentous.” Oscar J. Hammen, “Economic and Social Factors in the Prussian Rhineland in 1848,” *The American Historical Review* 54.4 (July 1949) 825-840, 836. See also Sheehan, *German History*, 665.

⁵¹ Blackbourn, *Long Nineteenth Century*, 169. Similarly, Holborn observes that “the fight was further complicated by the necessity of its being waged in many arenas. In France, Paris always served as the stage of ultimate decisions.” Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.102.

local lords. Everything depended on either Prussia or Austria, the only large states with large armies.

The members of the assembly have often been criticized (most famously by Friedrich Engels) for being academic idealists. The truth is that they were actually fairly moderate realists with an accurate appreciation of their lack of a solid base of power beyond a vague and unstable public desire for reform and unification.⁵² Their proposed solution was perfectly rational. They attempted to make the historic bargain between burger and king by offering Friedrich Wilhelm IV the crown of a constitutional monarch, at the head of a new German federation. But Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his predecessors had made their bargain with the aristocrats. “This so-called crown,” he said, “is not really a crown at all, but actually a dog-collar, with which they want to leash me to the revolution of 1848.”⁵³ Without an army or popular support for violent revolution, once a few reforms of feudal oppressions were granted in various states, the Frankfurt Assembly fell apart. R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton observe that the failure of the Frankfurt Assembly “like so much else in German history, in the long run contributed to a fateful estrangement between Germany and the West.”⁵⁴

In the aftermath of the Frankfurt Assembly, and continuing struggles over attempts at reform in Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV established a regressive legislature in 1849. This was the *Landtag* which continued in Prussia after the Unification of 1871 and up to the end of the *Kaiserreich* in 1918. It consisted of an upper house, a *Herrenhaus*, a “House of Lords,” with peers determined by the king, and a lower house, a *Haus der Abgeordneten*, a “House of Deputies,” which might have served as a popular house of commons, but which was elected according to the *Dreiklassenwahlrecht*, the “three

⁵² Blackbourn, *Long Nineteenth Century*, 169; Engels, letter to the *New York Daily Tribune* (1852), in Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The German Revolutions: The Peasant War In Germany and Germany: Revolution And Counter-Revolution*, Leonard Krieger, ed. (1967), 171.

⁵³ Quoted in Sheehan, *German History*, 695.

⁵⁴ They add that “Thousands of disappointed German liberals and revolutionaries migrated to the United States.” R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (1971), 532.

class suffrage.” It divided adult male Prussians into three classes, according to the amount of tax they paid, and gave the two upper classes each equal weight with the far more populous lower class. This, in combination with aristocratic control of the upper house, guaranteed conservative control of the *Landtag*. As important, the army was exempted from an obligation to uphold the constitution, government ministers were not made responsible to the *Landtag*, and it was left as an open question, to be fought over later, as to whether or not the *Landtag* had the power to control the budget.⁵⁵

This set the stage for the creator of the modern German state, Otto von Bismarck. He burst onto the stage in 1862 because the long-standing struggle between the king and the commons over control of the army had resulted in a constitutional crisis. This is when he gave his famous *Eisen und Blut* speech, or “blood and iron” speech, as it is often put in English. The *Landtag* was attempting to exercise control over the army budget in the manner of other legislatures of the time in Western European states. In response to this “misuse” of legislative power, Bismarck told a *Landtag* budget commission that “not by means of speeches and majority verdicts will the great decisions of the time be made ~ that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 ~ but by iron and blood.”⁵⁶ Realizing that a nationalist revolution was due to come in some form, Bismarck’s demonic genius was to conjure up a *Revolution von oben*, by military conquest, which diverted German nationalism towards militarism and reaction.⁵⁷ As Weber puts it later, “the victories of the German armies have made up for the defeats of German politics.”⁵⁸

Having said that about Bismarck, a few qualifications are in order. The *Eiserner Kanzler*, as he became known, was actually a man of far greater subtlety and refinement than this might suggest. Despite being the architect of three wars, he had a good, solid,

⁵⁵ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.79.

⁵⁶ David G. Williamson, *Bismarck and Germany, 1862-1890* (1998), 89-90, document 9.

⁵⁷ Hans Ernest Fried, “German Militarism: Substitute for Revolution,” *Political Science Quarterly* 58.4 (December 1943) 481-513.

⁵⁸ Max Weber, “Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order” [*Parlament und Regierung in neugeordneten Deutschland*, 1918], in *Political Writings*, 161.

Clausewitzian understanding of the rational limits of war. Although he was the agent of the king in defending the prerogatives of the military, he was also the agent of the greater state, as he saw it, in resisting excessive militarism and adventurism. Notwithstanding the temptation presented by such a dramatic character, it would be a mistake to make Bismarck, the master pilot, into a case for a great man theory of German history. That would be underrating the force of the historical currents he was attempting to navigate. He did not make that mistake himself. To the contrary, in both success and failure, he argued that he was merely the agent of wider historical forces.⁵⁹ When he actually tried to shape those forces to his will, in the *Konfliktzeit* and the *Kulturkampf*, he failed to master them. It should be clear that the frustrations and divisions of German liberal nationalism in the face of Prussian militarism were a crippling defect already there, before Bismarck, and still there after his departure from the scene. His political genius was merely that he recognized the nature of the beast with greater clarity than most and took advantage of it with great cynicism. He unified Germany politically, partially. But in doing so he only exacerbated the internal political and cultural divisions. Although the man was far from the stereotypically stupid Junker, the greater reality, as Weber perceived in 1918, was that the simplistic legend rather than the complicated man became the lasting legacy in German political culture:

As so often happens, the after-effects of the mighty events of 1866 and 1870 were first felt by the generation for whom the victorious wars were the indelible experiences of their youth but who did not have their own clear view of the profound domestic political tensions and problems which had accompanied those wars. It was in the minds of these people that Bismarck first became a legend. That generation of political litterateurs who entered public life from about 1878 [the beginning of the anti-socialist legislation] onwards fell into two camps of unequal size.... The larger group was filled with adulation, not for the grandeur of his subtle, sovereign mind, but exclusively for the element of violence and cunning in his statesmanship, the real or apparent brutality in his methods, while the other camp reacted to this with feeble *ressentiment*.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Bismarck “scoffed at the notion that great men manufacture great events.” Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (2004), 223.

⁶⁰ Weber, “Parliament and Government in Germany,” 135.

As many historians have said, Germany was “conquered, not united” in the Unification of 1871 which created the Second Reich or *Kaiserreich*.⁶¹ Clausewitz had predicted that there was “only one way for Germany to attain political unity, and that is by the sword: one of the states must bring all others in to subjection.”⁶² Hitler expressed the sentiments of many Germans for long afterwards when he asked:

was not Germany above all other countries a marvelous example of an empire which had risen from foundations of pure political power? Prussia,...came into being through resplendent heroism and not through financial operations or commercial deals, and the Reich itself in turn was only the glorious reward of aggressive political leadership and the death-defying courage of its soldiers.⁶³

This transformation of the nationalist program into an affirmation of heroism and militarism was seductive. “I am no devotee of Mars,” said Gustav Mevissen at the time, “but the trophies of war exercise a magic charm upon the child of peace....and one’s spirit goes along with the boundless rows of men who acclaim the god of the moment ~ success.”⁶⁴ As many historians have put it, the defeat of France in 1871 was also the “capitulation of German liberalism.”⁶⁵

Bismarck originally became the most prominent enemy of liberalism when Wilhelm I (reigned 1861-1888) appointed him as Prussian *Minister Präsident* in 1862 as a champion of the king’s *Kommandogewalt* or “command authority” over the military, against the attempt of the *Landtag* to assert authority over the military. For some time, Albrecht von Roon, Minister of War, had been working on a general army reorganization intended to strengthen royal control and increase overall military strength. The *Landwehr*, Roon argued, was a “politically false” and “militarily false”

⁶¹ Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (1984), 420, quoting a common view, which he says has “much truth” in it, although he has some qualifications to add. See also agreement with the common view in Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (1990), 125-6.

⁶² Clausewitz, quoted in Barraclough, *Origins of Modern Germany*, 420.

⁶³ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (1999) [1925-6], 154.

⁶⁴ Mevissen quoted in Gordon R. Mork, “Bismarck and the ‘Capitulation’ of German Liberalism,” *The Journal of Modern History* 43.1 (March 1971) 59-75, 59, from Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany: The Period of Unification, 1815-1871* (1963), 327.

⁶⁵ Mork, “Bismarck and the ‘Capitulation’ of German Liberalism,” 59.

institution which should be more completely subordinated the *Heer*.⁶⁶ The king demanded that the *Landtag* give him the funds and taxing authority for this plan. Increasingly numerous liberal members of the *Landtag* had the effrontery to consider limitations and conditions on the funding.⁶⁷

Bismarck was not the instigator of the political crisis. Although he was known for his reactionary rhetoric, he was far from the most reactionary of those in the royal camp. As before, many in the aristocracy urged the king to simply rule by decree. In the end, that was more or less the solution he adopted. Bismarck entered into negotiations with the *Landtag* which would have given the king significant independence from legislative control over organization and funding, and would have provided everything asked for in terms of military expansion, but these failed because of the intransigence of the king and the aristocracy. They simply would not accept, as had monarchs in most other European nations, that the parliament had a say about the army.⁶⁸ Bismarck then adopted a convenient constitutional doctrine popular among the king's supporters, the *Lückentheorie* or "gap theory," which held that an impasse between king and parliament constituted a constitutional crisis, and that the king therefore had the right to take emergency measures ~ that is, to simply collect taxes and spend money on the army without legislative authority ~ during the crisis.⁶⁹ It worked, because there was no stomach for a revolution to prevent it, and the *Landtag* later forgave it, even if still objecting in principle, in the Indemnity Act of 1866.

This specific legislative act, Gordon Craig argues, "was an act of capitulation from which middle-class liberalism never recovered, and its effects have been felt in German history down to our own day."⁷⁰ It was a political precedent for the principle of executive rule by decree during a politically created crisis ~ a principle which was

⁶⁶ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 140.

⁶⁷ At that time, they called themselves the *Deutsche Fortschrittspartei (DFP)*, "German Progressive Party." Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 154.

⁶⁸ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 163.

⁶⁹ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 164.

⁷⁰ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 137.

embodied in the Weimar Constitution, and which was a significant catalyst for the Nazi *Machtergreifung*. (Recall the discussion of Hindenburg in § 3.) During later internal struggles over socialism in the new German Empire, Bismarck and conservatives continued to undermine the rule of law by constant threats of a *Staatsstreich* or “putsch” if they failed to get their way. This became a “ritual of constitutional life” in the *Kaiserreich*.⁷¹ Those who accepted the *Lückentheorie* as a necessity, in 1866 and later, ignored the fact that it was always in the power of the executive to *create* a political crisis, and thereby grant itself power.

Bismarck’s insight, certainly not his alone, but more farseeing than many of his merely reactionary colleagues, was that popular dissatisfactions could be turned to the benefit of the monarchy and aristocracy through a program of conquest and political unification. He instigated three carefully limited wars ~ against Denmark (1863-4), Austria (1866), and France (1870-1) ~ each of which advanced the influence of Prussia in Germany. In each of these wars, Bismarck conducted a delicate balancing act, in which he connived on one hand to instigate popular and international support for each war, while on the other hand he constantly restrained the military, which always wanted to pursue military means past the point of diminishing returns. Particularly as illustrated in his personal conflicts with General Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (the elder), this presented a perfect case study of the difference between authentic *Realpolitik* as rational strategy and *Realpolitik* as an irrational *animus dominandi*. After victory over Austria, it was only with great difficulty that Bismarck reminded the king that Austria was a natural ally in Europe and convinced him to forgo demands which would create permanent Austrian hostility. Bismarck complained that “we are just as quickly intoxicated as we are plunged into dejection, and I have the thankless task of pouring water into the bubbling wine....”⁷² In the exhalation of victory, the *Landtag* granted Bismarck the Indemnity Act of 1866. Although the request for

⁷¹ Craig, *Germany*, 144, note 11.

⁷² Bismarck quoted in Craig, *Germany*, 4.

indemnity included no promise that the king would not invoke the *Lückentheorie* again, reactionaries in his government were outraged that Bismarck would propose even an implied admission of illegality.⁷³

Then there was the real enemy, France. Bismarck connived to instigate the war with strong support from Moltke and Roon,⁷⁴ but once again had to restrain the king and his generals. The Prussians won a quick victory in the field at Sedan, but found themselves bogged down in a long investment of Paris and resistance from irregulars. This time, Bismarck felt somewhat less need to restrain Moltke. He had stopped Moltke from marching on Vienna before. Now, although he did not favor it, he did not prevent a march on Paris. After the investment of Paris became inconvenient, Bismarck even insisted on a bombardment in order to force a quicker settlement, for fear that other European powers would become involved. But this was for the purpose of forcing the French to the table for negotiations, not for the purpose punishing the French. Moltke was not interested in a negotiated peace. He advocated a “war of extermination” against the French.⁷⁵ To Bismarck, this was nonsense. War with France, as with Austria, had a practical goal, which was Prussian hegemony in Germany. He admired French culture and he never saw this as a war between cultures or a war for the conquest of France. Many Germans, however, wanted just that. There was a “passion of hatred and contempt for all things French that swept through Germany,” which as Crankshaw notes, even swept up Bismarck’s wife, Johanna von Bismarck, who called Paris a “mad Sodom” that should be leveled by artillery. Similarly, the wife of Richard Wagner, Cosima Wagner, hoped that Paris, “this kept woman of the world,” would be burnt to the ground.⁷⁶ Bismarck eventually asserted his political authority over Moltke, although only with difficulty. With reservations, he agreed to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. This was a major political error, the

⁷³ Craig, *Germany*, 9.

⁷⁴ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, 266-9; William M. Sloane, “Bismarck as a Maker of Empire,” *Political Science Quarterly* 15.4 (December 1900) 647-666, 655-6.

⁷⁵ Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, 212.

creation of an unnecessary aggravation which was to poison German and French relations up to the end of the Second World War.

Having thereby established Prussian hegemony in Germany, and also having enlisted popular support for Prussian arms, Bismarck now offered the king a crown he could accept, as emperor of a new “German Empire,” the Second Reich or *Kaiserreich*, although it was a *Kleindeutschland* nation-state without the Germans of Austria. In an act of symbolism which reflected the long-standing German *ressentiment* of Rome, France, Napoleon, and the French claim to be the successors of Charlemagne, the act of German Unification and the new German Empire was proclaimed in the Palace of Versailles in 1871. Thereafter Bismarck declared Germany to be a “satisfied power.”⁷⁷ But this admirable rationality broke down after his dismissal in 1890. The problem was not so much with Bismarck’s policies *per se* ~ which constituted an adroit exercise of truly rational *Realpolitik* ~ but with the elemental forces and underlying cultural conflicts which he stirred up in Germany.

Bismarck’s decline began with his *Kulturkampf* or “cultural struggle” against Catholics inside Germany, an odd mirror image on the right of his earlier *Konfliktzeit* against German liberals on the left. Crankshaw notes that “there has been no completely satisfying explanation of the *Kulturkampf*.”⁷⁸ Many historians seem to accept, at least in general terms, Bismarck’s own explanation. The *Kulturkampf* “was determined not by religious considerations but purely by the desire to establish as firmly as possible the unity won on the battlefield.”⁷⁹ Bismarck’s real enemies were on the left, especially the socialists.⁸⁰ The *Kulturkampf* was the domestic analogue to the war against Austria. Just as Prussia needed to seize leadership of the Germans from

⁷⁶ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, 285.

⁷⁷ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, 1.250, et passim; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Bismarck’s Imperialism 1862-1890” (1970), 150-1; Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914* (1976), 13.

⁷⁸ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, 309.

⁷⁹ Bismarck quoted in Ronald J. Ross, “Enforcing the *Kulturkampf* in the Bismarckian State and the Limits of Coercion in Imperial Germany,” *The Journal of Modern History* 56.3 (September 1984), 458, note 3.

⁸⁰ Craig, *Germany*, 93, et passim.

Austria before mobilizing against the main enemy in the west, Bismarck sought to assert ideological hegemony over the right wing in Germany in order to better wage the long-term battle against the left. Later history proved the validity of this intuition. The Catholic Church became the most effective firebreak against German reaction. Bismarck made a conciliatory settlement with the Catholic Church, just as he had with Austria, before then turning with true vengeance on the socialists.⁸¹ Ever the calculator, he attempted another permutation on the theme of *Revolution von oben*. Much as he had diverted liberal nationalism into a program of militaristic national conquest while also continuing to oppose authentic democratic reforms, he now offered the population a remarkably progressive social welfare program while also repressing socialist newspapers and organizations with the anti-socialist legislation (*Anti-Sozialistengesetze*) initiated in 1878. Bismarck was not alone in this approach. He lost power in part because Wilhelm II, a highly reactionary and erratic king whom Bismarck had encouraged in his youth, thought that he could play the same game better.⁸²

In 1890, Bismarck's intemperate outbursts gave Wilhelm II the excuse for "dropping the pilot," as it was put in the famous *Punch* cartoon.⁸³ Although the precipitating event was domestic policy, his dismissal was also motivated by ongoing conflicts with Wilhelm II over foreign policy.⁸⁴ And it was in that realm that his departure had the most momentous effect.⁸⁵ He obtained his goal, the protection of aristocratic privilege, but it was ultimately a pyrrhic victory. As Ritter sums it up, "The conservative nobility retained possession of many of its traditional bastions ~ the courts, the army, the civil service, the upper chamber of the Prussian diet ~ without gaining the kind of political realism and popularity that made the British nobility

⁸¹ Craig, *Germany*, chapter 5.

⁸² Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.302; Craig, *Germany*, 177.

⁸³ John Van der Kist, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: Germany's Last Emperor* (1999), 75.

⁸⁴ Robert Waite, *The Kaiser & the Fuhrer: A Comparative Study of Personality & Politics* (1998), 142-3; Van der Kist, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 72-5.

⁸⁵ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.303.

almost into our own times a perpetrator of political traditions....”⁸⁶ The revolution from above and the diversion of nationalism into militarism led to the later foreign policies of Wilhelm II, including a *Weltpolitik* which was in part another attempt to divert liberal nationalism into militaristic ends, and which led to the disaster of the First World War.

The *Gründungszeit* or “foundation period” after 1871 was accompanied by an increase in economic activity which was financed and controlled by the new state, or by large corporatist interests with privileged positions in the state.⁸⁷ Like the political revolutions, the economic revolution was a revolution from above. The gradient in time, the steep slope of industrialization and urbanization shown in graph 1, was the temporal result of the spatial cultural gradient. Political particularism had previously retarded economic development. This late but rapid economic development now had a radicalizing effect on political culture. “With a suddenness that has had no parallel,” as Fritz Stern says, “the industrial revolution changed the face of German society.”⁸⁸ The classic analysis of this effect, which has become one of the most widely accepted interpretations of the German problem, is Thorstein Veblen’s *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (1915).⁸⁹ Veblen argues that authoritarianism and militarism

⁸⁶ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, 1.158. He adds that, “German life under the Reich sustained a distinct militarist tinge that repelled Western European sensibilities.” *Sword and Scepter*, 1.158. As Holborn puts it, “the German burgher had to crawl from under the shadow of the German nobleman, and he never fully succeeded in doing so, not even in the nineteenth century.” Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 2.307.

⁸⁷ David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (1997), 191, 321-3; Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.384-5.

⁸⁸ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (1961), xxvii.

⁸⁹ Reprinted as Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (1990). See Milan L. Hauner, “A German Racial Revolution?” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19.4 (October 1984) 669-687, 669; Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (1987), 255. Veblen’s analysis is updated, without changing the core of it, in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire: 1871-1918*, Kim Traynor, trans. (1985) [*Das Deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871-1918*, 1973]. Another permutation on Veblen’s theme is Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation: Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* [*The Late-coming Nation: On the Political Corruptibility of the Civic Spirit*] (1959). Although nearly a century has now gone by, what Henry Wallace said in 1940 is still true. “Veblen’s study is probably the most acute analysis of modern Germany which has ever been

was exacerbated in Germany by its technological backwardness and a disparity between economic and political development which was “exceptionally unstable.”⁹⁰ Veblen published in 1915,⁹¹ before the crises of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis. But he foresees the paradoxical nature of “reactionary modernism.” What he calls the “Imperial system” was:

necessarily inimical to modern science and technology, as well as to the modern scheme of free or popular institutions.... Yet the Imperial system of domination, statecraft and warlike enterprise necessarily rests on the modern mechanistic science and technology.... The Imperial State, therefore, may be said to be unable to get along without the machine industry, and also, in long run, unable to get along with it.⁹²

Reactionary modernism and the fetishization of technology

These are curious phenomena which demonstrate the power of cultural polarity and the significance of connections between different domains in culture. “Reactionary

written.” Henry A. Wallace, “Veblen’s ‘Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution,’” *Political Science Quarterly* 55.3 (September 1940) 435-445, 435. Veblen bases the analysis on an empirical comparison of Germany and Britain. The largest chapter in his book is actually on Britain. See Joseph Dorfman, “Introduction” to Veblen, *Imperial Germany*, xxxvi. He thereby moved the analysis into the realm of social science for the first time. He may have thereby inspired a view, now often criticized, which sees Britain as a paradigm of a “normal” nation-state. But that is not an error in his own work. Quite to the contrary, in accordance with good comparative method, he selects Britain and Germany as the relevant cases because “they represent the two extreme terms” in the development of nation-states in Western Europe. *Imperial Germany*, 107. He also points to the significance of the Netherlands and Japan as comparative cases. He wrote a separate article on Japan, in which he expanded the argument. Dorfman, “Introduction,” xxxv-xxxvi. Given the fact that Japan was at this time an ally of the Western Alliance, against Germany, and had not yet evidenced its fascist and imperialistic ambitions clearly, this was a remarkably prescient observation.

⁹⁰ Veblen, *Imperial Germany*, 64, et seq., 174-237, 239. Hitler had a similar theory about the effects of industrialization. “The industrialization of country invariably provokes an opposite reaction and gives rise to a recrudescence of a certain measure of romanticism.... It is perfectly true that we are a people of romantics, quite different from the Americans, for example, who see nothing beyond their skyscrapers. Our romanticism has its origins in the intense appreciation of nature that is inherent in us Germans.” Hitler quoted in Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, eds., *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (2000), # 320, 15 June 1943, Midday, pages 706-7.

⁹¹ Also, Veblen did not initiate the study in response to the First World War (which the United States had not entered at the time of publication). Veblen, *Imperial Germany*, xxix. In his 1939 introduction to Veblen’s work, Joseph Dorfman says that “So well had Veblen caught the spirit of the Third Reich twenty years before its birth that its accredited spokesmen sound as if they are merely obeying Veblen’s logic not only in broad outline but in specific detail.” Dorfman, “Introduction” to *Imperial Germany*, xxiv.

modernism” was a manifestation of spiritual reaction to modernity which arose in Prussia during the struggle between reformers and reactionaries after Jena, and which became a more extreme and paradoxical phenomenon during Weimar and the Third Reich.⁹³ The “fetishization of technology” is a permutation of reactionary modernism which explains the counter-intuitive incompetence of the German way of war, despite their industrial and technological power in the 20th Century. Thomas Mann, who had the good sense and decency to become disillusioned with it, described reactionary modernism as “technological romanticism.”⁹⁴ Similarly, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, called it *stählerne Romantik*, “steely romanticism.”⁹⁵ Just as religious fundamentalism and fascism are modern reaction to modernity (see § 4), “reactionary modernism” is a modern reaction which attempts to use technology, an instrument of materialism, in service of spiritualism. It is *mythos* attempting to resist *logos* with the tools and weapons of *logos*. As in the confusion about aesthetics and politics, it is important be clear about the actual relationship between “reaction” and “modernism” in “reactionary modernism.” It was a variation on a theme arising in many modernizing cultures. More typically, however, it takes the form of a futile attempt to maintain an artificial separation, a “bipolarity” between the material and spiritual sides of culture. In China and Japan this was expressed by the slogans of “Chinese learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical applications,” and “Western science, Japanese essence.”⁹⁶ In German reactionary modernism, the relationship was more intimate and subtle, as it was in Italian Futurism and Marxism, other ideologies which evolved within Western modernization, although they were reactions to it. Instead of merely attempting to segregate the two domains,

⁹² Veblen, *Imperial Germany*, 270-1.

⁹³ The term was first coined by Jeffery Herf in *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984), and then explicitly applied to the earlier period in Prussia by Eric Dorn Brose in *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia: Out of the Shadow of Antiquity, 1809-1848* (1993), 189, et passim.

⁹⁴ Thomas Mann, quoted in Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 2.

⁹⁵ Joseph Goebbels, quoted in Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 3.

⁹⁶ Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan, 1853-1964* (2003), 19-20.

although that was part of the strategy, especially in the early stages in Prussia, the attempt was to reshape technology into an expression of spiritualism, to make technology a form of magic,⁹⁷ so that tools and weapons were also works of art with a strong element of symbolic meaning as well as a mechanical purpose. This is part of the confusion between the “aestheticization of politics” and the “politicalization of aesthetics.” When art takes on an ideological meaning that is the “politicalization of aesthetics,” a spiritual polarity. The same spiritual polarity is now expressed as an “aestheticization of technology.” This “aestheticization of technology,” apparent in much of the technology of the Third Reich, is sometimes misinterpreted as an “aestheticization of politics.” The converse is the “technologicalization of art,” more commonly known as the modern principle that “form follows function,” although that was actually a lie in many manifestations of “modern art,” as in the uncomfortable aluminum chairs or the leaky flat roofs of the *Bauhaus*.⁹⁸

In their quest for national unification, the bourgeois liberals of Germany were forced into a Faustian bargain, with Bismarck playing the role of the cynical Mephistopheles, by which they traded liberalism for a nation, just as Faust and those who lusted after the ring in the Wagnerian myth gave up love in exchange for power. But there was another Faustian bargain, made by the reactionaries and militarists, in which they exchanged their souls for power, although they hoped, like Faust, to be able to cheat the devil and retain their souls through their fanatical striving. This was the phenomenon born in the reluctant reforms of the post-Jena period under Friedrich Wilhelm III (1797-1840) which would later be called “reactionary modernism.” It was the attempt to use the tools of modernity to resist the cultural consequences of modernity, an ultimately irrational and futile quest, an impossible attempt to square the circle, but one which seemed to work for some time. Hegel had a point, even if rather

⁹⁷ Jeffery Herf, who coined the term “reactionary modernism,” also refers to it as “magical realism.” Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, chapter 4.

⁹⁸ See Richard Pommer, “The Flat Roof: A Modernist Controversy in Germany,” *Art Journal [of New York]* 43.2 (Summer 1983) 158-169.

overdrawn, in viewing the humiliating defeat of Prussia by Napoleon at Jena in 1806 as the symbol of an epochal change, at least for Prussia and Germany. It was this humiliation which forced Friedrich Wilhelm III and his Junker allies, as little else would have, to reluctantly consider reforms. But they never went farther than forced. They continued to strongly believe, as Eric Dorn Brose puts it in his study of *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia* (1993), that:

Peasant emancipation, freedom of land ownership, and the growth of rural industry would destroy the organic harmony of the countryside.... What was worse, materialistic bourgeois values and the lust for profit would emasculate the nation and loosen traditions of loyalty and service. An ignominious “Jew-State” would replace the heroic Prussia which they knew.⁹⁹

It was a culture war. Although much of the hostility was focused on Napoleon and the French Revolution, there was also a strong reaction against the “devilish mechanization spreading from Britain.”¹⁰⁰ They feared the British Industrial Revolution as much as the French Revolution. They had a definite hatred of the city, and a quite specific fear that Berlin, previously a garrison town, would become a breeding ground for subversion ~ as it did in 1848. They attempted deurbanization schemes in which textile workers were deported to outlying villages.¹⁰¹ Adam Heinrich Müller, a follower of Fichte’s regressive economic theories, hoped that this would protect workers from the unnatural environment of the city and preserve the artistic traditions of the Middle Ages,¹⁰² much as later romantics of the *Bauhaus* tried to recreate medieval craft traditions and combine them with industrial production during the Weimar Republic.¹⁰³ After the late and rapid industrialization discussed above, Germany became a great industrial power, and also produced a disproportionately high number of scientists winning Noble Prizes (although a

⁹⁹ Brose, *Politics of Technological Change in Prussia*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Brose, *Politics of Technological Change in Prussia*, 48.

¹⁰¹ Brose, *Politics of Technological Change in Prussia*, 49-50.

¹⁰² Brose, *Politics of Technological Change in Prussia*, 51.

¹⁰³ Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus* (1984), 16.

disproportionate number within the ranks of the Germans were Jewish).¹⁰⁴ But this leadership in science and technology was not accompanied by instrumentally rational employment of technology in culture and politics.

Even in the area of military technology, where the compulsion to modernize was most powerful, there was resistance to change. As discussed above, the few bourgeois officers admitted into the officer corps were largely relegated to technical services, such as supply and engineering, because those were thought less fitting for the heroic warriors of the aristocracy. Throughout many wars, as Kenneth Macksey says, the German army “repeatedly overlooked or misemployed non-combat troops.”¹⁰⁵ The disdain for technical aspects of war even extended at first to the artillery, the most effective weapon of modern war until the rise of air power. As Brose sums up their attitudes, “there was something bourgeois and dishonorable about ‘the secret service of the black collar’ which seemed to lie behind artillery technology, something derogating about an officer who ‘reeked of axle grease.’”¹⁰⁶ Prussian artillery built by Krupp, which had to overcome a long political battle over the conversion from brass and muzzle-loaders to iron and breech-loaders, eventually proved its use on battlefields of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1).¹⁰⁷ But this resulted in the “gigantomania” of the Second and Third Reichs.¹⁰⁸ Having decided that big and powerful cannons were good, the Germans decided that bigger was always better, even if not practical.¹⁰⁹ Gigantic weaponry was more than a technical need. It was a fetish.¹¹⁰ There was an especially phallic quality to the pointless bombardments of Paris, the “Sodom” and

¹⁰⁴ Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (1987), 32.

¹⁰⁵ Kenneth Macksey, *Why the Germans Lose at War: The Myth of German Military Superiority* (1999), 38.

¹⁰⁶ Brose, *Politics of Technological Change in Prussia*, 165.

¹⁰⁷ William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp, 1587-1968* (1968), chapters 4-5.

¹⁰⁸ Ulrich Albrecht, “Military Technology and National Socialist Ideology,” in Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker, eds., *Science, Technology, and National Socialism* (1994), 92-5.

¹⁰⁹ See Roger Ford, *Germany’s Secret Weapons in World War II* (2000), chapter 9, “Artillery.”

¹¹⁰ See the characterization of the love of big guns on both side of the First World War as a “fetish” in Marc Ferro, *The Great War, 1914-1918*, Nicole Stone, trans. (1973) [*La Grande Guerre*, 1969], 96.

“Whore,” with huge canons in both the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War,¹¹¹ as there was to the equality pointless bombing of London with dirigibles in the First World War. (And need we mention the *Pickelhaube*, the Prussian helmet with the knobby spike?) But it was more fundamentally about power, not sex, and about the aesthetic love for visible displays of power. This was an element in the counterproductive competition with Britain over the construction of battleships, the “castles of steel” which played a significant role in souring German and British relations before the First World War.¹¹²

The magical and aesthetic elements in the fetishization of technology may be illustrated by a body of literature in Germany which began as naïve *völkische Mythos* in the *Gründungszeit* but then mutated into a strange form of pseudo-science fiction in Weimar and the Third Reich. To begin with, from the inception of the Romantic and *Volk* Movements, myths and stories, such as the story of Hermann, were numerous and

On Hitler and his “wrong-headed insistence...that big (and powerful) was always beautiful (irresistible),” see Ford, *Germany's Secret Weapons*, 7, et seq.

¹¹¹ See Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp*, 291-2.

¹¹² See Robert Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea* (2003); Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, 3.307-11; Robert Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (1991). Battleships were also a way of reconciling bourgeois and liberal elements to reactionary militarism. A naval building program under Wilhelm II and Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz (1849-1930), in pursuit of a *Weltpolitik* which was supposed to give Germany a new *Platz an der Sonne* among the Western colonial powers, also appealed to urban and bourgeois interests because it promoted industry and promised to give them individually a “place in the sun” as officers in the *Kriegsmarine*, which was much less of an exclusive preserve for the Junker aristocracy. Jonathan Steinberg, “The Kaiser’s Navy and German Society,” *Past and Present* 28 (July 1964) 102-110, 105-6, et passim. Tirpitz, in the view of Gordon Craig, made a major contribution ~ as if Wilhelm II needed the help ~ to giving “German policy a European reputation for dangerous irrationality.” Craig, *Germany*, 303. Even in the *Kriegsmarine*, however, despite being a relatively technical service, there was a deep prejudice against officers with technical skills and a cult of aristocratic warrior honor. Charles Thomas, *The German Navy in the Nazi Era* (1990), 2-4. It was another of those Faustian bargains. In addition, an important aspect of this naval program was that it gave rise to a major pathology in German politics, the politics of the supposedly non-political *völkische* organization. The expansion of the *Kriegsmarine* was promoted by the highly nationalistic *Deutscher Flottenverein* (German Navy League, founded 1898), followed by the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League, founded 1891), which exposed the principle of *Sammlungspolitik*, the “politics of unity,” and which contended that it was a “non-political organization,” although, as Geoff Eley says, it was actually a radically nationalist organization which was “a political factor of the first importance.” Geoff Eley, “Reshaping the Right: Radical Nationalism and the German Navy League, 1898-1908,” *The Historical Journal* 21.2 (June 1978) 327-354, 352.

popular. That traditional and nostalgic form was ever present, as it was in English and French literature, although it was far more widespread and varied in Germany. “As the infrastructure of the new Reich was being laid,” Craig says, “German artists were writing about times infinitely more remote or filling their canvasses with triton and nereids and centaurs and Greek columns, while the greatest musician of the day, Richard Wagner, was composing musical dramas that, overtly at least, had only the remotest connection with the society in which he lived.”¹¹³ But modernization gave rise to a new genre, a revealing form of reactionary modernism in literature which might be called “reactionary futurism.”¹¹⁴ After the defeat in the First World War, the fiction became more fantastic, as well as more overtly racist and militarist. Much of it involves putting rockets, ray guns, atomic bombs, and other *Wunderwaffen* in the hands of an authoritarian regime which conquers the corrupt democracies, often in response to degeneration of the German race due to industrialization, socialism, or pollution by inferior blood. Some of the stories arm the *Freikorps*, the paramilitary political gangs plaguing the Weimar Republic, with such weapons for that purpose, or empower the heroes of the First World War, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, to become the *welthistorische Persönlichkeiten* of a German renewal.¹¹⁵ The stories abound with *heimliche Kaiser* or *Führer* figures.¹¹⁶ A pervasive theme is the destructiveness of *Technik* and the superiority of ancient peasant values, or *Blut und Boden*. In *Tuzub 37* (1935), “gray robots” (*grauen Menschheit*) ruin the world for centuries to come. In *Der Flug in die Zukunft* (*The Flight into the Future*, 1937), an artist instigates a rebellion against a technological utopia akin to the “universal homogeneous state” feared by many today. As the genre evolved in the Third Reich, it began to lay more stress on the theme of the engineer or scientist as hero of the race, a theme existing

¹¹³ Craig, *Germany*, 215.

¹¹⁴ That is my term. A rich collection of this literature ~ a truly fascinating window in the popular culture of Germany from the Second to the Third Reich ~ is described in Jost Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich: Volkish Utopias and National Socialism* (1988).

¹¹⁵ Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 87-107.

¹¹⁶ Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 87-107, 137.

from the beginning in novels such as *Planetenfeuer* (*Planet on Fire*, 1899) or *Der Golfstrom* (*The Gulf Stream*, 1913).¹¹⁷ A leading example from what Jost Hermand calls an “immense body”¹¹⁸ of this genre produced under the Third Reich is *Verschollen im Weltall* (*Vanished in the Cosmos*; 1938), a novel in which the racial war moves to the cosmos, where skin color distinguishes other species in a hostile universe, and the battle is won with space ships, but the superior white Earthlings afterwards reject industrialization and urbanization, returning to *Blut und Boden*.¹¹⁹

That was the fantasy, a form of science fiction which has as little to do with science as astrology has to do with astrophysics. Now let us look at the almost equally fantastic reality of technology in the Third Reich. When Winston Churchill announced the beginning of the Battle of Britain on 18 June 1940, he warned the British people, that “if we fail, then the whole world...will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age, made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.”¹²⁰ But it was the Nazis who failed. One reason was “perverted science.” A good thing about science, technology, industrialization, and the weapons of modern warfare is that they do not well serve a spiritualistic mentality.

The technology of propaganda. Nazi innovations in technology were most effective when they were directly employed in the service of propaganda, a purpose which is consistent with the aesthetic and magical mentality of the spiritual polarity. The best known example may be Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*, 1934-5), the official documentary of the 1934 Nazi Party Rally in the Zeppelin Airfield at Nuremberg which seems to have drawn from themes and styles in Fritz Lang’s *Die Nibelungen* (1924). One of the most brilliant examples (literally) was also the *Lichtdom*, the “Cathedral of Light,” which Albert Speer created with 130

¹¹⁷ Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 246.

¹¹⁸ Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 247.

¹¹⁹ Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 259-60.

¹²⁰ Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (1978), 326.

searchlights at the 1934 Rally.¹²¹ But the distinction between the “aestheticization of technology,” which this was, and the “aestheticization of politics,” which this was not, is indicated by the fact that Speer, although proud of this impressive device, gave it as an example of a general style of “architectural megalomania,” which in retrospect he saw as “romantic” and overdone.¹²² The lack of instrumental rationality in the architecture of the Third Reich was evident in the fact that Hitler and Speer sometimes rejected modern construction methods in order to create “ruin value.”¹²³ But Speer avoided studying Roman and Renaissance examples of monumental architecture in Italy, which he later realized would have been useful for this purpose, for ideological reasons. He sought instead to recreate the “simplicity” of Greek architecture along “Doric” lines, before “the purity of Greek artistic creativeness was speedily contaminated by the wealth in the Ionian colonies in Asia.”¹²⁴ The *le mirage spartiate* was alive in his mind.

Hitler is sometimes credited with being the first politician to make effective use of the radio for political purposes. But he had vigorous competition from both of his democratic opponents, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. There is an important contrast in style between the authoritarian and liberal use of radio. Hitler and Mussolini ranted into the microphone. Just as Nietzsche sees music as the most spiritual medium of art, Marshall McLuhan sees radio as a “hot” medium “that extends one single sense in ‘high definition.’”¹²⁵ According to this theory, Hitler understood radio. But it is not quite so simple. Churchill and Roosevelt made effective use of the

¹²¹ At a later rally in 1936, when they repeated the effect with 150 searchlights intended to create “the most powerful cathedral that mortals have ever seen,” the faithful took a *Schwur unter dem Lichtdom*, an “Oath under the Cathedral of Light.” Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), *Der Parteitag der Ehre vom 8. bis 14. September 1936* [*The Party Day of Honor from 8 to 14 September 1936*] (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1936), 170-177. The British Ambassador, Sir Neville Henderson, called it the “Cathedral of Ice.” Quoted in Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, Richard and Clara Winston, trans. (1970) [*Erinnerungen*, 1969], 97.

¹²² Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, chapter 5, 93.

¹²³ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 93.

¹²⁴ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 102.

¹²⁵ Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, and Jerome Agel, *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), 22.

radio in a contrary mode more suitable to the democracies by cooling it down, by creating a sense of intimacy and dialogue. Churchill often used romantic and pretentious rhetoric, but he never ranted. His speeches sounded as though they were being given in the collegial setting of the crowded House of Commons, which he declined to have rebuilt to larger and less intimate dimensions after it was bombed. Roosevelt was famous for his “fireside chats.” And there was, especially in Churchill, a dialectical and open quality to the democratic rhetoric which was absent in the rhetoric of the authoritarians. Churchill had a habit of discussing failures, hardships, and the possibilities of future disaster with cold realism.¹²⁶ The Nazis discovered during the war that they had helped feed a technological monster which they could not control, in part by distributing cheap *Volksempfänger* sets. They designed the *Volksempfänger* with limited frequencies and reception range in an attempt to prevent it being used to listen to foreign broadcasts.¹²⁷ Unlike Churchill, the Nazis were desperate to keep people from thinking about hardships or defeats. But foreign radio broadcasts were more difficult to suppress than were foreign newspapers, and people became more attuned to broadcasts from the BBC, despite severe sanctions, as official news in the Third Reich became less credible.¹²⁸ The BBC, conversely, “acquired and

¹²⁶ On 13 May 1940, shortly after assuming the premiership, he gave the British a promise they knew he would keep. “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.” On 4 June 1940, just after the Evacuation at Dunkirk, when other politicians might well have succumbed to the urge to indulge the people in their celebration of the salvation of the army, he dampened enthusiasm instead. “We must be careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations.” In that same speech, he also spoke openly about what other politicians might have thought unspeakable, the possibility that the British government might be forced to evacuate to Canada “until in God’s good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the Old.” It was one of the most remarkable admissions of weakness and dependence on allies ever uttered by a leader in wartime. And on 18 June 1940, in the speech quoted above with regard to “perverted science,” he warned what failure could mean. Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 245, 283, 285, 326.

¹²⁷ George F. Church, “Short Waves and Propaganda,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 3.2 (April 1939) 209-222, 218-9.

¹²⁸ See the interviews, and clips from propaganda films, in Jeremy Isaacs, producer, *The World at War*, video disks, vol. 1-5 (Thames Television and the Imperial War Museum, 1973), volume 3, chapter 1, “Inside the Reich,” § 02, “Propaganda and Oppression.”

held a reputation for truthful reporting.”¹²⁹ *Ganz Deutschland hört den Führer mit dem Volksempfänger*, said German posters, “All of Germany hears the *Führer* on the People’s Radio.”¹³⁰ But as the war went badly, it was more often Goebbels who spoke to the Germans.

Germans were much less astute in applying radio technology to physical warfare. They were the first to invent radar, but it was the British who first put it to good military use.¹³¹ It was a critical advantage in the two most dangerous theaters for Britain, the Battle of Britain and the Battle of the Atlantic. Martin van Creveld argues that Allied decimetric radar, which devastated the U-boats, was one of the few instances of a single technological development having a decisive effect in a theater of war.¹³² Similarly, the Germans fell far behind the British in code-breaking, for which the British invented the first modern computer. The British code-breaking headquarters at Bletchley employed the creative talents of various social undesirables (even by British standards) who would have been in concentration camps if Germans, but who maintained operational security far better than did German scientists working on secret weapons at Peenemünde.¹³³ Although they did not have big rallies in the night with searchlights, British were also capable of staging shows when needed. They created a fake “First Army Group” in Eastern England, made of up of inflatable tanks and fake radio traffic, which helped convince the Germans that the D-Day invasion of Normandy was only a diversion.

The technology of economic development. For those who are prone to see the Third Reich as an economically and technologically rational state, two leading examples in civilian technology promoted by the state are the autobahns and the

¹²⁹ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (1994), 583.

¹³⁰ Poster in Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion: World War II* (1993), 27 (my translation).

¹³¹ Peter Townsend, *Duel of Eagles* (1972), 51-2.

¹³² Martin van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present* (1989), 229.

¹³³ John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: The Value ~ and Limitations ~ of What the Military Can Learn about the Enemy* (2002), 263, et passim.

Volkswagen. Both were useful projects, but both were mismanaged by the Nazis and turned to the purposes of propaganda instead of effective economic development. As Uwe Oster points out in “The Autobahn Myth” (1996), they were designed and proposed by the government of the Weimar Republic, but were opposed by the Nazis as a bourgeois project at that time.¹³⁴ After taking power in 1933, the Nazis adopted the plans and made great propaganda use of them with feature films, novels, paintings, poems, posters, and stamps which celebrated them as *Straßen des Führers*, “roads of the leader.” As Richard Overly says, “The roads represented Hitler’s repeated desire to be regarded as the *Bauherr* of his people.”¹³⁵ Fritz Todt, the Minister of Armaments before Albert Speer, “compared the work to the building of the pyramids, or the roads of the Romans.”¹³⁶ They were real roads, to be sure, but the Nazis reframed the purpose of the roads to suit their *völkische* romanticism and hatred of the city.¹³⁷

James Shand points out that:

Ernst Vollbehr, the official artist of the *Reichsautobahn*, echoed a traditional “Volkish” hostility to large cities as he envisioned this great public-works project “sucking the unemployed out of the urban areas,” thereby making productive citizens out of the hitherto idle day-laborers and vagrants. In his 1938 dissertation, Erich Volk waxed enthusiastic over what he saw as a Nazi decision to reverse the nineteenth-century conversion of Germany into an Industriestaat. The new highways would supposedly further the re-agrarianization of Germany....¹³⁸

In other words, in the minds of these ideologues, autobahns were the means for reviving the schemes for deurbanization under Friedrich Wilhelm IV. And, as in the case of the sci-fi fantasy *Verschollen im Weltall*, an instrument of modern technology

¹³⁴ Uwe Oster, “The Autobahn Myth,” *History Today* 46.11 (November 1996) 39-41, 39, et seq. See also Erhard Schütz and Eckhard Gruber, *Mythos Reichsautobahn: Bau und Inszenierung der “Straßen des Führers” 1933-1941* (1996).

¹³⁵ Richard J. Overly, “Transportation and Rearmament in the Third Reich,” *The Historical Journal* 16.2 (June 1973) 389-409, 398.

¹³⁶ Overly, “Transportation and Rearmament in the Third Reich,” 398.

¹³⁷ This is exactly how Hitler himself saw them, when he claimed that “even in the more thickly populated spaces,” the Autobahn “reproduce the atmosphere of the open spaces.” Hitler quoted in Cameron and Stevens, *Hitler’s Table Talk*, # 320, 15 June 1943, Midday, page 707.

¹³⁸ James D. Shand, “The Reichsautobahn: Symbol for the Third Reich,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19.2 (April 1984) 189-200, 191.

was supposed to be a means of reversing the urbanization of modernity ~ but without any clear idea of how the rural landscape would support this modern population or continue to provide the technological means to keep the state strong. Although I know of no proof of cross-fertilization in their ideas, it is interesting to note that Volk's dissertation and *Verschollen im Weltall* were written in the same year, 1938. This specific idea of deurbanization seems to have been part of the *völkische Zeitgeist*.

Autobahns are only useful to the civilian population if they have autos to drive on them. This supposedly was the purpose of the Volkswagen, which was also called the *KdF-Wagen*, because it was promoted by *Kraft durch Freude*, the Strength through Joy program. But it was a scam. Millions of Germans paid their money in advance, but party officials embezzled the money and the autos never came off the production line. Upon war, the factories were converted, with great difficulty, and incompletely, to military use. Ironically, the first mass production of Volkswagens, a commercial success, was organized by British occupation authorities after the war.

Good roads might also serve a real purpose in military logistics. But the autobahns did not serve this material purpose. To begin with, the building was poorly managed in terms of military needs, and construction largely ended with the beginning of war in 1939. At that time, only 3,000 kilometers in a national network of 212,700 kilometers were finished, and only half of that was considered *kriegswichtig*, "strategic," or suitable for military use.¹³⁹ Even if the roads had been built to military requirements perfectly, it would have done little good because the German army was chronically deficient in motorized transport.

Symbolic weapons. There are few weapons more useless in modern warfare than swords and pistols.¹⁴⁰ Officers in most of the armed forces of the world still have ceremonial swords, but few of them since the end of the First World War, except Germany and Japan in the Second World War, continued to make swords or daggers a

¹³⁹ Overy, "Transportation and Rearmament in the Third Reich," 391.

part of their daily uniform. For the Germans, it was a fetish which began with paramilitary organizations such as the *Sturmabteilung* and the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, who issued daggers and cleavers with slogans inscribed in Gothic letters, as symbols of rank or achievement. Upon graduation from the *Hitlerjugend*, a young man was given a dagger, engraved with *Blut und Ehre*, “blood and honor.”¹⁴¹ A modern army does have limited use for a standard service pistol ~ if it is cheap and easy to maintain, so that such a low value weapon is not a drain on scarce resources. In the event of a huggermugger situation in which a pistol is actually useful, the one thing the soldier drawing the pistol requires most is that it will not jam. The German Luger P08 may be the most admired and sexiest pistol ever made. But it failed miserably on rational criteria. It was expensive, difficult to manufacture to tolerance, and highly susceptible to jamming.¹⁴²

The mysteries of military technology. It is easy to make fun of swords and pistols. But the German misconception of modern warfare was far more profound. They had some of the leading scientists and engineers in the world, even after stupidly exiling

¹⁴⁰ On the uselessness of pistols, see James Dunnigan, *How to Make War: A Comprehensive Guide To Modern Warfare* (1988), 56-7.

¹⁴¹ Toland, *Adolf Hitler*, 405. This grew out of the long-standing love for military organization and uniforms in Prussia and Germany discussed above. Some sporting groups, and even fire brigades, also issued such weapons. But their use had actually declined before the Nazis came in. “Prior to 1933,” Robin Lumsden says, “only a few regulation German daggers existed for wear by naval officers, selected higher ranks of the Fire Brigade, Forestry Service officials, members of hunting shooting associations and boys from various youth movements. By 1941, over twenty uniformed organizations had their own patterns of daggers, issued in more than fifty different styles for different categories of wearer.” Robin Lumsden, *Edged Weapons of Hitler’s Germany* (2001), 14.

¹⁴² A reference on pistols calls the Luger “very beautiful from a technical point of view,” before listing its “important disadvantages,” which included a tendency to jam, a high sensitivity to dirt or damage, difficulty using variations in ammunition, and high cost of manufacturing. A.E. Hartink, *Encyclopedia of Pistols and Revolvers* (1996), 29. The Germans were quite capable of making a better service pistol, and they did. That was the Walther P38, made in 1938. It used the internal Walther block action system which has become standard on automatics since that time and was considerably more robust than the Luger toggle, as well as cheaper to manufacture. It was intended to be a replacement of the Luger, but somehow never managed to become as popular with the *Wehrmacht*. Barrie Pitt, *The Military History of World War II* (1986), 55.

many brilliant scientists who were Jewish or politically undesirable,¹⁴³ but they systematically failed to effectively mobilize the talent. As Matthew Cooper says:

The Third Reich has too often been portrayed as a ruthlessly efficient centralized state, in which all effort during the years 1939-1945 was geared toward the requirements of total war. Reality, however, was somewhat different. The actual course of events proved not that totalitarian nations are necessarily best equipped to deal with the problems of modern war, but quite the opposite. One of the best examples lies in the scientific and research field, for here it was that the democracies who achieved the indispensable co-ordination between requirement and research, between political direction and science, not Germany. In contrast, her program was characterized by chaos rather than by determined organization. Her lack of any central planning which could co-ordinate the various centers of technological effort was to ensure that the Germans, despite their many achievements, ultimately failed to produce any war-winning weapon.¹⁴⁴

Contrary to the conventional image of an efficient Nazi war machine simply overwhelmed by American industrial production and Russian manpower, a growing body of recent literature supports the opposite view, that the Nazis were poor military strategists, even if impressive warriors at the tactical level, who made ineffective use of their economic resources and were less than astute in applying the technology of war. Two particularly good studies supporting this view are Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (1995),¹⁴⁵ and Kenneth Macksey, *Why the Germans Lose at War: The Myth of German Military Superiority* (1999). German mobilization of their industrial resources was so poor that, as Gerhard Weinberg points out, “the German army had fewer tanks and the German air force no more planes in June 1942 than in June 1941.”¹⁴⁶ The Nazis had hoped to gain significant resources by their initial conquests in Europe. But their political policies ran counter to economic rationality. They looted and dismantled industrial plants in occupied areas in a haphazard fashion, and found that they could not make much use of the equipment, especially without the skilled workers from those

¹⁴³ See Jean Medawar and David Pyke, *Hitler's Gift: The True Story of the Scientists Expelled by the Nazi Regime* (2001).

¹⁴⁴ Matthew Cooper, “Science and Technology ~ Brilliance and Confusion,” in Robert Cecil, ed., *Hitler's War Machine* (1975), 196.

¹⁴⁵ See also Richard J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (1994); Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 471-83.

areas. Their attempt to use slave labor from the occupied areas was grossly ineffective. And their oppressions drove away needed workers.¹⁴⁷

The greatest absurdity was the attempt to create a brand of “German physics” (*deutsche Physik*) which was opposed to the “Jewish physics” of relativity. German physics was a marginal movement eventually rejected by the regime at the urging of industrial and military leaders who realized how counterproductive it was.¹⁴⁸ This was similar to the way in which the regime eventually distanced itself, temporarily, as a matter of immediate tactics, from the parallel movement of “German faith” (*Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*) in the Protestant Churches. By the time that some sanity set in, however, the hostility to Albert Einstein and his ideas, and to Werner Heisenberg, the most brilliant of the physicists remaining in Germany, had already done considerable damage to German research programs.¹⁴⁹ Einstein, it should be noted, was not despised merely for being a Jew. He was especially hated because he was a cosmopolitan Jew and a devout pacifist who believed deeply in the international nature of science and saw the use of science for nationalism or militarism as the worst possible perversion of the scientific enterprise.¹⁵⁰ Despite the rehabilitation of Heisenberg in the eyes of the Nazis and some support for investigating nuclear physics in the scientific community, “Hitler remained hostile to the whole project,” as Overy says, and “When Speer tried to talk to him about the research Hitler condemned it as ‘a spawn of Jewish pseudo-science.’”¹⁵¹

More generally, despite brilliant scientists such as Heisenberg and Wernher von Braun, and despite highly sophisticated armament industries such as Krupp, the Germans failed to effectively integrate scientific research, industrial organization, and

¹⁴⁶ Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 409.

¹⁴⁷ Williamson Murray and Allan Millet, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (2000), 141-2, 318; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 431.

¹⁴⁸ Mark Walker, *Nazi Science: Myth, Truth, and the German Atomic Bomb* (1995), 180.

¹⁴⁹ Mark Walker, “National Socialism and German Physics,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 24.1 (January 1989) 63-89, 79, et passim.

¹⁵⁰ See Ronald Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (1971).

¹⁵¹ Richard J. Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (1995), 237.

military operations. It does not appear that they ever understood the need. An important concept in the Allied war effort was what came to be known as “operational research.” That was merely a bureaucratic way of saying that it worked better if scientists and warriors worked together as a team. This cross-disciplinary teamwork, for example, was another significant factor in winning two of the most critical battles for the Allies in the Second World War, the Battle of Britain against German bombers and the Battle of the Atlantic against German submarines.¹⁵² In the Battle of the Atlantic, the element of British-American cooperation and civilian interaction with the military on both sides of the ocean was also important. In all these ways, the greater openness of a multicultural liberal polyarchy was of great advantage. Scientists, industrialists, and warriors tended to work separately in Germany, with inventors putting time and resources into prospective weapons before consulting with the military on operational needs. In the one major program area which was characterized by a high level of interaction among the three parties, which was the attempt to develop various *Wunderwaffen* such as the V-1 and V-2 rockets, the effort was undermined by parochial rivalry between the *Heer* and the *Luftwaffe*. More importantly, while they had their minds in the clouds dreaming about the fanciful possibilities of these *Wunderwaffen*, the Germans failed to carefully consider the more mundane problems of their conventional forces. A fundamental problem in the German mentality, shared by both scientists and military officers, was the desire to create marvelous new weapons with little regard for the practical problems of industrial mass production and operational deployment. Overy aptly refers to this as German “technological fastidiousness,”¹⁵³ another way of saying “fetishization of technology.” The Allies also experimented with many different designs in the rapidly evolving technology during the Second World War. But they tended to quickly settle on a few basic designs, sometimes developed in joint projects between the British and the Americans, which

¹⁵² See both discussed in Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Two-Ocean War: The Definitive Short History of the United States Navy in World War II* (1963), 105-9.

thereby provided interoperability and simplicity of supply and maintenance, and then they mass produced those designs, while making incremental improvements, in staggering quantities. The Germans, in contrast, produced a tremendous number of designs, some of them excellent weapons, but then did not produce them in sufficient quantities and fell prey to problems of interoperability and maintenance within their own services.¹⁵⁴ And some of the major designs they did develop were impressive monsters rather than operationally appropriate weapons.

Immobile monsters on land. The lack of German mobility is surprising, because the Germans are associated with the image of the mechanical *Blitzkrieg*, the “lighting war.” Hitler claimed that “The German army is technically the most perfect in the world.”¹⁵⁵ It was a myth. Machines and mobility depend on logistics, particularly transport. Despite an impressive cutting edge of tanks and tactical aircraft, the “point of the spear” which so dramatically rolled over France in 1940 and into Russia in 1941, the Germans lacked the motor transport and supply chain, the “logistical tail,” to properly support either operations. In Russia, the German soldiers suffered severely from such basic mistakes as the failure to provide warm clothing for the winter. Overy adds considerable clarity to the picture by explaining that the Nazi army was “essentially two armies, one small motorized army based on tanks and trucks, and a vast old-fashioned army still reliant on rail and horse.”¹⁵⁶ To the end of the war, the German *Heer* was far more dependent on horse transport than the Allies¹⁵⁷ (the Russians got their trucks from the United States) and it had even planned to bring thousands of horses along for Operation Sea Lion (*Unternehmen Seelöwe*) the planned invasion of Britain. As the war progressed and logistics collapsed, the *Heer*

¹⁵³ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 5.

¹⁵⁴ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 217, et passim.

¹⁵⁵ Hitler quoted in Cameron and Stevens, *Hitler's Table Talk*, # 7,24-5 July 1941, Night, page 13.

¹⁵⁶ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 215.

¹⁵⁷ John Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth: How Hitler and the Allies Misread the Strategic Realities of World War II* (2003), 75, 109.

experienced what Overy calls “a progressive ‘demodernization.’”¹⁵⁸ The lack of logistics and infantry motor transport to support the tanks was probably a significant factor, early on, in the somewhat perplexing German failure to follow through at Dunkirk. And it was indisputably a major factor in the German failure to complete the conquest of Western Russia.

The Germans built some of the most powerful tanks of the Second World War, such as the Tiger Panzerkampfwagen VI. It was an impressive monster, and it was devastating when it went toe-to-toe with American and British Shermans. But it was costly to manufacture, the Germans could never produce it in sufficient quantities, and it often broke down for lack of tank transporters, salvage gear, and maintenance. John Mosier says that the Tiger was in the “German tradition of overweight and overengineered vehicles.”¹⁵⁹ “In the long run,” as Roger Ford says, “the Tiger would prove to be deeply flawed,” and ever larger versions of the class which were built toward the end of the war, partly in response to Hitler’s personal gigantomania, only should have demonstrated to the Germans that “the law of diminishing returns was at work.”¹⁶⁰ (Recall the S-curve discussed in § 4.) More fundamentally, the Germans failed to understand that having the most powerful tank on the battlefield was not necessarily an advantage in the multi-dimensional combined arms environment of modern warfare. As John Mosier argues generally in *The Blitzkrieg Myth* (2003), it was coordinated tactical air power, not the tank, which was the decisive weapon of the land battle in the Second World War. Although many see the Second World War as the war in which the tank came into its own, it quickly became something of an atavism as the war progressed, a modern version of the overly armored knight facing the longbow at Crécy. Heavy German tanks on the Western Front were overcome by Allied aircraft (which prevented them from moving by day in the later phases of the war), by coordinated artillery fire (which the Americans, with their West Point

¹⁵⁸ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 215.

¹⁵⁹ Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth*, 181.

engineering mentality, excelled in), and by use of mines (a technology which the British and Americans mastered with specialized mine-clearing equipment, but which the Germans neglected). As Christopher Wilbeck says, “Allied forces recognized the superiority of the Tiger and did not attempt to engage it frontally, if at all.”¹⁶¹ German reliance on the Tiger was a misfit to “strategic realities.”¹⁶² Allied armies, on the other hand, learned that the most important warriors in the land dimension were the artillery spotter and the air support coordinator. As Overy puts it nicely, “Allied forces preferred the bomb to the bayonet.”¹⁶³ Instead of meeting heroic German warriors on their terms, they coldly calculated how to rain down death from the sky.¹⁶⁴

Great ships turning circles at sea or stuck in port. Both the Germans and the Japanese also built huge battleships. It was equally misdirected. Their battleships were often immobilized by the shortage of fuel oil. In part because of the long-standing inferiority of Germany at sea compared to Britain, in part because of the impact of submarines and surface commerce raiders in the First World War, and in part because of the Versailles Treaty restrictions, the *Kriegsmarine* had previously focused on pocket battleships, cruisers, and submarines in its buildup to the Second World War. But that was never satisfying to Hitler or the *Kriegsmarine*. They had a grandiose plan, “Plan Z,” for a fleet which would include 10 battleships and 4 aircraft carriers.¹⁶⁵ “Hitler was fascinated with prestige and power,” as Michael Veranov says, “and loved to fill his sketchbooks with designs for battleships of gargantuan size.”¹⁶⁶ Admiral

¹⁶⁰ Ford, *Germany's Secret Weapons*, 122.

¹⁶¹ Christopher Wilbeck, *Sledgehammers: Strengths and Flaws of Tiger Tank Battalions in World War II* (2004), 56.

¹⁶² Wilbeck, *Sledgehammers*, 191. American military planners were fully aware of the one-to-one superiority of German tanks, but they made a considered decision to stay with tanks of medium weight because they were determined to maintain a more mobile war, which also depended on a logistical chain crossing an ocean. *Sledgehammers*, 206-9.

¹⁶³ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 227.

¹⁶⁴ Murray and Millett, *War to Be Won*, 592; William O'Neill, *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (1993), 352-5.

¹⁶⁵ Charles Thomas, *The German Navy in the Nazi Era* (1990), 179.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Veranov, *The Third Reich at War: The Full Story of the Most Awesome Military Machine the World Had Ever Known* (1998), 351.

Erich Raeder was happy to support these ambitions until he realized that Hitler's timetables were entirely unrealistic.¹⁶⁷ It was never clear how the *Kriegsmarine* could go up against Britain's 8 large carriers, or the larger American fleet, in a main fleet action. But it became clear, as the Second World War progressed, that it was the aircraft carrier which was the dominant weapon at sea. The Germans invested in, but never completed, the construction of a large carrier to be named the *Graf Zeppelin*, to commemorate the giant air weapon which had been so useless in the First World War. Instead, the Germans completed two huge battleships, the *Bismarck* and the *Tirpitz*, named after the creator of the German Empire and the admiral who encouraged Wilhelm II in his pointless dreadnought competition with Britain. These two *Schlachtschiffe* were the largest and most heavily gunned warships in the Atlantic, but neither produced any strategic results. The *Bismarck* was sunk at sea after being forced to run in circles with a rudder disabled by a plane from a British carrier. The *Tirpitz* was sunk in port. In the final engagement of the *Bismarck*, as Williamson Murray and Allan Millett say, "The damage the German battleship absorbed indicated the wonderful workmanship of German industry, but the episode again underscored the bankruptcy of Germany's naval strategy."¹⁶⁸

The Germans pioneered the U-boat, and they built excellent boats in the Second World War. But British code breaking, radar, sonar, and domination of the surface and air of the ocean overcame that threat. The U-boats were especially susceptible to code breaking because the *Kriegsmarine* insisted on highly centralized command and control of the U-boat wolf packs. The Allied response to the submarine threat was an example of the strength of polyarchies in overcoming their initial incompetence at war. Just as British admirals had refused to adopt convoying in the First World War until pressured by the civilian leadership, American admirals refused to learn from the

¹⁶⁷ Thomas, *German Navy in the Nazi Era*, 174-82.

¹⁶⁸ Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 243.

British until forced to do so by civilians and public outrage.¹⁶⁹ But then, when they did, they developed a sophisticated system for administering convoys.¹⁷⁰

Going down, in a blaze of glory, in the air. The Battle of Britain, as Mosier puts it, “revealed the formidable power of a mobilized industrially competent democracy.”¹⁷¹ It was a prototypical battle of bureaucrats against warriors, which the bureaucrats won. The Germans seemed to think that air war was a Wagnerian drama. The Stuka was equipped with a siren, to make it more terrifying, which resembled the sound of an air raid siren. An air force, more than any other service, requires technological competence. But pilots, in the wrong institutional culture, can be the worst of the retrograde romantic warriors. The *Luftwaffe*, which would have been plagued by that culture in any case, suffered the special curse of being under the command of a hero of the air in the First World War, Hermann Göring, a charismatic and genuinely popular figure, although also sometimes ridiculed, whose “massive figure and extraordinary vitality suggested, even to contemporary writers, the attributes of classical heroes.”¹⁷² Göring played some part, although how decisive has never been clear, in the great blunder at Dunkirk.¹⁷³ He promised Hitler that the *Luftwaffe* would finish the job for the *Heer*. He failed to do that. But when the *Kriegsmarine* and the *Heer* could not agree on how to accomplish Operation Sea Lion, Göring stepped forward again to promise Hitler that the *Luftwaffe* would destroy British air and sea power as a prelude to the invasion. “While fanatically proud of his *Luftwaffe*,” according to Jon Lake, “Göring had not made any real effort to prepare himself to lead it. He did not understand modern air power.... As an ex-fighter pilot he was naturally interested in fighters.... But transport aircraft, logistics and the technicalities of air

¹⁶⁹ Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 378; Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 249-50.

¹⁷⁰ Morison, *The Two-Ocean War*, 103-15.

¹⁷¹ Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth*, 195.

¹⁷² Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership*, Michael Bullock, trans. (1979) [*Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches: Profile einer totalitären Herrschaft*, 1964], 73.

¹⁷³ Jon Lake, *The Battle of Britain* (2000), 25.

power bored him.”¹⁷⁴ Peter Townsend, who flew in the Battle of Britain under Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, the Chief of Fighter Command, makes the same observation about Göring and draws an interesting comparison to Dowding. “Göring lacked the wisdom, judgment, and scientific knowledge needed to win against a highly organized defense backed by twenty years of professional experience and managed by a technician like Dowding.”¹⁷⁵ Dowding believed in “science thoughtfully applied to operational requirements.”¹⁷⁶ Another of Göring’s British counterparts was the Air Minister, Sir Archibald Sinclair. Overy observes that Sinclair, a civilian with no flying experience who “made no pretense of commanding the Royal Air Force” and who allowed the system to run by committees with professional air staffs, “epitomized that British elite of dignified public servants so much despised and ridiculed in German propaganda. Göring, on the other hand, was everything that Sinclair was not.”¹⁷⁷ “The British system required effective committee men and military managers.”¹⁷⁸ So did the German system. But they did not know it. Murray concurs that “Göring had a disastrous impact” on the *Luftwaffe*, and notes, among many errors, “Göring’s refusal to follow recommendations that the *Luftwaffe* devote 20 to 30 percent of production to provide adequate inventories of spare parts.”¹⁷⁹ Werner Baumbach, German General of the Bombers, provides a similar appraisal. The *Luftwaffe* suffered from (1) “Lack of technical foresight,” (2) “Disregard of the most elementary rules of rational production,” and (3) “Irresolution and lack of logical thinking.”¹⁸⁰

Not so wonderful wonder weapons. German aircraft designers, in both World Wars, were afflicted with gigantomania.¹⁸¹ They designed monstrous bombers which were leaps ahead in design instead of making incremental improvements. The Nazi

¹⁷⁴ Lake, *Battle of Britain*, 40.

¹⁷⁵ Townsend, *Duel of Eagles*, 345.

¹⁷⁶ Townsend, *Duel of Eagles*, 176.

¹⁷⁷ Richard J. Overy, *The Battle of Britain: The Myth and the Reality* (2000), 31-2.

¹⁷⁸ Overy, *Battle of Britain*, 32.

¹⁷⁹ Williamson Murray, *The Luftwaffe 1933-45: Strategy for Defeat* (1996), 5, 14.

¹⁸⁰ Werner Baumbach, *The Life and Death of the Luftwaffe* (1960), 41-2.

¹⁸¹ Albrecht, “Military Technology and National Socialist Ideology,” 92-5.

technological fetish was most clearly evidenced in the highly inventive but largely useless *Wunderwaffen*. The only one which came close to being a war-winning weapon was the Schwalbe Messerschmitt 262 jet propelled aircraft developed late in the war. It was a deadly aircraft, but also dangerous to fly, and it was badly mishandled, in part because Hitler insisted on having it developed as a bomber contrary to the technical advice of his military. At that point in the war, there was very little high grade fuel left for flying it. And the few M262s which got into the air were “simply overwhelmed by the great numbers and longer endurance of the American P51 Mustangs.”¹⁸² Lack of German provision for home fighter defense left their industry and transportation systems exposed to Allied bombing, which gradually had a devastating effect on production. Murray notes that, despite the truly heroic efforts of overwhelmed German fighter pilots, “one recurring theme was that of the cowardice of Germany’s fighter pilots and their refusal to press home attacks on bombers.”¹⁸³ In desperation, Germans came up with designs for fighters which demanded extraordinary physical tolerances, and sometimes suicide, in the hope that the limitations of technology could be overcome by ideological fervor.¹⁸⁴ The V-1 and V-2 rockets, the *Vergeltungswaffe* or “revenge weapons,” were another case in which brilliant designs were futile.¹⁸⁵ A common view is that the *Wunderwaffen* came too late to help Germany. But Weinberg argues that, in the case of the V-1 and V-2 rockets, “their employment came too soon rather than too late” because such inaccurate weapons could only have had an effect if they were launched in massive quantities, which was

¹⁸² Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 763.

¹⁸³ Murray, *Luftwaffe*, 210.

¹⁸⁴ Ford, *Germany’s Secret Weapons*, 22, 38, et passim; Albrecht, “Military Technology and National Socialist Ideology,” 97, et seq; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 775; Murray, *Luftwaffe*, 228; Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 317, 319.

¹⁸⁵ There were a number of similar weapons, much less well known because they had even less effect on the war, although some of them did see limited operational deployment. Those included the *Hockdrückpumpe* (V-3) advanced cannon, the *Rheinbote* artillery missile, the *Blohm und Voss* 143 anti-ship glide bomb, the *Blohm und Voss* 246 long-range glide bomb, the *Friedensengel* air-launched torpedo, the *Mistel* unmanned bomber, the *Zitterrochen* supersonic guided missile, and the *Feuerlilie* anti-

beyond the German industrial capacity, and the programs for their development sapped precious resources from production of conventional weapons.¹⁸⁶

The German way of war, especially in contrast with the bureaucratic and businesslike British way of war, or the technocratic American way of war,¹⁸⁷ reflected the baneful influence of German spiritualistic culture. It was the result of a constellation of dangerous myths. Roman armies were beaten by the rustic purity of Hermann. Barbarossa was a great emperor because of his grandiose imperial pretensions despite his incompetence as unifier of Germany. Faith rather than works brings salvation, and the grace of God is given to an elect without any reason. The essence of the nation is its martial spirit and the natural leaders of the nation are its military aristocrats. Heroism is innocent and naïve, even while violent and mad for power. The *Wille zu Macht* is the ultimate reality and morality. These dangerous myths germinated with all the greater force after they were proven to be bad ideas in the First World War because they thrived in a spiritual culture which was predisposed to self-consciously reinforce them. These ideas led the Germans down their special path in history, a path which ascended to apparent heights before falling over the cliff, to a heroic but stupid *Götterdämmerung*.

aircraft missile. See, generally, Ford, *Germany's Secret Weapons*; William Breuer, *Secret Weapons of World War II* (2000).

¹⁸⁶ Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 563. See also Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 333.

¹⁸⁷ Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (1973).

§ 10. Dangerous myths

The last section showed how the German way of war was doomed to failure, despite the technical achievements of the Germans, by their heroic and spiritual conception of technology. This section complements that analysis with an examination of some specific myths which led to the German *Götterdämmerung*. The segment on “Dangerous myths and the accursed inheritance” presents the reflection, in the realm of ideology and philosophy, of the conflicts in the more material realms identified above. This is where some of the specific connections with the avatars of polarity in § 4 also become more obvious. The unconstrained and heroic nihilism of the Ring, the mythological thinking of German leaders such as Wilhelm II and Hitler, the conflict of *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation*, and the politicalization of aesthetics all relate directly to a number of theories reviewed in § 4. Much as the discussion of Bismarck in the previous segment is an ironic counterpoint to the irrationality of modern German politics, *Faust* provides an ironic counterpoint to the Ring in the realm of high culture. *Faust*, although popularly read as an affirmation of unconstrained heroic and romantic striving for mystical power, just as Bismarck was popularly presented as a romantic hero of unconstrained militarism, is actually a work which reveals the deep ambivalence of German culture and the dangers of unconstrained striving for power. The segment on the “Revenge of the gods: The new religion of Nazism” is a sort of conclusion to all the preceding historical sections (§§ 7-10), this short segment sums up and crystallizes the characterization of Nazism as form of religion, and as an extreme manifestation of the spiritual polarity in culture, in accordance with the theory of fascism presented in § 4.

Dangerous myths and the accursed inheritance

Ideology is real. It kills. Yet it lives in the mind, in consciousness. In the mythology of Hermann or Barbarossa, it matters not what they actually did, but what they represented in the minds of later Germans. The theology of Luther or the

philosophy of Nietzsche has little to do with what Luther or Nietzsche intended except in so far as they were significant epiphenomena of their *Zeitgeist*, who were then incorporated into the evolving *Zeitgeist*. And it matters not, that the Germans had no essential qualities of spiritualism or heroism which distinguished them from other members of the species. It matters only that they came to believe that they did, that they constructed such myths about themselves and acted them out. Independently of all the historical and comparative arguments already made for the *Sonderweg* theory, a strong argument for it is that the Germans, themselves, believed that they were a spiritual journey down a special path through history.

But where did they think that special path was destined to lead them? There is probably no better example of the dangerousness of myths, no more obvious artistic symbol of the heroic urge and fanaticism which brought Germany to disaster in the World Wars, than Richard Wagner's "Ring Cycle," *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1853-1874). The *Ring* was based on a number of older myths, especially the *Nibelungenlied*, the "Song of the Nibelungen," a popular epic poem from the 13th Century. Elements in the *Nibelungenlied* may be based on Hermann's rebellion against the Romans in 9 CE.¹ Whether or not there was such a genealogical connection, it became a similar foundational myth in the German psyche. As David Levin puts it, from a psychoanalytic perspective, "the *Nibelungenlied* has repeatedly served as a privileged object ~ if not a fetish ~ in the fervent search for an origin in German cultural identity."²

When Wilhelm II fatalistically committed Germany to the First World War in 1914, despite clear warnings that it would lead to ruin, he invoked the mystical *Nibelungentreue*, the warrior's absolute blood oath to the tribe, as justification for his

¹ Siegfried Fischer-Fabian, *Die ersten Deutschen: Über das rätselhafte Volk der Germanen* (2003), 325-9, et passim.

² David Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen: The Dramaturgy of Disavowal* (1998), 19.

willful submission to fate.³ Then there was Hitler. The Wagner festivals were sacred rites to him, Wagner's home at Bayreuth was a shrine, and Wagner was "a revelation of the divine" to him.⁴ Wagner's operas expressed his innermost political and philosophical views⁵ better than any formal party platforms or the canonical writings of proto-Nazi philosophers such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain⁶ or Alfred Rosenberg⁷ ~ although both of them joined him in deep admiration of Wagner.⁸ Hitler said that "Wagner's works are the embodiment of everything to which National Socialism aspires.... In order to understand what National Socialism is, one must read Wagner."⁹ That is exactly what we must do, however strange it may seem, in order to understand the *wertrational* self-consciousness of the Germans.

In 1940 ~ after Hitler had invaded Poland and begun the Second World War, but before Hitler had sealed his own fate by irrationally invading Russia and declaring war on the United States in 1941 ~ a former Nazi official in exile, Hermann Rauschning, published a memoir in which he quoted Hitler discussing the possible outcome of the war. Hitler said that "We may be destroyed, but if we are, we shall drag a world with us ~ a world in flames." After this declaration, Hitler also hummed a tune from the last part of the *Ring*, the *Götterdämmerung*, the *Twilight of the Gods*, in which the hero, Siegfried, and the home of the gods, Valhalla, are consumed by flames.¹⁰ In another

³ John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (1974), 5

⁴ Christa Schroeder paraphrasing or quoting Hitler, in Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (2002), 237. See also Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (1992), 45.

⁵ See, especially, the somewhat controversial interpretation in Joachim Köhler, *Wagner's Hitler: The Prophet and His Disciple*, Ronald Taylor, trans. (2000) [*Wagners Hitler: Der Prophet und sein Vollstrecker*, 1997]. Although Köhler may overstate the thesis somewhat, there is certainly no doubt that the heroic warrior ethos of Wagner's operas resonated deeply with Hitler, and that it did coincide nicely with his view of politics. See also Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 213.

⁶ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1-2, John Lees, trans. (1911) [*Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1899].

⁷ Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of our Age*, James B. Whiskey, trans. (1982) [*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 1930].

⁸ Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (1972), 12-3.

⁹ Quoted in Köhler, *Wagner's Hitler*, 93.

¹⁰ Hermann Rauschning, *The Voice of Destruction* ([1940] 2003), 5.

memoir written in 1942, Rauschning recalls Hitler musing that “National Socialism could come to grief, like all that was noble; one day, perhaps, like Siegfried, it would bleed to death from the treachery of a malevolent Hagen.”¹¹ Alan Bullock argues that Rauschning was quite accurate in “describing Nazism as the St. Vitus’s Dance of the twentieth century” with “its essential element of nihilism.”¹² (“Nihilism” is a faddish term now thrown around much in postmodern discourse,¹³ with little appreciation for what true nihilism was, as a concrete policy in the Second World War.)

As the Third Reich collapsed in 1945 and even Hitler could no longer deny the fact of defeat, he attempted to institute a policy of scorched earth, *Politik der verbrannten Erde*. When the Russians gave ground to the Germans at an earlier phase of the war, a “scorched earth” policy was a rational military tactic. In that case, however, the Russians pulled back their people and their industry, breaking down factories and shipping them east to be reassembled again, to fight again another day. That was not what Hitler had in mind for Germany, as Albert Speer soon realized to his horror.¹⁴ Hitler’s *Politik der verbrannten Erde* was intended as a *Götterdämmerung*, a destruction of the German nation itself, which had proven unworthy of his heroic leadership ~ after which he would also have himself and his mistress consumed in flames, just as Wagner disposed of Siegfried and Brünnhilde in the *Götterdämmerung* of the *Ring*.¹⁵ During the collapse of the fronts on both east and west, Hitler declared that “if the German people are not prepared to give everything for the sake of their self-preservation, very well! Then let them disappear!”¹⁶ Then on 19 March 1945, as he issued orders for *verbrannte Erde*, he proclaimed that “If the war is to be lost, the

¹¹ Hermann Rauschning, *Men of Chaos* (1942), 103.

¹² Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (1962), 462.

¹³ See Tom Darby, Béla Egyed, and Ben Jones, eds., *Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism: Essays on Interpretation, Language and Politics* (1989).

¹⁴ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, Richard and Clara Winston, trans. (1970) [*Erinnerungen*, 1969], 510, et seq.

¹⁵ See Robert Waite, *The Kaiser & the Führer: A Comparative Study of Personality & Politics* (1998), 287.

¹⁶ Hitler, quoted in John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (1976), 707.

nation will also perish. This fate is inevitable.... The nation has proved itself weak, and the future belongs solely to the stronger eastern nation. Besides, those who remain after the battle are of little value; for the good have fallen.”¹⁷

Now, consider an interpretation of the myth which may be helpful in the analysis of German culture, although it does not mean that Hitler, Nazis, German Romanics, or Wagner himself necessarily read the myth this way. My analysis is not *mythos*. It is *logos* interpreting *mythos*, or *Erklärung* rather than *Verstehen*. Indeed, it was their inability to read the story this way which brought about their doom. In Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*, Brünnhilde takes from the dead body of Siegfried the magic ring of power, *der Ring des Nibelungen* which is the subject of the story, to contemplate for a moment before killing herself. Unlike the heroes, gods, giants, and dwarves in the story, she fully understands that no good can come from the magic ring. (This is the point Plato makes with his magic ring in the *Republic*, and what the Hobbits know in the *Lord of the Rings*.) The *Rhinegold* from which the ring is created gives one power, but at the price of love, which is the only thing making life and the power to live it worthwhile.¹⁸ Brünnhilde calls the ring her “inheritance,” but also an “accursed band,” as she gives it back to the Rhinedaughters.¹⁹ Those watching this *Götterdämmerung* on stage seemed to exalt in the beauty of the heroic tragedy, and to identify with Siegfried’s self-destructive quest for power, rather than learn from Brünnhilde. Even Max Weber, writing during the First World War in 1916, missed the lesson when he justified the war as Germany’s “accursed duty” to heroically resist Western *Gesellschaft*.²⁰

Earlier in the *Ring*, Wotan has seen the curse of the ring at work among the giants and has admitted to Erda, a goddess of the Earth, that it would only bring the destruction of the gods. But he cannot resist sending Siegfried on the quest for the ring

¹⁷ Quoted in Bullock, *Hitler*, 463.

¹⁸ Richard Wagner, *Ring of the Nibelung*, in *Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung*, Stewart Spencer, trans. (1993) [*Der Ring des Nibelungen*, 1853-1874], *Das Rheingold*, scene 1, page 68.

¹⁹ Wagner, *Ring of the Nibelung*, *Götterdämmerung*, act 3, scene 3, page 349.

despite that knowledge. In the *Ring*, Erda and Brünnhilde both play roles analogous to Athena in the *Odyssey*, while Wotan and Siegfried play roles analogous to Odysseus, with Wotan doubling as both Zeus, the king of the gods giving way to his rebellious daughter, and also as Odysseus when assuming the guise of the *Wanderer* to see Erda. But there is a big difference. In the *Ring*, unlike the *Odyssey*, the lust for power or *thymos*, represented by Odysseus and Siegfried, is not overcome with wisdom or *sophia*, represented by Athena and Brünnhilde. Siegfried is not a wily Odysseus who masters foreign opponents through guile, with help from Athena. Without mentioning Odysseus, Levin makes the comparison in the role of Siegfried:

Siegfried is simply too naïve.... While he is a true hero in battle...he is a dupe when it comes to the pitfalls of cultural communication, falling prey to the elementary cultural manipulations that a moderately savvy hero should be able to avoid. Why should this be? In part, Siegfried has been consistently stylized since the nineteenth century as an agent of a long-lost natural state, one where men were strong and wise in the ways of the forest, but necessarily less adept in the ways of civilization. Thus Siegfried has served as a player in the critique of culture.²¹

The “critique of culture” in this context means the critique of civilization on behalf of culture, *Kultur* versus *Zivilisation*, which was a pervasive theme in Germany. This stylized representation of Siegfried as the innocent hero of *Kultur* was drawn more sharply in a silent film version of the *Nibelungenlied* directed by Fritz Lang,²² *Die Nibelungen* (1924), produced during the feverish cultural warfare of the Weimar Republic. An “avowed purpose” of the film, Levin says, was “to outwit (or better, to out-culture) Hollywood by exploiting the German’s supposedly superior cultural tradition, and through it, their privileged access to the universal...”²³ Lang said that he intended the film to be “the spiritual shrine of a nation...a film that would belong to the

²⁰ Max Weber, “Between Two Laws” [“Zwischen zwei Gesetzen,” 1916], in *Political Writings*, 76.

²¹ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 12.

²² Fritz Lang was actually half Jewish, but so popular as a promoter of *völkische* art that Joseph Goebbels wanted him to lead the Nazi Culture Chamber for film. Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (1992), 56.

²³ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 97.

Volk,” a *Volk* which was “full of longing for heroic adventures.”²⁴ There is evidence, as well, that it became a model for Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* (1934-5), the highly successful propaganda documentary of the Nuremberg Nazi Party rally in 1934.²⁵

In the film *Nibelungen*, Lang gives Alberich, a *Nibelung* dwarf, the worst stereotypical features of the hated Jew and makes him a representative of all the corruptions of *Zivilisation*, in contrast to the innocent purity of Siegfried, a blond warrior on a white horse. It is an odd moral stance, of course, because Siegfried is a thief and murderer. But so were noble knights in the Middle Ages. Siegfried overpowers Alberich and turns the *Nibelungen* to stone, but is then betrayed and stabbed in the back with a spear by another warrior. The backstabber is Hagen, a fellow human in the original myth, *Nibelungenlied*, and in the film, *Nibelungen*, but the son of Alberich the *Nibelung* in the more famous opera, the *Ring*. By this confusion of myths, Hagen becomes the perfect symbol of the disguised enemy at home, the Jew or the Communist, pretending to be a loyal German liberal or socialist. “To the end,” as Levin says, “Siegfried remains ignorant: he is happily and remarkably oblivious to the plotting that surrounds him.”²⁶ At the end of the First World War, contrary to all reality, German officers decided that this had been their fate. When General Ludendorff announced the capitulation, one of them wrote that, “It made me think of Siegfried with Hagen’s spear plunged into his back.”²⁷ Thus was born the *Dolchstoßlegende* or “stab in the back legend,” which was so effective in mobilizing conservative forces against the Weimar Republic.

The significant difference after the Second World War was the contrary sense of innocence lost ~ although not without trauma, denial, and controversy. One other notable work of art, a commentary after the fact, provides a useful capstone to this

²⁴ Lang, quoted in Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 97, 131.

²⁵ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 99.

²⁶ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 116.

²⁷ Quoted in Köhler, *Wagner's Hitler*, 78.

analysis of myths. That is a film appearing in German as *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (1989), about a girl growing into a woman, and taking a metaphorical voyage of discovery, as she exposes the Nazi past of her small town. The title is translated into English as *The Nasty Girl*, but this is perhaps a bait and switch for viewers in search of an arty foreign sex flick. A more precise translation would be *The Dreadful Girl*. Appropriately enough, *Das schreckliche Mädchen* echoes Homer's depiction of Athena as *deinë theos*, the "dread god" or "the awesome one in pigtailed," or the *paid' aïdêlon*, "that mad and baneful maid."²⁸ In *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, the dreadful girl, Sonja Rosenburger, opens the film with a quote from the first lines of the *Nibelungenlied*. *Uns ist in alten mæren, wunders vil geseit....* "We have been told in ancient tales many marvels of famous heroes..."²⁹ Her role, as Levin points out, is to destroy modern myths and bring down false heroes. There, finally, after the fact, a German female is the one who overcomes the *thymos* of the self-destructive German heroes with her *sophia*. Sonja is Odysseus and Athena, and also Brünnhilde, the avenging Valkyrie.

Levin emphasizes that the lines from the opening of *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, "We have been told in ancient tales many marvels of famous heroes," were already a story about stories, "a scene of retelling," when appearing at the beginning of the *Nibelungenlied* in the 13th Century.³⁰ This is an observation which fits perfectly with the analysis of the German problem in terms of the spiritual cultural polarity. Both instances, the original reflection on ancient tales of heroes in the *Nibelungenlied* and the ironic recital of the lines in *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, are expressions of collective self-consciousness, a conscious reflection on what German consciousness has been before. But this is self-consciousness of opposite polarity in the two instances. In the first instance, as the heroic myths are invoked in the *Nibelungenlied* in the 13th Century, and then replayed in Wagner's *Ring* in the 19th Century before the

²⁸ Homer, *The Odyssey* [c. 700 BCE], Robert Fitzgerald, trans. (1998), 7.40-1; *The Iliad* [c. 700 BCE], A.T. Murray, trans. (1924), 5.870.

²⁹ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 19, 145-6; Hatto, *Nibelungenlied*, 17.

³⁰ Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen*, 19, 145-6.

First World War, and then in Fritz Lang's *Nibelungen* in the 20th Century before the Second World War, the retelling is an ever deeper reaffirmation of the original heroic impulse, a cultivation of *thymos*, and a denial of the fact of failure, a rejection of *sophia*. This is the self-consciousness of the spiritualistic polarity, a self-conscious refusal of adaptation, a celebration of the tragic hubris which insists on running off the edge of the cliff in diagram 1, not with genuine ignorance, but with a pretence at the innocence of ignorance. On the other hand, when Sonja invokes the myths ironically in the *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, this is the self-consciousness of the materialistic antithesis, the rejection of the pretence of innocence in the face of historical fact.

A number of historians have agreed with Thomas Mann's observation, as Ron Rosenbaum restates it in *Explaining Hitler* (1998), "that at the heart of Hitler's appeal to the German people was his presentation of himself as a mythmaking artist rather than as a politician."³¹ Berel Lang sees Nazism as a "phenomenon of imaginative evil"³² and Hitler as an artist of evil.³³ This is accurate in a sense, in that Hitler saw himself as a godlike creator with the power to reshape humanity, the *Bauherr* of Germany.³⁴ But that sort of "art" is political. This brings us to the confusing concept of fascism as the "aestheticization of politics,"³⁵ an unfortunate term which implies exactly the opposite of what the phenomenon is. It is actually the "politicalization of aesthetics," in the substantial sense that all matters of art take on political meaning.³⁶ The content of politics, conversely, is not determined by aesthetic considerations in a fascist regime. Much as with the sometimes subtle concept of self-consciousness, it

³¹ Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (1998), 217.

³² Berel Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (1990), 47.

³³ Lang's thesis analyzed and summarized in Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, chapter 11.

³⁴ Richard J. Overy, "Transportation and Rearmament in the Third Reich," *The Historical Journal* 16.2 (June 1973) 389-409, 398.

³⁵ See Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (1993).

³⁶ See the rather confusing discussion of these concepts in Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (1993), 164-9, et seq., and the equally confusing discussion in the original text where the "aestheticization of politics" was coined, Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" ("Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit"), in *Illuminations*, Harry Zohn, trans. (1969) [*Illuminationen*, 1955].

may be difficult to keep clear about the polarity, the direction of the influence at work. In this *völkische* mythology and the fascist ritual which builds upon it, the political movement gains power from an aesthetic appeal. But the aesthetic creation, in both form and content, is shaped by the influence and purpose of the political ideology, not the other way around.

There is, to be sure, considerable artistry, poetry, and music in Wagner's *Ring*. But he self-consciously intended that his work serve a larger political or cultural purpose, which was the special mission of the Germans to restore a lost wholeness to the Modern Age.³⁷ As a story, the *Ring* is "perhaps the most mystifying work of art of the last few thousand years."³⁸ Most great works of mythology, from the *Old Testament* to the *Nibelungenlied*, are poorly crafted works. They derive their aesthetic appeal from an ideological content which denies any literary logic, and from a mythological structure which gains ritualistic power, rather than losing it, from its mystery. As Goethe says, "The more incommensurable and incomprehensible for the understanding a poetic creation may be, the better."³⁹ In a materialistic self-conscious reflection, after the end of the dream that became a nightmare, Albert Speer was almost as appalled by the aesthetic poverty of the monumental architectural designs he had created for Hitler as he was by the criminality of the regime.⁴⁰ He had thought that Hitler's "cultural speeches" were brilliant when he first heard them. Rereading them in prison, in search of inspiration, "now they seemed empty, without tension, shallow and useless. What was more, in them Hitler openly aired his intention to pervert the very meaning of the concept of culture by mobilizing it for his own power goals. I found it

³⁷ Sheehan, *German History*, 839. See also George Bernard Shaw's interpretation of the *Ring* in R.W.S. Mendl, "Can Music Be Philosophical?" *The Musical Times* 75.1099 (September 1934) 800-803, 803.

³⁸ Gerhart Hauptmann, quoted in Stewart Spencer, "Introduction" to Richard Wagner, *Ring of the Nibelung* (1993), 7.

³⁹ Quoted in Walter Kaufmann, "Introduction" to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, 10. The same rule applies to political ideology. "We can be absolutely certain only about things we do not understand. A doctrine that is understood is shorn of its strength." Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (1951), 81.

incomprehensible that these tirades should once have impressed me so profoundly.”⁴¹

Rosenbaum compares philosophical interpretations of evil proposed by Hannah Arendt and Berel Lang which arise from this problem of consciousness and polarity. “While Arendt tries to define evil as ‘thoughtlessness,’ heedlessness of moral questions, Lang sees it as *thoughtfulness*, in the sense of literally being full of thought...of deliberation, and imagination ~ at least in the case of the Nazis.”⁴² It is certainly clear that Hitler had a lot of imagination. And it is also clear that he self-consciously rejected modern standards of morality. It is a mistake, however, to say that he considered himself an agent of evil, as such, in his own moral universe. As Efraim Zuroff says, “He believed he was doing *good*, not evil!”⁴³ Lang uses the fact that Nazis tried to conceal genocide, and that Himmler stressed the burden his SS was assuming in the *Endlösung*, as evidence of shame and guilt. But he ignores the fact that Hitler, Himmler, and other Nazis self-consciously lauded themselves for pursuing a higher moral cause which the public was not expected to understand.⁴⁴ Hitler saw himself as an agent of God, a hero, in the moral universe of the *Ring*, in which tribal loyalty, heroism, and strength are the ultimate moral values. These are, as pointed out in § 5, the values of the *Old Testament* and the values which Nietzsche praised as the alternative to the morality of modern Judaism, Christianity, or secular humanism.

The other most characteristic and informative myth of Germany is *Faust*. According to Oswald Spengler, Germany had a “Faustian soul,” the soul of a *Kultur*, which was engaged in a historic struggle against the “Apollonian soul” of Western *Zivilisation*.⁴⁵ *Faust* was also a popular story before Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) made it into a great work of art. But it was from a later time than the

⁴⁰ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 189.

⁴¹ Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 98.

⁴² Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 216, emphasis in original.

⁴³ Quoted, with opinions from others supporting this interpretation and careful analysis of the question, in Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, xxvi, et passim.

⁴⁴ See a focused study of this phenomenon in Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (2003).

⁴⁵ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Charles Francis Atkinson, trans. (1991) [*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918-22], 97.

Nibelungenlied. It was a story about a Doctor Faustus in the Renaissance of the 16th Century, first written up in Johann Spiess, *Volksbuch* (1587), and then in Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus* (circa 1588), before Goethe wrote his *Faust* (in two parts, 1808 and 1832).⁴⁶ The theme was also adopted by Thomas Mann for novel about the conflict between materialism and spiritualism, *Doktor Faustus* (1947). Although it rivaled the *Ring* in its mythological stature for the Germans, *Faust* is a very different work, written by a very different thinker, reflecting the Renaissance rather than the Middle Ages. “There is no writer so paradoxical as Goethe,” Ronald Gray declares at the beginning of his intellectual biography.⁴⁷ Goethe was a subtle and complicated man, and a humanist who was not besotted with simplistic heroic fantasies. The same can be said of Mann, when he took up the theme after the Second World War.⁴⁸

Goethe’s *Faust* is filled with modern materialistic self-conscious irony.⁴⁹ Goethe was the voice of German *Zivilisation*,⁵⁰ trying to come to terms with the conflict between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*. From that perspective, however, especially from his own struggle with romantic *Sturm und Drang*,⁵¹ Goethe was painfully aware of the accursed inheritance of Germany, of the division between the Roman heritage and the heroic rebellion against that heritage going back to Flavius and Hermann. His *Faust*

⁴⁶ He also wrote a preliminary study, now called the *Urfaust*, in 1774. As with Wagner and the *Ring*, it was a long struggle with the material.

⁴⁷ Ronald Gray, *Goethe: A Critical Introduction* (1967), 3.

⁴⁸ See comments on the complex tensions in Goethe and Mann in Wolf Lepenies and Barbara Harshav, “Between Social Science and Poetry in Germany,” *Poetics Today* 9.1 (1988), 117-143, 140-1.

⁴⁹ Irony hits the audience in the face right off, in the prelude, where the director self-consciously complains about the audience (thereby exhibiting the “stage presence” self-consciousness of the materialistic polarity discussed in § 4), and in the prologue, where Mephistopheles snidely bargains with God. More specifically, in comparison to Siegfried, the character of Faust in the play is no tragic hero. Kaufmann, “Introduction” to *Faust*, 8-9.

⁵⁰ See Charles W. Hendel, “Goethe’s Faust and Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 10.2 (December 1949) 157-171; Mikhail Lifshitz, “Johann Joachim Winckelmann and the Three Epochs of the Bourgeois *Weltanschauung*,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 7.1 (September 1946) 42-82, 81-2. Goethe was in fact an advocate of *Weltliteratur*, “world literature,” which would break down intellectual boundaries between cultures in the same way as commerce broke down material boundaries. Gail Finney, “Of Walls and Windows: What German Studies and Comparative Literature Can Offer Each Other,” *Comparative Literature* 49.3 (Summer 1997) 259-266, 261.

complains that “two souls, oh, live in my breast, [and] one wishes to separate from the other.”⁵² Perhaps with some intuition of the allegory to Flavius and Hermann, Walter Kaufmann’s translation says that “one is striving to forsake its brother.” Charles Hendel argues that, in *Faust*, Goethe anticipated Hegel in striving to find a synthesis or transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of the conflict between faith and science, between God and nature,⁵³ or, in terms of the polarity of culture, between spiritualism and materialism. Faust seems to complain about the accursed inheritance, the desire to lay claim to the great ideals of Rome and Christianity, even while resenting the loss of German heroism and innocence, when he says that, “Whatever noblest things the mind received, more and more foreign matter spoils the theme.... That [which] gave us our life, the noblest urges, are petrified in the earth’s vulgar surges.”⁵⁴ Faust also speaks of a *verliebtem Haß*, a “loving hate,” which grows out of *Geist das Höchste und Tiefste greifen*, a “spirit grasping the summit and abyss.”⁵⁵ In other words, this is the polarity growing out of the steep cultural gradient. It would be unfair, of course, to say that German romanticism had to result in Nazism. But the self-conscious rebellion against the modernizing influence of Rome called forth the old gods and the old morality.⁵⁶ Instead of Athena, it was her resentful and angry brother, Ares. Instead of Flavius, it was Hermann. Instead of Nehalennia, Erda, and Sonja, it was Wotan and Siegfried. And instead of Erasmus, it was Luther.

Revenge of the gods: The new religion of Nazism

Finally, on the subject of myths, let us briefly consider the “occult roots of

⁵¹ Reinhardt, *Germany*, 1.395 et seq; Fritz Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair* (1961), 278 note.

⁵² Goethe, *Faust*, 1.1111-2 (my translation). Siegfried Fischer-Fabian reads this line from Faust in a similar manner in *Die ersten Deutschen*, 103.

⁵³ Hendel, “Goethe’s Faust and Philosophy,” 169.

⁵⁴ Goethe, *Faust*, 1.634-5, 638-9.

⁵⁵ Goethe, *Faust*, 1.1767, 1772 (my translation).

⁵⁶ See Gilmer W. Blackburn, “The Portrayal of Christianity in the History Textbooks of Nazi Germany,” *Church History* 49.4 (December 1980) 433-445.

Nazism,⁵⁷ and the nature of Nazi ideology as a modern religion. There is not much that needs be said, because it is something which is obvious, but which tends to distract from the main point. The main point, already discussed in general terms in § 4, is that fascism is a manifestation of the principle that “Religion cannot disappear; it can only be transformed.”⁵⁸ It is a manifestation of *la revanche de Dieu*, “the revenge of God.”⁵⁹ It is quite clear that there were “occult roots” for Nazism, a number of Aryan cults and other pagan revivals which helped lay the groundwork for Nazism, and that they were cultivated by some significant factions in the Third Reich. They were a special obsession for Heinrich Himmler, who made the *SS* into a pagan cult modeled along the lines of the Teutonic Knights, but who explicitly rejected what Nietzsche called the “slave morality” of Christianity. Rudolf Hess was also a devotee of the occult. Hitler sneered at this mysticism, and he sought to distance himself from it, as he also distanced himself from the *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*, at least publicly. But he tolerated these movements. And it is also apparent, although intentions can never be known for certain, that he intended to eventually replace Christianity entirely, with some sort of neo-pagan and pseudo-scientific Nazi faith, complete with its own rituals.⁶⁰ Already, in the Third Reich, there were Nazi neo-pagan baptisms and marriages, followed by presentation of a copy of *Mein Kampf* instead of the *Bible*.

⁵⁷ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology, The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935* (1992). See also Dusty Sklar, *The Nazis and the Occult* (1989); Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (2004); Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 183, et seq. In particular, Hitler apparently read the crude neo-pagan writings of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (Josef Adolf Lanz, 1874-1954), who founded a secret society he called the “New Temple.” Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 112. He also attended the lectures of Hans F.K. Günther (1891-1968), a mystical crank whom the Nazis later elevated to a chair of social anthropology. Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (2000), 41.

⁵⁸ Claude Henri de Rouvroy Saint-Simon, quoted in Robert Friedrichs, *A Sociology of Sociology* (1970), 104. See also the discussion of modern ideologies as religions in Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (1990), 257, et passim.

⁵⁹ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), 95, et seq.

⁶⁰ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 379-40; Rauschnig, *Voice of Destruction*, 55, 223; Otto Wagener, *Hitler ~ Memoirs of a Confidant*, Ruth Hein, trans. (1985) [*Hitler aus nächster Nähe: Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauten 1929-1932, 1978*], 141, 172; Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 97.

Already, the *Führer* was compared to Christ⁶¹ and had actually replaced Christ in some prayers,⁶² religious hymns and Christmas carols.⁶³ And already, in place of the Cross, it was said that “The Swastika brings salvation on earth.”⁶⁴ Hitler promised that “A new age of magic interpretation of the world is coming, of interpretation in terms of the will and not the intelligence.”⁶⁵ “Although the relationship between the Nazi state and the German occult movement was predominately one of hostility,” as Corinna Treitel puts it, “there were important affinities that underlay and complicated this hostility.”⁶⁶ The “occult roots” were there, and were cultivated. But they were not the main roots of the tree. Nazism grew out of a more general and less coherent sense of loss of “Being,” as Heidegger puts it, a general spiritual reaction against the modernity of the West which could take the form of revived traditional Catholicism (which Heidegger never disowned) as easily as a revived pagan cult such as the Thule Society. Just as contemporary fundamentalist reaction coexists with various “New Age” neo-pagan movements, it has much less to do with the specific form of the tradition than with the basic, vague, but powerful desire to recapture some sort of primordial spiritualism. Hitler, Himmler, and other Nazis were likely not all that clear in their own minds on what exact form the new Nazi faith would take. (Nor were the early Jewish-Christians in Rome.) But they were working in that direction.

As mentioned in § 4, Hitler had a peculiar interpretation of the *New Testament* which indicates the core of his spiritual vision, in terms directly related to the polarities of culture. It was also very much in the tradition of German philosophical and theological philology, in which essential meaning is found in semantic nuance. Hitler said that “I have no love for Goethe. But I am ready to overlook much in him for the

⁶¹ Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (1987), 39.

⁶² Toland, *Adolf Hitler*, 404; Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 98-9.

⁶³ Kershaw, *Hitler Myth*, 53; Patrick Glynn, *God the Evidence: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World* (1997), 159.

⁶⁴ Glynn, *God the Evidence*, 159.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Rauschnig, *Voice of Destruction*, 223.

⁶⁶ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*, 212.

sake of one phrase ~ ‘In the beginning was action.’”⁶⁷ Faust, who most probably does not represent Goethe’s own theology, rewrites the opening line of the Gospel of John (the same gospel which Luther considered the best of all the books in the *New Testament*) so that “In the beginning was the word (*logos*),” becomes “*Im Anfang war die Tat!* In the beginning was the act!” Hitler took that one step further. He argued that Luther had mistranslated the word, and that Goethe had not gone quite far enough to correct him. Hitler thought it should say, “*Im Anfang war die Trieb!* In the beginning was the *urge!*”⁶⁸ *Trieb*, which can be translated as “urge,” “force,” or “instinct,” has many important associations, including the death “instinct” of Freud, the *eigenen Trieb* of Schopenhauer, an avatar of his “World as Will” (*Welt als Wille*), the “immanent urge” (*immanenter Trieb*) of “world-historical figures” (*welthistorischer Persönlichkeiten*) in Hegel, and the *Wille zu Macht* in Nietzsche. Hitler hated modern science, liberalism, and reason ~ a “disease of life,”⁶⁹ as he put it, in quite Nietzschean and postmodern terms. What exact form his new *mythos* would take, in terms of doctrine or re-interpretation of the traditions of the West, is far from clear, and not really important. It is clear that Hitler was intent on replacing *logos* with a new *mythos* of power.

To mix a few metaphors from different myths, this was a Faustian quest for the *Ring* of power, made from the *Rhinegold*. We can thank the true *deus ex machina* ~ the real god of the machine, which is technological rationality, the *logos* of Athena and Nehalennia ~ that Hitler was not able to become Lord of the Ring.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Rauschnig, *The Voice of Destruction*, 224.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Wagener, *Memoirs of a Confidant*, 172.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Rauschnig, *The Voice of Destruction*, 222.

§ 11. Conclusion

The special path which any nation takes through history is complex and multicausal. There is no pretense, here, that everything about the German problem is explained by only a few historical factors. (See diagram 2.) The proposition, however, is that polarities of culture, geoculture, cultural kraters, the extremely spiritual polarity of German culture in reaction to its position on the steep cultural gradient of Europe, and the consequent reaction to the West, are fundamental factors which explain a great deal of the German problem. The same theory also explains much of the current clash of cultures between civilizations, and inside the highly conflicted civilization of the West. As imperfectly evolved biological entities with resentful tribal creatures inside us, and as individual and collective entities with dangerous ideas which sometimes find fertile environments in imperfectly adapted cultures, the underlying pathology of the German problem is our own problem, to some degree, among any peoples.

To materially polarized minds, to those of us civilized in the *logos* of modernity and instrumental rationality, it may still seem difficult to believe, despite all the evidence, that so much stupidity and self-destruction could result from this *mythos*, from cultural constructs such as the struggle between *Kultur und Zivilisation* or the war between *Händler und Helden*. Believe it. Believe it, because they did. And it was not only the crazies who believed it. Intelligent, educated, and cultivated men such as Luther,¹ Fichte,² Novalis,³ Heine,⁴ Mann,⁵ and Weber,⁶ as well as popular writers such

¹ See Martin Luther, "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nobility as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom" [*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520], in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed., various translators (1962); "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants" [*Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern*, 1525], in *Luther ~ Selected Political Writings*, J.M. Porter, ed., various translators (1974).

² See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, R.F. Jones and G.H. Turnbull, trans. (1968) [*Reden an die deutsche Nation*, 1808], address # 12, 7.446-7; Hans Kohn, "The Paradox of Fichte's Nationalism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10.3 (June 1949) 319-343.

³ See Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), "Faith and Love" ["Glauben und Liebe," 1798], "Philosophical Studies" [*Philosophische Studien*, 1795-6], and "Christianity or Europe" [*Christenheit*

as Spengler⁷ and Sombart,⁸ and evil but brilliant philosophers such as Heidegger⁹ and Schmitt,¹⁰ believed in an existential conflict between the spirit of Germany and the materialism of the West. Believe it, also, because it was diagnosed, before it reached its terrible culmination in war and holocaust, by various observers such as Veblen,¹¹ Plessner,¹² and Freud.¹³ Culture can kill. The analysis in this work merely traces out the underlying pathology of a cultural disease which clearly existed.

The minds of men and the World Wars

But let us now shift to a different level of analysis and take a brief look at two of the true crazies. Kaiser Wilhelm II (reigned 1888-1918) and Adolf Hitler (ruled 1933-45) were especially relevant actors manifesting the spiritual polarity of their political cultures. When two different leaders from such different backgrounds arrive at places

oder Europa, 1799], in Frederick C. Beiser, ed., *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, various translators (1996);.

⁴ See Siegbert Salomon Prawer, *Frankenstein's Island: England and the English in the Writings of Heinrich Heine* (1986).

⁵ See Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, Walter D. Morris, trans. (1983) [*Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, 1918]; Harvey Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (1992).

⁶ See Max Weber, Max Weber, "Between Two Laws" ["Zwischen zwei Gesetzen," 1916], in *Political Writings*, Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, trans. (1994); Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil*.

⁷ See Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Charles Francis Atkinson, trans. (1991) [*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918-22]; *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*, Charles Francis Atkinson, trans. (1932) [*Der Mensch und die Technik*, 1931].

⁸ See Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen* (1915); Arthur Mitzman, *Sociology and Estrangement: Three Sociologists of Imperial Germany* (1973).

⁹ See Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (1959) [*Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 1953]; Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" ["Brief über den Humanismus," 1947], in *Basic Writings*, Frank A. Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray, trans. (1977); Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis, eds., *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics* (1992).

¹⁰ See Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (1996) [*Begriff des Politischen*, 1932]; Carl Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, Simona Draghici, trans. (1977) [*Land und Meer*, 1942]; John P. McCormick, "Fear, Technology, and the State: Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and the Revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany," *Political Theory* 22.4 (November 1994) 619-652.

¹¹ See Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* ([1915] 1990).

¹² See Helmuth Plessner, *The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism*, Andrew Wallace, trans. (1999) [*Grenzen der Gemeinschaft: Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus*, 1924].

so close together in the *Weltanschauung*, it indicates that the phenomenon has as much to do with the political culture which empowers them as with the accidents of individual personality.

Wilhelm II sought refuge from his insecurities in the simplistic world of military ritual and political bombast. But he was fairly intelligent, and sensitive to the desires of his people. His major policies enjoyed widespread support from both the elites and the public.¹⁴ He was popular, even if some thought him mad, and he was not such an aberration in the tradition of “enlightened dictators” begun by Friedrich the Great, although his power was considerably less absolute. If Wilhelm II had been an all-powerful *Kriegsherr*, he might have avoided the First World War. Austria was urged on by ministers and military officers who sought to present him with a *fait accompli*.¹⁵ He almost certainly would have avoided taking on Britain as well as Russia and France. That great strategic stupidity can be laid at the feet of his military advisors, especially Moltke,¹⁶ just as the previous poisoning of relations with Britain with the dreadnought competition, while supported by Wilhelm and many political interests, was instigated by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz.¹⁷ War was popular throughout many sectors in Germany, in contrast to Britain and France.¹⁸ It is a mistake to be

¹³ See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, James Strachey, ed. and trans. (1961) [*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, 1930].

¹⁴ Even some of his most notorious gaffes, such as the *Daily Telegraph* article of 28 October 1908, were committed with the full knowledge and acquiescence, if not instigation in some cases, of his ministers beforehand. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, “Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 25.2-3 (May-June 1990) 289-316, 302-4; John Van der Kist, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: Germany’s Last Emperor* (1999), 139-40.

¹⁵ To a considerable extent, as David Fromkin says in a recent study of the decisions leading to the First World War, incorporating decades of research and argument, it was Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (the younger), Chief of the German General Staff, and Erich von Falkenhayn, the Minister of War, “who made the real decision for war in the summer of 1914.” David Fromkin, *Europe’s Last Summer: Who Started the Great War in 1914?* (2004), 290. See also Mommsen, “Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics,” 309-10.

¹⁶ Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns Of August* ([1962] 1994), 78-83, et seq.

¹⁷ Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (1978), 303, et passim.

¹⁸ “An aggressive policy was a policy endorsed by imminent intellectuals, clerics, journalists, and educators. Among the general population, dozens of patriotic societies insisted that it was Germany’s historic destiny to impose its will on the Continent through a war of aggression.” Robert Waite, *The*

mesmerized by the apparent insanity of the leader and forget the pathological political culture. Wilhelm's vacillations and alterations in mood were often the result of intense political conflicts ~ between civilian and military leaders in the government, and between wider conservative and liberal interests ~ which Bismarck himself had difficulty navigating. Contemporaneously in 1908, Max Weber got to the heart of the issue. "There is far too much talk about the 'impulsive nature' and the personality of Wilhelm II. The faulty political structure is the root of the evil."¹⁹ This weak and overly sensitive man, an intensely "self-conscious" man in the pathological sense, was a human gage, a living epiphenomenal indicator, of the political and cultural antimonies of Germany.

Hitler has often been viewed as a uniquely demonic personality, a man possessed of some mysterious charisma which allowed him to mesmerize otherwise rational and decent people into supporting his insane policies. That is nonsense. Charisma is as much about the led as the leader, about their need for sense of spiritual unity or strong leadership in a time of perceived crisis.²⁰ Charming megalomaniacs are always among

Kaiser & the Führer: A Comparative Study of Personality & Politics (1998), 205-6. By contrast, the British government and people were largely united in being against war up until 1 or 2 August 1914, until the German invasion of Belgium and Luxembourg on 3 August 1914. Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 279; David Stevenson, *Cataclysm: The First World War as Political Tragedy* (2004), 30, 32.

¹⁹ Weber blamed Wilhelm for bringing Germany into contempt abroad, but he blamed the German people more, "because we tolerate it and excuse it." Weber, quoted in Mommsen, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics," 290, 292. See also Mommsen, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics," 313.

²⁰ Daniel Goldhagen argues that was a case of "if not Hitler, someone *like* Hitler.... Charisma...although it is not often treated this way, but as Max Weber first expressed it, it is not a property of leaders, it's a property of the *people* really. The extent to which the leader is charismatic as Weber discussed it depends on the belief of the *people* in his infallibility and the prophetlike nature of the leader. *They grant him his charismatic quality.*" Goldhagen quoted from conversation in Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (1998), 349-50. "The sources of Hitler's immense popularity have to be sought, it has rightly been claimed, 'in those who adored him, rather than in the leader himself.'" Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (1987), 2, 1-5, 45; Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 290-1. As an American reporter observing Hitler arriving at the 1934 Nazi Party Rally at Nuremberg, William Shirer was surprised, perhaps even disappointed, at how unimpressive Hitler seemed to him despite the hysterical reception he received from Germans. William Shirer, *20th Century Journey: A Memoir of a Life and The Times*, vol. 1-3 (1976-1990) volume 2, *The Nightmare Years*, 119.

us.²¹ The role of *Führer* which Hitler fulfilled was merely an updating of the long-sought *heimliche Kaiser, dritter Friedrich, or Heiland*.²² And it was a role. Privately, Hitler felt little but disdain for much of the romantic and *völkische* thought which paved the way for the Nazis.²³ Hitler did have high regard for Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and he all but worshiped Wagner. But how much he may have absorbed from the immense product of German philosophers is not of great importance, just as what the great philosophers themselves really intended to say is not nearly so important as how simplistic interpretations of their ideas propagated through the culture. Hitler was a great lover of the simple idea, a “terrifying simplifier,” as Georges Bernanos called him.²⁴ Gordon Craig echoes Weber’s comments about Wilhelm II in saying that Hitler can be explained “only by analyzing German society.”²⁵

That was the focus of §§ 7-10. Conversely, however, it is useful to look at the same relationship in the other direction. This completes the analysis of actual historical causes by relating the collective cultural traits to specific individual traits of actors who had the power to affect events. A number of important similarities between the two leaders are described in a fascinating study by Robert Waite, *The Kaiser & the Führer: A Comparative Study of Personality & Politics* (1998). (1) Both strongly identified with Friedrich the Great.²⁶ That was part of their more general cult of

²¹ See Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (1951); Margaret Thaler Singer, *Cults in Our Midst* (2003).

²² See Friedrich Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, Janet Sondheimer, trans. (1968) [*Das Heilige Römische Reich*, 1916], 74, 80-1; Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 164-6; Kershaw, *Hitler Myth*, 13-5, 81.

²³ Examples were his disdain for Arthur Moeller van der Bruck, author of *Das dritte Reich* (1922), and Oswald Spengler, who in turn despised the Nazis, although that did not prevent the Nazis from enjoying considerable assistance from Spengler’s work. Otto Wagener, *Hitler ~ Memoirs of a Confidant*, Ruth Hein, trans. (1985) [*Hitler aus nächster Nähe: Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauten 1929-1932*, 1978], 167-8; H. Stuart Hughes, “Preface” to Spengler, *Decline of the West*, x.

²⁴ Georges Bernanos (1888-1948), French novelist and political commentator, quoted in Heer, *Holy Roman Empire*, 81. Hitler emphasized his desire to simplify German education to stress only the essential ideals in Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (1999) [1925-6], 418-23.

²⁵ Gordon A. Craig, *Politics and Culture in Modern Germany: Essays from The New York Review of Books* (1999), ix.

²⁶ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 4, et seq.

militarism and strength of will.²⁷ We might ask why neither of them identified so much with Bismarck, although Bismarck was an early mentor to Wilhelm, and Bismarck was identified with Hitler in the propaganda of the Third Reich. An answer is that Bismarck, for all his *Eisen und Blut* swagger, was far less romantic and far more rational. The master of cold and calculated *Realpolitik* would almost certainly never have made the major strategic blunder, which both Wilhelm and Hitler made, of taking on so many enemies in one war. (2) Both were devoted fans of Wagner who “saw themselves as Wagnerian heroes.”²⁸ (3) Both were “narcissistic personalities”²⁹ who were highly self-conscious of themselves, in the pathological sense, but who lacked any real empathy for others.³⁰ (4) Consistent with all those traits, both were extremely rigid personalities.³¹ Although they were narrowly educated and poorly read, they took pleasure in intimidating others with better education or technical skill by remembering trivial details.³² They both complained that, “I cannot change.”³³ Hitler thought in terms of essences in all things³⁴ and he loved the simple idea.³⁵ “To his *Weltanschauung*,” Alan Bullock says, “Hitler remained remarkably consistent. Once formed, it was rigid and inflexible.”³⁶ An aspect of this rigidity of special importance to political decision-making was their dislike of information which might alter their

²⁷ Three historical figures which Hitler singles out for special praise are Friedrich the Great, Martin Luther, and Richard Wagner. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 213.

²⁸ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 87, et seq.

²⁹ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 246, et seq., 291-2.

³⁰ As extreme narcissists, they were also “notably lacking in humor, except for the pratfall, *Schadenfreude* variety,” and “conspicuously deficient in the leavening grace of self-irony.” Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 43, 250.

³¹ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 44, et seq. A British ambassador to Wilhelm II remarked that Wilhelm had an “unfortunate habit” of cutting off conversations not going as he liked with the simple declaration that “I do not admit that this is so.” Quoted in Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 257. During the Munich crisis of 1938, while playing a dangerous diplomatic game for the highest stakes, during which another politician might have wanted to reassure the Germans that he was well aware of all the dangers, Hitler instead told a public audience that “I go the way that Providence dictates with the assurance of a sleepwalker.” Quoted in John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (1976), 388.

³² Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 248.

³³ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 44.

³⁴ Ralph Manheim, “Translator’s Note” to Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, xii.

³⁵ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 71.

preconceptions. Hitler was notorious for his refusal to listen to contrary information or advice, and for sometimes going into a rage when someone tried to correct him.³⁷ Unlike Churchill, he refused to visit cities suffering from bombing. “Reality was not allowed in the Führer’s presence,” as Gerwin Strobl puts it, and “Thus it fell to Goebbels to formulate a suitable media strategy” for dealing with the bombing.³⁸ (5) Finally, in what might seem somewhat inconsistent with the last trait, they both had a *zerrissene Natur*,³⁹ a deep ambivalence about many issues, both personal and political. Walther Rathenau (1867-1922), the Jewish industrialist who served as a foreign minister in the Weimar Republic until murdered by antisemites with the approval of many conservative interests, described Wilhelm II as “a man who is at war with himself...a being who is torn apart (*eine zerrissene Natur*).”⁴⁰ That was much how Hegel described the condition of the *Geist* searching for its lost wholeness, as a *Zerrissenheit*, a “torn-ness,” a thing alienated from itself.⁴¹ And that is a good description of the condition of German political culture torn apart by the cultural gradient, the sundering of Flavius and Hermann, and the two souls of Faust. The most important of their many ambivalences concerned two related subjects which reflected ambivalences in the wider German culture which was their psychic environment. They were both reactionary modernists who clung to atavistic myths even while being almost childlike lovers of impressive machinery. And they both deeply felt the long-standing German ambivalence about Britain.⁴²

One could plausibly argue that this particular ambivalence about Britain, an intense combination of admiration and resentment, which replicated the earlier German

³⁶ Bullock, *Hitler*, 225.

³⁷ Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (1995) 275, et seq; Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (1994), 570; Williamson Murray and Allan Millet, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (2000), 319.

³⁸ Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (2000), 197.

³⁹ Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 40, 246, et seq., 266, et seq.

⁴⁰ Rathenau quoted in Waite, *Kaiser & Führer*, 246.

⁴¹ In Eric Voegelin, *Published Essays, 1966-1985* (1990), 245.

ambivalence about the accursed inheritance of Rome, was directly responsible for Germany losing both the World Wars. In Wilhelm's case, the familial metaphor was not far from concrete biological reality.⁴³ Hitler, although having nothing like the same parentage, had a rather similar ambivalence about Britain.⁴⁴ The intense frustration which Hitler felt about his failure to force Britain to terms had much to do with his disastrous decision to launch the second front against Russia. He explained this in a letter to Mussolini on 21 June 1941, on the eve of Operation Barbarossa:

I am writing this letter to you at a moment when months of anxious deliberation and continuous nerve-wracking waiting are ending in the hardest decision of my life.

The situation: England has lost the war. Like a drowning person, she grasps at every straw. Nevertheless, some of her hopes are naturally not without a certain logic.... The destruction of France has directed the glances of the British warmongers continually to the place from which they tried to start the war: to Soviet Russia....

Behind these two countries stands the North American Union, goading them on....

Whether or not *America* enters the war is a matter of indifference, inasmuch as she supports our enemy with all the power she is able to mobilize....

The partnership with the Soviet Union, in spite of our efforts to bring about a final conciliation, was nevertheless often very irksome to me, for in some way or other it seemed to me to be a break with my whole origin, my concepts, and my former obligations. I am happy now to be relieved of these mental agonies.⁴⁵

⁴² See Strobl, *The Germanic Isle*; Siegbert Salomon Prawer, *Frankenstein's Island: England and the English in the Writings of Heinrich Heine* (1986).

⁴³ His mother was the British Princess Royal Victoria, daughter of Queen Victoria, and she tried to bring him up with enlightened and liberal ideas, while military officers and conservative politicians such as Bismarck did just the opposite. The result, as John Van der Kist says, was that he became "the product of two cultures, torn between the ideals of the Prussian Junker and the Liberal English gentleman, and at the same time alternately filled with admiration for Britain's mid-nineteenth-century achievements and envy of British 'arrogance.'" Van der Kist, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 26.

⁴⁴ In *Mein Kampf*, he voiced the traditional complaint about British "perfidy," but combined this with a certain grudging admiration for the British art of imperial rule (as had Wilhelm as well), and warned his countrymen that they made a mistake in having underrated the British in the First World War. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 144-5. The analogy between Germany and Japan, first noted by Thorstein Veblen, is discussed in § 6. Hitler made something of the same comparison, and related it to Britain. "Just as there have always been two Germanies," he said, "so there have always been two Japans: the one capitalist and therefore Anglophile ~ the other, the Japan of the Rising Sun, the land of the samurai." Quoted in Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations* (2000), # 19, 4-5 January 1942, Night, page 178.

⁴⁵ Hitler quoted in William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (1960), 849-51 (emphasis in Hitler's original).

Frustration, and a highly emotional reaction. Instead of rationality, an absurd rationalization. And a perverse self-conscious satisfaction at the surrender to the compulsion of the unconstrained mentality. To quote Brett Butler again, “the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.”⁴⁶ Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa (*Unternehmen Barbarossa*) on 22 June 1941, the anniversary of Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812. It was a curious name, as John Stoessinger points out, because Barbarossa failed in his crusade to the east.⁴⁷ Once again, as in the First World War, Germany took on two fronts. An amazing thing about this, however, is that it was enthusiastically supported by senior German generals despite their later attempts to disavow it.⁴⁸ Hitler then topped that by declaring war on the United States immediately after Pearl Harbor, on 11 December 1941, although the Japanese had no intention of returning the favor by making war on Russia. And the most amazing thing of all is that the *Kriegsmarine*, due to a myopic focus on the Battle for the Atlantic, was already urging Hitler to declare war on the US. The *Heer* and the *Luftwaffe*, with equal myopia, expressed no interest in the decision. “As to strategic assessment,” Williamson Murray and Allan Millett flatly say of this decision, “there was none.”⁴⁹

Two of the biggest fallacies about war, plaguing both historical actors and academics, are related fallacies of the simple idea. One is the simple idea that it is all one war, that a decision to have a war is necessarily a decision to have all of the war which resulted from that initial decision, as if there were no increments and decision-points in the process. A specific form of this is “victory disease,” the insistence on pursuing unlimited war past the point of diminishing returns. (Recall the S-curve.) The

⁴⁶ Brett Butler, *Knee Deep in Paradise* (1996), 199.

⁴⁷ John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (1974), 48.

⁴⁸ Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 799, 812; H.W. Koch, “Hitler’s ‘Programme’ and the Genesis of Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” *The Historical Journal* 26.4 (December 1983) 891-920; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), 218.

⁴⁹ Williamson Murray and Allan Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (2000), 136.

other fallacy is the simplistic notion that alignments at the time of a crisis are givens, that there is no human power to make reasonable adjustments. This is the failure to master statecraft as Bismarck defined it, as “the knowledge of what the other statesman would do in any given circumstances,”⁵⁰ which is an attribute of materialistic self-consciousness. These are both fallacies of the “unconstrained” vision, because they result from rigidly adhering to an interior image of reality, to the exclusion of exterior information. In *Why Nations Go to War* (1974), an elegant set of case studies which includes Wilhelm II and Hitler, Stoessinger finds that “the most important single precipitating factor in the outbreak of war is misperception.”⁵¹ It is not so much perception, as such, as it is the cognitive openness to perceptions. In order to deal with exterior reality and the intentions of others, and possibilities for changing or adapting to the environment, the actor must be willing to be constrained by reality. The self-image, and the polarity of self-consciousness, blocks this receptivity.

Traits (1) through (4) discussed above ~ identification with Friedrich the Great and Wagnerian heroes, narcissism, and rigidity ~ prevented Wilhelm II and Hitler from engaging in that Bismarckian self-consciousness, the materialistic self-consciousness of the exterior senses which informs a leader of how others will react to his actions. Trait (5), and specifically the endemic German resentment of Britain, provided the spasmodic compulsion which completed the insanity. They were driven inalterably over the cliff in diagram 1, past the reasonable limits which apply to any policy in war or peace, by the spiritual self-consciousness of the interior identity.⁵² Germany could have avoided war against France and England in 1914 by making some moderate concessions on Alsace-Lorraine, not attempting to force France into a humiliating surrender of its fort at Verdun as a condition of peace, and going over to the defensive

⁵⁰ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, vol. 1-3 (1982), 3.307.

⁵¹ Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 223.

⁵² This same rigidity was particularly notable in Martin Luther, who reputed to have said *Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders*, “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.” He probably did not actually say that. But the fact that the Germans widely believed he did has as much relevance to the analysis here. See Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (2000), 137-9, 294.

on the west instead of provoking England with an invasion through Belgium.⁵³ In the Second World War, the Germans could have consolidated their tremendous conquests in Western Europe, allowing Britain to exhaust itself and come to terms, while carefully avoiding provocation of the United States, before beginning a new war against Russia. And there was certainly no rational motivation for the declaration of war on the United States in 1941. No *zweckrational* motivation, that is. From the perspective of spiritual polarity, there was a *wertrational* necessity. It was a heroic quest for a ring of power. For that, we should be quite glad. If the scholastic academics of *Realpolitik* or *Rationalisierung* theory were actually right in believing that all leaders of nations make instrumentally rational decisions in war, then Hitler, and his generals and admirals, would have consolidated their conquest of Europe. The European Union would be the *Neuordnung Europas*. We should be glad that, in their romantic and reactionary hubris, they followed their heroic path to the end, to the glorious *Götterdämmerung*.

The war for the mind of the West

The German front in the war ended with the resounding defeat of 1945, at which time Germany was divided at an historically appropriate place, at the Elbe ~ thus allowing West Germany to join in the ever-larger Atlantic krater, and the ever-larger zone of democratic peace. The cultural gradient was moving eastward throughout history, Germany was for long a divided nation, and the division of Germany into west and east by the occupiers ~ although not their intention ~ was, in terms of the cultural gradient and the problem of German cultural polarity, precisely the right solution to the “German problem.” The more urbanized and industrialized western parts of the country were finally allowed to complete their modernization, and to create a viable liberal polyarchy, under the guidance of the relatively enlightened occupiers ~ who did, most definitely, make it part of their intention not to allow the mistakes of the previous

⁵³ See Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns Of August* ([1962] 1994), especially chapters 4-9.

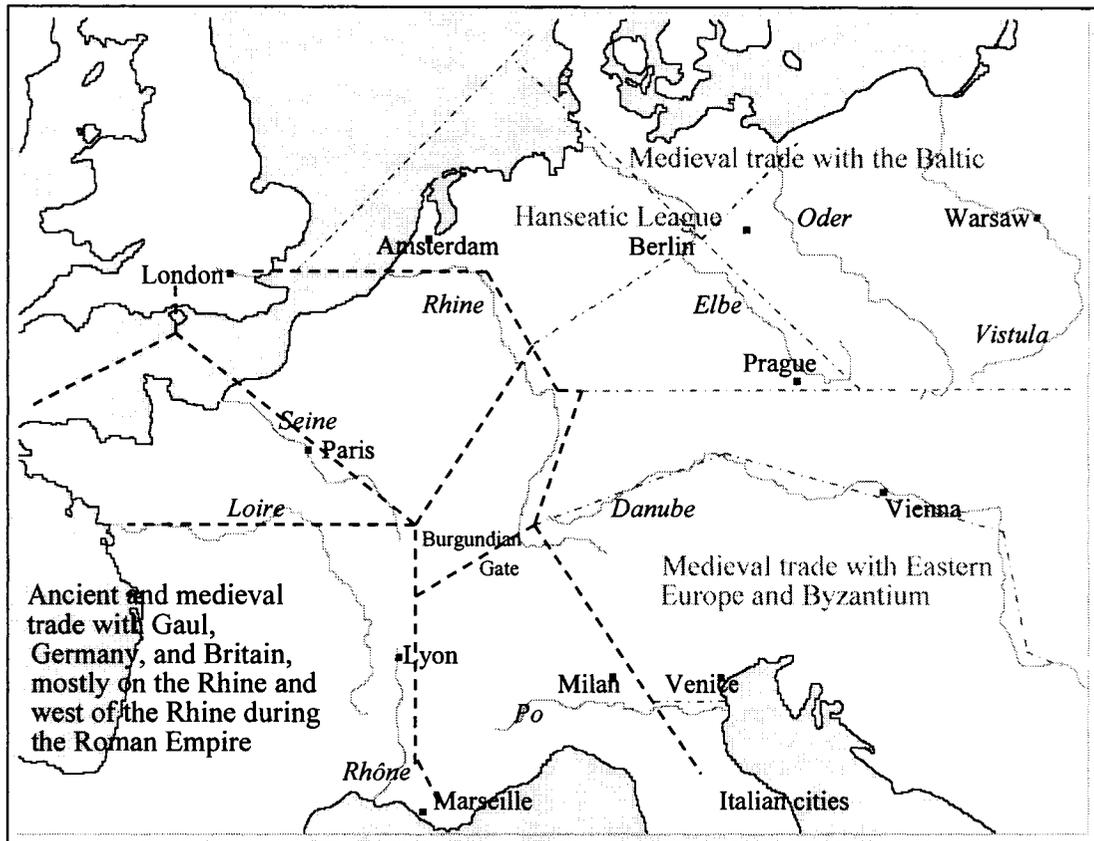
post-war period to be repeated. As important, the Germans themselves were painfully aware of the depths of their error, of how far they had fallen off the cliff of the S-curve again, this second time. Sometimes, in fact, wars do change things. As this work has tried to make clear, differences in national cultures are not caused by genes or some mysterious essence of a people, despite what the Germans had believed themselves. They are due to differences in conditions, most importantly the conditions of geocultural relationships. When those conditions changed radically, after 1945, so did German political culture. And it changed so radically that the later reunification of Germany in 1990, although not without problems and tensions related to cultural polarity, is no serious threat. The easterners, under the more painful education of the Soviets, also realized, finally, how far they had gone over the cliff.

But that was not the end of the larger war for the mind of the West. In a sense, the German war for the mind of the West has gone underground, has become an intellectual insurgency through the agency of French postmodern philosophy, which has in turn helped inspire Islamic fundamentalism. That is not to say, however, that the Islamic radicals needed inspiration from the Germans or the French. Unfortunately, the theory laid out here tells us that we will have many more such wars to fight, not merely for the mind of the West, but for the mind of the Earth, because of the tensions and polarities inherent in the cultural gradients of globalization. The current rage against Danish cartoons in the Islamic world clearly demonstrates the seriousness of this strange spiritual reaction against the values of materialistic polyarchies. Once again, it is the “marching season.” Once again, the terrible resentment of the wounded tribal creature inside us is rearing its ugly head. The pathology of the reactive spiritual polarity, the “rock and roll” of the polarized contact between the material and the spiritual cultures, is not an esoteric or philosophical construct. It is as real as world wars and holocausts. And, sadly, tragically, the theory in this work tells us that we likely have not seen the end of such horrors.

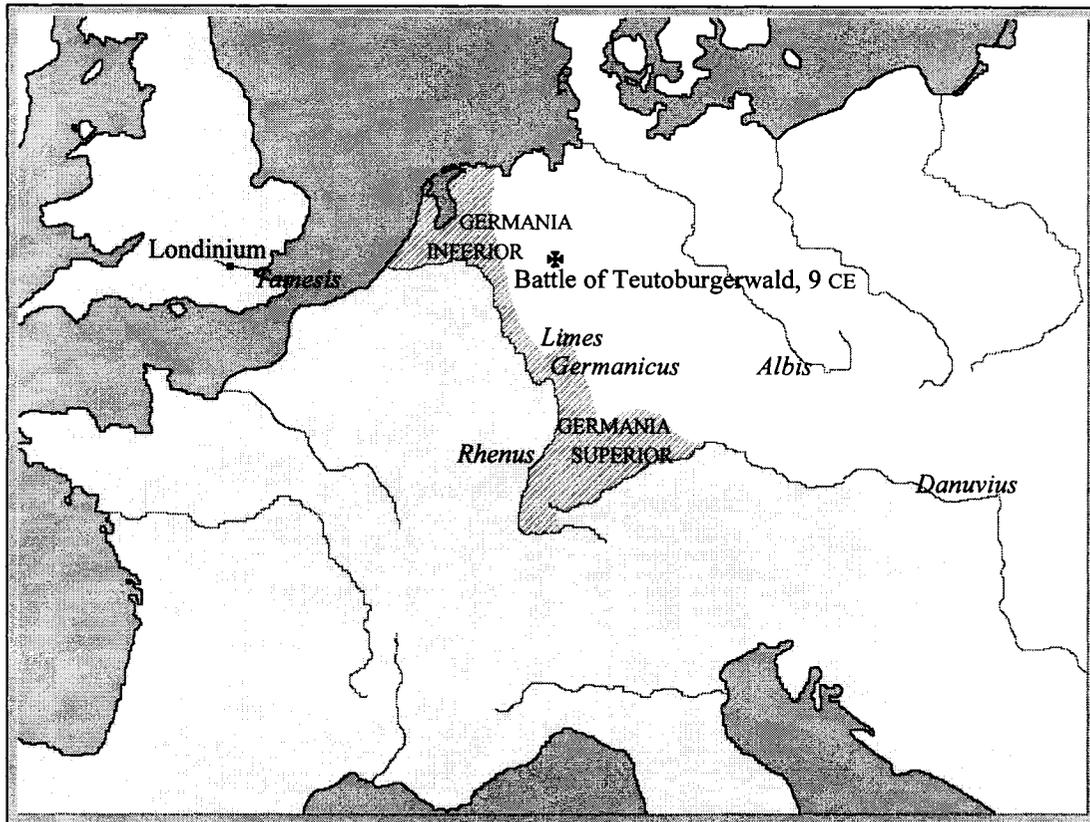
But the theory also gives us reason to think that, ultimately, those are wars the material side will win. So I will happily take the side of Enlightenment against the twilight idols. If they insist, we will give them their *Götterdämmerung*. There is nothing on this planet more deadly than a materialistic polyarchy aroused to war. But it would be much better if we could instead help them win the war against the tribal creature within, the enemy within all of us. We do not need a crusade against terror. That is only another manifestation of the spiritual demons within. We need to exorcise the demons with a clear, cold, cynical, calculated, materialistic, self-conscious appreciation for our own enlightened self-interest. It is complicated. As the Romans did on their better days, we must play a smart game of mixed strategies. It means that we must sometimes give other cultures more space, to avoid the mistake that Varus made on the Rhine in 9 CE. And it also means that we must help them develop a materialistic culture of their own, as the Romans did in the Netherlands. Instead of charging off the cliff ourselves, into unlimited global war, we should take a protected position atop our cultural gradient, and fight back the barbarians when we must, but also offer a friendly hand to those who want to climb up the gradient themselves. It is not easy to be so wise. But I think it might help if we always remember the wisdom of Pogo. We have met the enemy and he is us.

~ Ω ~

Map 1. Early trade routes connecting the Mediterranean with Western Europe

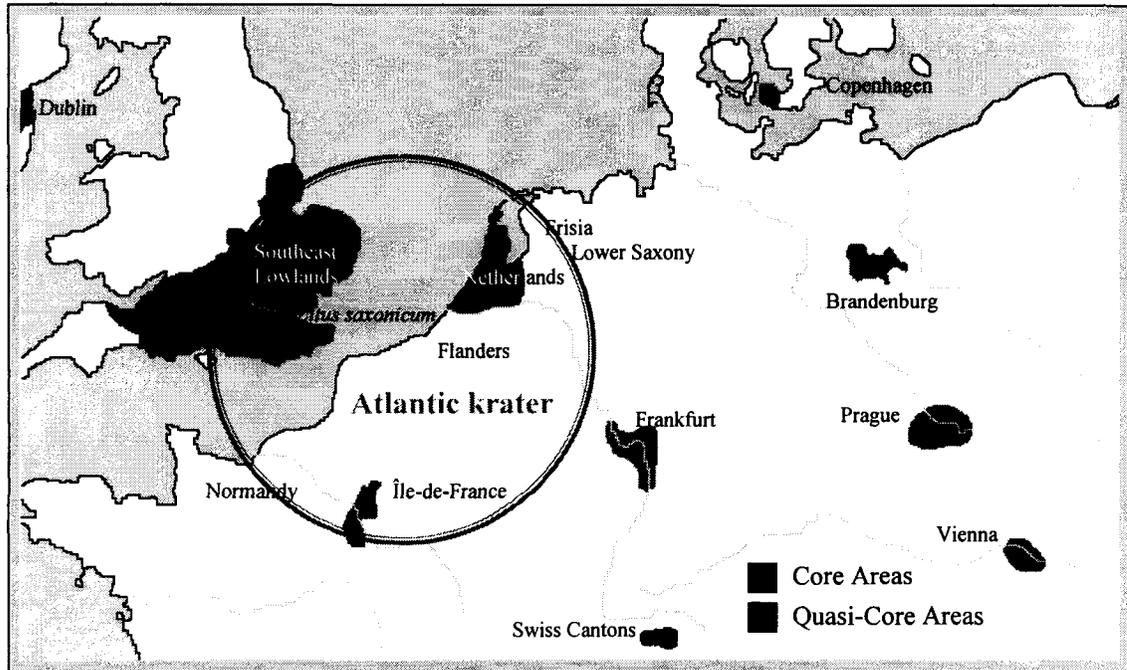


Map 2. The Roman Empire in the 1st Century CE



Sources for maps 1 & 2: Herdman F. Cleland, "Commerce and Trade Routes in Prehistoric Europe," *Economic Geography* 3.2 (April 1927) 232-238; Kevin Greene, *Archaeology of the Roman Economy* (1986); Barry W. Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC ~ AD 1500* (2001); James Westfall Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300-1300)*, vol. 1-2 (1928); Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300-900* (2001); Stéphane Lebecq, "Routes of Change: Production and Distribution in the West (5th-8th Century)," in Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown, eds., *The Transformation of the Roman World: AD 400-900* (1997); N.J.G. Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe* (1990); Geoffrey Barraclough, ed., *The Times Concise Atlas of World History* (1982); Geoffrey Barraclough and Richard Overly, eds., *Hammond Atlas of World History* (1999).

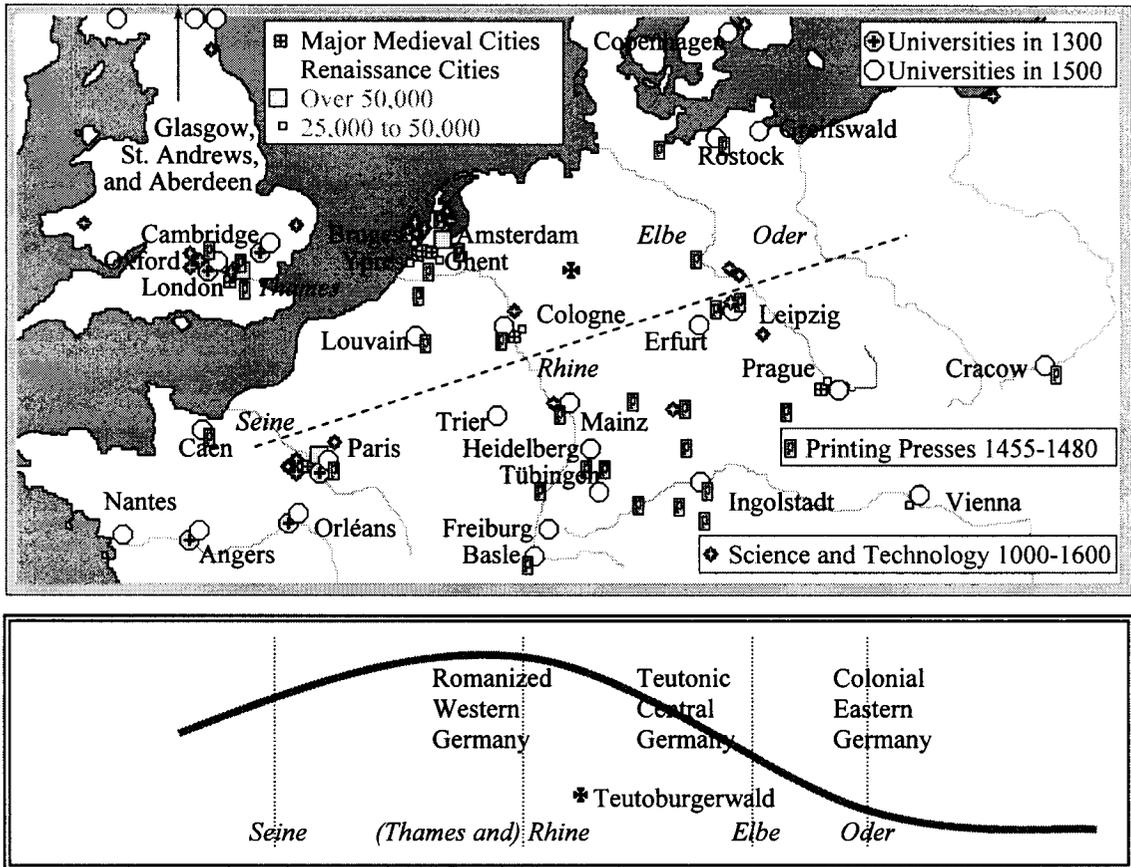
Map 3. Northwest European core areas and the Atlantic krater



Source and notes: "Core areas," are adapted, with amendments, from N.J.G. Pounds and Sue Simons Ball, "Core-Areas and the Development of the European States System," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 54.1 (March 1964) 24-40, figure 3, page 29. Areas are indicated for the late 15th Century. The Netherlands are added as a "core area," because it was an area of trade and urbanization which provided the basis for a nation-state which did consolidate, although Pounds and Ball assert that "the state did not grow up around this nucleus." "Core-Areas," 38. They do not use the term "quasi-core area." That is applied to the area around Frankfurt, which they classify as an "ephemeral core-area," and to Brandenburg, or the area around Berlin, which they classify as a "core-area." Although Pounds and Ball classify Brandenburg as a "core-area," that is inconsistent with their own analysis, in which they say that "core-areas" were always "foci of trade routes." "Core-Areas," 39. Berlin was not a central trading city (as were Prague and Vienna, from an early time). (See also map 1.) It developed only later, as a capital of Prussia. Moreover, Pounds and Ball say that "It is impossible to fit Germany into any one of the categories.... Its ultimate unity was not the result of a gradual expansion from any recognizable core-area." "Core-Areas," 38. They apparently give it the status of a "core-area," rather than an "ephemeral core-area," as for the Frankfurt area, because the capital of Prussia was established there, *ex post facto*. For the purpose of the analysis, the issue is whether or not it was actually a natural core of commercial activity and urbanization prior to the establishment of a modern state. Placing the Berlin and Frankfurt areas in one category, of "quasi-core areas," actually agrees with their analysis, in which they say that "There thus proved to be in Germany two separate core-areas, the middle Rhineland and Brandenburg," but the Frankfurt or Rhineland area was "ephemeral," and the Berlin or Brandenburg area was "a relatively poor and backward area which was even outside the limits of the early Germany empire." "Core-Areas," 39.

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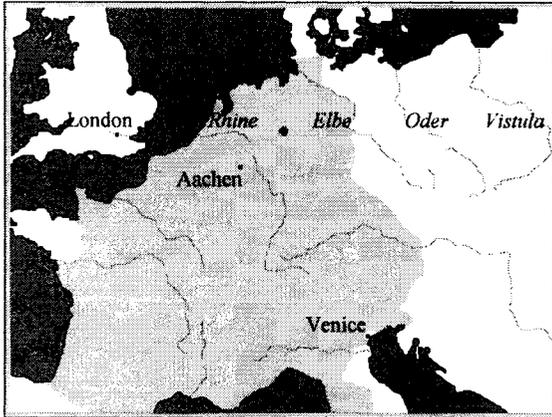
Map 4. The cultural gradient in Northwest Europe, Middle Ages to Renaissance



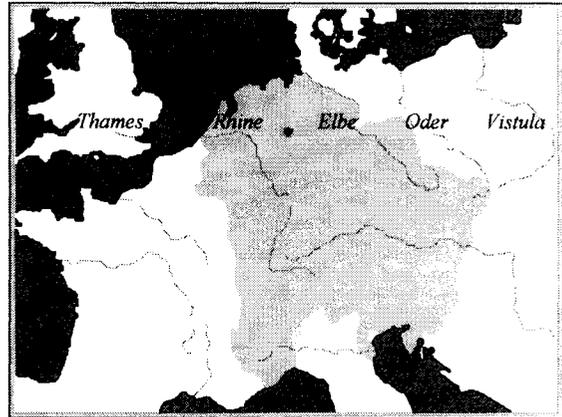
Sources and notes: Cities marked with squares are based on the classification of “very large” medieval cities and the cities with the largest populations in the “first half of the sixteenth century” in N.J.G. Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe* (1990), maps 6.9, 8.3, pages 164, 222. Universities marked with octagons are universities which were “active” in 1300 and 1500 according to Jacques Verger, “Patterns,” in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 1, (1992), maps 3, 7, pages 71, 75. Stars indicate significant discoveries in the natural sciences and practical inventions, from 1000 to 1600, based on Isaac Asimov, *Asimov’s Chronology of Science and Discovery* (1989), 75-128, with information from Francis Gies and Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge, and Waterfall: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages* (1994), and others on specific discoveries and inventions, using Asimov’s list as the basis for selection. Locations are the places at which the discoveries and inventions occurred, not the birthplaces or nationalities of the discoverers and inventors, and they do not include any which cannot be assigned to a relatively specific location. Ps indicate the locations of the first printing presses, from 1455 through 1480, the first 25 years of printing, based on the detailed listing in Colin Clair, *A Chronology of Printing* (1969), 9-24. Multiple printing establishments in the same city are not indicated.

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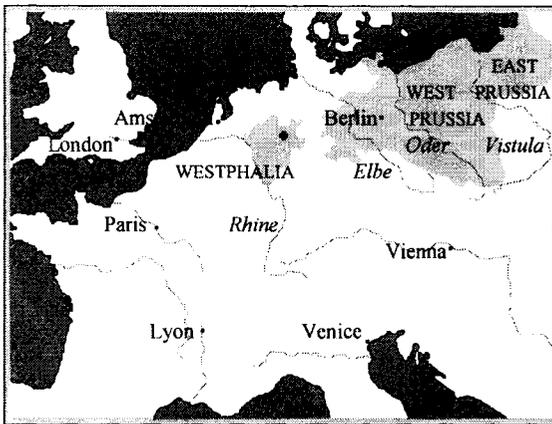
Map 5. Charlemagne's Empire 800



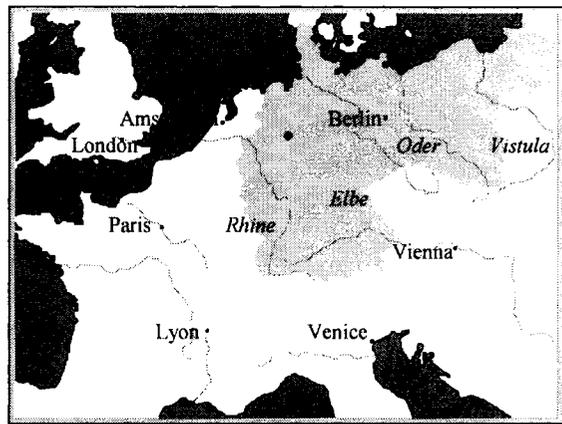
Map 6. Holy Roman Empire 1100



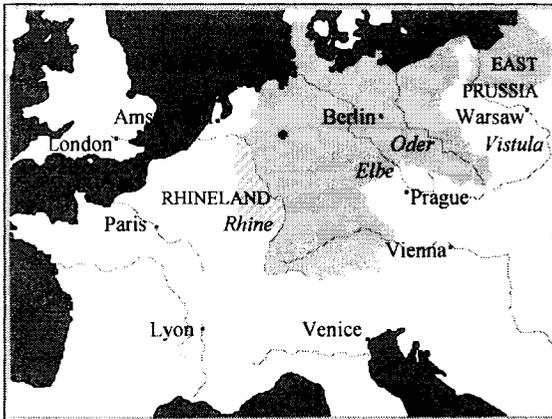
Map 7. Prussia 1815



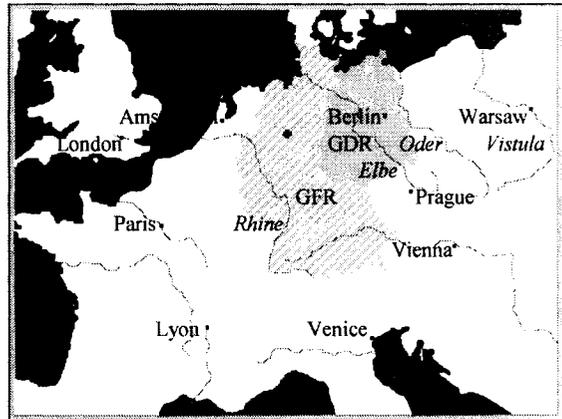
Map 8. German Empire 1871



Map 9. Weimar Republic & Nazi State 1933

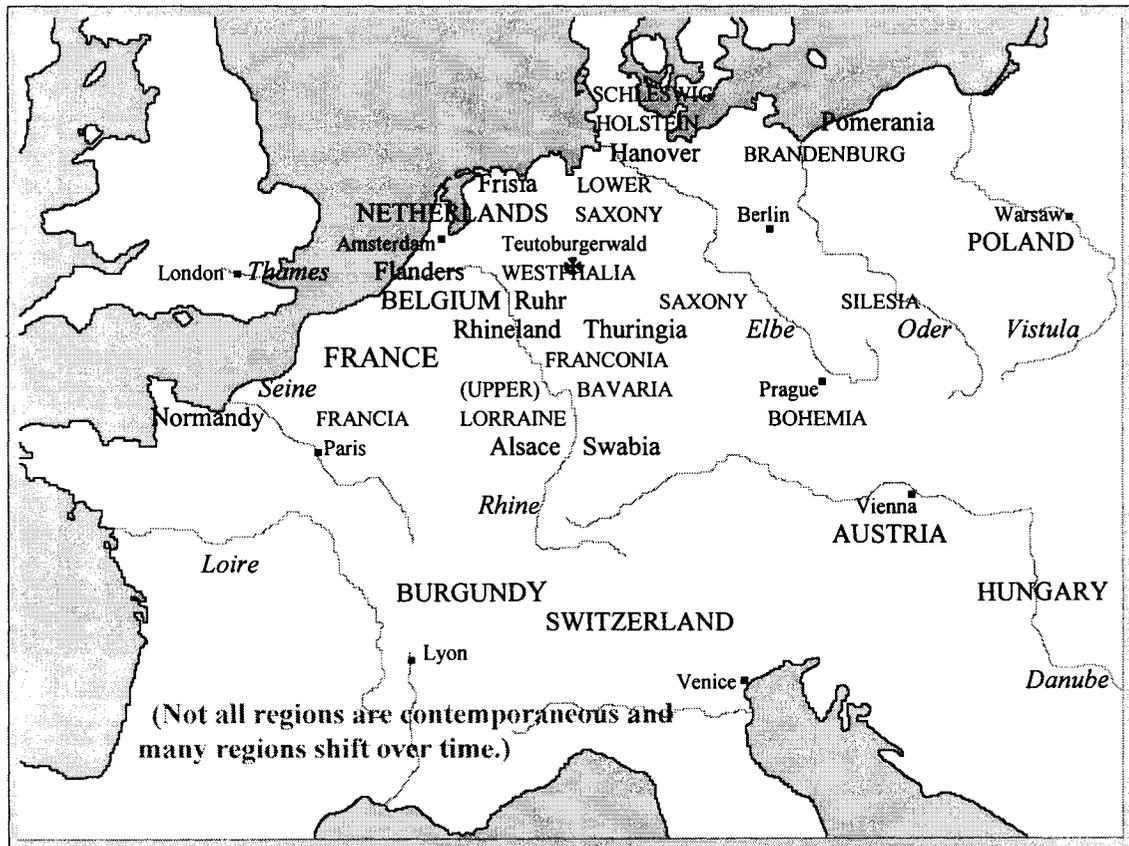


Map 10. Germany East & West 1948



* Teutoburgerwald

Map 11. Selected regions of Central Europe



Map 12. Areas of Germany (in darker shading) voting 50% or more Nazi on 5 March 1933

Source: Mary Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation: A History of Germany, 1918-1990* (1992), map 3, page 67.

All maps, 1-12, are drawn by the author, with general geographic coordinates based on reference maps from the US CIA. Use is permitted by United States statute, 17 USC § 105.

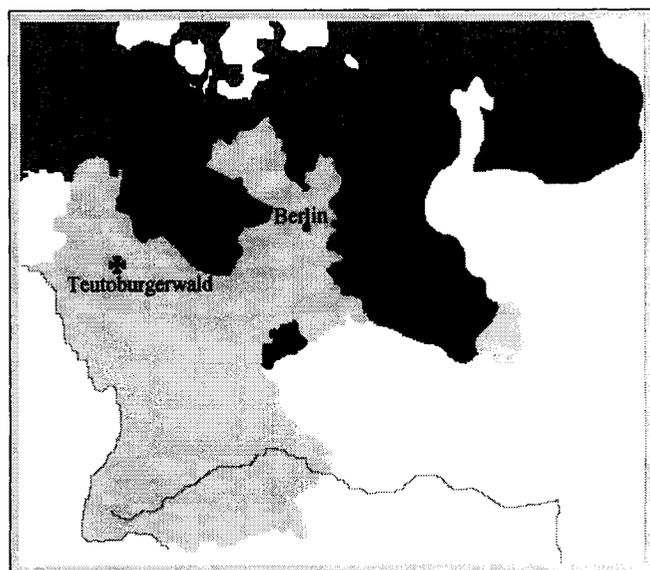
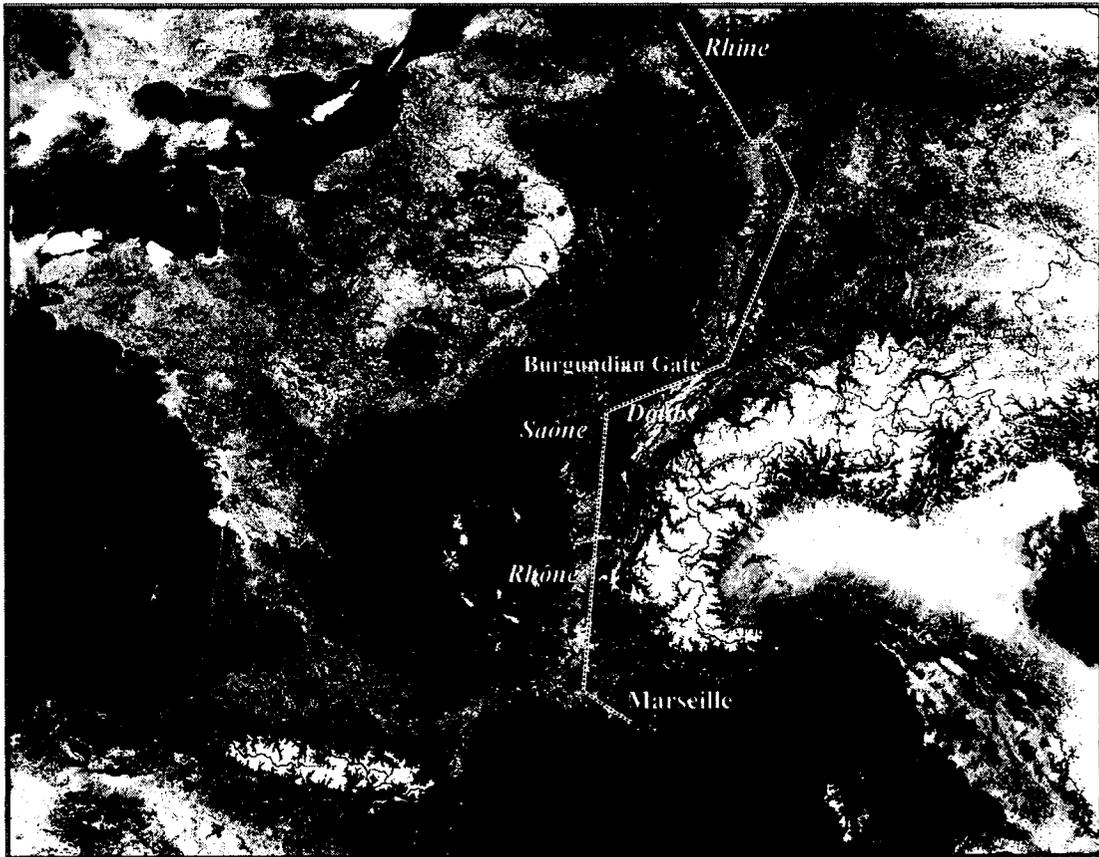
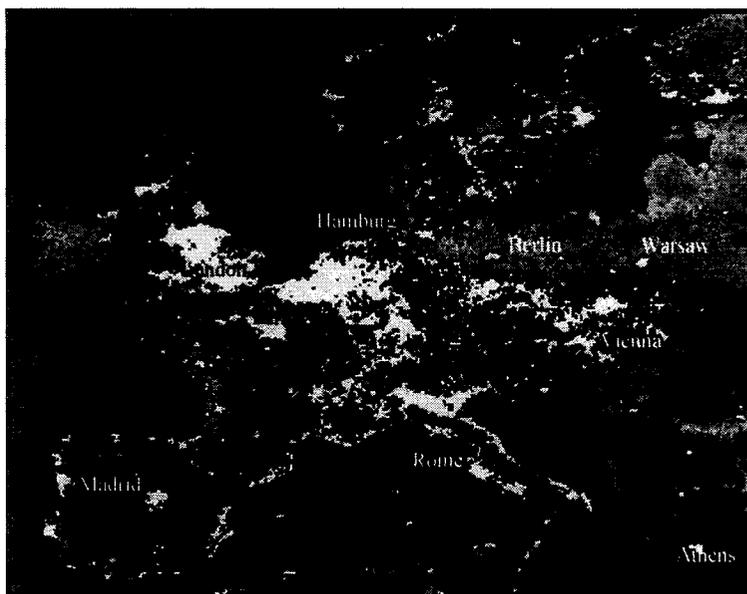


Photo 1. Western Europe, with overlay of Rhône-Saône-Doubs-Rhine route from Marseille to London



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Photo 2. Europe, bright lights indicating urbanization and industrialization, in 2002



Sources: Photo 1 is from the NASA “Visible Earth” project. Photo 2 is from the NASA GSFC Scientific Visualization Studio. See United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Earth Observatory, “Blue Marble” web site, at earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/BlueMarble, “Visible Earth” web site, at www.visibleearth.nasa.gov, and “Earth from Space” web site, at earth.jsc.nasa.gov. Both are processed and edited by the author, mostly for the purpose of reproduction in black & white. Photo 2 is color filtered to separate bright mountains, here in dark shades, from artificial lights, and North Sea oil flare lights are edited out. Use is permitted by NASA policy and United States statute, 17 USC § 105.

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Table 1. Theories of the German problem

	CULTURAL THEORY IDEOLOGICAL AND MORE HISTORICAL	RATIONAL THEORY MATERIAL AND LESS HISTORICAL
EXCEPTION OR ANOMALY	(1) <i>Sonderweg</i> (<i>Innenpolitik</i>) Germany has taken a special path, marked by continuities in political culture and institutions, which constitutes a long-term historical divergence from the norms of Western Europe. Usually an inside-out explanation. The fundamental problem is that Germany never accepted modern democratic liberalism.	(2) <i>Sonderfall</i> (<i>Außenpolitik</i>) Germany has taken a different path in its external politics and political structure, but these differences are primarily a result of its objective position in Europe and its internal material circumstances at the time, not a peculiar culture or ideology. Stresses an outside-in explanation, but also applies to internal politics, especially as they are determined by outside stressors. One variation argues that Germany was in fact too democratic and radical in Weimar, leading to the populist dictatorship of Hitler.
EXEMPLUM NOT AN ANOMALY	(4) <i>Rationalisierung</i> Germany is a most Western nation. Nazism represents an exemplum, or possibly an extreme case, of the overall totalitarianism of Western technological rationality, capitalism, and mass politics. The Nazi Holocaust is merely one among many modern holocausts. But it does reflect a long-term historical process, the disaster of modernity.	(3) <i>Realpolitik</i> Germany, in both the Second and Third Reichs, has simply followed the realistic demands of power politics in its situation, as would any state. The World Wars may have resulted from breakdowns of the international states system, or from objective limitations on instrumental rationality. The Nazi Holocaust is less easy to explain.

Note: In addition, the idea that Nazism is a *Betriebsunfall*, a "historical accident," or a singular and incomprehensible event, constitutes a non-theoretical explanation (or non-explanation). Less precisely, *Betriebsunfall* may be taken to mean that an accidental confluence of material forces in the special circumstances of the interwar period logically compelled the rise of Nazism. That variation is another name for the *Sonderfall* theory.

Table 2. Polarities of culture

Material (A☉)	Spiritual (☉)	Sources
External	Internal	Vilfredo Pareto
<i>Unterbau</i>	<i>Überbau</i>	Karl Marx
Libertarian personality	Authoritarian personality	Frankfurt School
Positive	Theological & metaphysical	Auguste Comte
Rational	Enchanted	Max Weber
Legal	Charismatic, traditional	Max Weber
<i>Zweckrational</i>	<i>Wertrational</i>	Max Weber
<i>Zweckwille & Kürwille</i>	<i>Triebwille & Wesenwille</i>	Wundt & Tönnies
Utilitarian Rationalism	Fundamentalism	Ernest Gellner
Capitalism	Pre-capitalist economics	Karl Marx
Organic social solidarity	Mechanical solidarity	Émile Durkheim
Contract society	Status society	James Sumner Maine
Repressive law	Restitutive law	Émile Durkheim
Law from history	From authority, philosophy	Roscoe Pound
Secular-humanist, profane	Fundamental, sacred	Émile Durkheim
Physiocentric	Psychocentric	Gavin Langmuir
Apolline	Dionysiac	Ruth Benedict
Chalice (partnership)	Blade (domination)	Riane Eisler
<i>Gesellschaft</i>	<i>Gemeinschaft</i>	Ferdinand Tönnies
<i>Zivilisation</i>	<i>Kultur</i>	Oswald Spengler
Open society	Closed society	Karl Popper
Constrained	Unconstrained	Thomas Sowell
Loosely-bounded	Tightly-bounded	Richard Merelman
<i>Aufklärung</i>	<i>Verfallsgeschichte</i>	German philosophers
Social contract, <i>isothymia</i>	Battle for recognition, <i>thymos</i>	Francis Fukuyama
Positive-sum strategy	Negative-sum strategy	Contemporary IR theory
Trading state	Conquest state	Richard Rosecrance
McWorld (globalization)	<i>Jihad</i> (neo-tribalism)	Benjamin Barber
Anomie	<i>Asabiyya</i>	Akbar Ahmed
Other-directed	Tradition & inner-directed	David Riesman
Sensate, empiricism	Ideational, spiritualism	Pitirim Sorokin
<i>Werden</i>	<i>Sein</i>	Pitirim Sorokin
Naturalism	Symbolism	History of Art
Polyarchy (pluralism)	Hegemony	Robert Dahl
<i>Logos</i>	<i>Mythos</i>	Karen Armstrong
<i>Welt</i>	<i>Geist</i>	G.W.F. Hegel

Table 3. Cultural layers in France, Britain, and Germany (including Netherlands)

France (Gaul, West Franks, and France)	Britain (Britannia, England, and Great Britain)	Germany (Holy Roman Empire)*		
		Romanized Western Germany (Netherlands)	Teutonic Central Germany	Colonial Eastern Germany (Prussia)
Tribal Celtic Roman-Urban Roman-Christian Germanic Christian-Feudal	Tribal British Tribal German-Celtic Roman-Urban Roman-Christian Anglo-Saxon Christian-Feudal Danish Norman-French Medieval-Urban Scots	Tribal German-Celtic Roman-Urban Roman-Christian Frankish-Christian Norman Medieval-Urban	Tribal German Frankish-Christian Christian-Feudal	Tribal Slavic German-Christian

* See also map 4.

Table 4. General comparisons of other nations to Germany

	Geography and economics	Culture and politics
Germany	<p>~ Middle of Europe, on the edge of the Rhine Trade Route, and the Roman Empire.</p> <p>~ No definite core areas providing a natural basis for national development. A number of stem duchies provided multiple alternatives for national consolidation, none of which were able to dominate the others successfully.</p> <p>~ Cities and trade developed in the Rhineland during the Middle Ages, but independent city life was repressed by secular and ecclesiastical princes. Hanseatic cities developed extensive trade networks, but were unable to compete against trading cities in England and the Netherlands after those nations began to consolidate.</p> <p>~ As Germany expanded to the east, the economic base was largely agricultural and the organization of production remained semi-feudal well into the Modern Age.</p> <p>~ Late and rapid industrialization beginning in the late 19th Century was highly monopolistic and state-financed.</p>	<p>~ Originally part of a common Germanic culture, with England and the Netherlands.</p> <p>~ National territory of dominant ethnic group smaller than areas of concentration in Europe, and largely homogeneous.</p> <p>~ A constantly contested and antagonistic culture, with a weak material base, resulting in the continuation of a weak imperial structure, but no nation-state until quite late, in 1871.</p> <p>~ Strong militarization, bourgeois identification with the military aristocracy, and resistance to the ideals of the Enlightenment and Western modernity.</p> <p>~ Late industrialization results in a high level of technical expertise without an associated identification with modern technical rationality, the phenomenon of "reactionary modernism." Late and rapid urbanization results in vehement and romantic resistance to urban and cosmopolitan values.</p> <p>~ Severe internal cultural dichotomies, expressed in both the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.</p>
England	<p>~ At the end of the Rhine Trade Route and the intersection with North Sea and Baltic Trade, somewhat protected by the sea.</p> <p>~ Major core area provided by London, from an early age, which expanded to other commercial and maritime cities in the southeastern Lowlands.</p>	<p>~ Originally part of a common Germanic culture.</p> <p>~ Subjected to multiple invasions and migrations, and also continuing trading relations, which broke down traditional structures and led to a more rationally integrated multicultural polity.</p> <p>~ A strongly contested but more organic culture with a strong material base, resulting in an early nation-state.</p>
Netherlands	<p>~ At the end of the Rhine Trade Route and the intersection with North Sea and Baltic Trade, somewhat protected by the sea.</p> <p>~ Major core area provided by shifting collection of commercial and maritime cities in the Rhine Delta.</p>	<p>~ Originally part of a common Germanic culture.</p> <p>~ Subjected to multiple invasions and migrations, and also continuing trading relations, which broke down traditional structures and led to a more rationally integrated multicultural polity with strong city-states which consolidated into a nation-state in response to outside threats.</p> <p>~ Highly cosmopolitan and rational culture.</p>

Table 4. General comparisons of other nations to Germany, continued

	Geography and economics	Culture and politics
Austria	<p>~ Area of modern state largely inside the Roman empire, and on the Danube, a main trade route of the ancient world, but separated from the Mediterranean by mountains.</p> <p>~ Largely rural, but with a major urban core and trade center at Vienna.</p>	<p>~ Highly multicultural or “multinational” empire, while still largely agricultural.</p> <p>~ Strong urban-rural dichotomy, resulting in vehement antisemitism at a later stage, but dominated by a relatively cosmopolitan political and cultural elite.</p>
Ireland	<p>~ Relatively protected island, not within Roman empire, but with strong maritime contacts with European continent, bringing both trade and immigrants.</p> <p>~ Largely rural, but with a major trade center and beachhead for invasion at Dublin.</p>	<p>~ Like the main island of Great Britain, but less so, subjected to multiple invasions and migrations, and also continuing trading relations, which broke down traditional structures.</p> <p>~ At the same time, resistance to English conquest consolidated a modern semi-tribal or national identity, resulting in a culture of romantic resistance and heroic violence, but not antimodern or fascist.</p>
France	<p>~ Ancient trade with Mediterranean via Atlantic coast and Rhône, and early conquest and settlement by Rome. Strong identification with Roman culture.</p> <p>~ Early division between two core trade areas, at Lyon and Paris, forming basis for Burgundian and French states.</p>	<p>~ Consolidation of national identity around Paris in the north, partly in response to the pressures of English invasions, partly because of the increasing productivity of the English and Netherlands connection in the north.</p> <p>~ Significant conflicts between the increasingly irrelevant aristocracy and the rising bourgeois, leading to the major but inclusive break of the French Revolution, followed by a continuation of ideological and political dichotomies well into the 20th Century, but with a strong identification with the ideals of the Enlightenment and Western modernity.</p>
Italy	<p>~ Peninsula with central place in Western Mediterranean, subject to many invasions and settlements in Ancient Ages.</p> <p>~ Invasions and migrations divide up the Italian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, causing fragmentation into local city states, well-positioned to take advantage of developing Mediterranean-European trade routes, but which become prizes in continuing struggles between major powers throughout the Middle Ages.</p>	<p>~ The relative success of the northern Italian cities and depression in the south results in an Italian north-south cultural gradient, and the continuing interference of outside powers results in national fragmentation, combined with frustrated dreams of an ancient empire, which eventually results in Italian Fascism, similar to Nazism, but less strongly opposed to modernity, less aggressively militaristic, and less antisemitic.</p>

Table 4. General comparisons of other nations to Germany, continued

	Geography and economics	Culture and politics
Russia	<p>~ Highly exposed geographically and subject to invasion and domination throughout early history. But relatively early consolidation of an empire.</p> <p>~ Like Germany, a late and relatively rapid industrialization, largely state controlled.</p>	<p>~ National territory of dominant ethnic group larger than areas of concentration in Europe and Asia, resulting, as in Austria, only more so, in a highly multicultural or “multinational” empire, even while still largely agricultural, during both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Empire.</p> <p>~ A sense of separateness from the West, and the ambivalence of resentful admiration, much as in Germany, but with the advantage of greater separation from the Western powers and more satisfaction of imperial ambitions. Much less domination of the polity by the culture of militaristic nobility. A “tame” nobility.</p> <p>~ No major religious reformation. Continuation of Orthodox Christianity as a priestly rather than prophetic religion. A “tame” priesthood.</p> <p>~ Acceptance of Marxism as an ideology which expressed the Russian desire to be separate from the West, but not fundamentally rejecting materialism or modernity.</p>
Japan	<p>~ Island nation somewhat protected by the sea. Early consolidation of monocultural national identity.</p> <p>~ Late and rapid industrialization and urbanization, like Germany. Forced contact with Western imperial powers in the late Modern Age.</p>	<p>~ National territory highly homogeneous. Originally dominated by Chinese culture, but later established isolation from both Asia and Western culture.</p> <p>~ Severe cultural dichotomies and resentments resulting from late, forced, and traumatic modernization, resulting in a form of fascism and “reactionary modernism” remarkably similar to Nazism in Germany.</p>

Table 5. Fascism or totalitarianism in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union

	Ideology	Domestic effects	Foreign effects
Nazi Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Strongly anti-liberal and anti-democratic, but populist. ~ Internally divided about capitalism. ~ Militaristic. ~ Antisemitic. ~ Anti-modern, but with claim to "race science" and celebration of some aspects of technology, especially weapons. ~ Anti-urban. ~ Spiritual, pseudo-religious. ~ Romantic, sometimes occult revival of ancient Aryan culture, some identification with Ancient Greece. ~ Millennialist, vision of the "Thousand Year Reich" and "New Order" in Europe. ~ Not universalist. ~ Cult of the leader, <i>der Führer</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Totalitarian control of all national institutions. Invasion of science and art, and religion by "German Science," "German Christianity," and "<i>Kulturführung</i>." ~ Street violence as a form of politics when in opposition. ~ Mass murder of Jews and other enemies of the regime. ~ Militarization of society. ~ Ineffective economic mobilization until in extremis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Unconditionally aggressive foreign policy, pursuing war for the sake of war, without limit. ~ Apparently very effective militarily, in fact highly effective at tactical and operational levels, but defective at logistic and strategic levels. Extremely creative in creating new weapon technologies, but quite ineffective in production. ~ Unable to change regime or capitulate when defeat was imminent.
Fascist Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Strongly anti-liberal and anti-democratic, but populist. ~ Corporatist. ~ Militaristic. ~ Generally racist, but not strongly antisemitic. ~ Anti-urban. ~ Futurist, but with romantic desires for a revival of the Roman Empire and a return to peasant goodness. ~ Not universalist. ~ Cult of the leader, <i>il Duce</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Weakly corporatist state, but not totalitarian. Little attempt to control science, art, or religion. ~ Street violence as a form of politics when in opposition. ~ Oppression and violence, but no mass murder. ~ Ineffective economic mobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Celebration of war for the sake of war, but actual foreign policy is opportunistic and imperialistic rather than unconditionally aggressive. ~ Remarkably ineffective militarily. ~ Rationally changed regime and capitulated when defeat was imminent.

Table 5. Fascism or totalitarianism in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union, continued

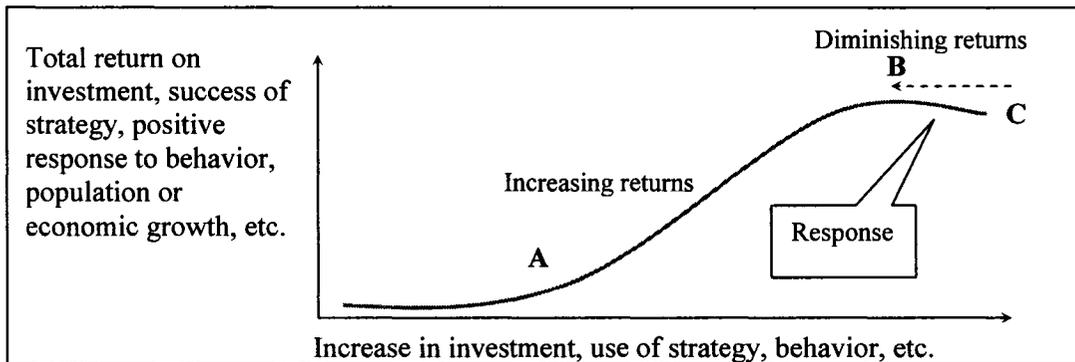
	Ideology	Domestic effects	Foreign effects
Japan, Showa Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Strongly anti-liberal and anti-democratic, with appeal to traditional imperialism, <i>Kodo</i>. ~ Internally divided about capitalism. ~ Militaristic. ~ Not antisemitic, but quite racist, against other Asians as well as Europeans. ~ Self-consciously divided about modernization or "Westernization. Attempt to import Western technology while resisting Western culture. ~ Anti-urban. ~ Spiritual, explicitly religious cult of the emperor and assertion of superior spiritual values over the West. ~ Romantic revival of ancient Japanese culture. ~ Millennialist, vision of a "New Order" in Asia. ~ Not universalist. ~ Cult of the emperor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Less than totalitarian control of all national institutions as such, but a strong social and cultural hegemony. ~ Autonomous military violence as a form of politics, especially when dissatisfied with civilian leadership. ~ No mass murder of any category of peoples as such, but extremely brutal and murderous practices in areas under occupation. ~ Enslavement of Koreans. ~ Militarization of society. ~ Ineffective economic mobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Unconditionally aggressive foreign policy, pursuing war for the sake of war, without limit. ~ Apparently very effective militarily, in fact highly effective at tactical and operational levels, but defective at logistic and strategic levels. ~ Unable to change regime or capitulate when defeat was imminent until after use of the atomic bomb and uncharacteristic intervention by the emperor.
Stalinist Soviet Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Strongly anti-liberal and anti-democratic, but with claim to be a "dictatorship of the proletariat." ~ Strongly anti-capitalist. ~ Not militaristic. ~ Not explicitly antisemitic, but some characterization of Jews as class enemies. ~ Mixed materialistic and idealistic elements in "dialectical materialism." ~ Pro-urban, in favoring urban proletariat, but also with romantic celebration of peasantry. ~ Strongly millennialist. ~ Universalist. ~ Cult of the leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Totalitarian control of all national institutions. Invasion of science, art, and religion, with "dialectical materialism," in science, and as substitute for religion, and by imposition of "socialist realism" in art. ~ Mass murder of "class enemies." ~ Ineffective economic mobilization until in extremis. ~ Non-universalist practical policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ No celebration of war for the sake of war, opportunistically aggressive, but also defensive and cautious. ~ Failure to pursue world revolution in favor of traditional imperialism and protection of the security of the Soviet State. ~ Initially ineffective militarily, but eventually effective in mass mobilization and production, with significant Western assistance.

Table 6. Selected imperial, German, and Prussian rulers

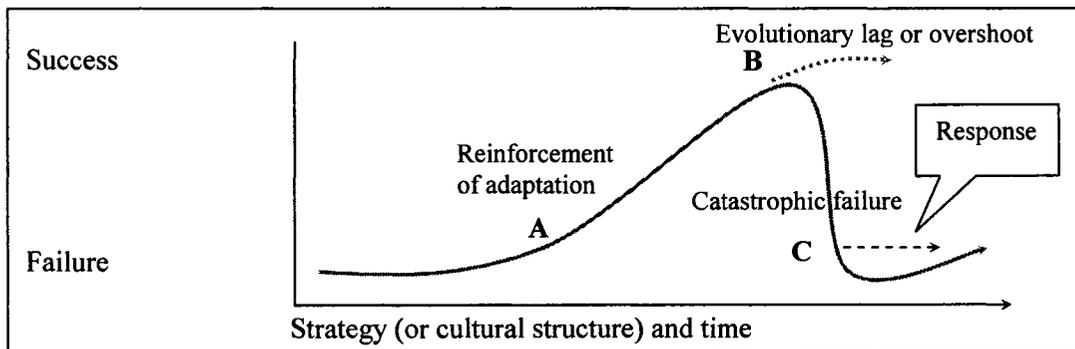
RULERS	REIGNS	RELATED EVENTS OR REGIMES
Charlemagne, <i>Karl der Grosse</i> , Emperor	800-814	Holy Roman Empire (800-1806)
Louis I, <i>Ludwig der Fromme</i> , Emperor	814-840	Usurpation (833)
Lothair I, Joint Emperor with Louis I	817-843	Civil War (840-843)
Louis, <i>Ludwig der Deutsche</i> , King East Franks	817-876	Treaty of Verdun (843)
Charles III, <i>Karl der Dicke</i> , Emperor	881-887	End of Carolingian Dynasty (887)
Arnulf, <i>Arnulf von Kärnten</i> , Emperor	887-899	Disintegration of Empire
Conrad I, Emperor	911-918	Rise of East Frankish Duchies
Henry I, <i>Heinrich der Vogler</i> , King Germany	919-936	Saxon dynasty (918-1024)
Otto I, <i>Otto Der Grosse</i> , Emperor	936-973	Battle of Lechfeld (955)
Henry II, <i>Sankt Heinrich</i> , Emperor	1014-1024	Consolidation of Ottonian System
Conrad II, Emperor	1024-1039	Salian dynasty (1024-1137)
Henry III, Emperor	1039-1056	Cluniac reform (c. 950-1130)
Henry IV, Emperor	1056-1106	Investiture Contest (1076-1122)
Henry V, Emperor	1111-1125	Concordant of Worms (1122)
Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, Bavaria	1142-1180	Breakup Saxony, Bavaria (1180)
Friedrich I, <i>Barbarossa</i> , Emperor	1152-1190	Wars in Italy (1154-1183)
Friedrich II, Emperor	1220-1250	Constitution of Princes (1231)
Hermann von Salza, Teutonic <i>Hochmeister</i>	1210-1239	Golden Bull of Rimini (1226)
Imperial Interregnum (fall of Hohenstaufens)	1254-1273	First Papal Inquisition (1233)
Charles IV, <i>Karl von Luxemburg</i> , Emperor	1355-1378	Golden Bull (1356)
Maximilian I, Emperor and King of Germany	1493-1519	Luther's 95 Theses (1517)
Charles V, Emperor	1519-1558	Diet of Worms (1521)
Albrecht Hohenzollern, Duke of Prussia	1525-1578	Conversion to Lutheranism
Friedrich Wilhelm, <i>der Grosse Kurfürst</i>	1640-1688	Thirty Years War (1618-1648)
Friedrich I, <i>König in Preußen</i>	1701-1713	Spanish Succession (1701-1714)
Friedrich Wilhelm I, King of Prussia	1713-1740	<i>Landtags-Recess</i> (1653)
Friedrich II, <i>der Grosse</i> , King of Prussia	1740-1786	Seven Years War (1756-1763)
Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia	1786-1797	Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815)
Napoleon, Ruler of Germany West of the Rhine	1794-1814	Battle of Jena, end of HRE (1806)
Friedrich Wilhelm III, King of Prussia	1797-1840	Post-Napoleonic industrialization
Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia	1840-1861	Revolution of 1848
Wilhelm I, Prussian King, German Emperor	1861-1888	Franco-Prussian War (1870-1)
~ Otto von Bismarck, PM, Chancellor	1862-1890	<i>Kaiserreich</i> (1871-1918)
Friedrich III, German Emperor	1888-1888	99-day reign
Wilhelm II, German Emperor	1888-1918	<i>Weltpolitik</i> (post 1890)
~ FM Hindenburg & General Ludendorff	1917-1918	World War I (1914-1918)
Friedrich Ebert, President	1919-1925	Weimar Republic (1919-1933)
Paul von Hindenburg, President	1925-1934	Article 48 Decree (1933)
Adolf Hitler, Chancellor, President, <i>Führer</i>	1933-1945	Third Reich (1933-1945)

Diagram 1. The cliff effect

1a. Basic S-curve (growth curve or logistic curve)



1b. The cliff curve (hubris)



1c. Alternative strategies (short-term high-risk versus long-term low-risk curves)

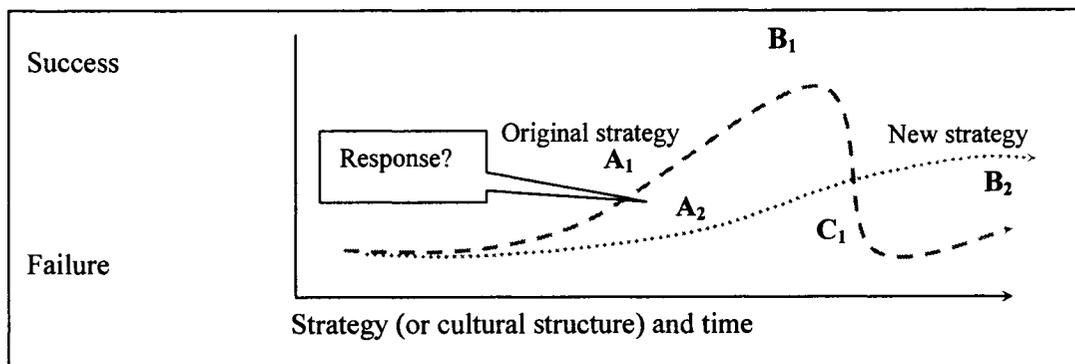
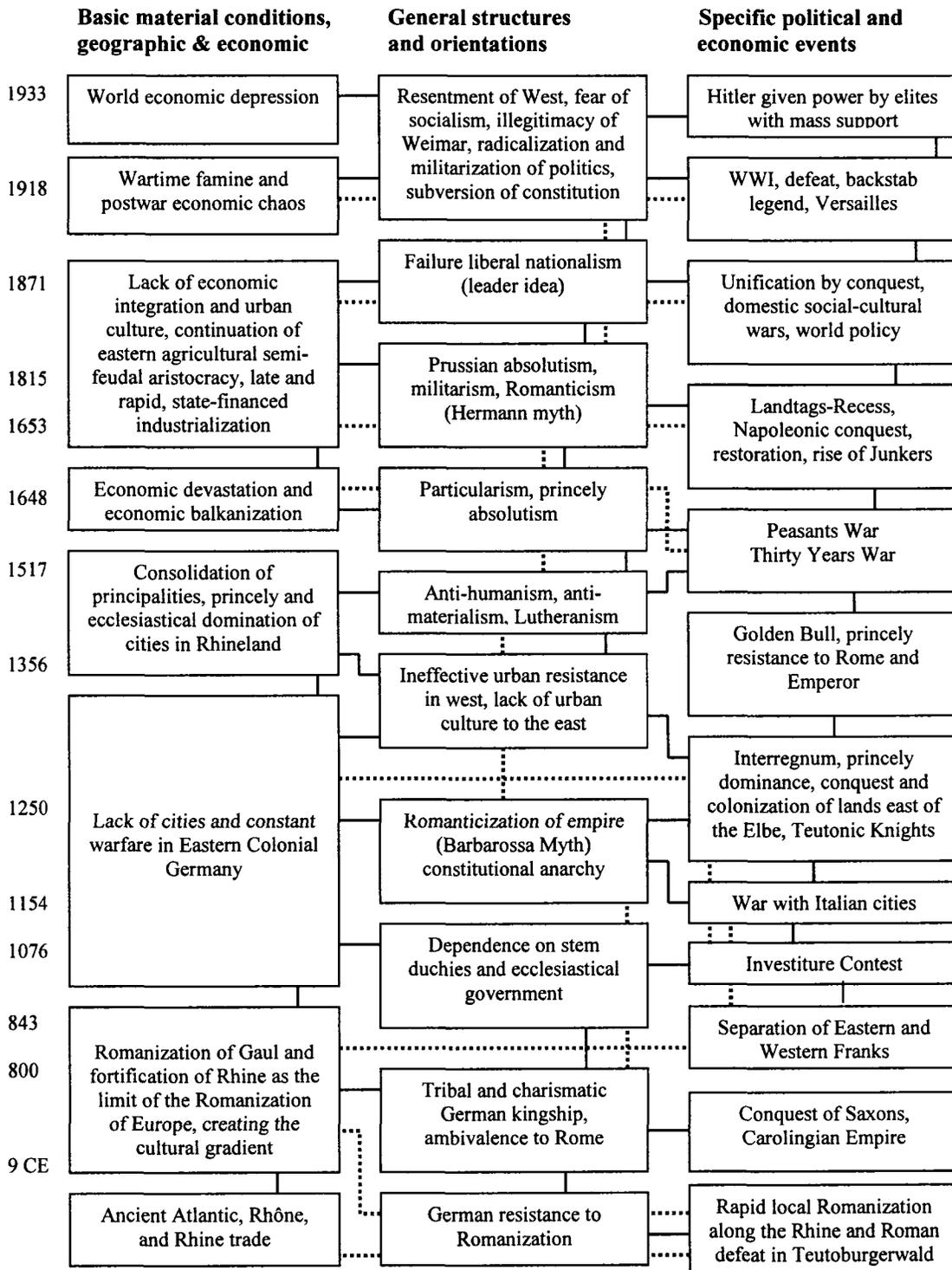
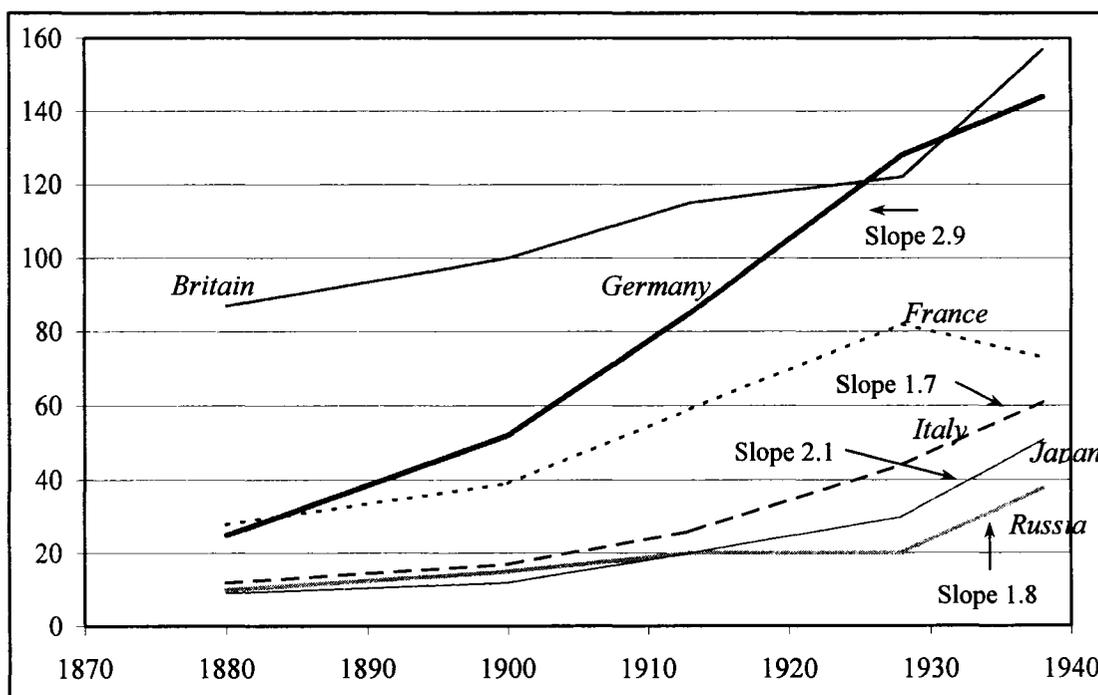


Diagram 2. The web of connections between 9 CE and 1933



Graph 1. Industrialization and urbanization in selected countries, 1880-1938

Graph 1a. Relative per capita levels of industrialization, 1880-1938



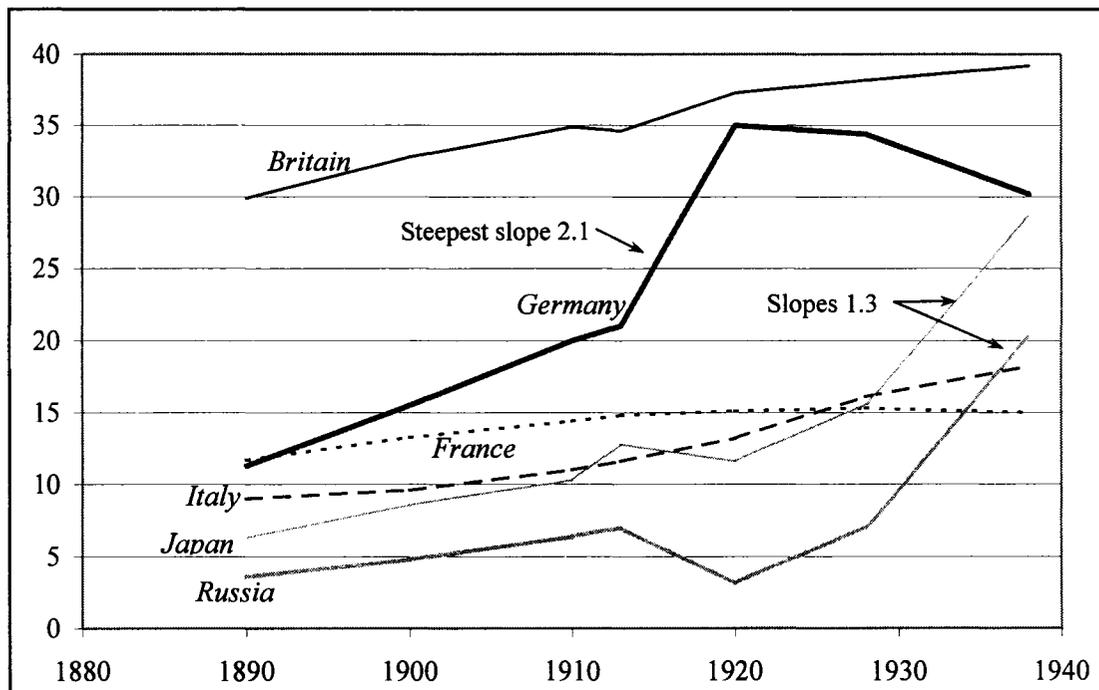
Relative levels, based on Britain 1900 = 100, per capita						Percentage change in levels, 1880 to 1938
	1880	1900	1913	1928	1938	
<i>Britain</i>	87	100	115	122	157	<i>Germany</i> 576
<i>Germany</i>	25	52	85	128	144	<i>Japan</i> 567
<i>France</i>	28	39	59	82	73	<i>Italy</i> 508
<i>Italy</i>	12	17	26	44	61	<i>Russia</i> 380
<i>Japan</i>	9	12	20	30	51	<i>France</i> 261 (293)*
<i>Russia</i>	10	15	20	20	38	<i>Britain</i> 180

Source: Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (1987), table 14, p. 200, from Paul Bairoch, "International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to 1980," *Journal of European Economic History* 11.2 (Spring 1982) 269-310, 294, 302.

*From 1880 to 1928 (highest point) = 293%.

Graph 1. Industrialization and urbanization in selected countries, 1880-1938, continued

Graph 1b. Percent urbanization, 1890-1938

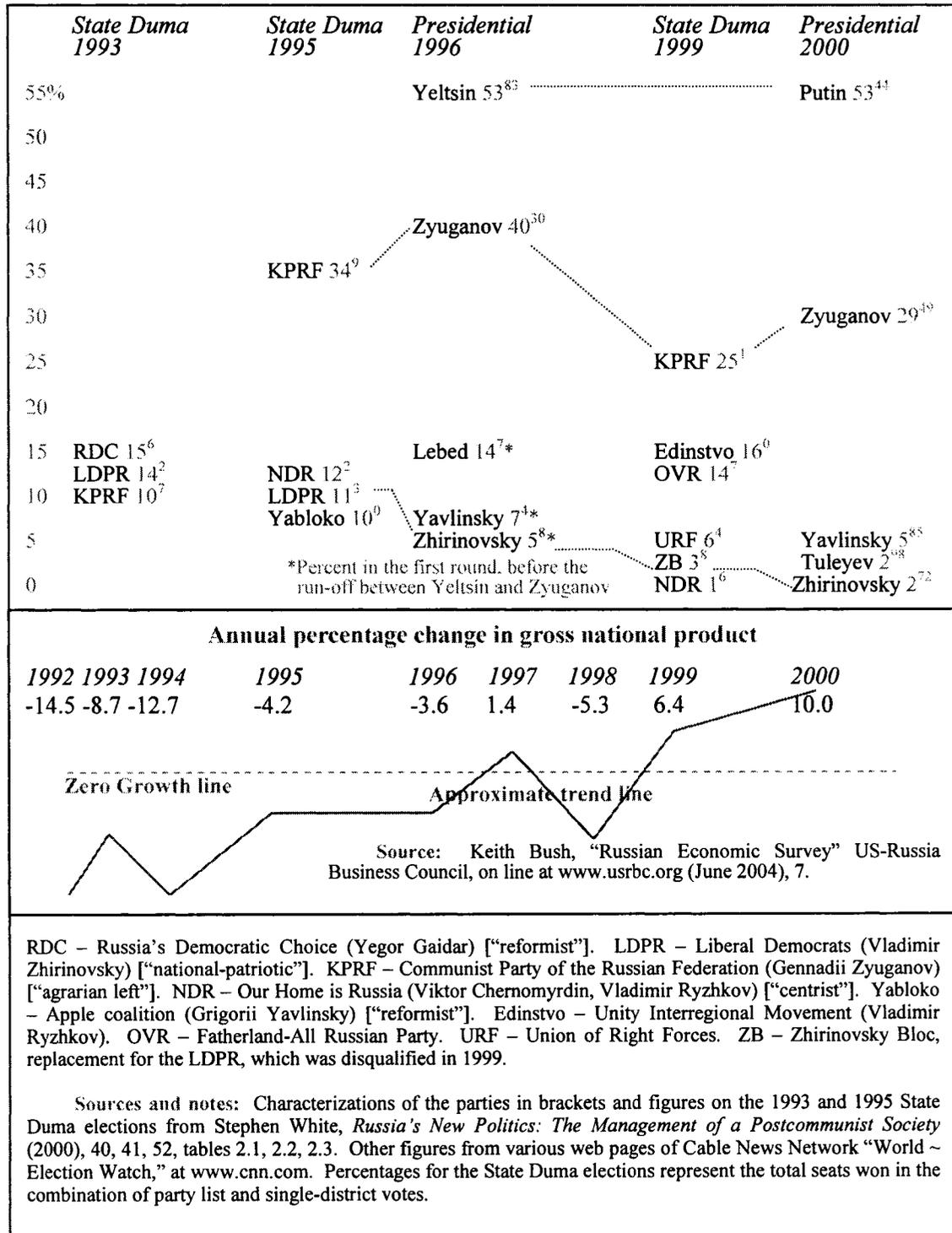


Urban population as a percentage of total population								Percentage change in percentage, 1890 to 1938
	1890	1900	1910	1913	1920	1928	1938	
<i>Britain</i>	29.9	32.8	34.9	34.6	37.3	38.2	39.2	
<i>Germany</i>	11.3	15.5	20.0	21.0	35.7	34.4	30.2	<i>Russia</i> 561
<i>France</i>	11.7	13.3	14.4	14.8	15.1	15.3	15.0	<i>Japan</i> 454
<i>Italy</i>	9.0	9.6	11.0	11.6	13.2	16.1	18.2	<i>Germany</i> 267 (316)*
<i>Japan</i>	6.3	8.6	10.3	12.8	11.6	15.6	28.6	<i>Italy</i> 202
<i>Russia</i>	3.6	4.8	6.4	7.0	3.1	7.1	20.2	<i>Britain</i> 134
								<i>France</i> 128

Source: Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, table 13, p. 200, from Cyril E. Black, Marius B. Jansen, Herbert S. Levine, Marion J. Levy, Jr., Henry Rosovsky, Gilbert Rozman, Henry D. Smith, II, and S. Frederick Starr, *The Modernization of Japan and Russia: A Comparative Study* (1975), 6-7.

* From 1890 to 1920 (highest point) = 316%.

Graph 2. Leading parties and candidates in Russian elections, 1993-2000, by percentages, compared to percent changes in gross national product



List of sources

Explanation of citations

In general. This list has all sources cited in the footnotes, except legal authorities, in a form which is as complete as possible, including, whenever available, the US Library of Congress call numbers of books and journals in pointed brackets { }. Generally, LOC call numbers, although sometimes varying slightly among libraries, are far more likely to be of assistance to modern scholars than the cities and publishers with which we traditionally clutter our citations, although those are also included here. This may be an instance of “informational imperialism,” as the British historian Norman Davies complains, but the fact is, as he has noticed, that “almost all libraries in the English-speaking world have adopted the American system.” Davies, *The Isles*, xxxv. (Is this a greater informational imperialism than the fact that so many of the rest of us live in the “English-speaking world”?) It is a matter of simple practicality. I have the silly idea that readers might actually want to look up many of my citations. And it is also a mild protest against the mindless ritualism in academia which forces us to clutter our citations with information which is useless in the age of Amazon.com and its competitors.

Multiple works by the same author are listed in order of the original dates of the works, as much as practical, in order to provide an indication of the evolution of the writing, with compilations usually put last. In some cases, such as the various selections from the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch, the works are listed in the chronological order of the subjects in order to present the works in a substantively logical order. General references which have a multitude of editors or authors, such as encyclopedias, are cited and listed by the name of the work rather than the editors.

Footnote form in general. With the exception of scriptures and certain general references, or anonymous authors, the first citations in the footnotes to each section give the names of the authors or editors as used in their work, the full versions of the main titles (with the subtitles, when they are substantively informative), and the dates of publication. A date in square brackets [] instead of parentheses () indicates the date of original publication rather than the date of the current version being cited, in order to give substantive information about the time at which the work was written. Repeat citations in footnotes within the same section are by last names and short titles, without dates, except when the longer form might be substantively useful.

The last numbers given in footnotes, for modern sources, are page numbers of the versions listed here. Useful subdivisions, such as volumes, books, chapters, etc., sometimes appear before that, separated by periods. Page numbers are not generally used for terms in dictionaries or short encyclopedia entries arranged alphabetically.

All English quotes from non-English works, except where specifically indicated to be my own translation, are from the translations listed here.

Classic and literary works (including scriptures). Citations in the footnotes to classic or literary works are to traditional pages, books, sections, chapters, aphorisms, verses, paragraphs, lines, fragments, etc., with subdivisions divided by periods, whenever those traditional divisions are available in an original or widely accepted standard version of the work. Where such subdivisions are explicitly numbered in the original text, a section sign § is sometimes used. Pages in the modern translation listed here, when that is likely to be helpful, are then enclosed in parentheses (). Original titles and original dates appear in square brackets [] in the first citation in a section.

Classics are generally listed here by the traditional names of the original authors, not by the names of editors or translators. Citations in the footnotes are to the best-known English name of the work, sometimes even when that is a bad translation of the original work, as in *Republic* for Plato’s *Politeia*, but keep to the original title as closely as possible, as in *Gallic War* rather than *The Conquest of Gaul* for the Pelican version of Caesar’s *De bello Gallico*. Where there is no commonly accepted English name of the work, the original is used, as in Livy’s *Ad Urbe Condita*.

All English quotes from non-English works, unless specifically indicated to be my own translation, are from the translations listed here. For some classical Greek & Latin works, I have listed more than one translation for benefit of comparison. Unless otherwise indicated, English quotes come from the first translation listed. Greek and Latin used in the text usually come from either the Loeb Classical Library versions listed as references or from the classic texts on line with the Tufts University "Perseus Project" at www.perseus.tufts.edu ~ an extraordinarily useful source for classic texts and aids.

Internet citations. Internet citations here are relatively few, and are mostly limited to news stories, incidental examples, and some statistical data ~ although a significant exception is the authoritative classical material in the Tufts University "Perseus Project" at www.perseus.tufts.edu. This is a case where the mindless ritualism in academia is especially irritating, because it is a newly invented ritualism noticeably out of step with the evolving reality of the internet. I willfully ignore the ugly and tedious formats suggested by the Modern Library Association and other supposed authorities on citation. Providing long and detailed addresses with multiple codes in slashes on the end is pointless because the organization and location of documents on the net is constantly changing. I never use an internet citation unless I can definitely identify the organization which is the custodian of the document and a general address ~ such as "news.bbc.co.uk" for the British Broadcasting Corporation News Online ~ which will then allow the reader to search the site for the document, however it has been reorganized in the time since, with the substantive information in the title of the document. Nor do I underline internet citations, because it interferes with reading the data, and because it confuses a citation with an actual hyperlink.

Legal Citations. A few legal citations in this work are given in complete legal form in the notes in the text and are not listed again here. Law libraries have an entirely different scheme of organization, based on jurisdiction and the source of legal authority, often embodied in standard multi-volume reporters, which makes the usual citation information irrelevant. Please consult a law librarian.

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