

SEVEN CONTEMPORARY FRENCH POLITICAL THINKERS

Considerations

of

Individualism, Humanism and Value Pluralism

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of PhD in the School of Languages,
Oxford Brookes University

February 2001

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"Zwei Dinge erfüllen das Gemüt mit immer neuer und zunehmender Bewunderung und Ehrfurchte [...]: der bestirnte Himmel über mir und das moralische Gesetz in mir."

("Two things fill the spirit with new and ever-increasing wonder and awe: the starry heavens above my head and the moral law within me."
(Kant: Critique of Practical Reason)

"There are [...] three distinct powers (potestas legislatoria, executoria, iudiciaria) which give the state (civitas) its autonomy, that is, which enable the state to establish and maintain itself in accordance with laws of freedom. The welfare of the state consists in the union of these powers (salus reipublicae suprema lex est). But this welfare must not be understood as synonymous with the well-being and happiness of the citizens, for it may well be possible to attain these in a more convenient and desirable way within a state of nature (as Rousseau declares), or even under a despotic regime. On the contrary, the welfare of the state should be seen as that condition in which the constitution approximates to the principles of right; and reason, by a categorical imperative, obliges us to strive for its realisation." (1)

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1. KANT, Immanuel -- **Das öffentliche Recht**, cited by REISS, Hans (ed.) -- **Kant; Political Writings**, Cambridge University Press, 1991 (second edition), pp. 142-143

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses upon a significant body of contemporary French political thought which takes as its starting point a contention that both the monist and doctrinaire political precepts dating from the Revolution and the consequent Hegelian, Marxist and structuralist thinking linked to these precepts have become anachronistic and hence have little relevance in present-day France.

The originality of this doctoral thesis lies in the analysis of the work of seven political thinkers. All of these thinkers, recognizing a break in the continuity of French political thought consequent upon the claim of François Furet that the "Revolution is complete", have sought to rationalize and reconcile the values of individualism, humanism and modernity in contemporary France. In contrast to the political thinkers of the Sartrean generation, whose work took little account of the actual practice of politics, the seven thinkers seek to relate the philosophical problems inherent in considerations of individual and communal rights and values to the present-day political environment.

Each of the seven has sought to rationalize a political situation, novel in France, of an acceptance of the concept of agreeing to differ on matters of substance and of a recognition that a modern democratic state is heteronomous and may contain a substantial range of incommensurable values.

This amounts to an acceptance of agonistic value pluralism, that is, of the idea of political conflict which is constructive (by contrast with the destructive conflict of revolutionary-inspired doctrines) and which leads to the evolution of arguments broadly acceptable to a majority in situations in which there is a clash of values. Thus the practice of politics has become a succession of endeavours to arrive at optimum solutions to conflictual problems, rather than a search after chimerical, maximalist answers.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is agreeable to be able to acknowledge with the warmest thanks the unfailing encouragement and intellectual stimulation (to say nothing of endless patience) that it has been my good fortune to have received from Professor Nick Hewlett. It is equally agreeable to be able to be able to express my profound appreciation of the scholarly, challenging and incisive guidance of Professor Jeremy Jennings of the University of Birmingham, guidance which has served to give my thesis additional solidity. Finally, a special word of thanks is due to Professor Valerie Worth-Stylianou who helped me maintain momentum through an especially worrying period.

Extra-murally, I should like to acknowledge, first, Mrs Gillian Hicklin, without whose practical help at a critical time this thesis would not have been completed, and second, Rob Bloomfield, who succeeded in coaxing the last few pages out of my ancient computer when lesser men would have said it could not be done.

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OBJECTIVE AND STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The objective of this thesis is to assess the nature and importance of individualism and humanism in late twentieth century French political thought following the fundamental socio-economic transformation of the nation which began in 1945.

I consider seven contemporary French political thinkers whose work is characteristic of the new French thought described by Mark Lilla as representing (1) "the almost universal abandonment of the Hegelian, Marxist, and structuralist dogmas that nourished intellectual contempt for liberalism after the war."

The selection of these seven scholars inevitably has an element of subjectivity; I have sought to introduce political thinkers who are regarded by their peers as having made a substantial contribution to thinking about the deeper political implications of the radically different socio-economic environment in late twentieth century France.

1. LILLA, Mark -- **New French Thought: Political Philosophy**, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 15

The originality of my thesis lies in the fact that it offers an examination and classification of a significant sample of new French political thought and locates this thought in the context of the contemporary French economic and social environment. This new thought, which has a strong focus on individualism and humanism with a tacit recognition of the fact that democratic values may be incommensurable, represents a caesura in what was, arguably, a two-centuries' long continuum in French political thought which had been underpinned by a widespread belief in the possibility of an ideal, absolute, determinist and universal political system embodied in the classical concept of "la République" which had given primacy to the community at the expense of the individual.

My thesis is organized into three main Parts. **Part I: Perspective** contains two chapters. In the first of these I review some recent major studies of developments in French political philosophy since 1945 and introduce the seven thinkers. In the second, I set out the context of their contribution and discuss some of the more significant intellectual antecedents of contemporary thought.

In **Part II** I review the work of the seven selected scholars in chronological order of significant relevant work published, beginning with Louis DUMONT, (1911-1997), who is some two generations older than the other six.

Dumont was an anthropologist who spent much of his professional career in India; he was appointed a Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in 1955. He was initially influenced by the structuralism of his professional colleague, Claude Lévi-Strauss. After a career spent studying the Indian caste system, in his later years, particularly and initially in his **Homo aequalis I: Genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie économique**, published in 1977, Dumont focused on the sociological implications of the individualism of contemporary occidental societies arising from the flowering of economic ideology. This flowering gave to occidental men and women in contemporary societies a hitherto unthought of range of choice. He contrasted this new, multi-faceted possibility of expressing individualism with what he calls traditional "holist" (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts) societies on which he had focused in the earlier years of his career and which he described as being hierarchical. He followed this with significant contributions in the 1980s, stressing the novelty of the new individualism.

Dumont pointed out the consequent importance of efficacy in economic management by contemporary French governments, given that French citizens, having a significantly wider range of personal choice, expected that their government should at least not impede this choice.

Pierre MANENT (1949-) is a Director of Studies at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS). In his **Naissances de la politique moderne**, published in 1977, he distinguishes between two schools of political thinking which he terms "realist" (associated with the thought of Machiavelli) and "utopian" (Rousseau).

In subsequent work he has developed thinking on what he calls the European theologico-political problem, specifically on the evolution of concepts of the basis of political power of governments. There has always been, and by implication, there will always be, tension in the relationship between "nature" and law, between rulers and ruled, between society and the state and between the represented and the representative.

Manent suggests that contemporary citizens serve two masters, the market and the state, but that they are at the same time themselves masters in that they have both market and electoral choice. They look to the state to help ease any pain generated by the market but the ultimate market regulator is consumer choice. He contends that competition is also an important social regulator in contemporary occidental societies.

Blandine KRIEGEL (1943-) is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris-X Nanterre and also editor of the journal *Philosophie politique*. An early significant work was *L'Etat et les esclaves*, published in 1979. Her thought concentrates upon the imperative of the rule of law in regulating the relationship between society and the state. She thinks in terms of political theory having three essential elements: a doctrine of power, a doctrine of individual rights and a political morality of law. In a given state, the law should be transcendent. She argues that a belief in human rights is concomitant with the idea that these rights be rooted in natural law, but distinguishes between "les droits de l'homme", "la citoyenneté" and "le droit du peuple", important considerations in the acutely multi-ethnic contemporary France.

This implies a re-thinking of the French democratic and Republican tradition and specifically the concepts of legislation and of citizenship following the general acceptance in France of the idea that the Republic has become an ethical rather than an ideological consideration.

Pierre ROSANVALLON (1948-) is a Director of Studies at the EHESS and has been active in the French Trades Union movement. Although his first published works date from the late 1970s (see my bibliography), I consider first in this study his **Le moment Guizot**, published in 1985.

Rosanvallon's major themes include a history of the development of the modern French state ("l'Etat") and the problems of effective democratic participation in the contemporary political process.

Concerning "l'Etat", Rosanvallon identifies its two prime functions: political and administrative. He argues that it is at once a solution and a problem: a solution in that it is an institution embodying accepted practices and rules, a problem in that its relationship to society is fluid. Individualism and statism have developed side by side in France over the last two centuries without finding a solution to this problem. It is this question which Rosanvallon addresses in his thinking about ensuring effective popular political participation.

Marcel GAUCHET (1946-) is also a Director of Studies at the EHESS and is editor of the journal *Le Débat*. In his *Le désenchantement du monde*, published in 1985, he considers the implications of the evolution of the modern secular society in which economics tends to be of vital significance with the consequent abandonment of a political role for religion. In other works, he considers developments in popular sovereignty and representation.

Gauchet argues that in the past the evolution of individualism in occidental societies had been matched by a parallel development of institutions and ideologies intended to curb this individualism. He cites Tocqueville's "struggle of contrary principles" in modern democracy and argues that democracy is formed out of conflict. Modern democracy does not need, as Tocqueville suggested, an ultimate divine point of reference, but sustains itself though debating conflicting values.

In addition, the emergence of free market economics as a prime social motive force in contemporary occidental societies means that the present is controlled and given legitimacy by the future, instead of the older concept of the present being in thrall to the myths of the past.

Finally, I consider the thought of Luc FERRY (1951-) who is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris-VII and Alain RENAUT (1948-), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris-IV Sorbonne, together in a single chapter. Although each has substantial published work to his name, their joint work is more significant.

Their professional reputation was launched with a refutation of the post-structuralist political thinking dominant in France in the 1960s and early 1970s, *La pensée 68*, published in 1985. Neo-Kantians, both their joint and individual work embraces the philosophy of humanism, individualism and subjectivity and the implications for human rights in the French republican tradition.

They distinguish between what they call "permissions" and "entitlements", or "political democracy" and "social democracy", or the liberal tradition of an insensitivity to popular demands for entitlements and a socialist tradition of a matching insensitivity to individual demands for permissions. This dichotomy is at the heart of political debate and has specific relevance to considerations of human rights.

In my conclusion (**Part III**), I discuss the contribution of each of the selected seven scholars to considerations of the relevance of individualism and humanism in late twentieth century French political thinking. In contrast to the political thinkers of the Sartrean generation, these contemporary political philosophers have sought to relate their thinking to the realities of the present-day political environment.

For each of the seven, the thought of Rousseau (and specifically **Du contrat social**) and the Revolution together form major benchmarks. All seek to construct a new intellectual basis for the contemporary practice of politics, a basis which reflects the break with the monist and revolutionary past and which will reconcile modern individualism and humanism. Each has taken an historical approach: for Dumont, Kriegel and Gauchet, this is the history of occidental ideas, beginning in Classical Greece and early Christianity; for Manent, Rosanvallon, Ferry and Renaut, this is the more recent history of individualism and modernity dating from the Renaissance.

I introduce the concept of agonistic value pluralism, that is, the idea of constructive political conflict and dialogue in a heteronomous situation. In other words, a need has been perceived in the French polity of seeking to ensure that an argument broadly acceptable to a majority evolves from any clash of values catalysed by topical (and often unexpected) events and that irreconcilable differences do not lead to an enfeebling of government.

There is consequently an implicit acceptance of the possibility of pluralism in finding optimum solutions to specific political crises arising from an incommensurability of values. This acceptance constitutes a novelty in French thought when contrasted with the previous two centuries of monist political thinking predicated upon a utopian belief in a perfect political system. Thus Raymond Aron, for example, was derided by many of his contemporaries for advocating political pluralism.

The recognition of this caesura in the continuum of French political thought and a consequent analysis of seven leading exponents of pluralist thinking constitutes the originality of my thesis.

No attempt has been made in this thesis to offer a philosophical critique of the arguments advanced by the selected scholars. My concern has been to assess the weight they give to the values of individualism and humanism and to establish the extent to which there is a common thread in their arguments. Beyond this, I have sought to interpret the thought of these seven scholars and to establish to what extent their collective work might be considered a new and coherent philosophical current.

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PART I
PERSPECTIVE

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW

Introduction

My objective in this chapter is twofold. First, recognizing the profound economic, political and social transformation of France in the decades from 1945 - a transformation which contributed to a general rejection of the revolutionary ethic which had, in one form or another, dominated French political thought since the Revolution - I examine recent significant literature which reviews mainstream contemporary French political thinking. I argue that this thinking is dominated by a concern with humanist values and with the importance of political pluralism in a dynamic social environment which is dominated by the imperatives of the global market economy and in which the tensions between concepts of individualism and community tend to engender intolerance.

Second, I explain further my choice of seven exponents of this thinking. I have selected thinkers whose approach either begins with social values, or whose starting point is the values of the individual, or who give priority to the rule of law and the role of the French state ("l'Etat") as an arbiter and regulator.

Overall, I have sought to balance the exponents of an empirical approach with those of ontological thought, that is, a concern for être or for devoir-être.

At this stage I deem it important to enter a caveat. The volume of the literature defining and describing contemporary French political thought is substantial; a complete literature review would be of significant length and would risk a major distortion in this study. Hence I have chosen initially to concentrate my research on recent histories of French political thinking and its sources and on a sample of academic and professional periodicals devoted to a reconsideration of values in contemporary political thought. Inevitably there is an element of subjectivity in my selection of examples of the new thought and of its exponents. I have sought to offset this subjectivity by approaching this study as a political agnostic and hence have eschewed as far as reasonably possible the use of adjectival labels which might imply a pre-judgement.

In a sentence, the transformation of France over the second half of the twentieth century was a result of, inter alia, successive governments leading the country into the European Union, encouraging the globalization of the French economy, and introducing fundamental constitutional change (in 1958) which had the effect of giving primacy to the political executive at the expense of the legislature.

In addition, for René Rémond (1): "Dans les années 70 s'est opérée une modification profonde du paysage des idées qui prépare la redistribution des forces qui se déploiera dans les années 80."

For Maurice Agulhon (2): "[...] en un demi-siècle, les profondes transformations remettent tout en question et peuvent susciter des interrogations légitimes."

As Rémond indicates, beginning in the 1970s, the sum of this transformation engendered a wide range of thinking about new political, economic and social realities, thinking which challenged much then-accepted conventional wisdom. A major element in this new thinking was a debate on the legacy of the Revolution from which a broad consensus emerged: France succeeded in placing its revolutionary past in a less ideologically-informed historical perspective.

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1. REMOND, René -- **Notre siècle**, Fayard, Paris, 1988, p. 820.
 2. AGULHON, Maurice, et al. -- **La France de 1940 à nos jours**, Editions Nathan, Paris, 1995, p. 526

At the outset it is possible to identify two major institutional sources of this new political thinking, that emanating from the philosophy faculties of French universities, especially the University of Paris, and that which is the the product of les grandes Ecoles, specifically in this case l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS). The consequent difference in approach is epistemological: the university faculties tend to consider political thought from a philosophical perspective, whereas the EHESS tends to sees this thought broadly as a sociological discipline. Philippe Raynaud comments (1): "La philosophie politique s'occup[e] du devoir-être ou encore de l'ontologie là où les sciences sociales étudieraient ce qui est ou se fonderaient sur l'empirie." He warns against making too much of the different approaches, arguing that Aristotle, Montesquieu and Rousseau each succeeded in arguing from a sociological point of view.

1. RAYNAUD, Philippe -- "Philosophie politique" in RAYNAUD and RIALS, (eds) **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique**, Presses universitaires de France, 1996, p. 468

A prime reference is the five-volume **Histoire de la philosophie politique** (1) (henceforth in this chapter **Histoire**), published at the end of 1999, and edited by Alain Renaut, who is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris-IV (Sorbonne).

In the foreword (**Les philosophies politiques contemporaines (depuis 1945)**), Renaut argues (2) that, since 1945 in France, each intellectual generation has found itself confronted with an apparently new set of problems. He maintains that, following the immediate post-war generation (that dominated by Sartre and by the debate between Marxism and Existentialism), the history of the two succeeding generations may be described as an account "des transformations qu'a pu connaître la relation à la démocratie et à ses valeurs", a phrase which has supplied the impetus of this study.

1. RENAUT, Alain (sous la direction de) -- **Histoire de la philosophie politique:**
Vol. I: **La liberté des anciens**
Vol. II: **Naissances de la modernité**
Vol. III: **Lumières et romantisme**
Vol. IV: **Les critiques de la modernité politique**
Vol. V: **Les philosophies politiques contemporaines (depuis 1945);**
Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1999

2. RENAUT -- op. cit. Vol. V. p.7

An essential reference for understanding the political thinkers associated with the EHESS is provided by **Une école pour les sciences sociales** (1), published in 1996, although from the point of view of depth and scope the work cannot be compared to **Histoire**. In their introduction to the work, the authors signal an important fact which is to be borne in mind in assessing the thought of scholars associated with the EHESS, who tend to have a marked concern with history (2):

"[...] la France est l'un des rares pays où l'histoire soit de plein droit considérée comme une science sociale; elle est probablement le seul où les sciences sociales se soient, dans une large mesure, organisées autour de l'histoire."

A third prime reference is the encyclopaedic **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique** (3) which includes essays by scholars on topical themes such as, inter alia, "Citoyenneté" "Communauté et Communautarisme", "Egalité", "Etat et société civile", "Démocratie", "Individualisme", "Libéralisme" and "Subjectivité". I shall return to this work in Chapter 2 of this study where I seek to establish parameters for the reconsideration of the values of liberal humanism in contemporary France.

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1. REVEL, Jacques and WACHTEL, Nathan -- **Une école pour les sciences sociales**, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1996
 2. -- idem. -- p. 15
 3. RAYNAUD, Philippe and RIALS, Stéphane -- **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique**, Presses universitaires de France, 1996, op. cit.

I contend that these (and other) sources (1), and especially **Histoire** (2), upon which I have drawn heavily, provide a reasoned overview of contemporary mainstream (that is, concerned with the impact of the transformation of the national ethos on the inter-relationship of the basic French political values: "démocratie", "la République", "L'Etat", "liberté" and "égalité") French political thought which permits the identification of a representative sample of present day exponents of this thought.

1. An important secondary series of sources in English is represented by the translations from original French works jointly edited by Thomas Pavel and Mark Lilla, published by Princeton University Press. This series includes:

- LILLA, Mark, (ed.) -- **New French Thought: Political Philosophy** (1994);
- LIPOVETSKY, Gilles -- **The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy** (1994)
- MANENT, Pierre -- **An Intellectual History of Liberalism** (1995)
- KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **The State and the Rule of Law** (1995)
- RENAUT, Alain -- **The Era of the Individual: A contribution to a History of Subjectivity** (1997)
- GAUCHET, Marcel -- **The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion** (1997)
- MANENT, Pierre -- **The City of Man** (1998)

2. RENAUT (ed.) -- **Histoire de la philosophie politique**, op. cit.

Contemporary French Political Thought and its Exponents

In an introductory essay ("Liminaire") to Vol. V of *Histoire*, under the rubric "L'humanisme en questions" in which he considers political thought in France since 1945, Lilla (1) contends that, seen from outside France, it is the relationship between individualism and modernity which has constituted the most important theme in the development of French political philosophy over the period.

Lilla's liminaire represents an important summary of developments in French political thought since 1945. In the first paragraph, he makes a point of considerable significance (2):

"Le langage de la philosophie française de l'après-guerre est un langage de négation et de refus; la renonciation est son credo. Et la philosophie politique fut la première chose à laquelle elle renonça. [... ...] Plus les intellectuels français devenaient 'politiques', moins ils s'intéressaient au fait politique. On ne peut espérer comprendre la pensée politique dans la France de l'après-guerre sans tâcher de comprendre la logique de ce double mouvement."

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1. LILLA, Mark -- "L'humanisme en questions" in RENAULT (ed.) -- *Histoire*, op. cit. p. 28
 2. -- idem. -- p. 19

Lilla contends that the work of François Furet provides the most convincing explanation for this phenomenon (1):

"Dans ses nombreux essais et ouvrages, Furet montrait comment, déjà au XIXe siècle, les débats politiques en France s'étaient constitués en disputes autour de la question de l'héritage de la révolution qui ne laissaient guère de place à une réflexion sereine portant sur les visées et limites de la démocratie libérale, comme cela se produisait alors en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis."

In the years immediately following 1945, French political thought tended to be dominated by Sartre. Lilla recalls Sartre's influence and evokes his description in 1960 of Marxism as being "l'horizon indépassable de notre temps"

(2). Of Sartre's general influence, Lilla writes (3):

"L'importance de Sartre en tant que penseur politique tient moins à ses écrits sur la politique, qui relevaient principalement du journalisme, qu'au style d'engagement politique qu'il contribua à populariser."

In intellectual and ideological opposition to Sartre was Raymond Aron, described by Lilla as being (4) "la plus importante [personnalité] dans le combat mené pour maintenir vivante une pensée politique sérieuse sur la démocratie libérale".

1. LILLA, op. cit., pp. 19-20

2. -- idem. -- p. 22. The words appeared in SARTRE, Jean-Paul -- **Critique de la raison dialectique**, Gallimard, Paris, 1960, p. 9

3. LILLA, op. cit. -- p. 22

4. -- idem. -- p. 23

Describing the influence of Aron, by contrast, Lilla argues that (1):

"[...] à la différence de Sartre, Aron reconnu, à partir de ses expériences, la valeur du scepticisme libéral et développa une persistente hostilité à toute forme de déterminisme historique, y compris celle dont était porteur le marxisme."

The method of linguistic structuralism (2) applied to the study of society, associated originally with the name of Claude Lévi-Strauss, appealed to a new French generation. (Lévi-Strauss's **Anthropologie structurale** was published in 1958.) Lilla argues (3) that the idea of "l'universalisme dans un seul pays", emanating from the revolutionary ethic and with a stated respect for cultural differences, seemed, by the end of the 1970s, to be no more than an absurd myth to a new generation of political thinkers.

The decade of the 1960s, Lilla continues, saw the advent of thinking associated with the name of Michel Foucault (broadly, post-structuralism) which focussed upon social marginality and which sought (4) "de promouvoir l'Autre au rang de nouveau sans-culotte. Tout ce qui était marginal dans les sociétés occidentales pouvait désormais être justifié, voire philosophiquement célébré."

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1. LILLA, op. cit. p. 23
 2. For a detailed history of structuralism, see DOSSE, François -- **Histoire de structuralisme** (2 vols), Editions la Découverte, Paris, 1991
 3. LILLA, op. cit. -- p. 25
 4. -- idem. -- p. 26

Lilla regards both the events of May 1968 and the election of François Mitterrand to the Presidency in May 1981 as being significant for the development of the practice of politics in France and hence for new political thinking. Of the impact of May 1968 he argues that the choices facing France made it more difficult (1):

"d'ignorer la tension entre une position politiquement à gauche, implicitement fondée sur les valeurs des Lumières, et un anti-humanisme philosophique qui revenait à faire de l'action politique le lieu d'exercice d'une décision purement arbitraire."

As to the election of Mitterrand, Lilla maintains that this represented (2):

"[...] le dernier chapitre de l'histoire de la lutte, en France, autour de la question de l'héritage de la Révolution française. Loin d'annoncer la gauche au pouvoir, c'était, là, la fin d'une longue tradition d'antilibéralisme politique qui contribua à faciliter la transition vers ce que certains ont appelé la république du centre."

Increasingly, beginning in the mid-1970s, an emphasis upon individualism began to dominate French political thinking. This was a novelty in France, Lilla comments (3); in contrast, individualism was a central concept in Anglo-American political and economic thought, to such an extent that it was considered a fact of life. Differences, if any, in the intellectual response in France to the phenomenon, Lilla continues, are methodological.

1. LILLA -- "L'humanisme en questions" in RENAUT (ed.) *Histoire*, op. cit. p. 27

2. -- idem. -- p. 28

3. -- idem. --

What Lilla calls "une des approches dominantes" (1) was historical and leaned heavily upon anthropology. An early exponent of the new political thinking was Louis Dumont, a contemporary of Lévi-Strauss and, like him, an anthropologist who had studied under Marcel Mauss. Dumont's professional reputation as an anthropologist had been gained through his work on the Indian caste system.

Lilla (2) describes his work as emanating from a consideration of the ideas of Tocqueville concerning the relationship of the individual to modernity. At the heart of his writing is a focus upon the distinction between "holist" societies whose ideology is hierarchical, and "individualist" societies whose ideological framework is built around ideas of equality and liberty.

"Si toute société est bien constituée d'individus, les sociétés holistes sont organisées suivant les principes qui ne reconnaissent pas l'individu en tant que source ultime de valeur. (3)

Lilla summarizes the essential thrust of Dumont's argument (4): European history, from the early Christian era to the Revolution, has been dominated by the tension between individualist and hierarchical values which were only resolved by the institution of the modern state and the separation of economic affairs and religious power from this state.

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1. LILLA, op. cit. p. 28
 2. -- idem. -- p. 29
 3. -- idem.
 4. -- idem.

Another attempt to analyse what Lilla calls the "historico-anthropological" approach to the problem of individualism and modernity is provided by the thinking of Marcel Gauchet and specifically by his **Le Désenchantement du monde**. (1)

Lilla summarizes Gauchet's thinking (2):

"L'affirmation de la subjectivité humaine a induit, sur le plan politique, la domination progressive de l'individualisme démocratique, mais également, comme conséquence du retrait des dieux, l'essor d'idéologies, de la bureaucratisation, du nationalisme, de la puissance étatique toujours grandissante, voire du totalitarisme. Plus l'homme est libre, plus le pouvoir social s'accroît et moins l'homme est heureux."

Both Dumont and Gauchet contend, Lilla writes (3), that modern political forms are the product of a continuous historical process; this approach is disputed by other thinkers, such as Pierre Manent (4).

1. LILLA, op. cit. p. 29. Lilla is referring to: GAUCHET, Marcel -- **Le Désenchantement du monde**, Gallimard, Paris, 1985; English language edition: **The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion**, Princeton University Press, 1997

2. LILLA, idem. p. 30

3. -- idem. --

4. -- idem. --

In a series of works focussing on the history of modern political thought, Manent argues, according to Lilla, that liberal democracy must be considered as a conscious modern break with the ancient and mediaeval worlds (1):

"[...] la modernité n'est pas le produit de cette force impersonnelle que serait l'histoire, mais plutôt un 'projet' conscient (et contestable), conçu par les premiers philosophes modernes et poursuivi par leurs épigones au cours des siècles qui suivent. L'histoire moderne fut engendrée par la philosophie moderne, et non pas l'inverse."

This position is also held by Alain Renaut and Luc Ferry, Lilla maintains (2). In addition, these two philosophers are numbered among those who are seeking to develop a clearly modern humanist philosophy of history. Lilla writes (3) that, like Manent, Renaut and Ferry consider that "l'historicisme est insoutenable et qu'il y a eu, sur la politique moderne, des effets dommageables."

The two philosophers distinguish, Lilla continues (4):

"[...] sujet et individu, affirmant qu'une conception humaniste du sujet, établie par Kant et Fichte, avait été abandonnée au bénéfice d'une conception de l'ordre social procédant subrepticement de l'interaction irrationnelle d'individus."

Thus, they continue, any political philosophy based on the thought of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche or Heidegger is fundamentally individualist and hence would tend toward anti-humanism (5).

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1. LILLA, op. cit. p. 30
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. -- p. 31
 5. -- idem. --

Lilla concludes that, seen from outside France, the work of these scholars seems to be particularly important because (1):

"[...] ils ont permis de replacer le phénomène de la vie politique au centre de la réflexion philosophique. La philosophie est devenue moins politique, au sens de l'engagement idéologique, mais elle est devenue cependant plus politique, sur le plan de l'analyse rigoureuse."

Charles Larmore (2) focusses on the work of these (and other) contemporary French political thinkers and provides a different perspective in a chapter in Vol. V of **L'histoire** entitled "Repenser l'humanisme et la démocratie. La philosophie politique en France depuis vingt ans". He subdivides the chapter into four main sub-headings: morality, autonomy, natural law and history. This subdivision reflects, Larmore implies, four substantial elements in the re-thinking of concepts of humanism and democracy over the last twenty years.

He begins by arguing that one of the undoubted signs of the overtaking of Marxism in France is the renewed interest shown by many French philosophers in human rights and the normative fundamentals of modern democracy. The novelty of this evolution, he argues, goes far beyond the abandonment of Marxist and revolutionary principles.

1. LILLA, op. cit. p. 31

2. LARMORE, Charles -- "Repenser l'humanisme et la démocratie" in RENAULT (ed.) -- **Histoire**, op. cit. Vol. V, pp 97-125

What is happening, Larmore continues (1), is a rejection, or at least a questioning, of a more venerable French tradition, a tradition upon which Marxism had been grafted, that is, the republican tradition:

"De Rousseau jusqu'à notre siècle, en passant par les grands architectes de la IIIe République, cette tradition a prôné la suprématie de la souveraineté populaire et montré donc une répugnance à admettre que la volonté collective doit être limitée par les droits naturels de l'individu." (2)

What is new and exciting in contemporary French philosophy, Larmore contends, is the desire to focus upon the moral foundations of modern democracy. In the section of his chapter headed "La Morale", he draws attention to the work of Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut (3):

"En 1984 et 1985, deux jeunes philosophes, Luc Ferry et Alain Renaut, font une entrée éclatante sur la scène intellectuelle. Dans toute une série de livres, ils réclament une réorientation profonde de la pensée politique de leur temps. Leur objectif est de démontrer, à l'encontre des courants philosophiques voulant faire table rase de la notion moderne de subjectivité, que la vision morale du monde est incontournable."

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1. LARMORE, Charles -- "Repenser l'humanisme" in RENAUT (ed.) -- **Histoire**, op. cit. pp. 97-98
 2. Larmore draws attention to what he describes as "l'étude excellente" of NICOLET, Claude -- **L'Idée républicaine en France, 1789-1924**, Gallimard, Paris, 1994 (2nd edition)
 3. LARMORE, op. cit. p. 98

Larmore lists some of the collective and individual work of Ferry and Renaut (1). He points out (2) that perhaps the best-known work of Ferry and Renaut - **La Pensée 68** - targetted the post-structuralist, anti-humanist philosophies which had had their vogue in France, beginning in the 1960s and continuing until the early 1970s. These philosophies had been profoundly influenced by Heidegger's critique of modern thought, Larmore argues.

Larmore summarises (3) Ferry and Renaut's argument, which began with a consideration of Heidegger's contention that the world of modern subjectivity is a world in which men and women can respect nothing greater than their own individual desire, be this even their own humanity.

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1. LARMORE, op. cit., p. 98 The works listed are:
 - FERRY, Luc -- **Philosophie politique**, 2 vols, PUF, Paris, 1984
 - FERRY, Luc and RENAUT, Alain -- **Système et Critique**, Ousia, Brussels, 1984
 - -- do. -- **La Pensée 68**, Gallimard, Paris, 1985
 - -- do. -- **68-86. Itinéraires de l'individu**, Gallimard, Paris, 1987
 - -- do. -- **Heidegger et les modernes**, Grasset, Paris, 1988
 - RENAUT, Alain -- **L'Ere de l'individu**, Gallimard, Paris, 1989
 - RENAUT, Alain and SOSOE, Lukas -- **Philosophie de droit**, PUF, Paris, 1991
 - RENAUT, Alain and MESURE, Sylvie -- **La Guerre des dieux**, Grasset, Paris, 1996
 2. LARMORE, op. cit. p.99
 3. -- idem. --

In spite of their important inspirational differences (the works of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud), Larmore continues, (1) the common ambition of French thinkers such as Althusser, Derrida, Foucault and Lacan was to overthrow the idea that reality has no other meaning than that which may be known, and hence mastered, by mankind. This concept was not only wrong, but had clear moral implications and could favour a totalitarian political development.

A broad conclusion of the anti-humanist arguments, Larmore argues, was that in order to thwart the desire to dominate reality (the supposed characteristic of modern thought), it would be necessary to go so far as to challenge the notion of individual responsibility. This conclusion Ferry and Renaut "repoussent de toutes leurs forces" (2).

Their argument, as summarized by Larmore (3), is that:

"[...] la leçon principale de la philosophie de Kant, dans laquelle ils voient donc à cet égard, comme à d'autres, l'horizon indépassable de la pensée, la forme de la subjectivité moderne irremplaçable."

Larmore points out that it is not only Kantian morality which is evoked by Ferry and Renaut but also the idea of autonomy (4). He cites Renaut's *L'Ere de l'individu* (5):

"L'homme n'entend plus recevoir ses normes et ses lois ni de la nature des choses (Aristote), ni de Dieu, mais ... les fonde lui-même à partir de sa raison et de sa volonté."

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1. LARMORE, op. cit. p. 99
 2. -- idem. -- p. 100
 3. -- idem. -- p. 101
 4. -- idem. -- p. 102
 5. -- idem. -- p. 103

This contention leads to a philosophical argument, touched upon by Larmore, an argument which leads to considerations of natural law, the subject of the third section of Larmore's chapter (1), and to a consideration by him of the work of Blandine Barret-Kriegel (2).

Larmore argues that the neo-Kantian ideal espoused by Ferry and Renaut contains a difficulty. This ideal (3):

"[...] indiquant ce que nous devons à nous-mêmes, non ce que nous devons à autrui, ne possède pas lui-même de caractère moral et ne suffit pas non plus pour nous faire entrer dans le point de vue moral."

This difficulty, Larmore continues, is at the heart of Barret-Kriegel's argument for a return to natural law, an argument which he summarises (4):

"[...] dans un univers où les principes de conduite deviennent tous négociables, il ne peut exister de droits individuels qu'il faut respecter inconditionnellement. Là où la volonté humaine devient source du droit, aucune règle préalable ne limite la sorte d'association politique qu'il est permis d'instituer."

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1. "La loi naturelle", LARMORE, op. cit. pp. 108-117
 2. -- idem. -- p. 109. Larmore lists the following works by Barret-Kriegel, who is Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Paris X-Nanterre, (she is now generally also known as Blandine Kriegel):
 - **Les Droits de l'homme et le droit naturel**, PUF, Paris, 1989;
 - **Cours de philosophie politique**, LGF, Paris, 1996
 3. -- idem. -- p. 109
 4. -- idem. -- p. 110

Larmore continues (1) that another way to set out Barret-Kriegel's thesis is to say that a contractualist theory can defend effectively the rights of the individual only on condition that is not completely contractualist. It becomes necessary to have recourse to a range of moral obligations, the validity of which does not depend upon any agreement among human beings, that is to say a moral law which defines what sort of agreements are legitimate.

Natural law, Larmore contends (2), means the spelling out of moral obligations which have a fundamental character, obligations which apply to all mankind as such and the validity of which does not depend upon human will nor upon conventions which men and women might agree among themselves.

In the final section of his chapter, "L'Histoire" (3), Larmore repeats the contention that morality means a willingness to submit to rules of behaviour which are themselves necessarily related to human will, and that this concept is neither essentially religious nor teleological.

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1. LARMORE, op. cit. p. 112
 2. -- idem. -- p. 114
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 117-125

In this context he points to the necessity of facing up to the argument of Ferry and Renaut (1) "selon laquelle nous vivons le recul des traditions morales, les critères qu'elles nous offraient autrefois n'étant plus disponibles."

Larmore also cites Claude Lefort (2) who draws the same picture of a world in which no moral principle has any longer the status of an acquired truth. Larmore quotes Lefort as writing that: "La démocratie s'institue et se maintient dans la dissolution des repères de certitude" (emphasis in Larmore's text. JT).

Larmore concludes by quoting Lefort's criticism of the Kantian ethic, which, Lefort maintains, has the effect

(3):

"[...] d'écarter toute réflexion sur l'insertion du sujet dans le monde et l'histoire qu'il interroge et sur l'enracinement de la connaissance, connaissance de soi et connaissance de l'autre, dans une matrice inconsciente."

1. LARMORE, op. cit. p. 117

2. -- idem. -- p. 118. Larmore quotes from: LEFORT, Claude -- **Essais sur le politique**, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 29.

3. -- idem. -- p. 119. The quotation from Lefort comes from op. cit. p. 11

In Vol. IV of the *Histoire -- Les critiques de la modernité politique* -- two issues are explored which would seem, prima facie, to be relevant to new French thinking about democratic values. The first is set out in an introductory note by Renaut: "Révolution américaine, Révolution française" and the second in an essay by Ferry entitled "L'émergence du couple Etat/société".

Renaut (1) argues that both the American and French revolutions have contributed to the history of political philosophy by either pointing to or renewing some major considerations. He continues:

"C'est sous ce dernier angle que l'on évoquera ici la contribution apportée par les deux processus révolutionnaires à la transformation de la raison politique moderne: cette contribution, qui engage à la fois la définition des principes ultimes de la modernité politique (à savoir les valeurs des 'droits de l'homme') et la conception du processus politique par lequel ces principes pourraient être mis en oeuvre, apparaît d'autant plus riche et complexe qu'elle n'a nullement été homogène, mais qu'elle s'est trouvée d'emblée dédoublée à la faveur de tout ce qui est venu distinguer la version américaine et la version française de la 'revolution des droits de l'homme'."

In his essay (1), Ferry makes the point that the modern notion of democracy contains intrinsically within itself the possibility of several political models. He argues that the birth and evolution of "le couple Etat/société" is nothing less than "un épisode charnière dans les transformations de la raison politique moderne."

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1. RENAUT -- *Histoire*, op. cit. Vol. IV, p. 21
 2. FERRY, Luc in RENAUT (ed.) -- *Histoire*, op. cit. Vol. IV, pp. 37-51

The sociological approach to a reconsideration of democratic values in France comes from the EHESS (1). Following the growing disillusionment with the ideology of international Communism in the early 1970s, and roughly coterminous with the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974-1981), came a fundamental realignment of French political thinking and a concomitant evolution of the study of politics in les grandes écoles. The EHESS was at the forefront of this realignment.

François Furet became president of the School in 1977. Other significant appointments (as Directors of Studies) were those of Jacques Ozouf in 1971, Pierre Nora in 1976 and Jacques Julliard in 1979 (2).

According to Pierre Rosanvallon (3), these appointments provided the human element in a development of political studies arising out of the changing intellectual climate in France which marked the decade of the 1970s. This development was stimulated by an intellectual critique of Marxism and by the perception of a certain number of limits to positivism as far as the social sciences were concerned. The major event of the period was what Rosanvallon calls "la crise du totalitarisme".

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1. See REVEL, Jacques and WACHTEL, Nathan, (eds) -- **Une Ecole**, op. cit.
 2. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- "Le Politique" in REVEL and WACHTEL, op. cit. p. 299
 3. -- idem. -- p. 300

Rosanvallon describes the intellectual environment of the decade of the 1970s (1):

"Il y a quelque chose d'exceptionnel dans cette conjuncture intellectuelle du milieu des années 1970. Les événements et la question du totalitarisme se joignent à la grande transformation culturelle qui est celle de l'épuisement du marxisme dans la culture politique et dans les sciences sociales. D'où l'énorme soif de retour aux classiques qui peut être constatée pendant cette période. Toute une nouvelle génération s'écarte du positivisme marxiste ou structuraliste dans les sciences sociales, mais prend aussi des distances vis-à-vis de l'essayisme idéologique, pour se replonger dans la lecture des classiques."

The change of emphasis in the EHESS in the 1970s went in parallel with the re-formulating of existing and the launching of new political journals to reflect the intellectual spirit of the times. The revue **Esprit**, founded by Emmanuel Mounier in the 1930s, donned new clothes in 1976 and announced that henceforth its editorial policy would be built around a sub-title: "Changer la culture et la politique".

A new journal, **Libre**, was founded in 1977, carrying a sub-title "Politique, anthropologie, philosophie"; the team of scholars behind **Libre** included Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort and Krzysztof Pomian, with Marcel Gauchet as editor.

1. ROSANVALLON, op. cit. p. 301

Perhaps the most influential new journal, one which captured an emerging intellectual mood, was **Le Débat**, founded in 1980, with Pierre Nora and Marcel Gauchet as editors, with the conviction that (1) "[...] une véritable métamorphose du modèle intellectuel était en train de s'opérer."

The work of virtually all the scholars so far listed is marked by a desire to return to the classics, or, rather, to the fundamentals of political philosophy. It is as though French scholars felt insecure about the foundation of the new thinking and hence perceived a need to reconstitute the intellectual basis for the study of politics in France.

A consequence of the desire for a return to the fundamentals of political philosophy is that much scholarly effort has gone into works which are essentially histories of the evolution of ideas. Some of these histories are unsurprisingly conventional, others claim to be seeking to evolve a "conceptual history" (2).

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1. **Le Débat** -- "Notre histoire" in **Le Débat**, May-August 1988, Introduction; this issue, marking the 20th issue of the journal, contains some extremely useful and relevant articles.
 2. The idea of a "conceptual history" comes from Pierre Rosanvallon. See JENNINGS, Jeremy -- "The Return of the Political? New French Journals in the History of Political Thought" in **History of Political Thought**, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring 1997, p. 149.

Two new periodicals (1) devoted to the study of the history of political ideas and political philosophy were launched during the early years of the decade of the 1990s: **Philosophie politique** (a bi-annual launched in 1992 by the Presses Universitaires de France with Blandine Kriegel as editor) and the **Revue Française d'Histoire des Idées Politiques** (dating from 1995).

Each issue of **Philosophie politique** focuses upon a specific broad philosophical idea or the work of a renowned philosopher; for example, No. 2 is devoted to Kant, No. 4 to La République, No. 5 to Hegel, No. 8 to La Nation.

Relatively recent works of reference covering the history of political ideas also include the monumental **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques**, edited by Pascal Ory and published in 1987 (2) and a work jointly authored by Philippe Braud and François Burdeau: **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution**, published in 1992 (3).

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1. JENNINGS, op. cit. pp. 148-156
 2. ORY, Pascal (sous la direction de) -- **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques**, Hachette Pluriel, Paris, 1987
 3. BRAUD, Philippe and BURDEAU, François -- **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution**, Montchrestien, Paris, 1992

Inevitably, given the radical change in the political environment, a large number of individual works covering the evolution of political thinking in France have been published over the course of the last two decades of the twentieth century. Claude Lefort, born in 1924, offered the perception of an older generation. His **Essais sur la politique** (1), published in 1986, included essays on modern democracy, on the Revolution, and specifically a lengthy and positive review of Furet's **Penser la Révolution française** entitled "Penser la révolution dans la Révolution française", and on liberty.

Lefort touches upon the differing approaches to political thinking in contemporary France between the social science disciplines and those of philosophy (2):

"Penser le politique au sens que nous prêtons à ces mots relève donc d'une intention différente de celle de la science et de la sociologie politiques, et nous enjoint d'interroger nos liens avec la tradition de la philosophie politique.

Citing Hannah Arendt (3), he makes a strong anti-historicist argument:

"[...] les événements du siècle au premier rang desquels l'essor des régimes totalitaires sont sans précédent, et [...] ils créent à la pensée l'exigence d'un nouveau départ."

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1. LEFORT, Claude -- **Essais sur le politique**, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1986
 2. -- idem. -- p. 8
 3. -- idem. -- p. 13

Lucien Jaume is a Director of Research at the Centre d'étude de la vie politique française. His **L'individu effacé ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français** (1) traces the development of French liberal political thinking from Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant to Raymond Aron. In his introduction Jaume provides an analysis of the historical evolution of the two main strands of French thinking about political liberalism, the one giving primacy to the liberty of the individual, the other, following the ideas of Guizot, giving primacy to a liberal Etat. Jaume emphasizes that French experience until very recently has leaned heavily towards the second option (2).

And yet, Jaume asks, do we not usually (3):

"[...] considérer le libéralisme comme la doctrine qui fait droit par excellence à l'individu moderne, émancipé à la fois de la tutelle spirituelle que faisait peser l'Eglise et de l'omnipotence conférée à la souveraineté, dans les monarchies absolues?"

Jaume's work is a history of these two strands of liberalism. He makes substantial reference to the work of Gauchet, Manent and Rosanvallon.

1. JAUME, Lucien -- **L'individu effacé ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français**, Fayard, Paris, 1997

2. -- idem. -- p. 11

3. -- idem. --

In summary, recalling my first objective in this chapter (1) of seeking to examine the significant literature reviewing mainstream French political thinking, I argue that, in part due to the socio-economic transformation of France and the associated broad acceptance by a significant majority of French political thinkers of Furet's contention that "la Révolution française est terminée", there has been substantial rethinking of the meaning of democracy and its values. These thinkers are concerned with humanist values and with the importance of political pluralism in a dynamic social environment which is dominated by the imperatives of the global market economy and in which the tensions between concepts of individualism and community tend to generate intolerance. In short, the most important theme of present-day French political thought is the relationship between individualism and modernity.

Further, contemporary political thinkers are seeking to relate their thought to the realities of the current practice of politics. This is in marked contrast to the thought of the Sartrean generation, which was generally contemptuous of the present-day political scene.

1. p. 1 supra

A striking manifestation of the difference between the present generation of French political thinkers and that of Sartre is found in the value given to the work of Raymond Aron. Aron embraced liberal scepticism and argued strongly against all forms of historical determinism; he was concerned with current realities and argued for an acceptance of political pluralism, an approach derided by his "petit camarade" Sartre.

Between Sartre and the thought of the present-day generation there emerged in France the phenomenon of structuralism and post-structuralism, a complex search for a universalist theory with a marked concern for social marginality.

Contemporary French political philosophy recognizes the dichotomy between society and "l'Etat" and is concerned with the implication of this dichotomy for the essential democratic values, for the rights of individuals and of the wider community, in short, on the moral foundations of modern democracy.

The recognition that there is a possibility of more than one democratic model and that within each model there is room for a number of incommensurable values is an integral part of contemporary French political thought.

I have approached my second objective in this chapter - the identification of a number of contemporary French scholars whose work has a strong focus on individualism and humanism, which constitutes a break with the past and which thus would warrant a much closer examination and analysis - with a concern to balance breadth of consideration with depth of analysis. I have chosen three philosophers - Renault, Ferry and Kriegel - three sociologists - Manent, Gauchet and Rosanvallon - and one - Dumont - whose work I judge to contain ontological elements as well as basic anthropological and sociological reasoning.

A starting point for my selection has been the work edited by Lilla, **New French Thought** (1), published in 1994. This volume includes samples of the work of thirteen contemporary French political thinkers of broadly the same generation. One, Tzvetan Todorov, was born in 1939, the other twelve between 1946 and 1958, the youngest being Anne Godignon (1958). Lilla's selection includes Luc Ferry, Marcel Gauchet, Blandine Kriegel, Gilles Lipovetsky, Bernard Manin, Philippe Raynaud, Alain Renault and Stéphane Rials.

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1. LILLA, Mark, (ed.) -- **Political Philosophy**, Princeton University Press, 1994

A bibliography of "Primary Works" offered by Lilla lists over thirty scholars, including (in addition to those mentioned in the previous paragraph) Raymond Aron, Cornelius Castoriadis, Vincent Descombes, Louis Dumont, François Furet, Claude Lefort, Edgar Morin, Pierre Nora, Alexis Philonenko, Pierre Rosanvallon and Paul Yonnet.

The work edited by Pascal Ory, **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques** (1), published in 1987, is not sufficiently recent to focus in depth on contemporary political philosophers, though Raymond Aron, Cornelius Castoriadis, Louis Dumont, Luc Ferry, Pierre Manent, Alain Renaut and Pierre Rosanvallon are mentioned en passant. In a conclusion entitled "Situation idéologique de cette fin de siècle", Ory argues that the work of Ferry and Renaut traces a line from Fichte to social democracy (2).

Braud and Burdeau's **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution** (3), published in 1992, mentions Raymond Aron, Cornelius Castoriadis, Marcel Gauchet and Pierre Rosanvallon, again en passant.

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1. ORY, Pascal (ed.) -- **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques**, Hachette Pluriel, Paris, 1987
 2. -- idem. -- p. 752
 3. BRAUD, Philippe and BURDEAU, François -- **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution**, Montchrestien, Paris, 1992

A valuable source which outlines the sociological roots of mainstream contemporary French political scholarship is contained in Revel and Wachtel's **Une école pour les sciences sociales** (1), published in 1996 and already mentioned. This work lists all the scholars referred to in the preceding pages with the exception of Anne Godignon and Gilles Lipovetsky.

I have sought to ensure that my selection should give roughly equal weight to the triad of concepts which form integral elements in the French polity : liberty and individualism; equality of conditions and humanism; "L'Etat" and the rule of law.

It is essential, I believe, to consider the ground-breaking work of Dumont. The anthropological basis of his thought and the fact that he and Lévi-Strauss were contemporaries and were both students of Marcel Mauss provides a link with the work of the latter. More important are the ontological elements in his work revolving around his consideration on the hierarchical nature of traditional society and the individualism of modern societies.

1. REVEL, Jacques and WACHTEL, Nathan -- **Une école pour les sciences sociales**, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1996, op. cit.

The work of Ferry and Renaut is sans pareil as far as thinking about the philosophical implications of individualism, about subjectivity and about humanism is concerned. In addition, each of the two philosophers has a substantial professional reputation, as witnessed by their published work.

Two scholars, one from the University of Paris-X (Nanterre), and the other from the EHESS, respectively Kriegel and Rosanvallon, focus on the exigencies of the modern state, Kriegel from the point of view of the philosophy of the French concept of "la République" and the rule of law and Rosanvallon from that of the evolution of the modern "Etat". Again, each has a noteworthy professional reputation and significant published work. Kriegel is also editor of the revue **Philosophie politique**.

Pierre Manent, an historian and a Director of Studies at the EHESS, has earned a significant reputation for his work on the history of political liberalism. His argument with the concept of historicism puts him in opposition to his EHESS colleague, the sociologist Marcel Gauchet. Gauchet has made a substantial contribution to thinking about the implications for morality in a modern secular state of the general abandonment of religion as an arbiter of normative socio-political behaviour. He is also an editor of **Le Débat**.

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CONTEXT

Introduction

In this Chapter, I consider the context of the emergence of the new French thought which is the focus of this thesis.

Initially, I set out in this introduction a résumé of the socio-economic and political transformation of France in the decades following the Liberation and of the effects of this change. I follow this with a brief mention of the salient elements of French thinking since Rousseau and the Revolution on democracy and its values.

This leads into three sections, each devoted to one of the determinants providing a base for the new thinking: François Furet's contention that "la Révolution est terminée"; the rise and fall of structuralism (which was sometimes regarded as being an ideological attack on French bourgeois society and hence as a new revolutionary creed); and a recognition of the historical fact of a stream of politically liberal thought in France and, specifically, the work and influence of Raymond Aron.

Transformation of the Economic and Social Environment

Over the course of the 30 years from the Liberation to the death of President Georges Pompidou, the French nation experienced a hitherto unparalleled economic and social transformation, a transformation which affected the practice of politics and contemporary political thought. Over this period, France experienced and survived two major political crises, in 1958 and in 1968; from the first came a new constitution and a return to power of General de Gaulle. France's links with its erstwhile colonial empire were sundered, a process accompanied by significant violence, especially in Indo-China and in Algeria.

Industry was modernised, and for the first time in the country's history the total of the urban-dwelling population exceeded that of the rural population. The standard of living of a great majority of the population grew rapidly; increased social mobility led to a progressive embourgeoisement. France became a founder member of the European Iron and Steel Community, which was to be the forerunner of the European Common Market and, ultimately, the European Union. There was a general national recognition that France-in-Europe was part of the global economy and hence that the nation had to be sensitive to the competitive pressures of the international economy. Contemporary France has become, like its European partners, far more consumer-oriented.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, there was a greater tendency for a re-thinking of the relationships between individual citizens, the society in which they lived, the nation of which they formed part and the state and its institutions which embodied and directed the affairs of the nation.

A noteworthy detail illustrating the nature of the changes which the nation was undergoing was the injunction of Georges Marchais, at that time Secretary-General of the French Communist Party (PCF), to the effect that universal suffrage and political liberty had to be regarded as victories for the people and the working class and that, accordingly, the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat had become redundant (1).

Ory and Sirinelli describe the political climate (2):

"Recul du marxisme, réflexion sur le phénomène totalitaire, corrosion des modèles révolutionnaires de rechange qui avait pris le relais de l'Union soviétique, ce sont, dans la sphère idéologique comme, plus largement, dans le champ de la politique, autant de paradigmes, ces mots types qui, en grammaire, sont donnés comme exemples pour une conjugaison, qui ne prêtent plus, en effet, depuis quelques années, et avant même l'implosion des régimes communistes à l'Est, à la déclinaison révolutionnaire."

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1. BRAUD, Philippe and BURDEAU, Francois -- **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution**, Montchrestien, Paris, 1992, p. 448
 2. ORY, Pascal and SIRINELLI, Jean-François -- **Les intellectuels en France de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours**, (second edition), Armand Colin, Paris, 1992, p.248. Marchais could be said to have been simply rationalizing the inevitable: from peaks of 28.6% of the popular vote in November 1946 and 25.4% in January 1956, the vote of the PCF had fallen to around 10% (Same source, p. 157)

Increasingly, French intellectuals and political thinkers moved away from the totalising, universalist and unifying Jacobin and Marxist precepts which had marked the early post-war decades (1) and focussed their energies on basic issues such as human rights and freedom of expression (2).

Over this period, of course, the somewhat romantic image of the Soviet Union (following the victory over fascism in 1945) had been tarnished by Khrushchev's speech to the XX Congress and the invasion of Hungary in 1956. A long period of growing disillusion with the USSR among French intellectuals continued, to culminate in the 1970s with the publication of Solzhenitsyn's **Gulag Archipelago**.

The fundamental nature of the impact on political thought of the transformation of the nation since 1945 cannot be over-emphasized. There is a broad unanimity of view among scholars, both French and foreign, about the import of these changes.

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1. BIRBNBAUM, Thierry -- "Critiques de 'totalitarisme'" in ORY, Pascal (ed.) -- **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques**, Hachette, Paris, 1987, p. 723
 2. There is a useful analysis of the attitudes of French intellectuals in Tony JUDT's **Past Imperfect** (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992

As Marcel Gauchet put it, what was happening represented (1):

"La dissolution, peut-être, de l'autarcie du système politico-intellectuel français. Aussi bien la redécouverte du politique, de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme, en un mot, la recomposition d'une autre idée de soi consécutive à cette rupture d'allégeance s'effectuèrent-elles sur fond de la vague conservatrice internationale et du tournant libéral des économies, dramatisés en France par la politique à contre-courant des socialistes et le revirement de cap de 1983."

But old attitudes did not suddenly vanish, as Tony Judt points out (2):

"The radical fallacy -- in which the search for ultimate solutions displaced sustained attention to the costs of economic or social stagnation or the limits upon political action -- continued to captivate writers and polemicists until the very eve of François Mitterrand's election to the presidency in 1981."

The attendant constitutional evolution of this period underlies the development of political thought. As Jack Hayward points out, milestones in this evolution were marked (inter alia) by a "transition from heroic to humdrum Gaullism" (3) and by Mitterrand's interpretation of the role of the President of the Republic as being one steering a middle way between the function of arbitrator and the function of authority (4).

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1. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Totalitarisme, libéralisme, individualisme" in *Le Débat*, no. 50, May-August 1988, p. 185
 2. JUDT, Tony -- *The Burden of Responsibility*, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 17
 3. HAYWARD, Jack -- "From Republican Sovereign to Partisan Statesman" in HAYWARD, Jack (ed.) -- *De Gaulle to Mitterrand: Presidential Power in France*, Hurst & Co., London, 1993, p. 26
 4. -- idem. -- p. 33

Thus by the 1990s, with the tacit acceptance by a majority of national opinion of the political pluralism implied by alternance and cohabitation, there was now little doubt about the stability of the French polity. "La Ve République a fait de la France une démocratie moderne [...]", "modern" in this context being defined as needing to bring together three elements simultaneously (1):

"1) que les gouvernés choisissent effectivement les gouvernants;

2) que les gouvernements aient effectivement les moyens de gouverner;

3) que les gouvernants soient effectivement responsables devant les gouvernés."

Gauchet summarizes the impact of this new-found constitutional stability (2): "La conscience s'est imposée que la stabilisation de la démocratie était un fait acquis en France et que nous étions sortie de l'orbite révolutionnaire." As a result, government in France, after a long period of revolutionary-inspired turmoil, has become stable and effective. Jacques Julliard argues that (3):

"La force des institutions de la Ve République est donc d'avoir été une création coutumière, fruit d'une conspiration prolongée entre la volonté d'un homme, l'exigence logique des citoyens et les aléas de l'histoire. De cette époque date le clivage clair et net entre une majorité et une opposition; système dualiste fort ancien chez les Anglo-Saxons, mais jusqu'alors inconnu en France."

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1. CARCASSONE, Guy -- **La Constitution**, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1996, p. 17 and p. 21
 2. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Totalitarisme, libéralisme, individualisme" in **Le Débat**, no. 50, May-August 1988, p. 186.
 3. JULLIARD, Jacques in FURET et al. -- **La République du centre**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1988, p. 83

The Evolution of Political Ideas and Values

In this section I look at the development of some of the salient elements in French political thinking about democracy and its values which have emerged since Rousseau and the Revolution, and especially the relationship of democracy to the French idea of the Republic and to two of the basic ideals of the Revolution, "liberté" and "égalité". Out of these elements the three strands considered subsequently in this chapter -- Furet's work on the legacy of the Revolution, the complex issues of structuralism and post-structuralism, and the acceptance of the idea of political liberalism -- have evolved.

Rousseau regarded "démocratie" as "un vice radical" (1), an attitude which led to a sustained debate in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as to what democracy really entailed (2). Did it mean the primacy of society over the individual, which became in purely political terms a question of finding an acceptable form of representation? Was it possible to evolve a system in which the sovereignty of the people, limited by a proclamation of individual rights, never became the mere omnipotence of large numbers of people? What was the relationship between the people and their government to be? Was it possible to envisage a form of democracy which did not descend into mob rule?

1. RAYNAUD and RIALS (eds) -- **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique**, op. cit. p. 131, citing Rousseau's "Sur le gouvernement de Pologne"
2. -- idem. --

Both Hegel and Tocqueville saw in these problems in nineteenth century Europe a dialectic between "liberté" and "égalité"; both held that the practice of democracy would favour the latter (1).

Thus the debate on democracy and its values in France is not new. What might be considered new, however, is a recognition that, contrary to the universalist principles of the Revolution, democracy will always engender debate and its values may be incommensurable. It could be argued that it was possibly this fact which aroused Rousseau's suspicion of democracy. Be that as it may, Ferry argues that (2):

"L'idée moderne de démocratie, pour évidente qu'elle nous apparaisse aujourd'hui, reste complexe, traversée qu'elle se trouve consubstantiellement par des profondes équivoques, qui engagent la portée proprement politique d'une référence à cette idée."

Closely allied to concepts of "démocratie" in France is that of "la République". Nicolet's magisterial **L'idée républicaine en France** (3) traces the history of the concept of "la République" from the Revolution to the early twentieth century and emphasizes the specific understanding of the concept.

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1. RAYNAUD and RIALS (Eds) **Dictionnaire**, op. cit. -- p. 132
 2. FERRY, Luc -- "L'émergence du couple Etat/société" in RENAULT -- **Histoire**, vol. IV -- **Les Critiques de la modernité politique**, op. cit. p. 37
 3. NICOLET, Claude -- **L'idée républicaine en France (1789-1924)**, Gallimard, Paris (2nd edition), 1994

Nicolet writes that (1):

"[...] le mot républicain a un valeur idéologique, qu'il ne se contente pas de qualifier un système institutionnel ou une tendance politique, mais que, à la manière de toute idéologie, il prétend exprimer une attitude mentale, une certaine présence au monde et une explication du monde, un comportement, qu'auront - ou que devront avoir -- en commun tous ceux qui se réclament de lui."

He continues (2): "[...] l'idéologie républicaine ne prétend justement à aucune autre autorité que celle de sa propre pertinence" and proposes a formula (3): "la République est, pour les Français, l'expression même de la temporalité historique."

Further, he affirms, (4):

"La république est le régime, et le seul, qui assure et garantisse à tous la pleine liberté de conscience et la pleine liberté d'expression, y compris pour ceux qui cherchent à la modifier ou à la détruire."

A current conception of "la République" and of "démocratie" was implied in a question put by the editor of Le Monde to Blandine Kriegel in June 1994. He asked whether the two could be considered on the same level (5).

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1. NICOLET -- **L'idée républicaine**, op. cit. p. 11
 2. -- idem. -- p. 41
 3. -- idem. -- p. 497
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 503-504
 5. Interview reproduced in KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **La Cité républicaine**, Galilée, Paris, 1998, p. 55

Kriegel answered that the two ideas are complimentary and continued (1):

"La formation républicaine à fait progresser l'égalité, c'est pourquoi elle est si populaire chez les Français qui se sont indentifiés à la République. Ajoutons qu'on doit à l'idée républicaine la centralisation politique qui a établi l'unité et l'indépendance nationales, la séparation de l'Eglise et l'Etat qui a institué la laïcité et enfin, la mise en place d'un Etat providence qui a assuré, avec l'assistance sociale et la redistribution, la fin de la misère."

Kriegel's response is revealing of the fact that the expression "French republican democracy" has meant in the past (and, following Kriegel, can mean still) giving primacy to the community (and hence to "égalité") at the expense of the individual ("liberté"). The emphasis given to individualism in contemporary French society clearly presents a challenge to a conceptual value which has perhaps tended to become an unquestioned tradition. The Revolutionary objective of "égalité" was itself, of course, a response to the structured hierarchy of l'Ancien Régime.

1. KRIEGEL -- *La Cité républicaine*, op. cit. pp. 55-56

Philippe Raynaud (1) argues that "[d]ans la perspective des sciences sociales contemporaines, l'opposition entre 'égalité' et 'hiérarchie' est une des expressions possibles de la différence entre les sociétés 'modernes' et celles qui les ont précédées ('aristocratiques' ou 'traditionnelles')." He contends that concepts of "égalité" and "hiérarchie" as such represent permanent philosophical problems (2). "Egalité" has meant in France, at least since the time of the First Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, equality before the law. It also means, in contemporary idiom, equality of opportunity; it can never mean social and economic equality, any more than it can mean equality of intelligence, ability or attainment. The concept of "égalité" implies, of course, the existence of an appropriate regulatory institution empowered to ensure that the precept is followed.

The contemporary idea of "égalité" is underpinned by a universal representation of humanism and is (3) "tout autant celle d'une interminable expérience de dépossession du sujet, qui ne trouve jamais la trace de ses intentions dans la complexité des relations sociales." (emphasis in original. JT.)

1. RAYNAUD, Philippe -- "Egalité" in RAYNAUD, Philippe and RIALS, Stéphane (eds.) -- **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique**, PUF, Paris, 1996, p. 189.

2. -- idem. -- p. 190.

3. -- idem. -- p. 194.

The Revolutionary slogan "liberté", a demand for a recognition of the rights of the individual, was paired with "égalité", the recognition that individuals were also members of a collectivity. Balancing the demands for "liberté" with those of "égalité" presented a dilemma for the political thinkers of the Revolutionary years.

The first Article of the original Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of August 1789 held that: "Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits". Subsequently, this became an element in the jacobin-girondin confrontation which might seem, prima facie, to be trivial but which was actually of considerable significance in the development (or, rather, non-development) of liberal democracy in France.

The issue was, in part, about whether priority was to be given to collective "égalité" rather than to individual "liberté" in policy statements. Article II of the "montagnarde" Declaration of 24 June 1793 defined the "droits naturels et imprescriptibles" of mankind as "l'égalité, la liberté, la sûreté, la propriété." (1) There was already a significant conflict between concepts of "égalité" and "liberté", a contributing factor to the ideological crisis of the time which was resolved with the elimination of the girondins.

1. See JAUME, Lucien -- **Les Déclarations des Droits de l'Homme, 1789, 1793, 1848, 1946**, Flammarion, Paris, 1989, p. 299.

There was nothing new in the idea of a dialectic between concepts of "égalité" and "liberté"; the problem was recognized by Kant (1):

"Man has an inclination to live in society, since he feels at this stage more like a man, that is, he feels able to develop his natural capacities. But he also has a great tendency to live as an individual, to isolate himself, since he also encounters in himself the unsocial characteristic of wanting to direct everything in accordance with his own ideas." (Emphasis in original. JT.)

The outwardly simple Rousseauian concept of "liberté" -- the freedom to participate in the affairs of the community through direct democracy, "la volonté générale" -- was less easy to put into practice. During the early nineteenth century, as Bénichou points out (1):

"L'idée de la liberté, au cours de la crise révolutionnaire, avait été compromise par le fait de la Terreur. Une doctrine de la liberté issue du Contrat social, et qui absorbait la souveraineté de l'individu dans sa participation à une volonté générale omnipotente, avait servi d'appui à une dictature. La liberté portée aux nues avait engendré son contraire. Il restait à démontrer, face à la contre-révolution, que la liberté pût être autre chose en France qu'un despotisme d'un nouveau genre."

The slogan "fraternité", linked popularly with the Revolution, does not figure in the various declarations of the revolutionary years.

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1. KANT, Immanuel -- **Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht** in REISS, Hans (ed.) -- **Kant: Political Writings**, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 44.
 2. BENICHO, Paul -- **Le temps des prophètes**, NRF/Gallimard, Paris, 1977, pp. 33-34, cited by RAYNAUD in **Esprit**, no. 75, op. cit. p. 51.

I argue that "fraternité" equates to humanism. Jean-Fabien Spitz (1) offers a classical definition of humanism which had its genesis in the Italian Renaissance:

"[...] l'humanisme civique est une conception anthropologique qui définit l'homme comme un être essentiellement politique, dont la nature ne s'accomplit que dans le statut de citoyen [...]."

Humanism, specifically civic humanism in this context, is a concept of social responsibility; men and women as citizens have rights, but they also have obligations, in the name of "the public good", towards their fellow citizens in the society of which they are members. "Cette notion de bien public est primordiale: elle signifie que la réalisation de notre nature passe par l'activité civique, et que c'est là le bien le plus précieux; [...]."
(2).

Ideas of "liberté" have changed over two centuries; Constant's *De la liberté chez les modernes* makes the point that classical "liberté" meant the freedom to participate in the affairs of the polity whereas "modern" (for Constant, in the first decades of the nineteenth century) "liberté" meant, in essence, the freedom not to participate in public affairs.

1. SPITZ, Jean-Fabien -- "Humanisme civique" in RAYNAUD and RIALS -- *Dictionnaire*, op. cit. p. 282.

2. -- idem. -- p. 285

Late twentieth century "liberté" often carries a connotation of maximum personal independence and a consequent: (1)

"[...] 'libération des entraves', avec pour horizon la façon dont l'individu moderne tend à ne se préoccuper que de lui-même, les sociétés modernes peuvent se voir attribuer une tendance marquée à concevoir la liberté au sens de cette 'liberté sans règle' dont Rousseau faisait la caractéristique de l'état de nature: [...]."

Thus contemporary "liberté" is an expression of an individualism, which might be thought of as the right of individual men and women to denounce tradition and any consequent and contiguous social value standards in the name of what is claimed as liberty (2). But already in 1840 Tocqueville (3) expressed a concern that:

"L'individualisme est une expression récente qu'une idée nouvelle a fait naître. Nos pères ne connaissent que l'égoïsme. [...] L'individualisme est un sentiment réfléchi et paisible qui dispose chaque citoyen à s'isoler de la masse de ses semblables et à se retirer à l'écart avec sa famille et ses amis; de telle sorte que, après s'être ainsi créé une petite société à son usage, il abandonne volontiers la grande société à elle-même."

I argue that untrammelled liberty and highly developed individualism lead to a concept which is at the heart of the philosophical consideration of humanism and subjectivity. In a secular society, this leads also to considerations of natural law and morality.

1. RENAUT, Alain -- "Liberté" in RAYNAUD and RIALS (eds.) -- *Dictionnaire*, op. cit. p. 347.
2. RENAUT -- "Individu et individualisme", in RAYNAUD and RIALS (eds.) -- *Dictionnaire*, op. cit. p. 293.
3. TOCQUEVILLE -- *De la démocratie en Amérique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1968, p. 242; cited by RENAUT in "Individu et individualisme", op. cit. p. 293

In discussing the contemporary concept of égalité, Renaut makes a point of considerable significance. The present-day idea of an equality of conditions contains precepts which are likely to have been difficult to understand during the Revolutionary years (1):

"La dynamique de l'égalisation des conditions, que toute histoire de la philosophie moderne a accompagné, se révèle ainsi plus complexe encore qu'on ne l'avait cru en général à partir de ces interprétations les plus fameuses: si le monde ancien, qui fonctionnait à la méconnaissance de l'identité de l'autre, a certes dû, pour céder le pas au monde moderne, laisser réinscrire l'altérité ou la différence sous l'identité (en permettant de reconnaître l'autre, qu'il s'agisse de la femme, du Noir, de l'enfant même, comme étant lui aussi un être humain, donc comme partageant la même identité que moi), il fallait aussi, pour que ce processus ouvrît bien sur l'égalité des hommes en droit et non pas sur une fantastique entreprise d'homogénéisation et sur un monstrueux effacement des différences, que la reconnaissance de l'identité, la reconnaissance de l'autre comme n'étant pas un 'tout autre', mais un 'même', s'accompagnât d'une reconnaissance de sa différence."

It is part of the function of "l'Etat" to balance the conflicting desires for "égalité" and "liberté" in a given civic society. That "l'Etat" should be distinct from civic society is a relatively modern concept attributable to Hegel (2).

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1. RENAUT -- "Conclusion générale" in RENAUT, (ed.) -- **Histoire de la philosophie politique**, Vol. V -- **Les philosophies politiques contemporaines**, op. cit. p. 472
 2. COLLIOT-THELENE, Catherine -- "Etat et société civile" in RAYNAUD and RIALS, (eds.) -- **Dictionnaire**, op. cit. p. 229.

Braud and Burdeau (1) argue that the modern occidental democratic state has the merit "d'avoir été l'instrument de réalisation des droits de l'homme," in other words, the defender of humanism. Writing in 1985, Ferry and Renaut (2) argued that the question of humanism was at the centre of then-current debate on philosophy.

In 1999, Lilla wrote (3) that, viewed from outside France, it is the relationship between individualism and modernity which constitutes the most important theme in the development of French political philosophy. At the same time, Larmore (4) identified what he considered four dominant themes in the re-thinking of humanism and democracy in France over the last twenty years: morality, autonomy, natural law and history.

Larmore also outlined (5) what is, in his view, novel and exciting in contemporary philosophy in France:

"... le souci de mettre en lumière les fondements moraux de la démocratie moderne. On se montre aujourd'hui plus ouvert que dans le passé à l'idée que la philosophie politique doit être ancrée dans la réflexion morale. On se dit à la recherche d'un nouvel humanisme."

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1. BRAUD and BURDEAU, op. cit., p. 552
 2. FERRY and RENAUT -- **La pensée 68**, op. cit. p. 22
 3. LILLA -- "L'humanisme en questions" in RENAUT (ed.) - **Histoire**, vol. V, **Les philosophies politiques contemporaines**, op. cit. p. 28
 4. LARMORE -- "Repenser l'humanisme..." in RENAUT (ed.) -- **Histoire**, op. cit. Vol. V. pp. 97-125
 5. -- idem. -- p. 98

Larmore recalls (1) the French Republican tradition, dating from Rousseau and enduring well into the twentieth century, which refused to admit that "la volonté collective doit être limitée par les droits naturels de l'individu." He cites (2) Ferry and Renaut's *La pensée* 68 and specifically their evocation of the philosophy of Kant in which they see "l'horizon indépassable de la pensée, la forme de la subjectivité moderne irremplaçable."

Earlier, in 1991, Larmore (3) wrote of the profound transformation in the nature of political philosophy in France as he saw it at that time:

"Le consensus marxiste de l'après-guerre, la violente critique des droits 'purement formels et illusoirs' des démocraties libérales et la confiance en la marche de l'Histoire, se sont pratiquement évanouis. De nos jours, ce sont plutôt l'articulation et la défense des principes de la démocratie libérale, surtout dans leur forme généralisée des 'droits de l'homme', et l'examen des dangers auxquels ils sont aujourd'hui exposés, qui occupent le devant de la scène."

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1. LARMORE -- "Repenser l'humanisme", op. cit. p. 98
 2. -- idem. -- p. 101
 3. LARMORE, Charles -- "Histoire et raison en philosophie politique" in *Stanford French Review*, Vol. 15, 1-2, 1991, p. 183.

Larmore's suggestion that it is the articulation and the defence of the principles of liberal democracy which is in the forefront of contemporary French political thinking is, I argue, a reasonable summary of the current reconsideration of democratic values but also, in so far as the suggestion might carry an implication of a liberal consensus in France, risks being misleading. It is not always easy to reconcile the historic and continuing role of and concept of the French republican state with the broad stream of occidental liberal political thought.

Yet Larmore's title in *L'histoire* (1), "Repenser l'humanisme et la démocratie", a concept carrying a concomitant need to understand what humanism means for individuals, for French society and for "l'Etat français" is at the heart of the contemporary debate on democracy and its values.

I conclude this introductory tour d'horizon by citing Renaut's conclusion about the role of "l'Etat". He argues that "l'Etat" must continually be equated with (2):

"[...] le régime moderne, où qu'on veuille en situer l'émergence, est celui où l'autre est apparu au contraire comme le même, comme un sujet égal à tout autre sujet et comme doté des mêmes droits que tout autre sujet: en vertu du principe de l'égalité des conditions, l'individu est ce qu'il est en dépit des droits qui sont les siens, non pas en vertu de son appartenance à un groupe, mais en raison de son individualité même."

1. LARMORE in RENAUT (ed.) -- *Histoire*, Vol. V, op. cit. pp. 97-125

2. RENAUT, "Conclusion général" in op. cit. Vol. V. p.473

Three Significant Determinants

The Acceptance of the End of the Revolution: François Furet

A fundamentally reoriented debate on political ideas was initiated by François Furet. The timing of his **Penser la Révolution française**, published in 1978, was propitious; the work appeared at a time when the older revolutionary and Marxist-inspired political philosophies, as well as structuralism and post-structuralism, in France were seemingly losing their relevance. Thus the work had immediate pertinence to then-contemporary France; it appealed to a wide audience and became a marked commercial success.

Furet argued that, in the past for a large part of the French nation: "[...] la Révolution française n'est pas seulement la République. C'est aussi une promesse indéfinie d'égalité, et une forme privilégiée du changement." (1) But, he argued, now: "La Révolution est terminée puisque la France retrouve son histoire, ou plutôt, réconcilie ses deux histoires" (2).

1. FURET, François -- **Penser la Révolution française**, Gallimard, Paris, 1978, p. 18.

2. -- idem. -- p. 130.

Furet was mounting a challenge to the teaching of the history of the Revolution in France. This history had, for a number of years, been strongly influenced, first by Georges Lefebvre and then by Albert Soboul, both of whom had held the Chair of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne. Both men had earned a solid reputation for original work on the social classes and structures of the revolutionary period; Lefebvre's early major work was his magisterial Les Paysans du Nord of 1924 and Soboul had earned his professional reputation for his 1958 thesis on the Parisian sans-culottes. Both were eminent and greatly-respected historians; Lefebvre had marked left wing sympathies, Soboul was a Marxist. Both were concerned with the social and economic causes and consequences of the Revolution, both had a strongly-developed sense of social justice.

Furet's preoccupation was with the political consequences of the Revolution. His main conclusion that the Revolution should no longer be regarded as a factor in the politics of contemporary France was arguably in line with the inclinations of many French citizens. It was a conclusion which provoked much criticism and debate among French historians of the Revolution, a process which peaked at the time of the bi-centenary of 1789 (1).

1. See KAPLAN, Steven Laurence -- **Farewell Revolution**, Cornell U.P., 1995 for an account of this debate.

Furet argued that, in the past, for as long as the spirit of revolution remained in the consciousness of the French polity, it had been virtually impossible for a popularly-elected government to sustain controversial political policies, because the political divisions engendered by the controversy tended to invoke echoes of the Revolution: "La révolution, c'est l'imaginaire d'une société devenu le tissu même de son histoire." (1)

Yet, Furet emphasized, the acceptance of the end of the Revolution did not imply in any sense that the Revolution had failed (2):

"La révolution bourgeoise est faite, et achevée, sans compromis d'aucune sorte avec l'ancienne société, dès 1789-1791. Tous les éléments essentiels du nouvel ordre bourgeois qui fondent notre monde contemporain: l'abolition des ordres et de la 'féodalité', la carrière ouverte aux talents, la substitution du contrat à la monarchie de droit divin, la naissance de l'homo democratus et du régime représentatif, la libération du travail et la libre entreprise, sont acquis sans retour dès 1790; [...]."

Furet drew attention to the work of Tocqueville, specifically *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, and hence to *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (3). Arguably, he thus made a substantial contribution to what might be termed a "rediscovery" in France of Tocqueville's oeuvre.

1. FURET, op. cit. p. 206

2. -- idem. -- p.201

3. -- idem. -- pp. 209-256

In another work written by Furet with two EHESS colleagues, **La République du centre: La fin de l'exception française**, published in 1988 (1), Furet and his co-authors summarise the results of the transformation of the French polity by the eclipsing of two opposing authoritarian tendencies, Gaullism and Communism. Furet argues that (2): "[...] l'enrichissement du pays, l'hédonisme des mœurs, la naissance d'une économie et d'une conscience européennes" together sounded the knell of the "politics of authoritarianism".

Furet himself described his work more generally as the study of "French political rationalism" (3). In addition to being an element in the national recognition of the idea that the Revolution had ended, Furet was, of course, undermining the intellectual position of historians of the Revolution in French universities.

He subsequently entered a substantial challenge to the Russian Revolution and its consequences in a controversial work, **Le passé d'une illusion: essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle**, published in 1995.

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1. FURET, François, JULLIARD, Jacques et ROSANVALLON, Pierre et al. -- **La République du centre: La fin de l'exception française**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1988
 2. FURET, in FURET et al., op. cit. p. 20
 3. KAPLAN, op. cit. p. 74
 4. FURET, François -- **Le passé d'une illusion: essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle**, Robert Laffont/Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1995

In the later years of his career, Furet spent a significant amount of time in the United States, first at Princeton and the University of Michigan. He subsequently held a permanent part-time position at the University of Chicago (1).

Through his "[...] preference for liberty over equality, his belief in the indissociability of capitalism and democracy, his antipathy to certain kinds of state intervention in social life, his ample (though not absolute) confidence in market arbitration, his skepticism of notions of general interest, his horror of the tabula rasa [...]" (2), Furet was regarded as being eminently liberal in outlook. His insistence on a systematic and pragmatic (rather than an ideological) understanding of the past was also regarded as being an essentially liberal attribute. In short, he challenged conventional wisdom and, specifically, the wisdom of a received idea, that is, the concept both of the Revolution and the idea of revolution as a universal promise.

1. KAPLAN, op. cit. p. 51

2. -- idem. -- p. 133

Furet's influence has the effect of moving history back to the centre stage of French intellectual life, Gauchet contends, as a master discipline at the expense of sociology and ethnology. At the same time, the study of politics has begun to take on a similar status. The individual, human rights, the Republic itself, were no longer regarded as the deceiving masks of class domination but the reality of contemporary French society. What was at stake, Gauchet maintains, was a complete renewal of the history of ideas (1).

Gauchet's summary of Furet's achievement underlines the catalytic importance of his work as far as a reconsideration of the essential elements of democratic values in contemporary France is concerned. His contribution did not represent a sudden conversion on the road to Damascus for French political thinkers. Rather, it engendered a national debate of genuine historic dimensions which, in the environment of the socio-economic transformation of the nation, contributed towards a recognition of the necessity for a fundamental reconsideration of basic political values.

1. GAUCHET, Marcel, "Changement de paradigme en sciences sociales" in *Le Débat*, no. 50, op. cit. p. 168

Rejecting Structuralism: The Failure to Find a Universal Theory

The need to find a viable political alternative in France did not, of course, begin with Furet's contention that the Revolution had ended. As is well known, following the example of Sartre, a great many French intellectuals during the decade of the 1950s had become involved intensely in the national and international political debates and polemics of the period. Descombes contends that the disillusionment following the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and the French constitutional crisis of 1958, as well as a growing disappointment with Sartre, caused many to seek inspiration in less obviously political subjects such as linguistics and anthropology (1).

There developed a wish to find a "unification des savoirs" (2) which would embrace as well all significant scientific thinking, a concept which became known as "structuralisme", described by Michel Foucault as being "pas une méthode nouvelle; il est la conscience éveillée et inquiète du savoir moderne" (3).

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1. DESCOMBES, Vincent -- "Structuralisme" in RAYNAUD and RIALS -- *Dictionnaire*, op. cit. pp. 647-649
 2. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Discours, structure" in *Le Débat*, No. 50, May-August 1988, p. 178.
 3. FOUCAULT, Michel -- *Les Mots et les choses*, Gallimard, Paris, p. 221; cited by DOSSE, François -- *Histoire du structuralisme*, (2 vols), Editions la Découverte, Paris, 1991, introduction.

I contend that structuralism represented an attempt to develop a new philosophy which would have relevance to the transformation of France. The subject is complex and I aim to do no more in this section than signal issues which are relevant to the debate on democracy and its values. The rejection of structuralism, and specifically the philosophical counter-arguments advanced by Dumont (chapter 3 infra), as well as by Ferry and Renaut (chapter 8 infra), means that it is important to place the structuralist phenomenon in the context of my consideration of contemporary French political thought.

Gauchet described the attraction of structuralism to intellectuals (1):

"Il y a eu un attracteur intellectuel intense au foyer de ce mouvement, un schème de pensée monotone, mais puissant, et remarquablement accordé par ailleurs à une sensibilité de l'époque. Brutalement dit: Saussure relu à la lumière de Heidegger, l'idée de structure linguistique appropriée au dessein d'une critique ou d'une déconstitution de la subjectivité."

Thomas Pavel, more favourable to the ideas of structuralism than Gauchet, described how "les concepts de la linguistique se sont transformés, au courant des années soixante, en un instrument de modernisation intellectuelle" (2). He gives a brief history of the development of structuralism in France.

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1. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Discours, structure", in **Le Débat**, no. 80, op. cit. p. 179.
 2. PAVEL, Thomas -- **Le Mirage linguistique**, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1988, p. 7

Beginning in the 1950s, what Pavel calls (1) "un important mouvement né sous le signe de l'innovation et de scientificité" gradually imposed itself on the multiplicity of often-conflicting new ideas then circulating among the French intelligentsia. The terms "structuralism", "semiology" and "post-structuralism", each illustrating one of the elements of the paradigm, described imperfectly the plethora of ideas then circulating and emanating from the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, and the epistemology of Michel Foucault, as well as from numerous variations on these themes. The total made up diverse philosophies of signification and of modernity, economies of the symbolic and theories of the human body and of the subject.

François Dosse argues that some followers of structuralism believed that the post-war transformation of French society had upset all idea of the continuity of past-present-future. The eclipse of traditional rural France ("la fin des terroirs") and the advent of a society having no links to the rural environment ("une société du hors-sol") created a state of worldly weightlessness, a dampening relationship to the spirit of the times (2).

1. PAVEL, op. cit. -- p. 9

2. DOSSE, François -- **Histoire du structuralisme**, vol. 1. "Le Champ du signe, 1945-1966", p. 432.

Dosse contends that others saw structuralism as having a direct link with the coming of a technocratic society. At this level, structuralism was seen to take on the role of legitimization of a social caste; it became the technostructure of the new industrial state, justifying its place at the highest levels of the exercise of power and as a theory postulating the end of history. The middle class, it was held, had become dominant and structuralism, as an ideology of the constraints on human liberty which had been reduced to mere acquisitions, would become a reflection of a consumerism in which the citizen ceded place to the user (1).

The intellectual roots of structuralism, Dosse argues, were found in the work of Nietzsche, Saussure and Heidegger (2); both Nietzsche and Heidegger rejected humanism, that is, independent human autonomy and volition.

1. DOSSE -- op. cit. pp. 432-433

2. -- idem. p. 446

In addition, Heidegger pointed the way towards the evolution of linguistics (1):

"Dans la perspective heideggérienne, le champ du langage sera donc l'objet d'étude privilégié. L'on retrouve bien évidemment une racine essentielle de ce qui va caractériser le structuralisme, lequel connaîtra son essor en généralisant le modèle linguistique à tout le champ du savoir des sciences humaines."

Dosse emphasizes that an understanding of the structuralist phenomenon in France requires also an understanding of the intellectual environment created by the spectacular development of the social sciences in French universities over the decades following 1945 (2).

He stresses the essential pluridisciplinary nature of structuralism in the early years of its postulation as a major element in the search for intellectual legitimacy by the rapidly growing faculties of the social sciences in French universities and continues (3): "D'où le caractère insécable des aspects scientifiques et idéologiques en cette période, car cette socialisation intensément recherchée induit l'idéologisation du discours scientifique."

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1. DOSSE -- **Histoire du structuralisme**, vol. 1, op. cit. p. 448.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 458.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 459.

The advocates of structuralism opposed both the traditional disciplines of philosophy and history. "On part alors en guerre contre l'historicisme, le contexte historique, la recherche des origines, la diachronie, la téléologie pour faire valoir les permanences, les invariants, la synchronie, le texte clos sur lui-même." (1) At the same time, there was a conscious rejection of much of Sartre's thinking.

Out of the concept of structuralism there developed what might be thought of as a corollary, post-structuralism, sometimes loosely (and inaccurately) referred to as "la pensée 68". Lilla comments (2):

"[...] la pensée française de l'après guerre [...] débutant avec le marxisme de Sartre, s'achevait avec le post-structuralisme de Foucault, Derrida, Althusser et Lacan."

Braud and Burdeau (3) argue that, during the years preceding the crisis of May 1968, there was "une effervescence intellectuelle tout à fait remarquable" around the question of structuralism. What they term "la mode de l'époque" sought to make a "School" out of the differing work of authors such as Lévi-Strauss (ethnology), Lacan (his attempts to renew psycho-analysis) and Althusser (seeking an epistemological approach to the works of Marx).

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1. DOSSE -- **Histoire du structuralisme**, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 464
 2. LILLA, "L'humanisme en questions", op. cit. in RENAULT, (ed.), **Histoire de la philosophie politique**, Vol. V, **Les philosophes politiques contemporaines**, p. 31
 3. BRAUD and BURDEAU, **Histoire des idées politiques depuis la Révolution** op. cit. p. 474

Braud and Burdeau summarize (1):

"Tous ces auteurs fondent leur démarche scientifique sur le fait d'écrire sur l'écriture, discourir sur le discours, percer le mystère des formes de la communication."

These post-structural discourses and proposed systems were essentially anti-humanist (2), underlining as they did the claim that the effects of systems would always have predominance over the deliberate will of individuals. Out of these ideas there developed during the 1960s "à grands fracas médiatique" the concept of the death of mankind.

The ideas of post-structuralism postulated not only the death of mankind, but also of philosophy, of history and of politics. Bernard argues that the decade of the 1960s was one haunted by an obsession with texts (3) to such an extent that it was regarded as important to study basic texts (Marx or Freud) and to weed out of these texts whatever might get in the way of an understanding of the original purity.

1. BRAUD and BURDEAU, op. cit. p. 474

2. -- idem. -- pp. 475-476

3. BERNARD, Jean-Pierre -- "Une 'pensée 68'" in ORY, Pascal (ed.) -- **Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques**, op. cit. p.700

The basic post-structuralist ideas carried through into the early 1970s, most remarkably in teaching in French universities. Massive changes in curricula introduced following the crisis of May 1968, involved " [1]a socialisation ou démocratisation de l'enseignement des sciences, leur implantation massive et leur pouvoir idéologique assurant alors conjointement le succès du paradigme structuraliste." (1)

There developed a desire to unify academic disciplines and post-structuralism appeared to offer such a possibility. Its proponents envisaged the theoretical concept of an eventual total conceptualisation and an analytical framework permitting all-embracing explanations of social diversity (2).

Thus, as Gauchet described the situation (3):

"L'organisation intellectuelle (emphasis in original. JT) du champ des sciences sociales au plus haut de leur rayonnement fin des années soixante, début des années soixante-dix, pourrait être schématiquement décrite comme un système à trois grands termes: une discipline modèle, la linguistique, porteuse de l'espérance d'une sémiologie unificatrice; deux disciplines-reines au plan des applications, la sociologie et l'ethnologie; et deux théories de référence, le marxisme et la psychoanalyse."

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1. DOSSE -- **Histoire**, Vol. 2. op. cit. p. 168.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 224.
 3. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Changement de paradigme en science sociales?" in **Le Débat**, no. 50, May-August 1988, p. 165.

This surge of post-structuralist thinking in the late 1960s and early 1970s represented yet another manifestation in France of ideas of revolution based upon (1) "l'illusion de commencement ou de recommencement absolu". Yet, I argue, it was the very irrelevance of these ideas to the French political environment which caused their disappearance. They represented a reductio ad absurdum of Lilla's comment (2) that the more French intellectuals in the post-1945 years became "political", the less interested they became in the practice of politics. The attitude of some intellectuals (Barthes, for example) to the "events" of May 1968 was highly equivocal.

I contend that the rejection of structuralism may be put alongside the oeuvre of Furet in establishing the context of the reconsideration of democratic values in contemporary France. "La République du centre", with all that the concept implies in terms of political pluralism and tolerance, was arguably the logical consequence of a national rejection of radical, authoritarian and esoteric political formulae.

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1. BERNARD, op. cit. p. 695
 2. LILLA -- "L'humanisme en questions", in RENAUT (ed.) **Histoire**, op. cit. p. 28; see also p. 8 supra

Recognizing Political Liberalism

French intellectuals in the past, as Catherine Audard points out (1), "coming from a tradition deeply influenced by Rousseau and his mistrust of 'the liberal individual'", were seldom enthusiastic about the concept of political liberalism.

Yet there was a strong liberal current (to be thought of in the context of the liberty of the individual) in French political philosophy throughout the nineteenth century as thinkers sought to come to grips with the intellectual implications of the legacy of the Revolution.

The reorientation of French political thinking which began in the mid-1970s and the consequent reappraisal of the history of ideas aroused renewed interest in those nineteenth century political thinkers of whom the adjective "liberal" may be used. Largely forgotten for over a century, the writings of Constant, Guizot and Tocqueville, to name only three, were "re-discovered" (2).

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1. AUDARD, Catherine -- "The Idea of 'Free Public Reason'" in *Ratio juris*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 1995, p. 16
 2. Marcel Gauchet, a disciple of Furet, was among the first French scholars to publish comment on Constant and on Tocqueville. He edited and contributed a lengthy introductory to a new edition of Constant's work published in 1980 and, in the same year, contributed a long essay entitled "Tocqueville, l'Amérique et nous" in the periodical *Libre* (Vol. VII, pp.43-120)

The thinkers of the revolutionary years had difficulty with precise definitions of "Les droits de l'homme" (1). In addition, as Lucien Jaume (2) points out, during the Jacobin ascendancy, much thought was given to the question whether the individual should be either no more than a simple numerical unit or a "citoyen vertueux"; the decision went to the concept of the "citoyen vertueux", but the debate on the boundary between "intérêts" and "vertu" was never concluded satisfactorily.

In another work, *L'individu effacé* (3), Jaume describes an essential paradox in French political liberal thinking: in essence, in the past, the citizen had always to yield primacy to the state (l'Etat).

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1. There were three "Déclarations" during the years of the Revolution: 26 August 1789, 29 May 1793 and ("Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen") 24 June 1793
 2. JAUME, Lucien -- *Le discours jacobin et la démocratie*, Fayard, Paris, p. 191
 3. JAUME, Lucien -- *L'individu effacé, ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français*, Fayard, Paris, 1997

In his introduction to this second work, Jaume offers an idea of political liberalism and a suggestion as to why "l'individu" has been "effacé" over the period of his study, that is, during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries (1):

"Faut-il admettre un droit de l'individu, et notamment le droit de juger de son droit, face au pouvoir politique et administratif -- ou faut-il, plutôt, envisager les libertés du point de vue de la puissance publique, comme autant de limitations que, par b n volence, elle s'inflige? [Les alternatifs sont] privil gier l'individu, jusqu' ,  ventuellement, un lib ralisme du sujet (Mme de Sta l), assujettir l'individu   un esprit de corps qui le discipline (point de d part de Guizot). Le lib ralisme fran ais a, tr s majoritairement, adopt  la seconde voie, celle d'un lib ralisme par l'Etat, et non contre ou hors l'Etat."

And yet, Jaume continues (2), political liberalism is thought of habitually as the doctrine which, par excellence, upholds the rights of the modern individual, emancipating him from the spiritual tutelage of the Church and the dominance conferred by the sovereignty of absolute monarchs. For Jaume (3), political liberalism is, by definition, "l'individualisme cons quent".

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2. JAUME -- L'individu effac  op. cit. p. 11
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. --

A consequence of the transformation of the French polity, economy and society which has taken place since 1945 is perhaps that the primacy of l'Etat over the individual is less accepted than was previously the case. Raynaud argues that, as a result, over the last decades of the twentieth century in France political liberalism has experienced "un remarquable renouveau" (1).

Jaume's paradox needs to be explored in a broader context, the starting point of which is Rousseau.

Raynaud contends that, in seeking to square the circle of individual liberty in a collectivity, Rousseau confused "la volonté générale" with "la souveraineté populaire": the former meant, according to Du contrat social, "l'aliénation complète de chaque individu avec tous ses droits et sans réserve à la communauté", whilst at the same time the sovereignty of the people could be "ni aliénée, ni déléguée, ni représentée." (2).

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1. RAYNAUD, Philippe -- "Libéralisme" in RAYNAUD, Philippe and RIALS, Stéphane (eds) -- **Dictionnaire de philosophie politique**, Presses universitaires de France, 1996 p. 338
 2. RAYNAUD, Philippe -- "Un romantique libéral: Benjamin Constant" in *Esprit*, no. 75, March 1983, p.56. JULLIARD, in *La faute à Rousseau*, op. cit. writes (p.40) of the: "[...] antinomie de la raison politique selon Rousseau: volonté générale et souveraineté populaire se confondent et se distinguent [...]."

This contradiction is well known; the belief that "la volonté générale" would be infallible has also had pernicious consequences. Benjamin Constant pointed out the essential problem (1):

"L'universalité des citoyens est le souverain, dans ce sens que nul individu, nulle fraction, nulle association partielle ne peut s'arroger la souveraineté, si elle ne lui a pas été déléguée. Mais il ne s'ensuit pas que l'universalité des citoyens, ou ceux qui par elle sont investi de la souveraineté, puissent disposer souverainement de l'existence des individus. Il y a au contraire une partie de l'existence qui, de nécessité, reste individuelle et indépendante, et qui est de droit hors de toute compétence sociale. La souveraineté n'existe que d'une manière limitée et relative. Au point de commencement l'indépendance et l'existence individuelle, s'arrête la juridiction de cette souveraineté."

The fact of this contradiction in an uncertain political environment in which the original constitutional legitimacy had been destroyed served to strengthen central political control at the expense of individual autonomy. In any case, in contrast to the American and British experience, France has had a long history of a centralised political authority. As Tocqueville argued (2), the centralising administrative policies of L'ancien régime were maintained by successive governments, irrespective of their political colour, because central control was deemed to be the only method capable of exercising control in a society in which the emotional legacy of the Revolution remained potent.

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1. CONSTANT, Benjamin -- **De la liberté chez les modernes**, Le livre de poche, Paris, 1980, p. 271; cited by RAYNAUD, *Esprit*, no. 75, op. cit. p. 57.
 2. TOCQUEVILLE, Alexis de -- **L'ancien régime et la Révolution**, (reprint), Gallimard, Paris 1967, p. 98

Rousseau had argued that the ultimate freedom of the individual would be found in membership of a community in which the will of each individual was subsumed into the general will, an idea at the heart of revolutionary thinking which was held by revolutionary and republican thinkers in France to be unchallengeable, in spite of the fact that it seemed unable to result in firmly-based and effective governments. The nineteenth-century marriage of Comtean positivism to the Jacobin discourse sustained the centralising republican narrative throughout the years of the Third Republic.

This republican narrative, as Judt (1) points out, resulted in a situation in which for most of the first half of the twentieth century French public life was "occupied and preoccupied with doctrinal language and quarreling to the occasional near-exclusion of anything else." Judt argues that this political friction had little effect on French society, which remained largely self-sufficient, rural, conservative and stable. He summarizes (2):

"In twentieth century France [...] history and memory conspired to exclude any sustained attention to what now appear to have been the country's true dilemmas -- one of them being the intolerable burden of competing pasts."

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1. JUDT, Tony -- **The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century**, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p 7
 2. -- idem. -- p.10

The determinist principles of Marxism in vogue in France in the late 1940s and 1950s were not alien to the administrative centralisation characteristic of the classic French republican ethic; these principles served to sustain the Jacobin element in the Revolutionary cannon and hence to fuel political differences.

An exception to the post-1945 dichotomy between political philosophy and the practice of politics was provided by the example of Raymond Aron. In the left-inclined intellectual environment of post-Liberation France Aron was regularly derided by his peers as being a "liberal". Judt (1) describes Aron as "the only prominent French thinker of his generation who had taken a consistent liberal stand against all the totalitarian temptations of the age" and as providing "a beacon of light pointing to the future at a time of confusion and doubt within the intellectual community."

Typical of Aron's closeness to and perception of the realities of day-to-day political problems is a comment from a text published in 1965 (2):

"Les sociétés occidentales d'aujourd'hui ont un triple idéal: la citoyenneté bourgeoise, l'efficacité technique et le droit pour chacun de choisir la voie de son salut." (Emphases in original. JT)

1. JUDT, op. cit. p. 137

2. ARON, Raymond -- **Essai sur les libertés**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1965, p. 72

Influenced as a young man by Elie Halévy, Aron had studied in Germany before World War II and had observed at first hand the breakdown of democratic processes which had permitted Hitler to seize power. He eschewed the disinterest in everyday politics demonstrated by a majority of his fellow intellectuals and wrote in his memoirs that he asked himself constantly (1): "qu'est-ce que je pourrais faire à la place de celui qui gouverne?" Strongly influenced by the thought of Max Weber (2), his doctoral thesis (presented before the outbreak of World War II and published in 1948) had been an introduction to the philosophy of history (3). In this work he focussed upon the individual in history and on the concept of political pluralism.

Aron's argument is that (4), briefly, there is a plurality of possible interpretations of human aspirations and endeavour; hence there has to be choice in giving preference to one interpretation at the expense of others. Again, nothing is pre-determined; the problem of choice is ever-present. Finally, men and women must accept responsibility for their choices.

1. ARON, Raymond -- **Mémoires**, Julliard, Paris, 1983, p. 56

2. JUDT , op. cit. p. 145; Judt cites Aron's appreciation of Weber's distinction between conviction and responsibility

3. ARON, Raymond -- **Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire**, Gallimard, Paris, 1948

4. See, for example, JUDT, op. cit. p. 142.

In the last section of his thesis, headed "L'homme et l'histoire", Aron examines the problems created by the need for governments to make choices and to take action. Citing Weber, he emphasizes that governments must come to grips with and understand problems by means of a rigorous and pragmatic analysis; he invokes the Kantian antinomy between a "politique de l'entendement" and a "politique de la Raison" (1), or between the dictates of chance and those inherent in an historic inevitability which regards immediate problems as being largely irrelevant.

A pragmatic political leader needs a duality of ends and means, of objective and subjective standards, Aron argues. He cannot accept either an immediate totality of causes or a pre-determined future; every moment is for him a novelty. On the other hand, the only problem for the politician who follows the dictates of rationality is one of tactics, given that the overall strategy is immutable.

Aron insists that these two concepts were extremes, and that practical politics had to have a mixture of both attitudes. The pragmatist needs to have at least a broad policy goal towards which he is working, the doctrinaire cannot afford to brush aside all the unforeseen day-to-day problems.

1. ARON -- Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire, op. cit. p. 331.

In a seminal work published in 1955 (1) Aron questioned the relevance of determinist ideology to France, a stand which isolated him intellectually and ideologically both from the Marxist and broad Sartrean schools of French intellectuals. Aron was critical of what he called "revolutionary messianism" and "proletarian eschatology", but for at least two subsequent decades the watchword among French intellectuals was "better be wrong with Sartre than right with Aron" (2).

Judt argues (3) that *L'Opium des intellectuels* is "in certain respects a companion volume and successor to his *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* and makes the point that Aron was himself a careful reader of Marx. Aron came back to his deep understanding of Marxism again and again in his subsequent writing. For example, in his *Dimensions de la conscience historique*, he wrote (4):

"[...] le marxisme est la seule philosophie de l'histoire au dernier sens que nous venons de dégager, c'est-à-dire la seule interprétation du passé humain dans son ensemble en fonction d'un métaphysique, qui exerce aujourd'hui une influence étendue et profonde sur la civilisation occidentale. Encore la plupart de ceux qui le professent, ayant perdu le souvenir des origines hégéliennes de leur foi, transposant le matérialisme dialectique sur le plan de la science et du fait, dégradant leur philosophie en une idéologie justificatrice."

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1. ARON, Raymond -- *L'opium des intellectuels*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1955.
 2. BAVEREZ, Nicolas -- Raymond Aron, Flammarion, Paris, 1993, p. 507.
 3. JUDT, op. cit. p. 143
 4. ARON, Raymond -- *Dimensions de la conscience historique*, Plon, Paris, 1961, p. 23

Aron never strayed from his belief in the importance of pluralism in his substantial oeuvre. He outlined his appreciation of the principle of pluralism (again in **Dimensions de la conscience historique**) (1):

"Sous une forme moins rigide, la philosophie du pluralisme est pour le moins suggérée par le spectacle des richesses humaines et le souci des éléments irrationnels, sentiments, croyances religieuses, styles artistiques. A partir du moment où l'on attache à l'éternel jaillissement des mythes et des arts autant qu'au progrès du savoir et du pouvoir, l'histoire se défait inévitablement en un nombre indéfini d'humanités, chacune vouée à une certaine manière de sentir, de vivre et d'imaginer le vaste univers."

He sought always to relate his thinking to the contemporary practice of politics (2) and never deviated from his basic concept of the vital de facto liberal political mechanism (3):

"Les régimes occidentaux que nous appelons couramment démocratiques et que je préfère, au risque de pédantisme, baptiser constitutionnels-pluralistes, comportant, en termes sociologiques, deux aspects essentiels: l'existence légitime de groupes multiples dont la rivalité commande la désignation des gouvernants, le respect des règles légales, constitutionnelles au sommet, conformément auxquelles sont désignés les détenteurs des fonctions exécutives ou législatives et ces fonctions elles-mêmes exercées." (Emphases in original. JT)

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1. ARON, **Dimensions**, op. cit. p. 25
 2. JUDT, op. cit. p. 161
 3. ARON -- **Essai sur les libertés**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1965, p. 156

Aron argued that there was a danger to liberal democracy inherent in the powerful surge of egoistic individualism characteristic of modern Western societies and believed in the need for the ultimate primacy of a liberal state. "Il a fait toute sa place à l'Etat [...]; il a fait sa place à l'individu également, dont la responsabilité est une donnée indépassable sauf à plonger dans la tératologie." (1).

He had no doubt that nations had to be grounded in institutions offering the authority of moral and spiritual as well as legal and political authority (2). Mahoney argues that Aron championed commerce as providing the ultimate key to liberal democracy, as had Montesquieu and Constant before him (3). Jaume describes Aron as being evidence of the permanence of the liberal spirit (4):

"Il est le continuateur de cette quête de la liberté, qui s'est ouverte dans la fracture révolutionnaire et qui se continue aujourd'hui: recherche d'un libéralisme du sujet et de la conscience tout autant que d'une liberté par l'Etat."

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1. JAUME -- **L'individu effacé**, Fayard, Paris, 1997, p. 554.
 2. ARON -- **Essai sur les libertés**, (re-issue), Paris, 1976, Postface, cited by MAHONEY, op. cit. pp. 117 and 171.
 3. MAHONEY, Daniel J. -- **The Liberal Political Science of Raymond Aron**, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Lanham, Md, 1992, p. 121.
 4. JAUME -- **L'individu effacé**, op. cit. p. 554

Judt's final words on Aron are apposite (1):

"[...] he will in time be recognized as the greatest intellectual dissenter of his age and the man who laid the foundations for a fresh departure in French public debate."

The importance of Aron in any consideration of the development of political thought in contemporary France cannot be gainsaid. He provides an essential frame of reference for the genesis of much subsequent thought, and particularly that of Gauchet, Manent and Rosanvallon.

1. JUDT, *op. cit.* p. 182

Summary

One of the effects of the substantial increase in the economic and social living standards of a significant proportion of French men and women during the latter part of the twentieth century was the possibility of a far greater upward social mobility than hitherto experienced in French history. Substantial increases in disposable income and hugely improved standards of living meant that the revolutionary idea of class struggle lost much of its meaning. The political edge of the Revolutionary slogans of "liberté" and "égalité" was blunted as freedom tended to become a matter of choosing between an increasing number of economic and social options.

In such an environment, the ideology of the Revolution simply lost much of its topical relevance, as did the endogeneous anti-bourgeois thinking implicit in structuralism. The day-to-day political issues ceased to be often a matter of a stark choice between incompatible options as internal politics became increasingly a matter of debate and agreement to differ rather than of apparently irreconcilable confrontation.

At the same time, the relevance of Marxism to the situation in contemporary France became uncertain and the PCF attracted a decreasing number of voters at each legislative election. The growing gap between the living standards and general quality of life of a great majority of French citizens and the standards and quality of life in the Eastern European "People's Democracies" was apparent to even the least well-informed French voter.

That is not to say that the liberty of economic and social choice integral to the new expression of individualism current in France was regarded as being ideal. On the contrary, it was seen at times to border on the libertine. The concept of transcendant moral values emanating from the Church or from natural law, via the Republican ethic, became weakened and was often challenged with apparent impunity in a society in which, increasingly, values tended to be given a monetary index.

Thus thinkers, seeking to find a political order in a radically different economic and social environment in which the economics of international trade in commodities and services had become a major motivating force, were forced to think about the basic mechanisms and values of democracy in France.

This included thinking about the basis of the legislative process, about the dynamic role of "l'Etat" as an administrator of the law and as a social regulator, arbiter and ultimate safety net, about the implications of an historical situation in which the myths of the past had little relevance, about the philosophical meaning of subjectivity in a community in which individualism and humanism had become values transcending the older "liberté" and "égalité", and about the significance of acceptance by the French polity of the concept of value pluralism.

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PART II

SEVEN EXPONENTS OF NEW FRENCH POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introductory Note

This Part contains six chapters, one devoted to each of the seven selected thinkers apart from Ferry and Renaut, who are considered together.

First, the work of Dumont, Manent, Kriegel and Rosanvallon is considered, in that order, because each published significant work in the late 1970s and thus was in the forefront of the new thinking which emerged at that time. Dumont, an anthropologist, had been a fellow student of Lévi-Strauss and in mid-career had been attracted to the anthropological aspects of structuralism. Manent, an historian, acknowledged Raymond Aron in his first major published work. Kriegel, an historian and philosopher and one-time student of Foucault, indicated her influence by François Furet. The title of Rosanvallon's first published work, *L'Age de l'autogestion*, which appeared in 1976, indicates his links to "la génération 68"; he is also an historian.

I then consider the work of Gauchet (who was a student of Claude Lefort at the University of Caen) and of Ferry and Renaut (both of whom are Professors of Philosophy at the University of Paris) dates from 1985.

I begin each chapter with a brief reference to the context of the ideas being developed by the author and a list of the works being considered. Each chapter is concluded with a summary of that scholar's perception of the essential democratic values in contemporary France. In my treatment of the work of each, I have sought to demonstrate the main thrust of his or her thinking while maintaining an overall balance. To consider every work of each thinker would risk excessive length, some distortion and, in some cases, a significant degree of repetition.

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Introduction

"[...] la vraie fonction de la sociologie est [...] de remédier à la lacune qui introduit la mentalité individualiste, lorsqu'elle confond l'idéal et le réel. [...] [La sociologie] a sa racine dans [...] la perception de la nature sociale de l'homme." (1)

Louis Dumont (1911-1997), an anthropologist and sociologist who, for part of his career, taught at the EHESS and whose professional reputation was built upon his work among Indian castes (2), sees his later published work as part of a general comparative study of modern ideology, based upon his original professional discipline of social anthropology. He examines the development of modern egalitarian society against a background of the classical form of an hierachical, quasi-tribal society. He maintains that there are currently two forms of sociology (3): the one begins with human beings and sets them subsequently in society; the other sees the birth of society as being a result of the interaction of individuals.

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1. DUMONT, Louis -- **Homo hierarchicus -- Le système de castes et ses implications**, Gallimard, Paris, 1967, p. 18
 2. Dumont's earlier publications include: **Une sous-caste de l'Inde du Sud**, Mouton, Paris, 1957 and **La Civilisation indienne et Nous**, Armand Colin, Paris, 1964
 3. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1991, pp. 11-12

Dumont is of the latter persuasion and has no doubt that (1):

"[...] la société avec ses institutions, valeurs, concepts, langue, est sociologiquement première par rapport à ses membres particuliers, qui ne devienne les hommes que par l'éducation et l'adaptation à une société déterminée."

This approach, Dumont insists, puts him apart from "les anthropologues anglo-saxons" and firmly in the stream of Durkheim and Mauss, the latter of whom emphasized the importance of understanding the reasons for the differences between concrete societies (2).

Dumont's professional reputation as an anthropologist was established through his work on the Indian caste system among structured, hierarchical "holist" (the total is greater than the sum of the parts) societies. In the later years of his career, influenced by the work of Tocqueville, Dumont focussed on the fact that contemporary occidental societies were largely unstructured and were marked by an anti-hierarchical individualism.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. pp. 98-99

2. -- idem. p. 12

Dumont's thinking is built around a detailed and rigorous analysis of relevant texts. His work may be considered from four different aspects: the ideological import of economics; the evolution of occidental concepts of individual autonomy which had its genesis in Christianity; the emergence of the concept of natural law in occidental societies; and finally the application of his ideas to post-Revolutionary France and its "left-right" dichotomy.

In this chapter I shall focus on his *Homo aequalis I* (1), his *Essais sur l'individualisme* (2) and on an article entitled "Sur l'idéologie politique française" (3) which appeared in *Le Débat* in 1990.

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1. DUMONT, Louis -- *Homo aequalis I: Genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie économique*, Gallimard, Paris 1977
 2. -- idem. -- *Essais sur l'individualisme: Une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne*, Collection Esprit/Seuil, Paris, 1991
 3. -- idem. -- "Sur l'idéologie politique française. Une perspective comparative" in *Le Débat*, No. 58, January-February 1990, pp. 128-158

The Ideological Import of Economics

Dumont recognizes that economic inequality is inevitable (1). In a major work (2) he explores the advent of economic considerations in the modern world and seeks to relate these considerations to the all-embracing configuration of the individual, politics and morality, or, as he writes, as part of his overall (3) "[...] idée générale d'une étude comparative de l'idéologie moderne [...] issue de mon travail antérieur d'anthropologie sociale."

He traces in characteristic detail the genesis and evolution of thinking about the social implications of economic determinants from Locke's **Two Treatises on Government**, Mandeville's **Fable of the Bees**, first published in 1714 (Dumont signals the subtitle: "Vices privées, bénéfiques publics" (4)), Quesnay's **Tableau économique** of 1758, and Adam Smith's **Wealth of Nations**. This leads him to a major section of the work headed "L'Epanouissement: Karl Marx" (5).

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1. DUMONT -- **Homo hierarchicus**, op. cit. p. 26
 2. DUMONT, Louis -- **Homo aequalis I: Genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie économique**, Gallimard, Paris, 1977.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 11
 4. -- idem. -- p. 86
 5. -- idem. -- pp. 137-218

The importance given by Marx to economic questions and to political economy is well-known as is the political impact of Marx's thought in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe. Dumont does not claim to bring any insights to considerations of the significance of Marxism, although he does seek to steer a path between a sociological critique of Marx's thinking and the revolutionary element in this thinking (1).

Significant is his signalling (2) of Marx's reference in **Das Kapital** to the tendency in capitalist societies for relations between individuals and objects to become more important than inter-human relationships.

Dumont takes issue with Marx's contention that revolution has to be the primary -- indeed, the only -- objective of mankind. He recalls Marx's thesis (3): the existence of three stages in historical development, that is first, primitive societies dominated by religion, second, the development of the natural power of individuals which leads to subjection and alienation and, third, the remodelling of society on a transparent and humane basis, in other words, on the emancipation of mankind. In a detailed analysis he points to what he considers to be inconsistencies in Marx's arguments.

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1. DUMONT -- **Homo aequalis I.**, op. cit. p. 204 et seq.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 207
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 209-210

In summary, he writes of these arguments that (1):

"Marx s'écarte des 'larmes sentimentales' du romantisme, mais ne partage-t-il pas le sentiment fondamental de celui-ci? On dirait qu'il a pensé, avec un haussement d'épaules: une domination ne vaut pas mieux qu'un autre, tous ces traits attrayants ne sont que des apparences, nous le savons parce que nous sommes en possession de la loi de l'histoire: au fond la propriété féodale du sol n'était pas politique, elle était économique, elle était 'la racine de la propriété privé' (emphasis in original. JT), et c'est pourquoi tous les ornements devaient disparaître."

Dumont claims that this argument is just not true (2). He suggests that Marx's precepts, especially in so far as private property is concerned, have been overtaken by history and are no longer relevant. He emphasizes the importance of the recognition of social dynamics: "les différentes périodes historiques ou les différents types de société apparaissent comme discontinus et hétérogènes" (3). He is not so much seeking to discredit the significance and the recognized brilliance of Marx's thought, as pointing out that the often solidification of this thought into a quasi-religion in essence robs it of much of its significance.

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1. DUMONT -- *Homo aequalis* I., op. cit. p. 215
 2. -- idem. -- p. 216
 3. -- idem. -- p. 217

Emphasizing his concern with precision in the use of language, in a concluding paragraph of his **Essais sur l'individualisme** Dumont refers back to his principal objective, which has been, he maintains, to isolate the characteristics of modernity in contrast with non-modern societies. Of this feature, or "configuration", he writes (1):

"Il apparaît aujourd'hui, tout compte fait, qu'on peut l'appeler individualiste (emphasis in original. JT), tant l'individualisme y est fondamental. Il est bien vrai que la modernité prise en un sens purement chronologique -- et non pas seulement sa phase la plus récente, 'contemporaine' -- contient bien davantage, au plan de la pratique sociale et même à celui de l'idéologie, que la configuration individualiste qui la caractérise comparativement."

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 299

The Christian Individual

The concept of an individual having a distinct identity apart from that of the community or society of which he or she is a member is relatively modern, Dumont affirms, and is closely associated with the development of Christianity in occidental societies. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, he insists upon the importance of a disciplined historical approach (1):

"[...] la dimension historique est essentiel; la configuration individualiste des idées et valeurs qui nous est familière n'a pas toujours existé, et elle n'est pas apparue en un jour."

Dumont writes that in the traditional caste societies of India in which he had begun his professional career, an individual was considered to be an ex-member of a community who had deliberately renounced his community and become independent from it, autonomous, an "individual-not-of-this-world" (un "individu-hors-du-monde") (2). The "holy man" or ascetic is a familiar sight in those large areas of India where the modern world has made little impression. The ascetic is similar to, but not identical with, the concept of the outsider, the outcast, a man or a woman implicitly at war with society, from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, to Dostoevsky's *Idiot* and legion twentieth-century examples.

1. DUMONT, Louis -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, p. 22

2. -- idem. -- op. cit. p. 304

Although in some traditional societies the outsider might have been respected as one who aspired to, or had achieved, spiritual serenity, in others he (rarely she) had very little hope of survival outside the matrix of his mother community. Still in the last decades of the twentieth century in the tribes of the Arabian peninsula, the imperatives of survival in the harsh pre-oil environment ensured that the interests of the community which was the tribe always had primacy over those of the individual. In the starkest and simplest terms, an individual could not survive in the desert outside the structure of the tribe; if the desert did not kill him, a neighbouring tribe would. (1).

Dumont (2) argues that the occidental concept of the individual, a concept which, he insists, has changed significantly over the centuries, had its genesis in the first centuries of the Christian belief. St Matthew's "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's [...]" was an invitation to an individual to offer less than total allegiance and subjection to a temporal authority.

1. Personal experience. JT.

2. Dumont acknowledges his intellectual debt to Max Weber, and specifically to Weber's **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism**; see **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 82

The essential early Christian concept of an individual (recalling the persecution of Christians for their faith during a period when a Second Coming was believed by those with faith to be imminent) was subtly different to that of Ishmael the outcast or the Indian ascetic, embracing as it did the persona of a man or a woman whose individuality existed purely in the presence of God.

Dumont advances an idea of early Christianity in terms of the emancipation of the individual through a personal faith and the union of an "individual-not-of-this world" in a terrestrial community with its heart in heaven (1). The appeal of such a religion was anti-authoritarian, plebeian and egalitarian, a combination of factors which made it anathema to successive Roman emperors.

It is a mark of contemporary occidental societies, when compared to more traditional societies, that members of these contemporary societies have a largely unquestioned and accepted concept of the rights of the individual member of the society, rights which will tend to have primacy over the interests of the wider community. In a modern society, individuals have aspirations, priorities and activities which may or may not be coterminous with those of their fellows and of the community as a whole, but which tend to be respected by others.

1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
p. 45

It is the development of what might be termed the interface between the evolving aspirations and rights of autonomous individuals in a given community and the upholding and defence of the interests of that community from the original inception of the concept of the individual in early Christendom which is at the heart of Dumont's thinking. In this context he cites Max Weber's **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism** (1) (his own translation from the original text): "Le terme 'individualisme' recouvre les notions les plus hétérogènes que l'on puisse imaginer."

He traces the evolution of the "individual-not-of-this-world" of early Christian communities into the "individual-of-this-world" ("l'individu-dans-le-monde") who is an active member of a society and who is (distinguishing him from "le sujet empirique, échantillon indivisible de l'espèce humaine") (2):

"[...] l'être moral, indépendant, autonome, et ainsi (essentiellement) non social, tel qu'on le rencontre avant tout dans notre idéologie moderne de l'homme et de la société."

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1. DUMONT -- **Homo hierarchicus**, op. cit. p. 22
 2. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 84. Dumont emphasizes the importance of precise definitions of the concepts he introduces.

Dumont stresses moral, a concept which implies, of course, a recognized and generally accepted code of social behaviour with its associated ideas and values and a consequent need for choices. He maintains that in pre-modern societies it was impossible to draw a clear line between ideas and values; he therefore introduces the concept of "idea-values" ("les idées-valeurs") (1).

These pre-modern societies, he maintains, were at one and the same time both hierarchical and holist (2). Dumont gives a specific meaning to the word "hierarchical" which, in the context of socio-political relationships means an unquestioned social order based upon the communal acceptance of a value. He employs the word "holist" in a way in which philosophers (and also biologists, for example) would understand it, that is describing the tendency in nature to form entities which are, in an ordered grouping, greater than the sum of the constituent elements.

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 274 et seq. and p. 303. Dumont emphasizes (p.303): "L'impossibilité de séparer idées et valeurs dans les formes de pensée non modernes conduit à parler d'idées-valeurs".
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 301-305. Dumont groups together in a final "Lexique de quelques mots clefs" brief outlines of his definitions. These definitions are enlarged upon in this and other of his works.

Traditional tribal societies are holist, in Dumont's sense, in that existence outside the community of the tribe is unthinkable for members of the tribe. In mid-twentieth century Oman, for example, every child in every tribe learned from an early age something which would make him or her a useful member of the tribe, be it only humble tasks such as pouring coffee or herding camels. Every child in every tribe learned the extent of the lands of his tribe and their boundaries, knew his tribe's allies and enemies, learned the art of water resource management without which survival in the desert would be impossible (1).

In this sense, for Dumont holism is an ideology (2), a conglomerate of the ideas and values which form an integral part of a specific society. It is thus to be contrasted with individualism which, Dumont avers, is an ideology which gives primacy of value to the individual (in the sense of the moral, autonomous being) and thus tends to neglect, or give a subordinate role to, the social totality.

1. Personal experience. JT

2. Dumont's definition of an ideology, which he insists is "l'idéologie moderne": "Ensemble des représentations caractéristiques de la civilisation moderne." (Essais sur l'individualisme, op. cit. p. 304) and "[...] le système d'idées et de valeurs caractéristique des sociétés modernes." (idem. p. 20). The 1968 Petit Robert defines idéologie as: "Science qui a pour objet l'étude des idées, de leurs lois, de leur origine". The dictionary gives also the Marxist definition: "Ensemble des idées, des croyances et des doctrines propre à une époque, à une société ou à une classe."

In modern, individualistic ideology, that is the collectivity of the common and characteristic manifestations of contemporary occidental civilization, values are segregated and diffuse, whereas in the traditional holist society, values were concentrated and integrated.

In any society, the accepted system of values determines the mental outlook and culture of that society; there is a hierarchy of accepted values (in the sense that some are more important than others), and each society's internal hierarchy of values marking its culture is an essential element of difference in any comparison with other societies (1).

Dumont insists that modern ideology is individualist, individualism being defined sociologically from the point of view of global values. The "individu comme valeur" has attributes, such as "égalité" (2), an idea especially important in France since the Revolution. Dumont cites Tocqueville (3) as writing that whereas in then-contemporary England (1835-1840), personal liberty was given high priority with scarcely a thought for any form of equality, in the United States of the same period, ideas of personal liberty had been inherited as a base upon which equality was developed. In France, however, the Revolution "s'est faite entièrement sous le signe de l'égalité".

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 18
 2. -- idem. -- p. 21
 3. DUMONT -- **Homo hierarchicus**, op. cit. p. 27

The dominance of the concept of "égalité" marked the French polity from the period of the Revolution to the final decades of the twentieth century. Major problems arose, because man does not just think, he also acts and hence he has values in addition to ideas. Because positive action requires weights and priorities to be given to different values, a consensus on the relative importance of these weights and priorities is required if social chaos is to be avoided. Clearly this reality can mount a fundamental challenge to concepts of "égalité".

Reverting to the origins of individualism, the advent of which over recent decades has been described by some as representing an exceptional phenomenon (1), he sets out in summary his prime thesis (2). This thesis is that something of modern individualism was found among the first Christians and in the world about them, but that this individualism is not exactly the same as the individualism with which we are familiar. He continues that the transformation of the idea of the individual over some seventeen centuries has been both radical and complex. Religion was the prime motivator in the first generalisations of individualism and this source of motivation continues to the present day.

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1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
p. 35
 2. -- idem. -- p. 36

For Dumont, although there was an historic event without precedent which can explain the traits of individualism, there is nothing which explains the emergence, the creation ex nihilo, of the individual as a value (1).

Citing Troeltsch, Dumont maintains that for early Christians, and specifically from the teachings of Christ and of St Paul, the Christian was simply an individual-in-relationship-to-God (2) and "égalité" existed only in the presence of God (3). Just as the individual took on a value, so was the material world as such devalued; the resultant dualism became a constituent element in Christianity and has remained an element in the evolution of ideas. It remains at the heart of the tension in modern occidental mankind between ideals and reality.

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1. DUMONT -- Essais sur l'individualisme, op. cit.
p. 41
 2. -- idem. -- p. 43
 3. -- idem. -- p. 45

Early Christianity, sustained by the faith in a Second Coming, had thus, Dumont continues, two discrete elements, the one millenarist and the second spiritual ("extra-mondain"), with the latter having predominance (1). Subjective morality and ethics formed the link between life in the material world and social imperatives on the one hand and ideals and absolute values on the other (2). The only Goodness that mattered was in a man's soul, and his own will was the source of his dignity and his fulfilment.

As Christianity became more of a force to be reckoned with in the Roman Empire, so were thinkers driven to seeking to reconcile the dualism implicit in "rendering unto Caesar ..." and the potential political dichotomy, and hence weakness, in the concept of an individual serving two masters. St Augustine's **The City of God** did not exclude the city of this world, but in the hierarchy of values temporal loyalties came second to spiritual imperatives and the temporal power had to give precedence to the Church. In his sermons, Augustine enjoined Christians: "Si non potes intelligere, crede ut intelligas. Praecedit fides, sequitur intellectus" (loosely translated: "Believe and you will understand; faith comes first, followed by intelligence").

1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
p. 47

2. -- idem. -- p. 48

Augustine conceded that the temporal power rested on a basis of justice, but affirmed with vigour that a temporal power which did not recognize the power of God and the relationship of mankind to God was not based upon justice and therefore was not a legitimate authority (1).

This concept was a challenge to the undoubted reality of the power of Roman Empire. If a nation be defined as a collectivity accepting common values, then (Dumont continues) Augustine asked for the temporal power to be judged from the transcendent point of view of the world being considered as the relationship of mankind to God, a radical and revolutionary idea (2). Reason had to give place to faith -- the experience of God -- but it was not easy to argue unambiguously where reason ended and faith began.

Dumont maintains that Augustine's precepts mark the beginning of the modern era (3):

"qu'on peut voir comme un effort gigantesque pour réduire l'abîme initialement donné entre la raison et l'expérience. [...] Augustin inaugure une lutte millénaire, toujours renaissante, protéiforme, existentielle, entre la raison et l'expérience qui, à force de se propager d'un niveau à un autre, modifiera en fin de compte le rapport entre l'idéal et le réel, et dont nous sommes en quelque façon le produit."

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1. DUMONT -- Essais sur l'individualisme, op. cit. p. 55
 2. -- idem. -- p. 56
 3. -- idem. -- p. 57

In summary, Dumont argues, the result of the early Christian experience was that faith and feeling invaded the domain of reason, that history acquired a shape and that the future of humanity was illuminated by hope (1).

The recognition by Constantine of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in 312 A.D. forced a hitherto fissiparous Church to unify and at the same time posed a fundamental philosophical problem: what form should a Christian state take (2)? For better or for worse, the Church could no longer turn its back upon the world. Over its early centuries, the concept of Augustine's two cities evolved into a tacit acceptance that the Church was a part of the Empire in so far as worldly affairs were concerned and the Empire was within the Church as far as divine issues were concerned (3). This understanding did not rule out, of course, all misunderstanding on exactly where the affairs of the world ended and those of God began.

The splitting of the Church between its Eastern and Western organisations and the concomitant close political alliance in the West between the Church and the Frankish monarchs, resulting in the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, marked a stage in occidental political development.

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. --
p. 61
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 61-62
 3. -- idem. -- p. 66

Dumont argues that (1):

"Avec la revendication d'un droit inhérent au pouvoir politique, un changement est introduit dans la relation entre le divin et le terrestre: le divin prétend maintenant régner sur le monde par l'intermédiaire de l'Eglise et l'Eglise devient mondaine en un sens où elle ne l'était pas jusque-là."

This development was potentially rich as far as the historical development of concepts of the individual and of the modern state were concerned. Henceforth the individual who was a Christian was, willy-nilly, more intensely involved with the world. And the implication of the Empire was that, eventually, "une unité politique particulière puisse à son tour émerger comme porteuse de valeurs absolues"(2), in other words the ground for the birth of the modern state was being prepared.

Dumont draws the threads of his argument concerning the evocations of individualism in the early mediaeval Church together with what he calls the principal lesson to be considered, that is that "le plus effective humanisation du monde est sortie à la longue d'une religion qui le subordonnait la plus strictement à une valeur transcendante." (3)

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 68

2. -- idem. -- p. 69

3. -- idem. -- p. 71

The best part of eight centuries from the death of St Augustine in 430 to the birth of St Thomas Aquinas in 1225 passed with the Church's priorities being concerned mainly with survival in an alien and generally lawless environment. Thomas, a Franciscan, was concerned with seeking a harmony between faith and reason. According to Dumont (1), his thought sought to combine Aristotelian philosophy with Christian revelation. For Thomas, each man is a living entity ("un tout vivant"; emphasis in original. JT), a private individual in direct relationship with his creator and, at the same time, paradoxically, at the level of terrestrial institutions, he is a member of society ("une partie du corps social"). If on the one hand the individual is sufficient unto himself, this fact is based upon his intimacy with God, as opposed to his earthly relationships. On the other hand, following Aristotle, the earthly community is legitimised, thanks to Aristotle, as a second value in the form of a rational institution. This is in marked contrast to previous concepts dear to the Church, which held that human society on earth was a product of original sin.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 84

Dumont argues that the thought of Thomas Aquinas marks a transition from a concept of mankind as universitas, that is, a social organisation to be regarded as a totality in which living men are no more than elements, towards societas, a social organisation which is an association between individuals.

Half a century after Saint Thomas, William of Ockham, a Franciscan who was eventually excommunicated, mounted an intellectual challenge to mediaeval thought which was to influence Luther some two-and-a-half centuries later. Dumont avers (1) that Ockham is the founder of what he calls the "subjective theory" of law, which is, in fact, he continues, none other than the modern theory of law. There can be nothing above the law postulated either by God Himself or by man, with God's permission. The concept of law, which in its most fundamental aspect was an expression of the order in nature discovered by the human spirit, thus became in its totality the expression of the "power" or the "will" of the legislator. More, whilst rights were conceived as defining just relationships between social beings, they became the social recognition of the power ("potestas") of the individual.

1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit. p. 87

Dumont argues that, although Ockham's legal writings remained largely unknown for several centuries, his work has great significance in that it marked the birth of the Individual (original capitalised. JT) in philosophy and in law (1). Henceforth on a social level, there was no longer a unique place for the idea of community, which became supplanted by the concept of the liberty of the individual.

Luther's hammering of nails into his church door in Wittemberg in 1517 represented the birth of a new era as well as marking the beginning of the protestant revolt against the power of a holist and hierarchial Church establishment. A consequence of the Reformation was that the Church, the institution which had provided the extra-mundane element in occidental society and which had conquered the occidental world was henceforth itself condemned to being intra-mundane (2). From that time onwards, the supremacy of the Church, which had endured throughout the Middle Ages began to give way to the supremacy of the State (3).

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. pp. 88-89
 2. -- idem. -- p. 81
 3. -- idem. -- p. 90

In short (1):

"La Réforme luthérienne porta un coup décisif à ce qui demeurait de l'ordre médiéval et du Saint Empire romain germanique. La société globale serait désormais l'Etat individuel, tandis que l'essentiel de la religion aurait son sanctuaire dans le conscience de chaque chrétien individuel."

Some 1200 years after Constantine legitimised the Church (at least, as far as temporal authority was concerned), the place of the individual in a nominally Christian society had become virtually dominant. After Luther there was Calvin and of Calvin's Geneva, Dumont writes (2): "L'individu est maintenant dans le monde, et la valeur individualiste règne sans restriction ni limitation".

Dumont argues that Calvin thought that he was following Luther but in fact produced a different doctrine, a doctrine with three elements: the concept of God as will ("volonté"), predestination and the Christian city as the objective bearing the will of individuals (3). Whereas for Luther individuals could find their way to God through faith and love and, to a certain extent, through reason, for Calvin love was nothing and reason applied only in the temporal world.

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1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
p. 95
 2. -- idem. -- p. 73
 3. -- idem.

At the same time, Dumont argues, Calvin's God is the archetype of will, wherein it is possible to identify the indirect affirmation of man himself as will and, beyond that, the strongest possible affirmation of the individual, responding to the needs of reason just as much as, or even more than, reason itself (1).

Dumont maintains that (2) "[l]a suprématie de la volonté est dramatiquement exprimée dans le dogme de la prédestination". This is a development which began with Luther, through his rejection of salvation through works, and which was aimed at the ritualism of the Church and its domination of the individual. Luther had replaced justification by works with justification by faith, stopping there and thus leaving a margin of liberty for the individual. Calvin went further, affirming the complete powerlessness of mankind in the face of the omnipotence of God, a development which might be thought to be placing a limitation on individualism rather than progress.

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 73
 2. -- idem. -- p. 74

However, Dumont argues (1), Calvin regarded certain men as being graced by divine election with the remainder being condemned to reprobation, to being condemned by God. The task of the elect was to work for the glorification of God in the world, and the fidelity with which this task was carried out was the sole mark of election. Thus the elect would exercise his will ceaselessly in action and in so doing, in absolute subjection to the Divine Will, he would be participating himself in fact in the realisation of his own objectives.

Dumont finds an echo of Calvin's concept of the complete identification of individual with the will of God in Descartes' argument that mankind would become "maître et possesseur de la nature". (2)

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1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit. p. 75
 2. -- idem. -- p. 76

He finds in this concept a significant point of reference in his basic argument of the evolution of the early Christian "individual-not-of-this-world" into the modern "individual-in-this-world" (1):

"Si l'extra-mondanité est maintenant concentrée dans la volonté de l'individu, on peut penser que l'artificialisme moderne en tant que phénomène exceptionnel dans l'histoire de l'humanité ne peut comprendre que comme une conséquence historique lointaine de l'individualisme-hors-du-monde des chrétiens, et que ce que nous appelons le moderne 'individu-dans-le-monde' a en lui-même, caché dans sa constitution interne, un élément non perçu mais essentiel d'extra-mondanité. Il y a donc une continuité plus grande entre les deux types d'individualisme que nous ne l'avions supposé au début, avec cette conséquence qu'une hypothétique transition directe du holisme traditionnel à l'individualisme moderne ne nous apparaît plus seulement maintenant comme improbable, mais comme impossible."

Dumont explains (2) this argument by recalling that the two elements in his initial paradigm had been introduced more or less independently and thus might appear to be mutually contradictory. He avers that the distinction between holism and individualism pre-supposes an individualism-of-this-world, whilst the distinction between of-this-world (intra-mundane) and not-of-this-world (extra-mundane), the concept of not-of-this-world is not opposed to holism (at least in the same way as is the concept of-this-world).

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1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit. p. 77
 2. -- idem. -- note.

In fact, individualism not-of-this-world is opposed hierarchically (emphasis in original. JT) to holisme: superior to society, the concept does not challenge society, whereas individualism of-this-world denies or destroys holist society and replaces it, (or claims to do so).

Dumont (1) summarises his argument by saying that Calvin sought to demonstrate that the Kingdom of Heaven may, little by little, be constructed on earth through the efforts of the elect. Any distinction between Church and State would thus be eliminated, with the formal church providing a form of social discipline and with objectives indistinguishable from those of the locus of political power, in other words, the elect.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
pp. 78-79

The Concept of Natural Law

There is an aspect of the Reformation, seen in the widest terms, which is considered important in the development of the occidental individual. In mediaeval Europe, as elsewhere in the world, the ratio of knowledge to mystery was heavily tilted towards mystery. Mankind could understand and explain a few phenomena; all that could not be explained was considered to be the prerogative of a divine authority.

Key events in a process of the acquisition of knowledge and the consequent reduction in mystery included the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, which closed trade routes and stimulated the voyage of Vasco da Gama around the Cape and of Columbus across the Atlantic. At about the same time, Gutenberg printed the Bible, thus making it available to a wider readership and leading to its translation into the vernacular of the more advanced European peoples.

The work of Kepler, Galileo, Copernicus and Newton showed that the universe was neither geocentric nor anthropocentric. Hitherto, mystery had begotten fear and fear discouraged individual initiatives which might put communal survival at risk, to say nothing of the survival of the power of the Church, which had a vested interest in maintaining mystery. Also, the achievements which had served so significantly to roll back the frontiers of mystery were the achievement of individuals, men who refused to accept the dictates of accepted wisdom, men who had had the courage to stand out against various established institutions and the authority of the Church which backed these institutions.

A result of these developments was an increasing recognition that there were natural laws and natural phenomena which might well be distinct from what had been hitherto regarded as the province of the Divinity, clearly a development of very great significance. Dumont cites Ernest Barker's translation of Gierke's **Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500 to 1800** (1), a brief summary of which, he writes, is the best manner of drawing attention to an important aspect of the modern idea of mankind and of society.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 96

In summarising Gierke's work, Dumont writes (1) that the idea of natural law is the surety for and the philosophical justification of systematic theoretical and deductive research into rights. It is an idea which has undergone a profound change in the modern era, to such an extent that it is often possible to contrast two theories of natural law, the ancient theory and the modern theory. In classical theory in general, man was a social being, nature meant order, and it was possible to discern, over and above the specific conventions of each polis a social order which conformed with natural order (and which hence conformed with the inherent qualities of mankind) which made up an ideal or natural basis of law.

In the modern world, influenced by Christian individualism, that which was termed natural law (as opposed to positive law) did not consider social beings but individuals, that is to say men, each one of whom was sufficient unto himself in so far as he was made in the image of God and was a depository of reason. The result was that in the initial viewpoint of jurists the fundamental principles of the constitution of the State ("l'Etat") and of society are to be extracted from, or deduced from, the properties and qualities inherent in mankind considered as an autonomous being, independent of any social or political linkage.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 97

From this concept there arose, according to Gierke as rendered by Dumont, the main problem of the theory of natural law (1): "établir la société ou l'Etat idéal à partir de l'isolement de l'individu 'naturel'".

The principal vehicle for expressing the necessary social and political unity of the social group became that of a contract. This concept initially developed two forms, one involving an association of equals, the second a political contract between individuals and a ruler. These differing approaches formed the basis of the thought of Locke and of Hobbes respectively and, subsequently, of Rousseau. Locke introduced the idea of a trust whilst for his part, Rousseau sought to eliminate any distinct agent of government.

Dumont considers the implications of individualism for concepts of liberty, equality and property (2). He argues that individualism implies at one and the same time both equality ("égalité") and liberty. However, there is a distinction to be made between an egalitarian "liberal" theory which postulates an ideal equality of rights and of opportunities, compatible with the maximum of liberty for everyone, and a "socialist" theory which seeks to realise a factual equality, for example by abolishing private property.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 100

2. -- idem. -- pp. 101-102

This last position has an inherent difficulty: the act of abolishing private property takes away a significant element of liberty for the individual.

Dumont maintains that a comparison between the thinking of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau reveals that the contrast between political association and political subordination is at the heart of the matter. The three had in common a recognition of the difficulty in combining individualism and authority and of the need to reconcile equality with the necessary existence of differences in political power in a society or in a state (1).

One of the great motivating forces which has been active in modern development, Dumont argues (2), is a sort of indignant protest against differences and social inequalities, be they fixed, inherited or prescribed, in other words inequalities of attribution rather than of accomplishment, be they inequalities of authority, of privilege, of capacity and, ultimately, of wealth. This protest began with Lutherean ideas of equality between men and amounts to a rejection of any concept of social hierarchy.

1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p.103

2. -- idem. -- pp. 103-104

Dumont contrasts Hobbes' ideas as set out in *Leviathan* with those of Rousseau in *Le Contrat social*; he maintains that, from a formal point of view, the one is at the antipodes of the other (1). Whereas the theory of Hobbes is representative, absolutist and insists on subjection, that of Rousseau is collective, based on laws ("nomocratique") and insists on liberty. Yet these obvious differences should not be permitted to hide a deeper similarity in the two theories. Each postulates a discontinuity between man in nature and political man such that for each the idea of a "social contract" marks the real birth of humanity as such.

Both Hobbes and Rousseau begin with individualist ideas and their strict logic leads them to anti-individualist conclusions. Each is concerned above all else to ensure the transcendence of the sovereign, in the case of Hobbes the "ruler", in that of Rousseau "la volonté générale", both stress the identity of the sovereign and of the subject. In summary, both Hobbes and Rousseau seek to fuse into a social or political body men who think as individuals.

1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
pp. 112-113

As far as Rousseau is concerned, Dumont argues that he was not only the precursor of sociology in the fullest sense of the word but that, in addition, he set out at one and the same time the problem of modern mankind, a problem which remains with us: man has become a political individual but he remains at one and the same time, like his fellows, a social being (1).

Thus the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of the summer of 1789 marks in one sense a triumph of the individual. It represented a desire to found a new State based only upon the consent of its citizens and to put this State out of the reach of the political authority (2).

Dumont touches upon the influence of Tom Paine and of Condorcet in the drafting of the constitution of 1793 and comments that (3): "[...] Condorcet est un libéral, un Girondin, qui ne place pas l'idéal égalitaire au-dessus de tous les autres".

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 120
 2. -- idem. -- p. 121
 3. -- idem. -- p. 125

He argues that although the Revolution did mark at the time an apparent triumph for individualism, its consequences have made it appear as having marked a check on individualism. He summarises (1):

"Telle est l'explication globale du retournement général que l'on perçoit, de l'optimisme au pessimisme, du rationalisme au positivisme, de la démocratie abstraite à la recherche de l'organisation', de l'accentuation politique à l'accentuation économique et sociale, de l'athéisme ou d'un vague théisme à la quête d'une religion réelle, de la raison au sentiment, de l'indépendance à la communion."

If the associative idea of contract between governments and citizens is to be efficacious, there needs to be a body of law based on socially accepted values acting as a matrix binding the civic society together. Government based on subjection clearly has much less need for such a matrix. The idea of socially accepted values is one to which Dumont gives considerable attention (2).

He writes that our system of values determines our entire mental outlook (3) and that (4):

"En premier lieu, la conscience moderne attache la valeur de façon prédominante à l'individu, et la philosophie traite, en tout cas principalement, de valeurs individuelles, tandis que l'anthropologie considère les valeurs comme essentiellement sociales."

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit. p. 127
 2. -- idem. -- ch. 7, pp. 255-299, "La valeur chez les modernes et chez les autres"
 3. -- idem. -- p. 18
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 256-257

Irrespective of these alternate views, Dumont argues, the question of social values has become a major preoccupation in modern society (1). Classical ideas of such values being built around ideas of "Goodness", "Truth" and "Beauty" have been supplanted by a modern concern about the difference between ideas and reality, between what should be and what is. Dumont summarizes (2):

"L'individualisme et la séparation concomitante entre l'homme et la nature ont ainsi disjoint le bien, le vrai et le beau, et introduit un abîme béant entre être et devoir être. Cette situation est notre lot en ce sens qu'elle est au coeur de la culture ou civilisation moderne".

Dumont enlarges the discussion by introducing the concept of systems of values, incorporating both ideas and values (3), which he considers to be inseparable, as inseparable as right and left in the human body.

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
p. 257
 2. -- idem. -- p. 267
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 272-273

This leads to three propositions, the first of a hierarchy of ideas and values, where "superior" ideas and values may contradict and can include "inferior" ideas and values (1). Dumont calls the second proposition inversion, which might be summarised as a modern version of the mediaeval Church-State relationship, with the one being dominant in certain fields and subsidiary to the other in other fields. His third proposition, which he calls segmentation, is when a value does not apply across the board, but only in specific instances.

Dumont calls the overall system of ideas and values incorporating his three propositions an "ideology" (see page 99 supra). He maintains that science plays a predominant role in modern ideology and argues that, as a result, modern scientific ideas, and to a great extent modern philosophical ideas also, are linked to a modern system of values and are thus often not easily adapted to anthropological study and sociological comparisons (2).

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1. DUMONT -- **Essais sur l'individualisme**, op. cit.
pp. 278-282
 2. -- idem. -- p. 284

He insists upon the fact of mankind as an individual representing probably the cardinal modern value and upon the concomitant accent on the relationship between men and women on the one hand and objects on the other at the expense of the relationship between men and women as individuals. These two traits have important consequences as far as values are concerned (1).

First, the concept of mankind as an individual implies the recognition of a wide liberty of personal choice. It follows that certain values, instead of emanating from society, will be determined by the individual for his own benefit. In other words, the individual, representing himself a social value, demands that society delegate to him a part of its capacity to establish values. Liberty of conscience is a classic example (2).

Concerning the complex links between the modern configuration of values and the relationship between mankind and nature, whereas relations between individuals are based upon the autonomy and equality of the subject, as far as nature is concerned, there is no such constraint, with the result that there can be (and there generally is) a wide gap between what should be and what is (3).

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1. DUMONT -- *Essais sur l'individualisme*, op. cit.
p. 289
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 290-291

The concept of the individual-in-society can be approached from another direction. Dumont points out that both "égalité" and "liberté" are ideas which (1):

"[...] s'impose à partir de la conception de l'homme comme individu. En effet, si l'humanité tout entière est censée être présente en chaque homme, alors chaque homme doit être libre et tous les hommes sont égaux".

He draws attention (2) to the subtle change between Rousseau's "L'homme est né libre" and the idea that "les hommes naissent libres et égaux en droits" and concludes that "la Révolution va prétendre réaliser le droit naturel en droit positif."

1. DUMONT -- *Homo hierarchicus*, op. cit. p. 26

2. -- idem. -- p. 27

The "Left-Right" Dichotomy in Post-Revolutionary France

Dumont brings his ideas back to modern France in a lengthy essay (1) and could be accused of stating the obvious: "Vue de dehors, la vie politique française depuis 1789 présente deux traits fort apparents: un haut degré d'instabilité, et une division profonde entre une droite et une gauche ainsi nommées" (2). His concern, of course, is with the evolution of political ideas and, in this context, specifically with ideas of right and left in French politics. He cites Emile Littré, who wrote in 1849 that (3):

"... les classes qui gouvernent en France n'ont plus aucun principe; tout est expédient pour elles, et les rapides changements de la situation politique permettent de voir, à peu de distance, les mêmes personnages soutenir ce qu'ils avaient combattu, combattre ce qu'ils avaient soutenu."

Dumont recognizes the French predilection for taking an anti-"Etat" position, echoing the contradiction descended from the Rousseauian dichotomy between "la volonté générale" and "la volonté de tous" (4).

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1. DUMONT, Louis -- "Sur l'idéologie politique française. Une perspective comparative" in *Le Débat*, no. 58, janvier-février 1990, pp. 128-158
 2. -- idem. -- p. 130
 3. -- idem. -- p. 132, citing Littré - *Conservation, révolution, positivisme*, Paris, 1879
 4. -- idem. -- p. 133

Insisting on his belief that individualism represents a fundamental value of the modern age, and specifically one of those of France since 1789, he maintains that it is easy to see that the systematic development of individualism by the political left has assured its ideological predominance (1). However (2):

"Si l'idéologie de gauche est irréalisable à l'état pur, les gens de gauche ne peuvent gouverner sans faire le compromis avec l'ordre, sans apparaître comme des transfuges [...] La montée du socialisme sous la IIIe République est à coup sûr un des grands faits idéologiques de la période."

This "idéologie de la gauche" meant the adherence to abstract and objective principles, the least possible authority and, implicitly, "tant pis pour l'efficacité" (3).

Dumont argues (4) that France has acquired along the way since the Revolution two perceptions: first, that the dominant national ideology as such is of the left and that this ideology, being far removed from social realities, has given rise through its application to all sorts of disappointments and relapses to such an extent that a century of trials and tribulations was necessary before a republic founded on universal suffrage could be eventually established.

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1. DUMONT -- "Sur l'idéologie politique", op. cit. p. 136
 2. -- idem. -- p. 139
 3. -- idem. -- p. 140
 4. -- idem.

Dumont acknowledges the sort of fatalism recognized, he says, by Raymond Aron, that is, to recognize how the political right has had to accept an element of the common national ideological patrimony.

Recalling his basic proposition concerning the distinction between individualism and holism, he cites Jaurès (1), writing that: "l'individu humain est la mesure de toute chose" and maintains that holism is the reverse, a situation where the social totality is given a higher value at the expense of individuals. In broad terms, he affirms that whereas the tendency of the political left is towards individualism, that of the political right in the past has been towards holism.

Dumont concludes his essay with a lengthy consideration of the impact on French political ideology of three disastrous wars over a period of less than a century against Germany, a nation dominated by a holist ideology over that period. These disasters (although the outcome of 1914-1918 was even more apocalyptic for Germany than for France) had the effect of ultimately reaffirming the French collective national ideological identity (with its strong universalist element) with a "modification minimale de cette idéologie" (emphasis in original. JT) (2).

1. DUMONT -- "Sur l'idéologie politique française" in *Le Débat*, no. 50, op. cit. p. 141

2. -- idem. -- p. 157

The fact of the progressive (and effective) steps towards the creation of the European Union since the 1950s, coupled with the undoubted substantially greater national self-confidence resulting from the socio-economic transformation of France which began in 1944, has removed much of the French defensive motivation for holding on to an ideology which had become traditional. In such a national political environment, the propounding of political ideas which may seem novel, and which may seem also to be incommensurable with more traditional ideas, is no longer seen to be potentially dangerously divisive.

Summary

Dumont's principal objective is to isolate the prime characteristic of modernity in occidental societies. This characteristic is individualist, given, he argues, that individualism is a fundamental feature of modernity. Further, in modern occidental societies, contrary to the evolution envisaged by Marx, the ownership of property has become a fact and a social aspiration of major importance. A largely property-owning society has little interest in violent revolution.

He sets out to demonstrate how the concept of the individual in civil society has evolved over some two millenia from being no more than an element in a universal totality to becoming an autonomous entity associating with other autonomous entities in a specific society. He argues that, sociologically, a specific society must be given priority over its members whose essence has reality only in so far as they belong to such a society.

Dumont attributes the origins of the occidental evolution of the idea of an autonomous individual to the implicit division of loyalty inherent in early Christianity between spiritual and temporal powers. This dichotomy engendered a change in concepts of law. Old Testament precepts and classical ideas of natural law had a common purpose, that is, the ensurance of social stability.

The development of Christianity brought with it the idea of the individual in relation to the Deity and hence a concept of personal conscience and moral law. This presented mankind with a dilemma, the conflict between ideals and reality, or between faith and intelligence. This dilemma was to become ultimately the antinomy between reason and understanding.

The alliance of spiritual and temporal powers, originally in the Holy Roman Empire and subsequently in monarchies such as France, had the effect of putting a brake on any expression of personal individualism other than that inner individualism encapsulated in the concept of man in relation to God. The Protestant Reformation in its various guises, Anglicanism, Calvinism, Lutheranism, and the concomitant rise of capitalism and mercantile activity were expressions of an individualism which the Church could not contain. Politically, this was to lead to the evolution of a temporal political power, the state, which challenged, and ultimately supplanted, the political power of the Church.

Individualism meant also challenging conventional wisdom; it thus stimulated exploration, both geographical and scientific and led to an unstoppable expansion of knowledge and, ultimately, of education.

The veils of mystery which gave the Church so much of its popular political power were gradually stripped away as more and more ancient "mysteries" became the subject of rational and scientific explanation. A consequence of this development was the erosion of divinity as a base for law.

These two developments -- the growth of the power of the state and the parallel eclipse of ultimate divine sanction by terrestrial, man-made laws -- undermined ancient patterns of political authority and thus created a need for a definition of the relationship between the temporal state and its subjects, a relationship which would include the legally mutually binding concept of contract or trust. This development raised in turn questions as to the locus of legislative creation, as to what extent individual freedom should be constrained by man-made laws and to what extent these man-made laws should apply to all subjects in a specific civil society. This introduced an associative concept and the need for a commonly-accepted matrix of social values upon which formal laws could be based.

So far, Dumont's analysis could be said to have applied to generally static societies. However, the rapid growth of commerce and mercantile activity in Europe following the discoveries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries introduced a major new dynamic, economics, into the evolving civil society:state relationship.

Economic affairs were the realm of the individual untrammelled by restrictive laws, and acquisitive material values tended to become more important than the older spiritual values; relationships between individuals and objects in the form of property became more important than intra-personal relationships. This development further clouded an already imprecise boundary between the values of personal liberty and those of social equality.

Dumont explores the importance of the concept of natural law. In a secular society of free individuals, ultimately natural law -- however defined, but with an implicit understanding of the reality of non-negotiable social values and consequent rules of behaviour -- is at one and the same time the surety for and the philosophical justification of human rights.

Relating his argument to contemporary France, Dumont argues that the principle of "égalité" enshrined in the revolutionary canon as, ultimately, an abstract and objective value to be defended even to the point of governmental inefficacy, had marked the precepts of the left since the Revolution. The Fifth Republic represents a compromise set of values between those of the left and those of the right, both descended from 1789.

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PIERRE MANENT

Introduction

"Chaque 'progrès', de la nature ou de la loi, de la société ou de l'Etat, du représenté ou du représentant, finit par manifester, après un temps d'illusion 'libérale' ou 'étatique', que la division est toujours présente, que l'on est toujours incapable de la surmonter. En construisant une loi qu'il veut souveraine absolue de la nature, mais qui ne doit et ne peut trouver ses motifs qu'en celle-ci -- c'est bien cela la thème originel entre l'état de nature et l'état civil, entre la société et l'Etat, le thème originel du gouvernement représentatif -- le dispositif moderne rend la loi de plus en plus unique souveraine, la nature de plus en plus libre, mais l'une et l'autre de plus en plus faibles, jusqu'à ce que la nature et la loi se soient plus occupées qu'à s'ôter l'une à l'autre leur force respective." (1)

Pierre Manent was a disciple of François Furet but has developed his own discrete scholarly reputation. Lilla regards him as believing (2):

"... that liberalism must be seen as a development within modernity, which in turn must be considered in contrast to the ancient and medieval worlds that preceded it. In other words, modern liberalism must be understood historically as a product of the modern break with the past".

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1. MANENT, Pierre -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme: dix leçons**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1987, pp. 247-248
 2. LILLA (ed.) -- **New French Thought: Political Philosophy**, op. cit. pp. 17-18

In the foreword to a work published in 1977 (1), Manent emphasizes his belief that, compared to the perceived certainties of traditional philosophies, a feature of the modern world is that history takes the place of established truths with the result that "une pensée qui ne peut être, ne disons pas même réfutée, mais simplement contredite par une autre pensée".

Manent acknowledges his intellectual debt to Leo Strauss, who, he writes (2), carried with him what he called the three waves of modernity: first, modern natural law, originated by Machiavelli and developed by Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Descartes and Locke; second, the crisis of modern natural law and the emergence of history, inaugurated by Rousseau and elaborated by Kant and Hegel; and, finally, radical historicism, inaugurated by Nietzsche and culminating with Heidegger.

Manent continues (3) by stating a basic premiss: the "complicité ultime" in modern political thought between a "scientific" or "realist" perspective -- the emphasis on "fact" -- and a "moral" or "utopian" perspective -- emphasizing "right" -- represents the two principal but opposing streams. Out of the first stream there developed the imperative of Machiavelli: obedience to necessity (3).

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1. MANENT, Pierre -- **Naissances de la politique moderne**, Payot, Paris, 1977, p.7
 2. -- idem. -- p. 8
 3. -- idem. -- p. 9

As far as the second stream is concerned, Manent argues (1), Rousseau is justly regarded as being the most significant representative. Both streams represent extremes, as, Manent contends, is confirmed by the history of modern philosophy (2).

Manent concludes his foreword (3) with the contention that the realist stream of modern political thought, which highlights fact, has developed from the work of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Hegel. The utopian stream, built around idealistic concepts, emanated from Rousseau, Kant and, again, Hegel. Manent argues that Hegel is the common element in both streams.

From this starting point, Manent produced three works during the 1980s focussing on the history of political liberalism (4). In a work published in 1994 he moved from his basic discipline, history, into ontology (5).

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1. MANENT -- **Naissances**, op. cit. p.10
 2. -- idem. -- p. 11
 3. -- idem. -- p. 12
 4. -- : **Tocqueville et la nature de la démocratie** (Payot, Paris, 1977); **Les libéraux** (texts selected and edited - Julliard, Paris, 1986); **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme** (Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1987)
 5. -- **La cité de l'homme**, Fayard, Paris, 1994; English language translation -- **The City of Man**, Princeton University Press, 1998

Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme

"Comment attacher les droits à l'individu en tant qu'individu, puisque le droit règle les relations entre plusieurs individus, puisque l'idée même du droit présuppose une communauté ou une société déjà instituée? Comment fonder la légitimité politique sur les droits de l'individu, puisque celui-ci n'existe jamais comme tel, que dans son existence sociale et politique, il est toujours nécessairement lié à d'autres individus, à une famille, à une classe, à une profession, à une nation?" (1)

Manent argues that, according to popular opinion, the basis of European political history is founded upon Christianity and the development of modern politics can be described as a "secularisation". What are "liberté" and "égalité" if not, ultimately, "evangelical values" meant to inspire and fashion civic life, he asks? (2)

This popular concept, he continues, was born in the wake of the Revolution with the purpose of building a bridge between old values and new concepts. Yet, he points out, it should not be forgotten that this idea, which took over a century to win general acceptance from both sides of the revolutionary divide, was only taken seriously after the fact of the Christian religion completely losing for the first time any claim to political power, a power which it would never recapture (3).

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1. MANENT, Pierre -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1987, p. 10
 2. -- idem. -- p. 12
 3. -- idem.

The reality was somewhat different, Manent argues. In fact, the principles of the new politics - the rights of man and the citizen, freedom of conscience, the sovereignty of the people - were forged over some two centuries prior to the Revolution during the course of a bitter conflict against Christianity, and especially against the Catholic Church. Manent argues that the decisive question becomes (1):

"[...] faut-il voir dans la guerre des Lumières contre le christianisme l'expression d'un immense malentendu, dont il s'agirait de comprendre les 'raisons historiques', ou bien au contraire cette période nous livre-t-elle le sens de l'entreprise politique moderne, et donc du libéralisme, bien plus clairement que la période postérieure de la réconciliation?"

In seeking to reconcile these propositions, Manent looks at what he calls the "European theologico-political problem", a problem born in the wake of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. After this cataclysmic event there remained in Europe three major political forms. The first was the Holy Roman Empire, the second city states such as Venice and Florence and, later, the North German Hanseatic cities, and third, the Church. But the existence of the Church posed an immense political problem for the peoples of Europe; Manent insists that European political development is only understandable if seen as a history of responses to the problems posed by the Church. Each institutional adjustment by the Church to counter problems served only to create new problems and to require thus new responses (2).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. pp. 12-13
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 19-20

Manent perceives two singular contradictions in the doctrine of the Church (1): at one and the same time, it left men free to organize their temporal affairs as they saw fit, offering a real emancipation in profane matters but imposed a hitherto inconceivable spiritual yoke upon them. This was simply a logical sequence from "rendering unto Caesar..." In contrast to Judaism and Islam, it did not seek to impose rules upon every aspect of human behaviour.

What was the impact of the pretensions of the Church on the first two political forms he defines, the Empire and the city, Manent asks? (2) He considers the city first, arguing that mediaeval cities were ideologically weak in the face of two so-called "universals", the Church and the Empire. This weakness, coupled with their propensity to indulge factional squabbles in their midst, was fundamental.

As for the Empire, it could not compete effectively with the spiritual power of the Church, in spite of its longevity and of the achievements of a few outstanding emperors.

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. p. 21
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 22-25

Whence, Manent continues, the European political problem evolved to become (1):

"[...] le monde non-religieux, profane, laïc doit s'organiser sous une forme qui ne soit ni la cité ni l'empire, une forme moins 'particulière' que la cité, et moins 'universelle' que l'empire, ou dont l'universalité serait autre que l'universalité de l'empire."

Initially the solution to this problem involved the establishment of monarchies in which the monarch could claim that his power came from God, in contrast to the cities in which the magistrates could not claim this authority (2). Nor did the monarch claim universality, thus limiting the scope of possible conflict with the Church (3); such a concept of monarchy made it nearer to the Church than to the city, especially as the monarch claimed a divine right to rule.

An initial ideological schism developed between those monarchs (as in France) who saw the overall political structure as being a union of Altar and Throne and those (as in late Tudor England) who were determined to keep all political power in their own hands (4). But in both cases, monarchies ultimately became a prey to secularisation (5).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. p. 25
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 26
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 26-27
 5. -- idem. -- p. 30

The implications of the European "theologico-political problem" were considered, Manent points out, by Saint Thomas Aquinas, "the greatest Aristotelian since Aristotle" (1). This problem was to become the sharp focus of Machiavelli's political analyses (2) of the realities of the then-contemporary exercise of power in Italy.

Machiavelli was, of course, a Florentine, as Manent recalls, and his experience of the exercise of power was in a city-state, a political form particularly inimical in so far as the Church was concerned and equally particularly vulnerable before the Empire (3).

Manent begins his chapter on Machiavelli with the phrase "la fécondité du mal" (4), on the grounds that "le mal" (however defined) is more politically significant, more "'réel' que le 'bien'" (5).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme,**
op. cit. p. 34
 2. -- idem. -- p. 35
 3. -- idem. -- p. 37
 4. -- idem. -- p. 31
 5. -- idem. -- p. 38

Machiavelli was not seeking to make a case for "le mal"; he was simply describing a political situation as it was, that is, concerned with the effective exercise of political power without sentimentality and without deference to any external "values" perceived as having little relevance to the immediate political situation. He recognized also that there was nothing especially novel in this phenomenon; he was simply describing the ruthlessness with which men (and women) seek power and defend power.

Manent quotes at length (1) the well-known passage from chapter VII of **The Prince** describing the ferocity and the political effectiveness of Caesar Borgia's violence after his occupation of the Romagna. He summarizes the political message Borgia was conveying: the first level of violence was anarchic, that of the petty chiefs of the province before Borgia's takeover; the second was that of Borgia's lieutenant, Remiro d'Orco, elimination the petty chiefs and re-establishing order; the third, of Borgia against d'Orco proved simply that he was master, suppressing fear by fear.

According to Manent, Hobbes' absolute monarch, the "Leviathan" was in a sense the institutionalisation of Caesar Borgia's action in the Romagna (2). Yet, as Manent's subsequent development of his argument shows, this simplification could be misleading.

1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. pp. 48-50

2. -- idem. -- p. 50

Manent underlines the violence of the period of gestation of Hobbes' *Leviathan*: the Civil War and the regicide of 1649, a period during which "[...] men live[d] without a common power to keep them all in awe [...]" and in which there were: "No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (1). His point is that Hobbes' description could have applied equally well to the pre-Borgia Romagna; there the solution was the imposition of strong government under Borgia, in England the solution was the imposition of strong government under the Lord Protector.

Manent points also to political developments in England under the last Tudors and the first Stuart monarchy as being a decisive development in the resolution of the overall European "theologico-political problem". Hobbes perceived, he writes, that the only way for the authority of the monarchy to be preserved was to detach it completely from the Church and thus make it fully sovereign (2).

1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, op. cit. pp. 51-59. The wording of Hobbes' text comes from *Leviathan*, ch. XIII

2. -- idem. -- p. 54

Hobbes, according to Manent, saw the causes of the Civil War being twofold: one profane, one religious. The first was built around the power of the English universities manifested in the aristocracy, the second was both Puritan and populist. The first envisaged classical solutions to political problems with classical ideas of political "liberty", the second encouraged individualist expression. The two streams together converged into a mood of political disobedience and of conflicting opinion.

Hobbes worried that conflicting opinions could only result in the anarchic "natural condition of mankind" which he deplored, the war of all against all, every man against his neighbour, a situation which, he believed, had prevailed at least in parts of England during the recent Civil War. What was needed was a political contract, a covenant, but "Covenants without the sword are but words" (1). To paraphrase, the power of the sovereign, irrespective of whether this sovereign be individual or collective, had to be unrestricted and absolute, in order than civic peace be ensured and maintained.

1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. p. 62. Hobbes' words come from
Leviathan, ch. XVII

The significant political and moral development, Manent suggests, is that a firm and unemotional concept, that of law ("droit") replaced the woollier classical concept of the common good ("bien") as being a dominant element in the matrix of society. Law, of course, meant a codification of the rights of individuals and introduced a new concept, that of political representation (1), it being patently impracticable for each individual to be able to make personal representation to the sovereign. A code of political rights enshrined in a Covenant might have given the people equality before the law, but did not, however, give them political power. "Ce qui est substantiel ou naturel, c'est l'égalité des sans-pouvoir." (2)

This, Manent argues, is a foundation stone in the evolution of political liberalism, creating a distinction between civic society and the state (3):

"Comment ne pas voir que nous avons là la matrice de la distinction entre la société civile et l'Etat, la société civile étant le lieu de l'égalité des droits, et l'Etat l'instrument de cette société civile grâce auquel sont assurés l'ordre et la paix?"

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 63.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 65
 3. -- idem.

But at the same time, what Manent calls the "provocative paradox" of Hobbes' doctrine -- that is, that the state is the only source of power in this civil society over which it exerts absolute power -- underlines the inherent difficulties with this distinction and the idea of representation which is inseparable from it. If civil society is what matters, which would be natural, if the state is no more than the instrument of this society, why is the gulf between civil society and the state so wide, Manent asks? This paradox, this lack of clarity between the functions of civil society and the state, he continues, set in motion a natural oscillation between two extremes: the fading away of the state and its absorption by civil society at one pole, the absorption of civil society by the state at the other (1).

Hobbes introduced the idea of the general will, but for him the general will would be expressed by the desire of the collectivity for a cessation of intra-communal strife and a consequent recognition that only an absolute sovereign could ensure the elimination of social conflict (2); this sovereign's authority would be expressed as a form of trust between him and the community.

1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*,
op. cit. p. 65

2. -- idem. p. 67

Thus for Hobbes there could be only one political form: discussion of the merits of democracy, or an aristocracy or a monarchy was in essence pointless, for what mattered was that the sovereign, who might be the embodiment of any one of these three forms, had absolute political power (1).

Manent argues that Hobbes contributed powerfully to the advent of the point of view of modern democracy in that his thinking presaged a realisation that there could be only one political form; democracy was just not one among a number of possibilities, it was the only possibility because it owed its legitimacy to the will of the people (2).

"Leviathan" ensured compliance; it was apart from individuals, each of whom represents a quanta of political power and who thus kept his basic liberty (3).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme,**
op. cit. p. 75
 2. -- idem. p. 76
 3. -- idem.

Manent considers that Hobbes may be considered the founder of political liberalism simply because he elaborated the liberal interpretation of the law: the law is a purely man-made essence, neutral to each individual for whom it is the guarantee of peaceful coexistence in the community. He writes (1):

"La pensée de Hobbes est ainsi la matrice commune de la démocratie moderne et du libéralisme. Elle fonde l'idée démocratique parce qu'elle élabore la notion de la souveraineté établie sur le consentement de chacun; elle fonde l'idée libérale parce qu'elle élabore la notion de la loi comme artifice extérieur aux individus."

Hobbes was writing, of course, at a time of great civil unrest in England; there can be no political kid gloves during or in the immediate wake of a civil war. Thus his solution to the perceived political problems of the age in which he lived was, not surprisingly, short on humanity. His argument was that people would give up a great deal if they could be assured freedom from what they feared most at the time: violence and sudden death.

1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*,
op. cit. p. 77

A generation later peace had been effectively restored, so that Locke could argue that what people feared most was hunger, thus entering an economic element into the classic political equation (1). Manent argues that Locke established two significant propositions: first, the right to property pre-dates the institution of society and thus does not depend on the consent of others or on politically-inspired laws; second, the link between man and nature is built around work. Thus man is an owning and exploiting being (2). Nature is neutral; only the toil of man can give value to what nature offers. Exploiting nature generates barter and, subsequently, trade and creates a need for a medium of exchange, money (3).

Manent argues (4) that Locke's conclusions have a great importance for the elaboration of the liberal doctrine. The apparition of an acceptable means of exchange and a means of storing value -- money -- spawned the need for a society in which property would be protected and agreements between individuals upheld. But, Manent continues (5), it gave rise to what he calls: "[...] le délicat problème du rapport entre l'individu, le travail et la propriété".

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme,**
op. cit. p. 93
 2. -- idem. -- p. 97
 3. -- idem. -- p. 99
 4. -- idem. -- p. 100
 5. -- idem. -- p. 101

In other words, the evolution of civil society followed a necessary progression from its origins with the hungry individual(1):

"[...] au commencement, le droit du propriétaire et le droit du travailleur ne font qu'un; une fois que l'invention de la monnaie et le développement de l'échange ont permis au travail d'être productif (de produire plus que ce qui est nécessaire à la consommation du producteur), propriétaire et travailleur deviennent distincts."

Manent argues (2) that from the time of Locke onwards, and to a large extent thanks to him, the right to property has been recognized as being the natural fundamental right. Hence economic activity developed as a "system" of production and exchange of values, in other words, as "political economy" in which what mattered was not so much the absolute rights of individuals but an essentially relative notion, that of personal interests and utility. Understood, of course, is the need for effective communication expressed as a meeting place (a market) between individuals where exchange may take place. Thus did the liberal political philosophy of natural rights tend spontaneously and, in a sense, irresistably, to transform itself into quite another type of thought: political economy.

1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 102

2. -- idem. pp. 103-104

Thus for Locke the escape of mankind from a state of nature into a civil society in which the meeting place of the market becomes transformed into a legislative assembly (1) which concerns itself with the laws of ownership of property and those governing trade and commerce.

This legislative assembly would become a sovereign body, itself subject to the laws which it promulgates. In order that it did not become too powerful, Locke argued that it should not be in permanent session. Rather, there should be an executive power, subordinate to the legislative assembly, whose task would be the monitoring of the observance of the laws (2). This executive power embodies the difference between the state and civic society, or between the political condition of mankind and its "natural" condition (3).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit.. p. 109. Although Manent does not stress the point, Locke was inevitably influenced by the evolving economic and political situation in late seventeenth century England, a period during which there was substantial economic growth and which saw the foundation of the Bank of England. In England for at least two centuries subsequently, the crimes regarded as being most heinous were those against property.
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 115

Thus, Manent sums up, the aim of politics became one of ensuring the security of people and property (1), and the idea of political liberalism was based upon representation in the law-making process (2).

Montesquieu observed political development in England some two generations after Locke. Whereas Locke was, more or less, directly involved in the polity about which he wrote, Montesquieu was the outsider looking in. Manent argues that Montesquieu's concern was how to ensure that the liberal project might evolve from absolute sovereignty without revolution and without risking a descent into anarchy (3).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. p. 119
 2. -- idem. -- p. 117. Again, Manent does not
make the point that political representation
meant representation of the property-owning
and major commercial interests in the law-
making process. The political dominance of
these interests was a result of the Civil
War and of the Glorious Revolution of 1688.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 121

Montesquieu, unlike Hobbes and Locke, was not concerned with how mankind may have evolved from the original state of nature and how consequently political forms may have evolved. His interest was in studying an existing political experience, that of neighbouring England. This was a unique period in liberal political development, Manent maintains (1), a period in which the sovereignty of the monarch had become redundant in England and before the first stirring of the sovereignty of the people triggered the Revolution in France; simply, it was a period during which the question of political legitimacy was not an issue.

In focussing on the conflict between the exercise of political power and individual liberty which he regarded as being at the heart of the political problem, Montesquieu, according to Manent (2), established what might be called the definitive language of political liberalism. Instead of taking as his starting point the concept of rights and laws assuring liberty, he began with an analysis not of the causes but the effects of the exercise of political power. His originality was in regarding power as a fact itself, separate in law and in fact from its origins and its purpose and separate in law and in fact from any man who seeks it or seeks to hold on to it.

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1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*,
op. cit. p. 123
 2. -- idem.

Montesquieu recognized what whomsoever holds power ultimately will tend to abuse it (1) and therefore it was essential to ensure that power would limit power by a judicious limitation and distribution of political power between the legislative and executive loci. Manent cites **De l'Esprit des lois** (2):

"Si la puissance exécutive n'a pas le droit d'arrêter les entreprises du corps législatif, celui-ci sera despotique; car, comme il pourra se donner tout le pouvoir qu'il peut imaginer, il anéantira toutes les autres puissances. Mais il ne faut pas que la puissance législative ait réciproquement la faculté d'arrêter la puissance exécutive. Car, l'exécution ayant ses limites par sa nature, il est inutile de la borner; outre que la puissance exécutive s'exerce toujours sur des choses momentanées."

A check and a balance would be provided, Montesquieu believed, by the inevitable evolution of parties, in other words, of numbers of legislators representing groups of citizens who had specific views on specific political problems; the numbers of legislators representing each group would be approximately equal. This split would be reflected in both the legislative and executive bodies, limiting the power of each (3).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. pp. 124-125
 2. -- idem. p. 128. The citation is from ch.
6 of Book XI of **De l'Esprit des lois**
 3. -- idem. pp. 130-131

As Manent sums up Montesquieu's argument (1): "Parce que la société est représentée par un pouvoir divisé, les citoyens vont être impuissants à se faire beaucoup de mal les uns aux autres." [Emphases in original. JT] Citizens in fact have a double interest: that the political power serve their interests and that it does not press too heavily upon the society.

Manent concludes (2) that compromise was at the heart of Montesquieu's concept of political liberalism. Instead of being a product of deliberation, compromise became itself the driving force of decision, because what is decided is the composite result of what was desired by both parties to the decision.

Thus the first full flowering of the concept of political liberalism due to Montesquieu is based upon two ideas, Manent maintains (3): the idea of representation and the idea of the separation of powers. The link between economics and politics becomes clear and the question (with considerable late twentieth century topicality) becomes whether each individual, be he (4):

"[...] d'abord membre indépendant de la 'société civile' ou sujet de l''Etat', bourgeois ou citoyen, homo oeconomicus ou homo politicus, appartient-il d'abord à l'espace transnational ou mondial du 'marché' ou plutôt au territoire de la 'nation'?"

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1. MANENT -- Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme, op. cit. p. 132
 2. -- idem. -- p. 138
 3. -- idem. -- p. 139
 4. -- idem. -- p. 142

Manent argues that the thought of Rousseau represented a break with the stream of liberal thought which had been evolving up to the mid-eighteenth century. He categorizes (1): [...] trois positions fondamentales qui définissent respectivement l'absolutisme, le libéralisme et la pensée de Rousseau".

Whereas Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu concerned themselves with the world as they saw it, Rousseau sought after an ideal world, he was pre-occupied with the soul of man, he doubted the reality of progress unless the human spirit progressed, he was unhappy with the essential optimism of the age (2). Manent maintains that discovering the positive elements in Rousseau's thought is an exercise in subtlety, "une question particulièrement délicate"(3). Modern society, according to Rousseau, made man both wicked and unhappy. The good society could only be that which conformed to the nature of man.

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme,**
op. cit. p. 152
 2. -- idem. -- p. 154
 3. -- idem. -- p. 159

Thus, Manent continues, Rousseau wanted to know what was the point of seeking a form of society conforming to the nature of man, if man is not by nature social, if society as such is contrary to his nature? (1) The answer, Rousseau believed, was to be found in the concept of le contrat social and la volonté générale (2); the liberal concept of a distinction between civil society and the state was unacceptable to Rousseau, for whom only unqualified "society" embodying la volonté générale could correspond to man's spiritual needs (3).

Manent sets out what he considers to be the ultimate paradox in Rousseau's argument (4):

"[...] : d'une part, la société est essentiellement contraire à la nature; d'autre part, elle ne se rapproche de la conformité à la nature, de la seule conformité à la nature qui lui soit ouverte, que dans la mesure où elle impose à ses membres l'unité la plus grande possible, où elle identifie le plus possible chacun à tous et à tout, dans la mesure où elle dénature l'homme."

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuel du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 162
 2. -- idem. -- p. 163
 3. -- idem. -- p. 171; what might be called the Rousseauian descent, reflected in the classic republican model as epitomised by the Third and Fourth Republics, has been a substantial reason for the difficulty French political thinkers have had with the concepts of political liberalism.
 4. -- idem. -- p. 168

According to Manent, the thinking of Rousseau marked the end of what he calls (1) "ce premier cycle du libéralisme", a watershed which may be summarized by the expression: "Rousseau and the French Revolution". The liberalism of the nineteenth century accepted the Revolution, in spite of the undeniable fact that the representative principle evolved from the Revolution could permit despotism, that the sovereignty of the people could be grabbed by a handful of men, and that the implementation of liberal principles was gravid with mortal dangers for liberty (2). One of the hallmarks of pre-revolutionary liberal political thought had been the concept of a clear distinction between civil society and the state. The edges of what had been a reasonably lucid notion, that of civil society, became blurred as society became more complex. And the idea of "history" determining events gained currency. (3). Both developments had an impact on the evolution of liberal political thought.

1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 173
2. -- idem. -- pp. 174-175
3. -- idem. -- p. 176

Nineteenth century political liberal thinking in France revolved around three men: Constant, Guizot and Tocqueville. Manent devotes a chapter to each (respectively: "VIII -- Benjamin Constant et le libéralisme d'opposition", "IX -- François Guizot: le libéralisme du gouvernement" and "X -- Tocqueville: le libéralisme devant la démocratie") (1).

Constant's long political career pre-dated the Empire; he was politically active as an opposition politician during the first decades of the Restoration. A substantial element of his contribution to French political thought is contained in his *De la liberté chez les modernes* (2), a work concerned with the limitation of political power, taking into account the evolving nature of society and the reality of the forces of history (3).

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1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, op. cit.; respectively, pp. 181-197, 199-219, and 221-241
 2. CONSTANT, Benjamin -- *De la liberté chez les modernes*, Livre de poche, Paris, 1980
 3. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, op. cit. p. 184

Manent cites Constant in setting out the latter's basic attitude. Constant asked (1):

"La loi doit être l'expression ou de la volonté de tous, ou celle de quelques-uns. Or, qu'elle serait l'origine du privilège exclusif que vous concéderiez à ce petit nombre? Si c'est la force, la force appartient à qui s'en empare; elle ne constitue pas un droit, et si vous la reconnaissez comme légitime, elle l'est également, quelques mains qui s'en saisissent, et chacun voudra la conquérir à son tour. Si vous supposez le pouvoir du petit nombre sanctionné par l'assentiment de tous, ce pouvoir devient alors la volonté générale."

This concern of Constant threw a light upon an ambiguity in the concept of the sovereignty of the people (2), and in so doing, of course, questioned the validity of Rousseau's thesis.

Manent argues that Constant, as a politician in opposition, put forward the idea of an essential scepticism among the political representatives of the people (3). Representation should thus not be an absolutist element in the structure of political sovereignty, but should be an expression of doubt, an institutionalization of scepticism.

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 185. Manent is citing Constant's "Principes du politique", first chapter, p. 269, in **De la liberté chez les modernes**
 2. -- idem. -- p. 186
 3. -- idem. -- p. 195

Guizot's long political career began in 1814. It was as a young minister in the Restoration government that he had to face up to an idea diametrically opposed to the "liberalism of opposition" of Constant, that of seeking to ensure some elements of liberalism in a government which hankered after absolutism. He began to put his ideas down on paper in 1820 (1).

Guizot saw the importance of a political sensitivity on the part of those in power to the realities of public opinion (2):

"Si le pouvoir n'a plus de mystères pour la société, c'est que la société n'en a plus pour le pouvoir; si l'autorité rencontre partout des esprits qui prétendent à la juger, c'est qu'elle a partout quelque chose à exiger ou à faire; si on lui demande en toute occasion de légitimer sa conduite, c'est qu'elle peut disposer de toutes les forces et a droit sur tous les citoyens; si le public se mêle beaucoup plus du gouvernement, le gouvernement agit aussi sur un bien autre public, et le pouvoir s'est agrandi comme la liberté."

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 202
 2. -- idem. -- p. 205; Manent is citing Guizot's **De la peine de mort en matière politique**, published in Paris in 1822, pp. 84-86

Guizot was seeking to teach the government, Manent writes (1), that society should not be considered an enemy but as a partner. The essence of Guizot's political thinking was that he firmly rejected the political founding idea of human will, either collective or individual, and in so doing broke with the modern political tradition (2). This held that the distinction between civil society and the state pre-supposed the political founding role of human will. In order that the state be an instrument of society, it is necessary that society be the source of the state through the sovereignty of will, given that the state per se could not have its roots in nature. Guizot saw civil society and the state as essential, twinned co-elements (3):

"La société et le gouvernement naissent ensemble et coexistent nécessairement. On ne peut les séparer, même en pensée. L'idée, comme le fait de la société, implique l'idée comme le fait du gouvernement."

Guizot was an early advocate of the need to "finish the Revolution" (4), but became himself a victim of 1848.

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 206.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 216
 3. -- idem. Manent is citing Guizot's "Philosophie politique: de la souveraineté" in ROSANVALLON, Pierre (ed.) -- **Histoire de la civilisation en Europe**, Hachette-Pluriel, Paris, 1985, p. 333
 4. -- idem. -- p. 219

Tocqueville, having established his reputation with his two-volume **De la démocratie en Amérique**, published in 1835-1840, became politically active in 1848 and Minister for Foreign Affairs from June to October 1849. His pre-occupation was to a considerable extent with the concept of égalité, specifically, according to Manent (1) with "'l'égalité croissante des conditions' -- dont il est très difficile de concevoir le terme".

Profoundly influenced by his travels in the United States in 1831-32, he wrote (2) that Americans were "nés egaux au lieu de le devenir", in contrast to the situation in France where people had had "égalité" thrust upon them, as it were. Democratic equality in the United States was the natural state of a frontier society and American political institutions had developed from this equality (3).

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 222
 2. -- idem. -- p. 223. Manent is citing **De la démocratie en Amérique**, (Gallimard, Paris, 1961) vol. II, second part, ch. III, p. 108
 3. This is a point of considerable importance. It was not for Americans to agonize about the possible character of a "state of nature"; they knew what it meant, because they lived in it and they knew that survival in a frontier society required a considerable amount of intra-communal co-operation and self-help. The "state of nature" was essentially an indifference to the efforts of mankind. In such a social environment, democracy and equality of conditions and opportunity do not need explaining, nor do they need to be codified; they form part of the common awareness of every citizen.

Thus democracy in the United States was primarily a social state in which the sovereignty of the people was implicit and which, consequently, rendered less sharp the distinction between civil society and that society's political institution (1).

But Tocqueville, with considerable perception, could also see that the ultra-democratic equality of the American experience could also be, ultimately and paradoxically, destructive of society (2):

"C'est dans l'Ouest qu'on peut observer la démocratie parvenu à sa dernière limite. Dans ces Etats, improvisés en quelque sorte par la fortune, les habitants sont arrivés d'hier sur le sol qu'ils occupent. Ils se connaissent à peine les uns les autres, et chacun ignore l'histoire de son plus proche voisin. Dans cette partie du continent américain, la population échappe donc non seulement à l'influence des grands noms et des grandes richesses, mais à cette naturelle aristocratie qui découle les lumières et de la vertu ... Les nouveaux Etats de l'Ouest ont déjà des habitants; la société n'y existe point encore."

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. p. 226. Again a point of some significance. Democracy in the United States, a federation, grew from the bottom up, whereas in France, a nation with a long history of dirigiste central government, following the Revolution, and especially following the inception of universal male suffrage in 1848, democracy was in essence imposed from the top down.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 227; Manent is citing **De la démocratie en Amérique**, Part I, Ch. III, pp. 50-51

This danger, Tocqueville argued, was not necessarily destructive of self-government in the United States, simply because there was no alternative. In France, however, with its dirigiste political tradition, a tradition not essentially changed by the Revolution, such a situation could lead to political indifference by individuals en masse with the result that liberal self-government would become meaningless (1).

Manent mentions (2) a well-known Tocquevillian worry: that the extremes of democracy such as he observed evolving in the United States, where conformity in an egalitarian society was becoming the norm and where intellectual exchange might be regarded as being socially unacceptable, could lead to an infringement of the freedom to think for oneself.

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1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, op. cit. pp. 229-230
 2. -- idem. -- p. 235

In the concluding pages of his **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**, Manent writes (1) of the nineteenth century evolution of the nation state which meant, in France, the problem of finding a political form which would satisfy the twin demands of "history" and of "revolution" and at the same time harmonise the division between nature and the law, or between civil society and "l'Etat". Both Communism and National Socialism could be regarded as early twentieth century attempts to establish this political harmony. In the last half of the twentieth century, with both these ideologies being fundamentally discredited, civil society and "l'Etat": "[...] se retrouvent-ils dans la nudité de leur confrontation réciproque, sans le sublime protecteur du Roi, de la Révolution ou de la Nation. [...] La religion chrétienne dont ils voulaient protéger la cité est aussi affaiblie que le sont la nature de notre société civile et la loi de notre Etat".

1. MANENT -- **Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme**,
op. cit. pp. 249-250

The Modern State

Manent considers the modern state in a separate work (1). In the opening sentence of an article published in 1988 he wrote: "When speaking about the modern state we speak of the modern state, pre-supposing its distinctiveness."

In this article (2), Manent argues that the thrust of Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des lois* "was the progressive substitution of the modern criterion of liberty for the ancient criterion of virtue". The Revolution marked the triumph of the modern and of the idea of the reign of reason. For Hegel, Manent maintains (3), "it was less a matter of criticizing the ancient than of showing the historical necessity that implied its being overtaken by the modern".

In contemporary society, he continues, we have learned to mistrust reason but (4): "[w]e want to live and think according to modern reason without having it lead to the progressive historicism that Hegel most coherently and profoundly represented".

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1. MANENT, Pierre -- "The Modern State", in LILLA (ed.) -- **New French Thought: Political Philosophy**, op. cit. p. 123. This is a translation of an article by Manent entitled "L'Etat moderne: Problèmes d'interprétation" which appeared in **Commentaire** (Spring 1988) pp.328-335
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. -- p. 124

Our contemporary mistrust of reason makes us doubt whether the perceived (1): "liberal-democratic principles of the modern state are not eternally rational and beneficial" and ask ourselves whether "the modern state that guarantees human rights is the ultimate form of human order". Yet we cannot accept any form of Hegelian determinism.

Manent maintains that we are concerned in a way without parallel in human history with an abstraction "human rights" (2):

"A poor wretch trembling with fear who does not want to die -- that is man, and that is his right. [...] ... and the right of self-preservation became the right to comfortable self-preservation. But comfort presupposes property, property presupposes labor, and labor's productivity presupposes the free use of one's talents and what those talents produce."

Manent argues (3) that in traditional, pre-modern societies, the good was equated with man's ends, which required a base of law. The early ideas of modernity recognized that ultimate human objectives could not be enshrined in a binding legal statement; in short, "the good" could not be imposed by a magistrate. Rather, the law must allow man "to seek his good freely, by prohibiting from hindering this liberty". (4)

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1. MANENT -- "The Modern State", in LILLA (ed.) op. cit. p. 125
 2. -- idem. -- p. 129
 3. -- idem. -- p. 129/130
 4. -- idem. -- p. 130

Thus, Manent continues (1):

"[...] the new form of law in modern states [is] founded on human rights. The ancient law, whether pagan or Christian, was a commandment, an authoritarian injunction; the law of the modern state is an authoritarian authorization."

This leads to a recognition which, I argue, is fundamental to an appreciation of the implication of value pluralism and hence of the imperative of tolerance and a respect for the views of others and also of the implicit intolerance of deterministic politics. In Manent's words (2):

"[...] the fact that the human problem, that of the relationship between nature and law, remains intrinsically, naturally, and therefore perpetually insoluble."

Elsewhere (3), Manent argues that individuals who live in modern liberal societies escape the arbitrary personal commands of a prince. Today's individual, as a citizen and a worker or an entrepreneur (4):

"derives his motivation from a general situation that he freely assesses; as a potential occupant of the seat of power, he prohibits any individual or group from violating equality through personal commands or monopolies. Thus the representative state and the market each imply the other".

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1. MANENT -- "The Modern State" in LILLA (ed.), op. cit. p. 131
 2. -- idem. -- p. 132
 3. MANENT, Pierre -- "The Contest for Command" in LILLA (ed.) op. cit. pp.178/185. This article appeared originally in the introduction to a work by Manent, **Les libéraux**, Hachette, Paris, 1986
 4. -- idem. -- p. 181

This leads to a situation in which, Manent argues, (1):

"Competition [...] remains the only acceptable candidate for social regulation, since the norm it offers is immanent to social activity. It is imposed on no one, it implies no dogmatism".

This is a new and unique situation in the evolution of Occidental political structures. It is a manifestation of Manent's contention that modern liberalism must be understood historically as a product of the modern break with the past (2).

1. MANENT -- "The Contest for Command", op. cit. in LILLA, op. cit. p. 185

2. See page 167 supra

La Cité de l'homme

Having considered the modern state, in a densely-argued work written around elements of the modern history of occidental ideas (1), Manent considers man, a word to be qualified, he argues (2), by "the obligatory Homeric epithet modern" (emphasis in original. JT). Modern man, Manent continues, defines himself by self-consciousness (3). More, modern man has a sense of history (4):

"The consciousness of being historical is the central and perhaps also the strangest aspect of the modern experience. Modern philosophy is convinced that the experience of history is the most profound and decisive experience".

Manent contends that his idea of modernity has its genesis in eighteenth century France and England and, specifically, with Montesquieu's perception of what was happening in each country (5):

"The movement of **The Spirit of the Laws** unfolds between the two poles of Ancient and Modern. The one is the ancient world of republican 'virtue', the other is the England of 'commerce' and 'liberty'. Between the ancient and the modern is the present of the French monarchy".

The ancient idea of virtue was at the heart of pre-modern political and moral philosophy, Manent argues (6), and became a universal principle.

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1. MANENT, Pierre -- **La Cité de l'homme**, Fayard, Paris, 1994; English language translation -- **The City of Man**, Princeton University Press, 1998
 2. -- idem. -- **The City of Man**, p. 5
 3. -- idem. -- p. 6
 4. -- idem. -- p. 7
 5. -- idem. -- p. 12
 6. -- idem. -- p. 18

This principle could not be sustained. Manent points out that from the eighteenth century, more and more, mankind tended "to live under the regime of commerce and liberty that was set in motion and maintained by the desire and the necessity of avoiding death and misery" (1), thus presenting a challenge to the concept of virtue.

This created a dilemma for mankind: practising virtue was not enough to ensure human survival. Was virtue then "contrary to nature"? Was the price of law to be an eschewal of liberty or was the pursuit of liberty to amount to a denial of law? Manent seeks to rationalize the dilemma (2):

"If the regime of virtue or law can legitimately be termed 'contrary to nature,' the regime of liberty cannot be said to be strictly speaking 'in conformity with nature.' It cannot be the unifying element of the different possibilities of human life. The classification of political regimes according to their greater or lesser conformity to nature gives way to the succession of the two great regimes of law and liberty. To call these two regimes political is anachronistic; it is much more appropriate to call them historical. History, and no longer Nature, is the umbrella under which the two regimes are joined in their succession and in their incompatibility".

In France, Manent continues, the Revolution sharpened the question and engendered a focus upon "the task of extricating law from social necessities." (3) This task remained at the heart of the evolution of European political ideas through the nineteenth century.

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1. MANENT -- *The City of Man*, op. cit. p. 46
 2. -- idem. -- p. 47
 3. -- idem. -- p. 51

After history, sociology. "The feeling of living 'within society' is the effective expression of living 'within history,' both of which are of central importance for us" Manent writes (1). He argues that Max Weber (2), by applying scientific method to the problem, gave:

"a rightful place to what the real man lives, thinks and wills, the individual who chooses among diverse possible actions and produces real effects. Max Weber impressively accorded the real individual his 'values'".

But "society" is a dangerous commodity, Manent warns, and is, in essence, "only the sum of its internal differences, with no common substance" (3). These internal differences may be caused by a differing hierarchy of values, if one follows Weberian precepts, or by sociological "laws" if one is Durkheimian. Manent seeks to reconcile the differing sociological approaches (4):

"Weberian man, who chooses in full liberty and sovereignty the values to which he will to devote his life, is the double of Durkheimian man, who is subject to the necessity of sociological causes and laws over which he has no control. These are the two opposed yet overlapping figures of the man deprived of reason by the sociological perspective".

In addition to being a product of history and sociology, Manent argues, the modernity of mankind is also a product of economics, or, rather, the economic system (5):

"The desire to better one's condition, the efficient cause of economic progress, constitutes the central wellspring of human nature in which, so to speak, nature and history are joined."

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1. MANENT -- **The City of Man**, op. cit. p. 51
 2. -- idem. -- p. 55
 3. -- idem. -- p. 67
 4. -- idem. -- p. 74
 5. -- idem. -- p. 87

Manent devotes the first part of *La Cité de l'homme* to what he describes as the self-consciousness of modern man, a factor derived from the facts (however interpreted) of history, sociology and economics. In the second part of the work he discusses what he calls "The Self-Affirmation of Modern Man" (1), beginning with a lengthy analysis of the work of Hobbes, Locke and Hume.

Out of this, he contends (2) that "Man the holder of human rights combines pure activity and pure passivity in his empirical nature" and also (3) that "the majestic edifice of the modern state, the system of human rights, rests upon a very fine point: the human individual transforms nature in order to feed himself".

Where does this leave liberty? Manent, who does not seek to hide his admiration of Heidegger (4), provides a conditional answer (5):

"The doctrine of free will indeed affirms human liberty, but only up to a certain point. Man is free within the framework and by means of his nature. That is saying, in an inverted way, that his nature comes between man and liberty. The proposal of liberating liberty leads to extenuating nature, dismantling substance, and abolishing essence".

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1. MANENT -- **The City of Man**, op. cit. pp. 109-206
 2. -- idem. -- p. 140
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. -- ; Manent refers to "the greatness of Martin Heidegger" - p. 155
 5. -- idem. -- p. 157

Manent argues (1) that the modern democratic experience contains an inherent paradox: men and women living in contemporary democratic societies are both free and domesticated. Is modern man, he asks, so sure of his freedom when in reality he has never been more subjected?

He continues (2):

"On the one hand, in effect, the will, in order to leave nature completely free, has to raise itself above all natural determinations, and thus to define and affirm itself again and again as pure will. But then, it is proper to man that the will determines him and thus his nature all the more".

Manent concludes by citing Kant's verdict of the heteronomy of mankind, or the essential contradictions in human nature (3). He describes (4) the nature of man as being "the mother of all heteronomies".

He is arguing against the absurdity of seeking to trammel mankind into a grid of rules and regulations which are claimed to have universal applicability. To attempt to do so is to ascribe to individual men and women an unnatural desire for an overwhelming conformity.

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1. MANENT -- **The City of Man**, op. cit. p. 181
 2. -- idem. -- p. 182
 3. -- idem. -- p. 203. It could be argued that Manent is not saying anything new and that id and ego have long been recognized as essential, and contradictory, elements in the makeup of individual men and women.
 4. -- idem. p. 204

Summary

Manent emphasizes the fact of modernity and argues that, as far as political philosophy is concerned, this fact represents a distinct break with the thinking of the classical and mediaeval worlds. In the modern world, history has replaced what were perceived by the ancients to be established truths.

He distinguishes three phases of modern political thinking: first, modern natural law; second, the crisis of modern natural law and the emergence of history; and third, radical historicism. Against this background, he argues that there have been two streams in modern political thought, the one realist (recognizing the force of necessity), the other idealist or utopian.

He offers a history of the evolution of the relationship between civil society and the state in Western Europe which, he says, has been a product of what he calls the theologico-political problem. This is a problem known since the earliest conflict of Church and State in Europe; the Church had been forced to make institutional adjustments to meet new political situations; the effect of these adjustments was very often a new set of problems which required still more adjustment.

The autonomous European cities of the late Middle Ages were a product of this institutional adjustment: neither the Church nor the temporal power was strong enough to suppress the desire for political liberty on the part of groups of people who had the economic means to sustain themselves.

Thus the stream of realist political thought from Machiavelli through Hobbes and Locke to Montesquieu was concerned with the growing reality of the exercise of political power untrammelled by ecclesiastical interference. This represented a gradual liberalisation of the political process, a process which stopped in France with Rousseau; Manent argues that there were in the mid-eighteenth century three fundamental political positions, absolutism, liberalism and the thought of Rousseau. Rousseau ignored economics and was concerned with an ideal world based upon a human reason which he perceived as having the potential to be ultimately infallible.

Manent stresses what he regards as the ultimate paradox in Rousseau's argument: from one point of view, society is essentially contrary to the state of nature; from the other, the need to live in and exploit the natural environment imposes on mankind an essential social discipline destructive of the mores of a state of nature.

For the nineteenth century French liberals -- Manent cites Constant, Guizot and Tocqueville -- the question became one of a reassertion of liberal principles in the face of a Rousseauian monist revolutionary and republican ethic based upon "égalité" and the concept of the ultimate infallibility of human reason. The nineteenth century was a period in which the evolution of the nation state meant for France at one and the same time a need to reconcile the streams of history, that is, the evolution of the nation, and revolution, that is, the promise for the future. The history of the twentieth century caused both the idea of "nation" and that of "revolution" to lose much of their ideological potency. There remained, however, the dynamic imperative of a need to promulgate laws which might conflict with perceptions of natural freedom and those of an egalitarian society. Thus the relationship between "l'Etat" and civic society has potentially substantial confrontational elements.

A prime legacy of the Revolution for the French nation was that individual French men and women became citizens from the moment when the laws of the nation were promulgated as issuing from the national sovereignty of the people. This reality left unresolved, however, the relationship between and the possibility of conflict between the collectivity of individuals, that is, civil society, and "l'Etat".

Manent sums up the consequent situation (1):

"Ainsi la société civile et l'Etat se retrouvent-ils dans la nudité de leur confrontation réciproque, sans le sublime protecteur du Roi, de la Révolution ou de la Nation".

In other works, Manent returns to the concept of modernity, both that of the modern state and of modern man. He argues that the conflict between nature and law in human society is endemic, as is the internal conflict within and between individuals (recognizing Kantian heteronomy). Further, the modern fluid alliance of the democratic state and the global market place acts as an optimum social and political regulator.

Modern man, Manent argues, is at one and the same time both self-conscious and self-affirmative. His self-consciousness is a product of his history, the evolution of the society in which he lives and the facts of economics. Manent points to what he describes as the dilemma of modern man: the ancient "virtue" could not ensure survival; was it, then, contrary to "nature"? But "liberty" could not be said to be "in accordance with nature". History, Manent contends, provides the link between these two incompatible concepts.

1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, op. cit. p. 249

Manent distinguishes sociologically between "Weberian man", who has his own hierarchy of values, and "Durkheimian man", who has no control over his destiny. He argues that modern man is torn between these two extremes. In one sense, modern men and women have great liberty; in another sense, they are subjects of the society which has spawned them and are "domesticated".

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BLANDINE KRIEGEL

"Les uns insisteront sur la prééminence de l'Etat, les autres sur l'exigence des droits du citoyen, les troisièmes sur le caractère impérissable des droits de l'homme, les quatrièmes sur les buts singuliers de la nation. Les frictions sont réelles. Le premier pas consiste tout simplement à les reconnaître et à faire valoir, pour soi, le caractère irréductible de ces différences logiques, à observer que chacun de ces droits existe, qu'ils existent réellement et que chacun d'eux a sa force." (1)

Introduction

Blandine Kriegel has been Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris X-Nanterre since 1994; she also edits the biannual review **Philosophie politique**. Previously, from 1990, she was a professor at the University of Lyon-III. She has been successively head of a commission charged with making recommendations on the modernisation of the French state and a member of a commission charged with considering possible reforms of the French system of justice.

Her first major work, **L'Etat et les esclaves** (2), was published in 1979 and republished in 1989. In it she first set out principles upon which she has developed a significant oeuvre over the ensuing two decades.

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **Philosophe de la République**, Plon, Paris, 1998, p. 314
 2. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **L'Etat et les esclaves: Réflexions sur l'histoire des états**, (2nd edition), Payot, Paris, 1989; English-language translation -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, Princeton University Press, 1995

In this chapter, I commence with an examination of the English-language translation (**The State and the Rule of Law**) (1) of her **L'Etat et les esclaves**, before considering her **La Politique de la raison** (published in 1994) (2), her **La Cité républicaine** (a collection of previously published papers, essays and articles, published in 1998) (3), her **Cours de Philosophie Politique** (representing a course she presented to the French University College in Moscow in the early 1990s and published in Paris in 1996) (4) and her important **Philosophie de la République** (1998) (5).

I have sought to bring out the main thrust of Kriegel's important contribution to contemporary French political thought.

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, Princeton University Press, 1999
 2. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **La Politique de la raison**, Payot, Paris, 1994
 3. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **La Cité républicaine**, Galilée, Paris, 1998
 4. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **Cours de Philosophie Politique**, Librairie Générale Française, Paris, 1996
 5. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **Philosophie de la République**, Plon, Paris, 1998

L'Etat and les esclaves

In this major work Kriegel focuses on the evolution of the laws which provide the matrix holding the modern state together. She begins by deploring the fact that, although contemporary historians have much to say about the history of ideas and ideologies, there has been no comparable development of histories of the state per se. (1) "So long as law and institutions, the very source of differentiation among states, are neglected, there can be no history of the state". (2)

Kriegel writes that she is seeking to (3) "reinscribe the history of political theory in the history of the state" and that this political theory is "reducible to three essential elements: a doctrine of power, a doctrine of individual rights, and a political morality of law".

As far as the doctrine of power is concerned, she affirms that this can be summed up in one word: sovereignty (4).

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 12
 2. -- idem. -- p. 13
 3. -- idem. -- p. 14
 4. -- idem. -- p. 15

Sovereignty is an integral element in the concept of the state, she continues; citing Bodin, she argues that unless a state is sovereign, it has no form (1). Yet, as she points out (2), the idea of the sovereign state has tended to earn a bad reputation in the twentieth century and has tended to be confused with absolutism. Yet, she argues at length, sovereign power per se is not evil, not despotic, and not feudal (3).

If sovereignty then is neither evil nor absolute, what, then is it, Kriegel asks? She supplies an answer to her own question (4): "Sovereignty articulates a threefold conception of the state: external independence, internal coherence, and supremacy of the law".

External independence, she maintains, is the principle of autonomy with respect to foreign governments (5).

Concerning sovereignty expressed as internal coherence, Kriegel argues that (6):

"Sovereignty is the power of a body closed in on itself, an interior life that fosters and maintains a consensus; it never openly challenges community, even if its definition remains uncertain when it meets with a hierarchical society that maintains a division of orders."

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit.-
p. 15
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 15-29
 4. -- idem. -- p. 29
 5. -- idem. --
 6. -- idem. -- p. 30

Supremacy of the law, with a consequent implicit limitation of sovereignty, is Kriegel's major theme (1):

"In the absence of limitation, sovereignty would be no different from feudal domination. The limitations stem from the law in its three incarnations, divine, natural, and fundamental."

She underlines the importance of the limitation of the state by law and argues that this limitation begins with the concept of human rights (2). Three conditions are necessary for a doctrine of human rights, she writes (3):

"First, human beings as such must be recognized as having value. Second, this recognition must be given legal expression. Finally, this legal status must be guaranteed by political authorities."

There are two discrete elements in the concept of human rights: human liberty and civil liberty. Kriegel gives the Latin terms to avoid ambiguity: status libertatus and status civitatus (4).

The latter implies the classic liberal tenets of civil liberties, citizenship, political rights, property, freedom of opinion, of assembly and of association. The former, equally fundamentally, signifies the right to defend the integrity of one's own body.

1. KRIEGEL -- *The State and the Rule of Law*, op. cit. p. 31

2. -- idem. -- p. 32

3. -- idem. -- p. 34

4. -- idem. -- p. 35

Kriegel argues that the idea of civil liberty was unknown in Roman law (1); although marriage and property rights were secure in ancient Rome, there was no right to individual security or of freedom to make one's own decisions. There was no guarantee of individual security, personal autonomy, freedom of conscience or freedom of assembly.

The original inception of civil liberties as understood at the end of the twentieth century evolved in Western Europe largely through the assertion of property rights by a landed aristocracy and commercial rights by mercantile classes several centuries earlier. This confirmed concepts of individual liberty.

Kriegel contends that (2):

"The idea of individual liberty was the grand innovation of the state under the rule of law, the foundation of the first body of law and politics that rejects slavery. In the ancient city, enfranchisement and emancipation were private affairs and events that occurred at the margins of society. The rule of law, by contrast, is embodied in general laws that modulate the exercise of power in the state. The guarantee of individual rights presupposes an anti-imperial and antidominal center of power committed to peace and respect for law. The first states under the rule of law gave neither power to the people nor political liberty to the citizen. They were neither democratic nor liberal."

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1. KRIEGEL -- *The State and the Rule of Law*, op. cit. p. 35
 2. -- *idem.* -- pp. 49-50.

The acceptance of the rule of law and the congruent political guarantee of a right of legal recourse represented a first step, she continues, because whenever and wherever the rule of law prevailed, servitude vanished.

In summary, Kriegel argues that concepts of sovereign power and the assurance of the rights of individuals were at the heart of early modern juridical thinking. Subsequently (1):

"[...] regulation of the social world would be viewed through the economic prism of liberal theory, which detaches the social world from the state".

Rousseau affirmed the importance of finding (2): [...] une forme de gouvernement au-dessus de l'homme"; implicitly this means, of course, establishing a framework of law which will be beyond the ability of individuals to tinker with established institutions and in so doing succeed in imposing a minority will upon the majority.

Kriegel recalls the fact that the law in a modern [Western] state has three primary sources: Greek natural law, Roman civil law and Jewish moral law (3) and maintains that the search for a link between morality and law culminated in Kant's **Critique of Practical Reason** (4).

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit. p. 50
 2. -- idem. -- p. 51
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. -- p. 52

She feels that perhaps in contemporary society we do not take sufficient cognizance of the historical links between religion and politics and believes that "religion in general only passes into politics by means of a human go-between, namely, morality"(1). Morality is a system of obligation which imposes duties and ideals (2).

She distinguishes between the morality of law and the morality of faith: "The morality of laws secures national identity by means of transcendence" (3), whereas "The morality of faith is the proclamation of individual redemption". (4)

Kriegel traces the idea of a lay legal order based upon reason back to Aristotle and its descent to Western civilization through St Thomas Aquinas (5). But law based upon reason is not always easy to reconcile with natural law. This created a problem for early modern political thinkers, seeking to reconcile the perceived equality of a state of nature with the reality of societies built around hierarchies and inequalities (6).

1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit. p. 52

2. -- idem. -- p. 53

3. -- idem. -- p. 54

4. -- idem. -- p. 55

5. -- idem. -- p. 56

6. -- idem. -- p. 57

The growth of the modern state, Kriegel argues, resulted in "a transformation of the essence of politics" (1). Politics is about the exercise and control of power and modern political doctrine seeks to "juridify the political sphere" (2). Thus, in contemporary occidental society (3):

"Law is no longer the coin of a politics of strength, and force and power are no longer to be regarded as brute facts. They are all henceforth subjected to law, while law itself becomes a power, a force. The state adopts the rule of law. To make politics an object of law is impossible without the subjection of power itself to the law, the juridification of proprietors as well as of property, of the powerful as well as of power."

Against this background, Kriegel considers the inherent difficulties in France with the state regulation of law (4). She argues that, even through the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the practice of politics in France contained elements of feudal forms of suzerainty alongside modern concepts of sovereignty. Citing Tocqueville, she argues that the centralization of administration in France had the effect of creating a unified state through the public function, at the expense of law (5).

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit. p. 58
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. -- p. 63
 4. -- idem. -- p. 78
 5. -- idem. -- p. 79

Reverting to her more general argument, Kriegel writes (1) that during the latter half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, "the doctrine of the state under the rule of law progressively declined, overtaken by the novel doctrines of liberalism and democracy".

Gradually, as civil society as a whole was seen to be more important than "l'Etat", thinkers concerned themselves with the individual and with the associated rights of man. Kriegel argues that both physiocrates and philosophes saw liberalism as a gift of a state based upon the rule of law and as the only political form authorizing the affirmation of individual subjectivity and the autonomy of civic society (2).

She signals what she regards as a paradox (1): liberalism may turn against the state. The limits of liberalism, she argues, are not confined to its predilection for economic problems; economic and political liberalism can coexist. She stresses that liberal political philosophy in her view concerns itself only with the individualist philosophy of the rights of man and liberal political concepts revolve around guaranteeing these rights.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit. p. 91
 2. -- idem. -- p. 92
 3. -- idem. --

There simply cannot be, she affirms, a political doctrine which is both liberal and statist and she continues that liberalism has nothing to say on the question of "l'Etat", underlining the fact that liberalism is politically equivocal (1).

Democracy, the alter ego of liberalism, arose in France as a consequence of revolution whereas in England it evolved. Kriegel argues (2) that liberalism grew out of civil society, which itself had evolved from the state based upon law, and that it prospered with modern capitalism. It was a product of a tacit division between power and property through which it was understood that it was possible to acquire property without seeking political power and, from the other side, the locus of political power would respect property rights.

But as far as democracy is concerned, Kriegel, evoking its classical origins in ancient city states and its links to slavery, writes that (3): "Democracy's ancient legacy weighed heavily on its modern ideal". She continues that the ancient democratic ideal was based upon the community and not upon the individual and that the ancients recognized in democracy the potential for tyranny and dictatorship.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit.
p. 92
 2. -- idem. -- p. 93
 3. -- idem. --

Both liberalism and democracy have, in Kriegels's eyes, their own antinomies (1):

"The best thing about it [democracy] was that all it needed was the people's direct exercise of power. The worst was that it showed no concern for individual rights. Liberalism overlooked the state, whereas democracy neglected the individual."

Recognizing that the political philosophy of the Enlightenment focussed strongly upon the problem of reconciling the liberty of the individual with the rights of the community, Kriegel argues that a result was a neglect of the state per se (2). Much of her subsequent work concentrates upon this lacuna.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **The State and the Rule of Law**, op. cit. p. 94
 2. -- idem. --

La politique de la raison

"Existe-t-il un ordre du politique, une sphère de la politique distincte de l'économie? L'Etat de droit a-t-il une valeur transcendante au simple fonctionnement d'un appareil de contrainte? Tous les Etats se valent-ils? Les droits de l'homme sont-ils la création aléatoire d'une culture, celle de l'Occident, et peuvent-ils véritablement valoir au-delà des frontières de la civilisation qui les a inventés?" (1)

Kriegel concentrates a substantial element of her considerable oeuvre on seeking answers to the fundamental political questions set out above. Specifically, in her **La politique de la raison**, published in 1994, she brings together the ideas developed in a number of articles and papers written and presented during the time she occupied the Chair of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Lyon-III (2).

In Part I of this work, "La politique des philosophes", she asks whether Descartes had concepts of political philosophy and goes on to analyse Kant's idea of a universal republic, Fichte's thoughts on nationalism, Heidegger and "political theology" (3), and ends by asking whether or not there is such a thing as a universal political development (4).

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **La politique de la raison**, Editions Payot, Paris, 1994, Introduction, p. ix
 2. -- idem. -- p. 270
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 60-71
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 72-78

Kriegel affirms (1) that our contemporary epoch and modernity in general demonstrate the existence of the possibility of a universal political development, with both Marxism and liberalism being manifestations of such a development. She argues, however, that both are currently discredited (2).

"D'abord l'émancipation purement sociale par la collectivisation des moyens de production et la prétendue abolition de la lutte des classes n'ont apporté ni la prospérité, ni la déperissement de l'Etat, ni la liberté et, dans les sociétés socialistes, les lendemains n'ont pas chanté. Par ailleurs, l'instauration du marché n'a pas entraîné, ipso facto, l'édification de la démocratie qu'elle était censée impulser dans les pays en voie de développement".

This recognition leads her to ask whether a universal political system is an unattainable ideal. Kriegel writes that she does not think so, evoking Kantian precepts in her response (3).

In Part II of the work under reference, headed "Histoire politique et culturelle" (4), Kriegel examines past concepts of the relationship between law and "l'Etat", what she calls "L'historicisme juridique" (5).

1. KRIEGEL -- **La politique de la raison**, op. cit. p. 73

2. -- idem. --

3. -- idem. -- p. 78

4. -- idem. -- pp. 79-188

5. -- idem. -- p. 185

In a concluding chapter to this Part, entitled "Histoire et droit à la fin de l'Ancien Régime" (1), Kriegel makes the point that for many centuries recorded history and archives were the principal methods of unifying law before comprehensive codification began. She refers to a consequent "lien de l'histoire et du droit" (2), a linkage which forms a significant element in her scholarly work.

In the final Part of *La politique de la raison*, entitled "Droit politique", Kriegel looks at the first drafts of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and considers concepts of the liberty of conscience before ending with a consideration of what she calls "la crise de la citoyenneté" (3), an evocation of the fact that many people in contemporary France feel themselves "exclus".

Kriegel argues that the French "Declaration", following Rousseauian precepts, tended to favour citizenship at the expense of human rights (4):

"La conception selon laquelle la citoyenneté repose sur les lumières de l'entendement et de la raison, et plus encore sur un acte de volonté, est à mon sens responsable de la production du grand nombre des exclus de la citoyenneté. Car elle a une grandeur, qui est d'avoir contribué au développement de la civilité par l'instruction, mais elle a aussi une limite, qui est d'ôter à une partie de l'humanité -- les femmes, les pauvres -- leur participation à la citoyenneté."

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1. KRIEGEL -- *La politique de la raison*, op. cit. pp.171/188
 2. -- idem. -- p. 184
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 229/260
 4. -- idem. -- p. 259

La Cité républicaine

In her *La Cité républicaine* (1) Kriegel considers three aspects of contemporary French republicanism: questions of morality and rights; questions of citizenship; and the relationship of the Republic with the collectivity of the people, that is, the nation.

Concerning morality and rights, she argues that the intellectual construction of human rights in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represented a crossroads between considerations of ethics and of rights. Kriegel recalls that Kant held that this implied a high degree of humanity; such a conjuncture could only be attained in a universal republic (2).

Kriegel contends (3) that if there are rules of behaviour for groups (communal rights, the rights of the state, the rights of a people) and for individuals and humanity (ethics), it becomes important to ensure that both rights and ethics preserve their autonomy. Neither the total coating of rights in a cloak of ethics, which would have the effect of turning rights into a sort of civic religion, nor the total juridification of morality, which would rule out any place for human freedom, is acceptable.

1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- *La Cité républicaine*, Galilée, Paris, 1998

2. -- idem. -- p. 18

3. -- idem. --

Again, she continues, that which is true for the relationship between individuals and groups is no less true for the relationship between universal transcendent norms (ethics) and the development of positive rights. The ethical considerations which underpin both the human and individual dimensions are at one and the same time both universal and specific. Similarly, the law which is inscribed into the constitution of a polity can neither ignore liberty nor rule out a degree of constraint.

Thus republican society is called upon to make a continuing reajustment of the interface between civil law and moral imperatives. Kriegel summarizes (1):

"Les hommes ne vivent pas que de pain ... Ils vivent aussi de droits (loi civile) et de devoirs (loi morale). C'est la formation d'une cité républicaine moderne où l'autorité s'exerce par la loi (Aristote), où l'on reconnaît aux individus pourtant marqués par la finitude un rôle fondateur dans l'avènement de la liberté qui rend tous les jours nécessaires la réarticulation du droit et de l'Ethique."

Against this background, Kriegel was interviewed by the editor of *Le Monde*, Jean-Marie Colombani, on 30 June 1994. She reproduces the interview (2) under the rubric "République et éthique de droit".

She was asked:

"La notion d'Etat de droit est devenue aujourd'hui l'idéologie dominante. N'est-ce pas dans l'histoire française une idée récente et n'est-elle pas radicalement contraire à toute une partie de nos traditions?"

1. KRIEGEL -- *La Cité républicaine*, op. cit. p. 19
2. -- idem. -- p. 49 et seq.

Her reply was categorical: "C'est tout à fait exact." She recalled that, during the 1970s, ideas of social autonomy dominated political thinking. Ideologies normally at loggerheads - Marxism, liberalism, "gauchisme" - could agree at that time that "l'Etat" was the common enemy and could join in brandishing the slogan: "La Société contre l'Etat!". Nobody was bothered by the fact that states were different; everyone could agree with the idea that excessive state intervention was the universal malady.

At this time in France, the teaching of history moved away from wars and politics and embraced economic and social considerations. It was thought possible to reduce politics to a mere branch of economics and immerse social history in general anthropology. No one thought of a history of States per se; there was only a history of societies.

Now, twenty years on, Kriegel continued, in a spectacular somersault, intellectual opinion is at one on the need to invoke the rule of law. She reminded Colombani that she had introduced this concept with her **L'Etat et les esclaves**, published in 1979. She contended that the new ideas being currently debated amounted to a renaissance of political philosophy and the end of the social paradigm, of a recognition that the social question is not everything and the entering on scene at the end of the twentieth century of what she insists is the fundamental question of political development.

Kriegel summarized this fundamental question (1):

"[...] l'Etat de droit, cette forme d'organisation qui arbitre le lien civil par la loi, garantit les droits individuels et soumet le pouvoir aux lois [...]."

She expressed concern that the French "Etat" is largely administrative, a state in which there is no genuine separation of powers and no independence of the judiciary at a time when the demand for justice is growing.

Kriegel was asked subsequently in the interview (2):

"République et démocratie, certains les opposent. Peut-on les mettre sur le même plan?"

She had no doubt that two two ideas were complimentary, noting the general popularity of the concept of the Republic in France, where it is identified with equality, with a political centralisation which has established national unity and defended the national integrity, with the separation of Church and State which has ensured laicity, and finally, with the welfare state. She cites Aristotle and summarizes (3):

"Si seul le gouvernement du grand nombre peut vraiment défendre l'intérêt général, cela signifie que seule la démocratie peut véritablement instituer la République."

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1. KRIEGEL -- *La Cité républicaine*, op. cit. p. 50
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 55-56; see also p.43 supra

Considerations of democracy and republic lead Kriegel to consider parity and the principle of equality (1) and, specifically, the question of citizenship (2). She points out that citizenship per se is not defined in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic but may be considered under three separate heads: political, civil and national. Definitions of citizenship appear in constitutional law, in the Civil Code and in the Code of Nationality. On a philosophical plane, citizenship may be thought of under the rights of "L'Etat", of civil rights and of the rights of the people.

The separation of the modern state from civil society has had the effect of creating two discrete aspects of citizenship, civil and political. Under the first is found the right of residence, the obligation to pay taxes, obligatory national service and the right to seek redress in the courts. Political rights include the right to vote and the right to stand for election to national, regional and communal assemblies.

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1. KRIEGEL -- *La Cité républicaine*, op. cit. pp. 162-173
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 67-90

Kriegel believes that the question of citizenship presents a problem which goes to the heart of the concept of the rule of law (1). Given that the fact of representation is a part of modern democratic practice, she is concerned that:

"[...] le problème posé à la citoyenneté est donc celui de la représentation et du fondement, c'est-à-dire de la capacité, de la qualification de la citoyenneté qui n'a pas encore trouvé de solution véritablement démocratique".

This problem, she continues, revolves around the possibility (or impossibility, she stresses) of reconciling considerations of solidarity with those of equality. In her words:

"Il s'agit, on le voit, de la qualification (fondement), de l'inscription et de la limitation de la citoyenneté. Celles-ci restent indéterminées et floues". (Emphases in original. JT).

The final section of this work contains disparate essays written or copies of papers presented around the broad theme of "La République, les droits du peuple et les droits de la femme". Some of the main themes are developed in her **Philosophie de la République**, discussed below (pp. 201-213).

1. KRIEGEL -- **La Cité républicaine**, op. cit. p. 83

Cours de Philosophie Politique

Kriegel's **Cours de Philosophie Politique** (1) is the text accompanying a course she presented to the French University College in Moscow in 1991. Naturally, this work draws on her previously published work. She focuses upon her major theme ("l'Etat de droit") as well as upon human rights and political liberty and upon concepts of republic and democracy.

She seeks also to relate her thinking to the wider concepts inherent in the European Union, especially on nations and nationalism and asks whether it is possible to reconcile the rights of states with human rights and with the rights of peoples.

She concludes with an idea of modern liberty (2):

"La liberté moderne est donc à la fois la libération - l'emancipation et non seulement la liberté privé - et l'accès libre de l'homme à son loi de nature. La liberté moderne est le moyen de déployer, avec les droits de l'homme, l'humanité en l'homme."

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **Cours de Philosophie Politique**,
Le Livre de Poche (Librarie Générale
Française), Paris, 1996
 2. -- idem. -- p. 140

Philosophie de la République

In the introduction to her most recent and, arguably, most significant work, **Philosophie de la République** (1), Kriegel asks: "Qu'est-ce ce que la république?"

The systems of thought of recent generations in France, Kriegel writes (2), can be given a threefold classification: the social revolution, liberalism and the conservative revolution. The first began with the Revolution and blossomed into socialism and then communism. The liberal idea, inspired by Montesquieu and the physiocrates, took on, in continental Europe, the cloak of restricted suffrage and a concern with property, both hostile to democracy, a fact which distinguished French liberalism from the British model. The conservative revolution began with political romanticism in France and in Germany and finished everywhere with fascism.

Philosophically, she continues (3), it is necessary to ask where does the social revolution end and where does the republic begin? She answers her own question: "Ce sont [avec] les droits de l'homme et les libertés individuelles".

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1. KRIEGEL, Blandine -- **Philosophie de la République**, Plon, Paris, 1998
 2. -- idem. -- p. 15
 3. -- idem. -- p. 17

Obsessed with the exclusive idea of a social emancipation which would solve all known problems, thinkers in the past forgot that there is more to life than social considerations, Kriegel continues. If there is no rule of law, the alternative is a despotic state; if there is no recognition of human rights, then individuals have no autonomy. The point of rupture between conservative liberalism and the republic is the sovereignty of the state and the rule of law.

However, she continues, even if Marxism and liberalism are not at one with the concept of republican political rights, they are not diametrically opposed to the republican idea. "Libéraux et marxistes ne sont nullement des adversaires par principe de la république". (1)

Kriegel contends (2) that the domination of public opinion in France in recent years by socialism and liberalism has tended to make people overlook the fundamental institutional achievements of the Republic, specifically in education and in justice.

1. KRIEGEL -- *Philosophie de la République*, op. cit. p. 18

2. -- idem. --

She continues that there is no point in looking for the fact of the return of the republican concept of the rule of law in either contemporary Marxist or neo-liberal thought (1):

"On ne la trouvera ni chez Althusser ni chez un penseur libéral comme François Furet. Le retour à l'Etat de droit, qui est la forme moderne de la république, implique en effet que soit récusé le paradigme commun au marxisme et au libéralisme qui est celui du primat de la société et de l'économie".

"What, then, is a republican state?" Kriegel asks again. "[...] un Etat qui n'est ni totalitaire ni despotique," she answers (2).

We can no more accept that "l'Etat" should be all-powerful than we can accept that individuals should have untrammelled rights, she continues. Nor can we accept either the total annihilation or the total exaltation of the state, following Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. "Nous avons cessé d'adhérer à ces outrances et nous ne revendiquerons ni cet éloge ni cette indignité. Nous avons choisi une voie moyenne". (3)

This consideration leads Kriegel to consider both the history and the philosophy of the rule of law.

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1. KRIEGEL -- *Philosophie de la République*, op. cit. p. 18
 2. -- idem. -- p. 61
 3. -- idem. --

As far as the history of the rule of law is concerned, she recalls that in ancient Rome, citizens and the state were equivalent: "Senatus populusque romanus - SPQR." In the absence of a state, citizens could participate directly in government. Civil society in an ancient republic was one and the same thing as political society. (3)

As far as the French Republic is concerned, its temporary apogée occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. It was gradually subsumed by the social revolution and, for a time, by the conservative revolution (2).

Turning to the philosophy of the rule of law, Kriegel points out that the concept of the republican rule of law has become exceedingly complex; it includes not only constitutional and administrative law but also international public law. The modern state is at one and the same time a focal point for justice, for finance, for police and for welfare (3).

She is concerned that, at the present time, insufficient thought is being given to the possible impact on the pristine idea of the rule of law emanating from a whole raft of national and European Union projects (4).

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1. KRIEGEL -- **Philosophie de la République**, op. cit.
p.63
 2. -- idem. -- p. 74
 3. -- idem. -- p. 75
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 75-76

The only way to address this potential problem is through a reconsideration of the concept of sovereignty (1).

"La pierre d'angle du droit de l'Etat est, aujourd'hui comme hier, la souveraineté. Même si le souverain, hier, c'était le monarque, et qu'aujourd'hui c'est le peuple. Nous devons donc faire nos comptes avec la souveraineté."

What, then, is sovereignty, she asks? (2)

She recalls that the emergence of the concept of sovereignty in France may be traced back to Bodin and to the first lines of his best-known work, **Les Six Livres de la République**, : "République est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs mesnages et de ce qui leur est commun avec puissance souveraine." (3) Further, sovereignty is "la fin principale de la République bien ordonnée". (4)

Ultimately, the question becomes one of the use of, and control of the use of, political power. This power, as Kriegel emphasizes (5), is "[le] pouvoir absolu centralisé, [le] pouvoir par excellence, [la] puissance telle qu'elle s'accomplit dans l'Etat, c'est l'énoncé de la puissance de l'Etat républicaine moderne [...]".

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1. KRIEGEL -- **La Philosophie de la République**, op. cit. p. 76
 2. -- idem. -- p. 77
 3. -- idem. -- ; the citation from Bodin comes from **Les Six Livres de la République**, L.1, Ch. 1, p. 27
 4. -- idem. --
 5. -- idem. -- p. 77

Kriegel contends (1) that the foundation of sovereignty consists of two complementary elements: a norm (that is, that the principal attribute of sovereignty is the law) and a power of decision (that is, that the law is established by a decision of the sovereign). That is to say that there is an ambivalence in the concept of sovereignty, which remains a subject for debate; the law is a product of the will of the sovereign.

She enunciates the essential problem and suggests that the solution is well known (2):

"On sera d'accord pour garder l'indépendance et l'unité politique, (principe d'autonomie), on ne mettra pas en cause l'attribution de la souveraineté au peuple (principe démocratique), et on ne discutera pas plus l'exercice du pouvoir par la norme (principe de juridification). L'obstacle n'est ni dans la puissance (l'Etat doit être fort), ni dans la titularisation démocratique (le peuple doit être souverain); non, il réside dans la démiurgie. Il faut déployer le souverain non dans un seul sujet mais dans une pluralité des sujets. Or la solution a été trouvée depuis longtemps. Le vrai secret de la république, dit Kant, est la séparation des pouvoirs [...]."

From the moment of recognition that, in a democracy, only the people have the ultimate right of political power, it becomes essential to move on from the question of the legitimacy of this power to the problem of its legitimate use (1).

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1. KRIEGEL -- Philosophie de la République, op. cit. p. 86.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 106
 3. -- idem. -- p. 112

Thus it becomes, Kriegel argues (1), a matter of re-thinking the question of the rule of law and re-organizing the functions of "l'Etat". It is not merely a question of a sociological distribution of power among different groups - public services, associations of citizens, the middle classes, the trades unions, popular charities ("les soupes populaires") - ensuring that each has its little bit of power. No, she continues (2):

"[...], il s'agit que plusieurs systèmes de légitimité démocratique s'affrontent et se concilient en même temps à l'intérieur d'un Etat pluriel. Ce n'est pas un seul pouvoir qu'il faut ériger sous l'autorité de la démocratie, c'est la démocratie qui doit humblement cheminer sous les pouvoirs".

Contemporary France has inherited a sovereign power which is firmly executive and legislative and which has almost succeeded in emasculating the judiciary. The result is that the executive, following the precepts established by the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, has, in alliance with the administrative bureaucracy, often succeeded in leaving the legislature fallow (3).

Kriegel argues with passion (4) that the evident need to reconstruct popular sovereignty in France does not mean surrendering independence or giving up political power, or simply scrapping national unity; it means simply democratising the republican "Etat".

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1. KRIEGEL -- Philosophie de la République, op. cit.
p. 116
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. --
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 119-120

The topical issue can be summed up in two words: sovereignty and democracy (1). If government means choice, then democratic government implies the involvement of an ever-increasing number of citizens in the political decision-making process, in defending minority rights, in keeping an eye on the practice of government, in ensuring an equitable distribution of power. This means subjecting political power to basic laws ("droit") and recognizing that sovereignty must be reconciled with the rights of individuals, human rights and the rights of citizens.

Kriegel examines these rights, starting with human rights (2). She points out that, from the point of view of philosophy, the dominant doctrinal streams of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were in general hostile or at least indifferent to the question of human rights. From an ideological point of view, neither the conservative nor the social revolution, nor even continental liberalism, ever gave a genuine priority to human rights. Philosophers tabled many objections detrimental to the construction of a solid theoretical base. The first of these was a reluctance to accept a justification for human actions arising from human nature. The second had an anthropological bias: multi-cultural theories saw in the doctrine of human rights hegemonic occidental motivation.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **Philosophie de la République**, op. cit.
p. 120
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 123-182
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 123-124

A third objection (1) was more circumstantial: there were so many claims to "rights" that the concept became blunted. Claimed rights included the rights of citizens, social rights and environmental rights, to cite only three. The result is well-known, Kriegel continues (2). Some two decades ago no discussion, no debate, no university course even, would consider directly the question of human rights, which had ceased to be of philosophical interest. Thus it became a question of defining the singularity of human rights in relationship to other individual rights.

One attempt at defining this singularity resulted in what Kriegel calls a "vulgate" (3). According to this version, she writes, the philosophy of human rights rested upon three axioms: first, human rights were born in the revolution of 1789; second, these rights cannot be separated from the rights of citizens; and third, their conceptual base is derived from a philosophy of the subject. Thus, in the political order, according to this rationalization, the statement of human rights represented an expression of the recognition of the emergence of the individual, breaking from the theological age.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **Philosophie de la République**, op. cit.
p. 124
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. -- p. 125. Kriegel comments: "De cette vulgate il existe, comme toujours, une version pour les simples et une version pour les doctes. A l'usage des uns, Marcel Gauchet s'est chargé d'exposer les deux premiers principes à l'intention des seconds, Alain Renaut a développé le troisième."

Kriegel takes firm issue with this position (1):

"Nous nous proposons de la déranger dans sa double conviction chronologique et philosophique et de montrer que les droits de l'homme ne datent pas plus des révolutions du XVIIIe siècle qu'ils ne procèdent de la philosophie de la liberté et de la volonté du sujet."

She argues (2) that human rights per se comprise a number of elements - equality, security, liberty, the right to property - and that philosophical consideration of at least the first of these elements can be traced back to the neo-thomist School of Salamanca. The philosophy of the Moderns concerned itself with, inter alia, questions of humanity and humanism, nature and the nature of man and law. Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu, among others, made a contribution. The American Declaration of Independence pre-dated the French "Déclaration des droits de l'homme" by some 15 years.

As far as the rights of the citizen are concerned, Kriegel argues (3) that the separation of civil society from the State which marks the modern era has resulted in citizenship taking on two discrete aspects: the first comprises civil rights (residence, legal status, the right to seek redress in the courts) and the second political rights (the right to elect representatives to the legislature and to be a candidate oneself).

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1. KRIEGEL -- Philosophie de la République, op. cit.
p. 127
 2. -- idem. -- p. 133 et seq.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 190; see also p. 201 of
this thesis supra

Kriegel worries (1) about the political rights of citizens in contemporary France and, specifically, the question of representation and a nation with an historically powerful administration made up, very often, of an élite. She expresses her concern about (2):

"[...] le problème de la légitimité des élites dans une démocratie, eu égard au principe d'égalité [...]. Dans une démocratie, les élites sont-elles légitimes? On sait qu'il existe une tentation que nous appelons populiste et que les Grecs appelaient démagogique pour les refuser."

What is the common root of populism and demagogy (3), she asks? She warns against confusing facts with values and recalls that egalitarianism never has time for heroes any more than it has for an artist or a champion. This can have pernicious effects and can lead to:

"[1]a négation de la performance, l'annihilation de la compréhension de la force particulière des individus conduisent au développement de la morale du ressentiment qui veut abolir toutes les mérites, qui se refuse à toute admiration et donc à toute élévation".

In summary, Kriegel argues (4) that the contemporary concept of citizenship has a number of different roots: the ancient Greek experience, the doctrine of human rights linked to the development of modern political thinking; the theory of representation associated with the division of the society and the State and concepts of nationhood.

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1. KRIEGEL -- **Philosophie de la République**, op. cit.
p. 194
 2. -- idem. -- p. 198
 3. -- idem. -- p. 199
 4. -- idem. -- p. 232

Kriegel summarizes her final "droit", that is, "le droit du peuple" (1):

"Si le développement du principe des nationalités n'est pas distinct de l'irruption démocratique des peuples, le droit des peuples est incontestablement le dernier volet du droit politique moderne".

Further, she continues (2):

"Dans son affirmation constitutionnelle mettant entre parenthèses sa préhistoire, le droit des peuples se présente donc comme une réaction et comme une correction aux formulations classiques de la doctrine de l'Etat et de la citoyenneté; une réaction démocratique au droit de l'Etat [...]".

Kriegel summarizes and encapsulates her thinking in a lengthy Conclusion (3):

"Après la définition aristotélicienne, le droit politique républicain moderne, nous l'avons vu, a développé quatre nouveaux chapitres: les droits de l'Etat, les droits de l'homme, les droits du citoyen et les droits du peuple. Quatre volets différents dont il est impossible de construire l'ajustement et d'instaurer la cohérence si l'on ne reconnaît, au préalable, qu'ils sont hétérogènes et irréductibles".

These four "rights" are often incommensurable, as Kriegel reminds her readers (4). Some people argue that the State should be pre-eminent, others the primacy of the citizen, a third group affirms the importance of human rights above all else, a fourth that the nation must come first.

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1. KRIEGEL -- Philosophie de la République, op. cit.
p. 238
 2. -- idem. p. 246
 3. -- idem. p. 311
 4. -- idem. p. 314

These differences are real and a first step in overcoming them is for each "right" to be evaluated dispassionately, recognizing that each one of the four does exist and that it has its own innate strength.

Beyond this, Kriegel argues (1), what matters is a recognition that the law can never be infallible, that it is not sent from a divinity, nor yet enshrined in some holy set of stones, but that its creation is, and has been throughout history, a continuous human activity.

From this position Kriegel asks (2): "Pourquoi la république?" If man's end is not a tomb but a cradle, and if political power be anonymous and impersonal, then the general interest is embodied in the res publica, the "public entity". This has to be something which does not belong to an individual, but to the collectivity and which is a continuing process of creation by and for individual citizens.

Kriegel would seem to be seeking to give the ideal of the Republic a transcendent value.

1. KRIEGEL -- **Philosophie de la République**, op. cit.
p. 328

2. -- idem. -- p. 334

Summary

It is perhaps inevitable that there should be a degree of repetition in the work of a scholar as prolific as Blandine Kriegel. However, a distinctive thrust may be perceived in the totality of her work. In a few words, she affirms the primacy of law over all other considerations in a modern, democratic republican state, and her starting point is a history of this state ("L'Etat") seen from the point of view of the evolution of concepts of rights and of law.

For Kriegel, political theory has three key elements: a doctrine of power, a doctrine of individual rights and a political morality of law.

She argues that concepts of political power can be encapsulated in one word: sovereignty. The idea of sovereignty embodies a threefold conception of the state: external independence, internal coherence and the supremacy of the law; sovereignty is limited by law and this limitation begins with a recognition that individuals in a given state have their own rights. These rights are twofold: human and civil. The use of force and the exercise of power must both be subject to the law.

Equally, there are dual concepts of morality, Kriegel argues, a morality of faith and a morality of law. The latter is a major element in national identity.

Since the late eighteenth century, the essential idea of the state under the rule of law has become eroded, Kriegel maintains, by new concepts of democracy and political and economic liberalism. This presents a paradox: liberalism, described as a tacit alliance between the exercise of political power and the ownership of property, has powerful anti-statist elements. As for democracy, the concept has tended to suffer in the modern European era because of its legacy of an affirmation of the primacy of the community over the individual.

This reality may also be expressed as a conflict between the two concepts. Political liberalism tends to ignore the state whereas democracy tends to ignore the individual.

Kriegel devotes a considerable proportion of her writing to the concept of rights. She defines four discrete variations on the theme of rights: the rights of the State (always "l'Etat"), human rights ("les droits de l'homme"), the rights of citizens and the rights of peoples. These rights can overlap and come into conflict, with one another. That there should be this conflict is an essential part of the contemporary democratic republican process, as is the conflict between the extremes of the essential rules of national and communal behaviour codified, often imperfectly, as "rights" and those relating to individuals and to humanity generally, contained in the concept of ethics.

A total codification of ethics into legal obligations would eliminate all human freedom and, equally, giving rights an inelastic ethical coating would be tantamount to creating a civil religion.

These considerations underline the importance of representation in contemporary occidental democratic and republican societies. Naturally, Kriegel is concerned about France where she feels that, first, the de facto alliance between the higher levels of the bureaucracy and the political executive risk being at the expense of the rule of law. Second, given the increasingly heterogeneous nature of contemporary French society and the number of people who consider themselves "les exclus", the system of representation cannot be considered to be perfect.

This takes her back to considerations of the historical evolution of political thought in France. She argues that there have been three streams: the social revolution, the liberal idea, and the conservative revolution. Each came into conflict, in one way or another, with the essentials of sovereignty and the exercise of political power.

The optimum solution, Kriegel implies, may be epitomised in the sovereignty implicit in the ethical idea of the Republic. This idea is that republican sovereignty consists of two complementary elements: a norm (the law) and a power of decision (the law is established by the sovereign, that is, the people).

Thus the law becomes a product of the will of the sovereign people. But this sovereignty can only be just if it incorporates an unambiguous separation of powers.

Kriegel emphasizes that these concepts have to be dynamic. Law makers are human, and hence fallible. Laws do not come from a Divinity, nor can they be uncompromisingly and eternally codified in stone or in holy scrolls. The making, and re-making, of law is, and has been throughout history, a never-ending human activity, reflecting advances in knowledge and awareness as well as often rapidly changing conditions.

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PIERRE ROSANVALLON

Introduction

"La formation des partis modernes, définis comme des organisations permanentes d'encadrement de la vie politique et parlementaire, a en effet traduit une modification très profonde des termes dans lesquels se formulait la question de la représentation. Deux facteurs se sont mêlés dans cette histoire. Le premier est d'ordre presque technique: les partis ont correspondu à une nécessité d'encadrement et d'organisation de l'activité électorale à l'âge d'une démocratie de masse. Le second est de nature plus sociologique: le développement des partis a été indissociable de l'émergence d'un nouveau rapport social au pluralisme. Dans les deux cas, c'est le monisme hérité de la Révolution française qui s'est trouvé ébranlé." (1)

Pierre Rosanvallon, an historian, economist and journalist is currently (2000) a Director of Studies at the EHESS, having joined the School in 1978. Politically, he became close to Michel Rocard in the early 1970s, when he was active in the trades union movement and editor of his union's journal **CFDT aujourd'hui**. He was an associate of François Furet and collaborated with Furet and Jacques Julliard on the work published in 1988, **La République du centre** (2) (published under the banner of the Fondation Saint-Simon).

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1. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **Le peuple introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France**, Gallimard, Paris, 1998, p. 173
 2. FURET, François, JULLIARD, Jacques, et ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **La République du centre: La fin de l'exception française**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1988

Rosanvallon has concentrated on the history of the attitude to thinking about political liberalism in early nineteenth century France as epitomised by the career of François Guizot (1), as well as on the evolution and structure of the French state ("l'Etat) (2) and histories of suffrage (3) and political representation (4) in republican France.

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1. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **Le Moment Guizot**, Gallimard, Paris, 1985
 2. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **L'Etat en France de 1789 à nos jours**, Le Seuil, Paris, 1990
 3. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **Le Sacre du citoyen**, Gallimard, Paris 1992
 4. ROSANVALLON -- **Le peuple introuvable**, op. cit.

Le moment Guizot

In a general statement of his objective with **Le moment Guizot** and of his focus on developments in the practice of politics in the first half of the nineteenth century in France, Rosanvallon affirms that (1) these developments were the result of "une expérience majeure: celle de l'histoire de France de 1789 à 1814" (emphasis in original. JT).

These developments make no sense, he continues, if the specific nature of this political and intellectual context is ignored and only the intrinsic movement of ideas from Rousseau to the theoreticians of the Republic or of socialism is considered. The Revolution was not only the first stage in a promise for the future; it represented also a rupture in the way in which both history and politics was considered.

As a result, Rosanvallon contends (2): "[...] la question cruciale que cherchent à résoudre toute une partie des auteurs 'libéraux' est celle des rapports entre le libéralisme et la démocratie" (all emphasized in original. JT).

1. ROSANVALLON -- **Le moment Guizot**, op. cit. p. 13

2. -- idem. --

These authors set out to understand the conditions under which the democratic ideal of public participation in the affairs of the republic has turned so ferociously against liberty. In other words, they wanted to ensure that the citizen would not disassociate himself from the individual up to the point of causing the latter to disappear. Eighteenth-century philosophers, neither Montesquieu nor Rousseau for example, had ever really thought in these terms, nor were they ever confronted practically with the radical nature of this question to such an extent as to put it at the heart of their work. Rosanvallon argues that the introduction of universal suffrage in 1848 put a cloak of banality over the essential problem, thus creating the illusion that it had been resolved (1).

The history of French liberalism cannot be followed unless this fact be recognized, Rosanvallon continues. This history differs from the history of English liberalism, which tends to be relatively unified and coherent, in spite of the differences found in the thinking of Locke, Hume, Smith and John Stuart Mill. The fact is that the gains of 1688 provided a common base for their thinking. The problem of the linkage between democracy and liberalism was never posed in England, a country in which various successive political reforms were approved by parliament in 1832, in 1867 and in 1884-85. The problem of the relationship of the individual to the citizen simply did not arise.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le moment Guizot*, op. cit. p. 14

This political "equilibrium", Rosanvallon argues (1), was a unique characteristic of the English experience which had no parallel in the wider European context. Thus it is not possible to generalize about modern liberal thought during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the French example being particularly striking. A first reason for this is that, in France, the Revolution created a gulf, unknown in England, between the philosophers of the eighteenth century and the political thinkers of the nineteenth century; Rosanvallon cites Constant, Say, Guizot, Tocqueville, Bastiat and Prévost-Paradol as representing examples of the latter.

The theoreticians of economic liberalism certainly followed the English example, but the distinction between economic and political liberalism, a distinction which made no sense in England, was fundamental in France. Montesquieu on one side of the divide and Guizot and Prévost-Paradol on the other were not seeking to reply to the same question. The historical context of their thought imposed a specific problem on each one of them. Against this background, Rosanvallon writes that his objective with **Le moment Guizot** is to (2):

"constituer en objet spécifique la philosophie politique française des années 1814-1848 pour proposer une nouvelle lecture de l'histoire des idées libérales et démocratiques au XIXe siècle".

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1. ROSANVALLON -- **Le moment Guizot**, op. cit. p. 14
 2. -- idem. -- p. 15

The fundamental task of French governments during the period 1814-1848, a task never achieved, was to have done with the spirit of revolution. But, Rosanvallon writes (1):

"Pour clore, enfin, la Révolution, il faut redonner de l'intelligibilité à l'histoire, comprendre 1789 comme 1793, découvrir pourquoi la France a été ballottée entre autant d'abîmes et de déceptions alors même qu'elle pensait chaque fois être arrivée à bon port."

For the politicians, both "ultras" and liberals, of the Restoration, stability mattered. All could agree that the immediate task was to build a new France, given that the old France had been destroyed in 1789, and with it, faith in the philosophers of the eighteenth century. Guizot summed up the opinion of his peers (2): "Le XVIIIe nous a beaucoup désappris." The preoccupation of all was to rid politics of passion.

There were, Rosanvallon writes (3) three broad approaches to finding a rational and "scientific" basis for the desired new political stability. First, there was the idea of "social mathematics", the child of Condorcet, with contributions from the scientists Lagrange, Lavoisier and Laplace; second, Cabanis had proposed "social physiology", an idea built around the concept that moral man could not be disassociated from physical man; finally, following the work of Jean-Baptiste Say, the link of politics with economics was argued.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le moment Guizot*, op. cit. p. 17

2. -- idem. -- p. 18

In each case, the thinking was that a way could be found through "science" to guarantee liberty without destroying the social order. The objectives of government, and hence of those, like Guizot, involved in government were simply summarized (1): "Terminer la Révolution, construire un gouvernement représentatif stable, établir un régime garant des libertés fondé sur la Raison."

Rosanvallon argues (2) that a study of the career and achievements of Guizot is obligatory for ensuring an understanding of the spirit of political liberalism which appeared in France with the Restoration. Guizot can be thought of at one and the same time as being representative of the period, both as an individual and as a member of a generation facing up to a substantial problem.

As interesting as Rosanvallon's account of Guizot's political life is, a detailed summary would distort my thesis substantially. In his final chapter, "Le proche et le lointain" (3), Rosanvallon argues for the relevance of an understanding of Guizot's career, both as a politician and as an historian, to contemporary France.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le moment Guizot*, op. cit. p. 26

2. -- idem. -- p. 28

3. -- idem. -- pp. 372-376

We cannot accept today Guizot's concept, one shared by the founding fathers of the Third Republic, of a classless society progressing towards the ultimate disappearance of all fundamental antagonisms and concerned only with the functioning of social relationships. On the contrary, we have learned, Rosanvallon continues, sometimes at considerable expense, that the democratic idea cannot be disassociated from the reality of social divisions. Further

(1):

"[...] nous ne pouvons [...] concevoir [l'idée démocratique] que comme un travail permanent de la société sur elle-même, tâche toujours à reprendre d'élucidation de ce qui constitue le lien social et l'institue en sa radicale fragilité, dans l'acceptation de son impossible maîtrise du point de vue d'un savoir ou d'un pouvoir qui disposeraient souverainement de son essence."

In conclusion, Rosanvallon argues that, as far as political philosophy is concerned, the period of the Restoration clearly represents a significant stage in the history of political ideas in France. In addition, its relevance to the present day is that the limits of the democratic model are currently being observed in contemporary France.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le moment Guizot*, op. cit. p. 373

The formulae of economic democracy and collective bargaining, instituted to strengthen universal suffrage, are proving themselves inadequate to meet the challenge of the social oligopoly of the present, nor is it proving adequate to face up to the facts of the crisis in the welfare state, the smothering of the social democratic model, the revealed inefficacy of Keynesian economics, the whole raft of conflicting new values. "Dans ces conditions", Rosanvallon writes, "nous sommes aujourd'hui obligés de réapprofondir les notions de démocratie et de citoyenneté." (1)

He believes that much can be learned which is relevant to contemporary political problems from a study of the debates and considerations of the Restoration period and that of the July monarchy. It is not a question of re-reading Guizot in the hope of finding an answer to today's problems but a recognition that these problems require new thinking and a fundamental reappraisal, just as new thinking and a reappraisal of basic issues was required by Guizot's generation.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le moment Guizot*, op. cit. p. 375

L'Etat en France de 1789 à nos jours

"[...] l'Etat comme problème politique, ou comme phénomène bureaucratique, est au coeur des passions partisans et des débats philosophiques tout en restant une sorte de non-objet historique." (1)

Rosanvallon begins his history of the French state by stressing the need for a clear definition of exactly what is meant by the word "state". He lists four imperatives (2): "déglobalisation", "hiérarchisation", "articulation", and "totalisation" which, he contends, need to be considered in the evolution of an acceptable definition of (3) "l'Etat".

Of the first imperative, "déglobalisation", he argues that "L'Etat" is too often perceived as a block which is referred to only in the singular, as though it were a unified structure, a coherent "thing". Using the relatively easy statistical approach, measuring the entity which is the state by public expenditure for example, is conducive to an understanding in these terms.

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1. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **L'Etat en France de 1789 à nos jours**, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1990, p. 9
 2. -- idem. -- **L'Etat en France**, op. cit. pp. 11-14
 3. Following the usage so far in this thesis, "L'Etat" will be used when the reference is specifically to France, and "the state" when the argument is general. Inevitably, there are some borderline cases.

Such an approach may seem reasonably neutral, but amounts to in fact a gross over-simplification: the question of definition becomes only one of weight (emphasis in original. JT); it can be argued that, over a period of time, the institution has increased its size by this or that amount and its history thus becomes a statistical curve.

Rosanvallon considers that such a definition has two major drawbacks. First, the weight of the state becomes confused with the degree of and the form of its fiscal intervention in society. On this basis there is no way to distinguish between a democratic state and a totalitarian state, given that all the characteristics of the institution are summed up in one discrete set of statistics; in essence, the cause has become lost in the effect. Economic growth tables become a measure of the effectiveness of the state.

Such an approach leaves little room for history per se, Rosanvallon continues; rather, it reduces the focus to becoming one either of economics and the sociology of bureaucratic organisations or of philosophies of history linked, for example, to the Wagnerian concept of the "irresistible movement of civilisation" or to the Marxist theory of social change. Seeking clarification through such an approach leads rather to a certain degree of complication.

The pre-supposition of a simple history (emphasis in original. JT) tends to govern our approach to the phenomenon of the state. The modern state, Rosanvallon argues, is not a problem to be understood but only a heritage to be managed, a reality to be moulded or an issue to be fought over; the manner of this approach matters little. A recognition of this fact is not altered by an opinion which might extol overall a reduction in the weight of the state in the name of a necessary re-balancing of the equation state:civil society, or which might disassociate the errors of a reglementary state from the benefits of the state as an embodiment of the rule of law, or which might denounce the state as an institution in the service of the middle classes, or which might see in the state the only institution incorporating legitimately the general interest.

A history of the French state in statistical terms is a straightforward affair, Rosanvallon continues: 150,000 state employees at the dawn of the nineteenth century have become almost 3 million at the present time; a total of 6 ministers in 1815 neared 30 a century and a half later; a national budget in which the contribution of "L'Etat" to the national product has almost quadrupled since the First Empire. A history of the state in such terms becomes a matter of a few graphs.

Such a history moreover would reveal that "l'Etat" has never ceased spreading its tentacles throughout society, that the administration has swollen inexorably, exercising a power which has become increasingly widespread. Such a history of "L'Etat" would become confused with a growth realised to the detriment of society. Rosanvallon summarizes his argument (1):

"L'héritage colbertiste, la tradition jacobine et l'oeuvre napoléonienne en auraient constitué le ressort, nous enfermant dans une 'tradition étatique et centralisatrice' dont notre histoire serait le produit. C'est avec cette vision trop globale qu'il faut rompre".

Moving on to his second imperative (2), "hiérarchisation", Rosanvallon avers that a principal difficulty in a history of "l'Etat" consists in bringing out what he calls the "intelligibilité comparative". This means, he writes, being able to take into account national specificities and break at the same time the continuing and homogeneous perceptions of the phenomenon of the modern state. This is largely a problem of perspective.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- **L'Etat en France**, op. cit. p. 13
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 13-14

If the state is only thought of as the modern state, of which the expansion is linked to the advent of the individual and the secularisation of politics, its history is limited to that of what Rosanvallon calls a "rupture unique", beginning in the West in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The only essential differences are comprised in those elements which were a part of the old feudal system. In such a case, history would become entangled with political philosophy to the extent that the purpose of the latter is to consider this founding break of modern society. But at the same time it would become difficult to come to precise grips with the specifics of the French, English or German examples if only the conditions for the break with the old order are considered.

It is equally difficult to detail the difference between the nineteenth century state and that of the twentieth century if only because the long term relationship between the development of individualism and of statism extant in their common characteristics outweigh their peculiarities. It is the same if one begins with a different long-term approach, for example linking the development of the state to that of capitalism.

On the other hand, if one embraces a short-term view, for example only changes in régimes or in the political complexion of successive governments, elements of continuity become indiscernable. Thus a history of the state is strongly constrained by this necessity for a precision of perspective which will permit the integration and ranking of the different levels of perception of the phenomenon of statism.

Rosanvallon describes his third imperative (1) as being one of "articulation"; he writes that the state is not only an administrative mechanism, it is also an abstract political entity in so far as it incorporates the principle of sovereignty. It is an efficacious form of social representation. For this reason, he continues, the history of the state must be above all the product of a linkage between history as a record of factual happenings and the history of ideas and of social representation.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *L'Etat en France*, op. cit. p. 14

The state is a motive force of society at the same time as it is formed by the image which society has of it. It is not an object which has as an integral part of itself its own consistency, apart from society, but is in fact the result of a permanent inter-action with society. The state is thus both a solution and a problem: a solution because of its essential institutions, practices and rules, a problem because it only has consistency in relationship to an entity, society, a relationship which is always unstable, interminably taken up and debated. Thus a history of the state becomes a "crossroads history" ("histoire de carrefour"), and in no circumstances must be allowed to become a history of administration which only touches the state in so far as it has a defined purpose. Further, such a history becomes the privileged meeting place between political philosophy and history.

Rosanvallon's final imperative (1) is that of "totalisation". If the various specialist areas of competence of the state -- the economy, social affairs, justice, police, defence, etc. -- are considered discretely, one loses sight of the overall motivation.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *L'Etat en France*, op. cit. p. 14

Such an approach leads to a purely instrumental approach, in other words, the state as a structure aside from the society which impinges upon it. Thus the history of the state is not simply a sum of sectorial or specialised histories; such histories can only make sense if they are set in an all-embracing framework.

Rosanvallon's four imperatives lead him to conceive of a dynamic history of the state (1), a history which comprises an analysis of the conditions in which the elements which make up the basic relationship between the state and society have been formed. He writes that there can be no history of the state save a history which incorporates this relationship. He defines four basic concepts (2) making up this relationship: the state as a "Léviathan démocratique", as an "instituteur de social", as "providence" and as the "régulateur de l'économie".

He defines the "Léviathan démocratique" as being "l'Etat dans son rapport à la société comme puissance (rapport de constitution de l'Etat par la société)". This concept is a product of the concept of a political contract embodied in a constitution which opens the door to political democracy and representative government.

1. ROSANVALLON -- **L'Etat en France**, op. cit. p. 15

2. -- idem. -- pp. 15-16

Rosanvallon's second concept is that of the cohesive rôle of modern state as "L'instituteur du social" which, he writes, constitutes: "[...] l'Etat en tant qu'il produit du lien social et de l'unité, met en forme la société et constitue la nation (rapport d'institution)". This concept is particularly relevant with the advent of a society of individuals which has upset both the older relationship of "l'Etat" to society and to the idea of the nation.

Citing Hobbes' definition of the state as being an institution for limiting the uncertainties of life, Rosanvallon considers his third concept, "La providence". The older idea of the state as a protector of its citizens, spurred by at least the economic and social elements in the idea of human rights, has been enlarged progressively into that of the welfare state.

Finally, following what Rosanvallon calls the Keynesian revolution, economic affairs have become an element in what citizens expect of a state, leading often to a greater degree of regulation.

These four concepts become each a major part of the work of Rosanvallon under reference. He provides as an introduction a lucid statement of the problem for the French state at the dawn of a new millennium, a problem at the heart of the difficulties encountered by contemporary French scholars seeking to think through in an appropriate French intellectual discipline the implications of political liberalism for the modernization of the French republican and democratic model (1):

"[...]: alors que la société civile souhaite faire de l'Etat un pur instrument, aux prérogatives limitées, ce dernier tend à devenir de plus en plus actif pour répondre aux attentes de cette même société civile. Penser historiquement l'Etat est dans cette mesure un préalable à toute réflexion solide sur son avenir. Le volontarisme politique et les bonnes intentions resteront perpétuellement condamnés à l'échec tant qu'ils continueront à méconnaître l'Etat réel" (emphasis in original. JT).

The heart of Rosanvallon's **L'Etat en France** consists of a detailed exposition and historical analysis of the four concepts he defines and leads him to seek to draw the threads of his argument together in some "Réflexions finales" (2) in which he asks a number of questions: "[...]: où sont les continuités et les ruptures dans l'histoire de l'Etat moderne? Quelle est la spécificité du cas français? Comment réfléchir, à partir du cadre d'analyse qui a été proposé, l'avenir de la forme étatique?"

1. ROSANVALLON -- **L'Etat en France**, op. cit. p. 16

2. -- idem. -- p. 269

Rosanvallon recognizes the difficulties inherent in finding a suitably consistent vocabulary to be employed in describing the state and its attributes. Even the term "the modern state", or simply "L'Etat", is one which qualifies so many different forms of public authority that simply bringing it into use confounds any attempt at precise clarification. In seeking a way around this problem he has confined himself in this work to considering specifically the significant issues in the relationship "Etat-société" in France since 1789.

In seeking to have a wider perspective on the political form of the state, Rosanvallon argues, it is necessary to maintain a conceptual distinction between the idea of the state and other types of public authority and also between the differing forms of Western state. He discerns three stages of development of the Western state which he epitomises as (1) "[l]e moment de la laïcisation du politique", "[l]e moment libéral" and "[l]e moment démocratique".

1. ROSANVALLON -- *L'Etat en France*, op. cit. pp. 272-273

The first emerged as a result of a double process of secularization and the acquisition of territorial authority emerging from the crisis of the imperial model, a model itself linked to Christianity and not recognizing any legal difference between spiritual and temporal authority, at the end of the Middle Ages.

The state form appeared, Rosanvallon argues, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a means of resolving the tensions created by the theologico-political universalism of the Empire, creating coincidentally a preponderant rôle for lay jurists seeking to legitimize and regulate political power. The acquisition of political authority over a specific territory concentrated and reinforced the nascent power of emerging states and the idea of sovereignty entered into political usage as an expression of the double process of a concentration of means and of a territorial limitation which characterised the formation of Western states.

The liberal period followed. It was the result of a clarification of the juridical nature of the state and at the same time represented a deepening of the process of secularization of politics. At first this secularization was external, in the sense that ruling authorities, generally monarchs, sought to limit or eradicate the power of the Church in their realms.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, and becoming an integral part of the Reformation, this process became internal, concerned with the relationships between what was public and what was private and recognizing the generally inviolate nature of the persona, the freedom of individuals to think, the slow divorce between religion and morality.

At the same time, concepts of law, either natural or expressed as some form of social contract, entered into the political equation. Out of this emerged what Rosanvallon calls "le moment libéral", in other words, the recognition of and protection of the natural rights of individuals in so far as these rights provided the basis for the social body.

Rosanvallon's third "moment", that of the emergence of democracy, is a recognition of the advent of representative government, or the determination of civil society to legitimize and control itself, which, he writes, marks the transformation of a state based on law into a democratic state.

It would seem therefore that the history of the development of the state is linked to that of democracy and the evolution of individualism, a reason for which this history will not be understood if it is confined to a history of capitalism, for example, or of domination, as was often customary during those years when a marxist-type intellectual tradition prevailed.

As to the specific development of "l'Etat" in France, Rosanvallon argues that the application first of what he calls "pastorism"(1) and then of the principles of Keynesian economics have contributed for the last century to solidify the differences between the various states of Western Europe. In France, the process of a conscious laicisation of politics began earlier than it did in both Britain and Germany.

In France again, the concept of "L'Etat" preceded that of the nation, a reality which the Revolution served to accentuate; this was in direct contrast to the German experience, for example.

1. ROSANVALLON -- *L'Etat en France*, op. cit. p. 274. The word "Pastorism" expresses an idea which lends itself to a range of translations, from a late nineteenth century sentimentalist notion of the state as a good shepherd caring for a flock to the late twentieth century cynical expression: "nanny state".

This had two consequences, Rosanvallon argues: first, liberal ideas in France were slow to develop before 1789, and second, in post-revolutionary France the expression of popular sovereignty was both more radical and more subjective. Hence the concept of the state as the "instituteur du social" became more pronounced than in other Western European countries.

In England, as Rosanvallon points out, the three processes of the laicisation of politics, the acceptance of liberal political concepts and of representative democracy proceeded more or less simultaneously in parallel, taking the form of a natural evolutionary process.

Thus, Rosanvallon concludes, the French state has its own specific history, a history which is neither linear nor progressive in the sense of making up an unbroken stream. From this position he is critical of the Tocquevillean thesis of continuity, specifically the concept of "L'Etat" being a firm rock throughout the history of France, incorporating a principle of management and dominance of society which was never seriously challenged, the Jacobin experience being no more than a continuation of an inherited trend in government.

This position is only tenable if "L'Etat" is regarded as being no more than an administrative system and if the concept of "l'Etat" as a political entity is overlooked. If linearity and continuity characterise the history of the evolution of the administration, on the contrary the history of the state form per se in France is marked by a succession of major breaks. The Revolution marked a decisive break, a break which Tocqueville tended to gloss over, and in so doing downgraded the most significant specific event in the evolution of "L'Etat", that is, the assumption of the French state's rôle as "instituteur du social".

The evolution of the form of "l'Etat" has been parallel to that of democracy in France. For the future, Rosanvallon maintains, a clarification of the links between the spirit of political liberalism and the exigencies of democracy will inevitably modify the society:"Etat" relationship far more than any variations in fiscal policy. Society's perception of "l'Etat" will be tied directly to the latter's degree of political legitimacy.

The significance of Rosanvallon's thinking on the function of the state in a liberal polity, and specifically his consideration of the history of the evolution of "l'Etat" in contemporary France, is linked, I argue, to the fact that he signals the inherited ambiguity on the rôle and functions of "l'Etat", an ambiguity which still exists, even though its effects have been largely overcome.

The Problem of Popular Representation

"Le dilemme de la politique moderne peut facilement être résumé [...] dans les termes simples: la séparation du système politique et de la société civile est une condition de la liberté des individus; mais cette séparation productive risque en permanence de se transformer en distance négative. C'est pourquoi la coupure est en permanence revendiquée et dénoncée à la fois."
(1)

Rosanvallon perceives three distinct aspects in the history of the development of democracy in France (2). The first was the establishment of a society of equals; this has meant making a place for the modern subject of democracy, the individual as an elector, that is to say, the citizen. The second concerned the forms of democracy, in other words, making the sovereignty of the people an effective reality. The third concerned the mechanics of representative government.

Rosanvallon considered the first of these at length in his **Le Sacre du citoyen: Histoire du suffrage universel en France**, published in 1992. He is currently (2000) working on a history of the sovereignty of the people. Concerning representative government, his **Le Peuple introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France** was published in 1998.

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1. ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- "Malaise dans la représentation", in FURET, François, JULLIARD, Jacques et ROSANVALLON, Pierre - **La République du centre**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1988, p. 159
 2. ROSANVALLON -- **Le Peuple introuvable**, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1998, p. 22

An aspect of the development of the practice of politics in France which worries Rosanvallon (1) is the impact of the élites of the nation -- both in government and in the world of business -- on the democratic process. The reality of alternance and cohabitation is that the traditional division between left and right has become blunted; the division instead is tending to be between the élites and the mass of the electorate. Thus, given the weakening of passion in the political process, government in France is tending to become the reign of a single, multi-functional class of experts. This may be acceptable for as long as this class of experts can demonstrate continuing sensitivity to the needs and future prospects of the people (2).

The weakening of passion in politics is to be applauded, Rosanvallon maintains, but at the same time the erosion of the ideal of civic mobilization and of the active participation in public affairs by citizens is to be deplored. French society is (my emphasis. JT) more autonomous, more stable; Rosanvallon argues that the contemporary reality is akin to what Benjamin Constant called "la liberté des modernes", contrasting it with "la liberté des anciens" (3).

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 142
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 143-144
 3. -- idem. -- p. 145

In other words, the contemporary situation may be summed up as "la poursuite de l'autonomie individuelle contre la participation à un idéal collectif et l'incorporation dans un tout social" (1). This might be thought of as a sort of normalisation in France, making the national practice of politics approach the British and American political systems. Rosanvallon argues that there is no better example of this normalisation than the growing concern with human rights, which has been accompanied by the emancipation of the individual and the decline of the political relevance of the hitherto major political issues, capitalism and socialism (2).

He contends that it is not possible to build a political system around human rights (3): "Il est en effet impossible d'envisager l'avenir des sociétés démocratiques du seul point de vue de l'autonomie individuelle et du respect des différences." The tension between the individual and the collectivity is a hallmark of modern societies, torn as they tend to be between a permanent enlargement of the private sphere and the inextinguishable concept of the public good and common interest.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 145
 2. -- idem. --
 3. -- idem. --

French politics during the decade of the 1980s, Rosanvallon argues, became at one and the same time both "désociologisée" and "désidéologisée" (3). This process is no more than another aspect of the normalisation, even the banalisation, of the contemporary practice of politics.

There is an ambivalence in contemporary democratic practices, Rosanvallon believes, as individuals seek at one and the same time to maximize their individual liberty and to maximize the protection that civil society offers them. This contradiction is, as Tocqueville pointed out (2), a recipe for banality but it is (3):

"aussi une condition de la liberté. Un monde protecteur est un monde structuré par des règles et des conventions. Les individus ne cessent de s'insurger contre elles, de dénoncer leur rigidité et de réclamer des arrangements, mais c'est pourtant cette impersonnalité de la règle, neutre et froide, qui est un gage de liberté. Les sociétés démocratiques tendent inévitablement à la bureaucratie, au sens propre d'une régulation par des conventions et des règles formalisées: l'Etat de droit n'est pas autre chose en son essence".

Rosanvallon contends that France still does have a specific political problem dating from the Revolution: the political culture which is the child of the Revolution has radicalized the relationship between the political system and civil society (4).

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 149
 2. -- idem. -- p. 160
 3. -- idem. -- p. 159
 4. -- idem. -- p. 161

He points (1) to the Loi Le Chapelier (14 June 1791) as being a first legislative emanation of this modification of the relationship between "l'Etat" and the wider society. "L'Etat" was no longer the regulating peak and organiser of an articulated hierarchy of intermediate bodies; it became instead, as the principal agent of unification, the social motivator of a society of isolated individuals. "L'Etat" became (2) "la seule figure incarnant l'intérêt général en même temps qu'il résumait en lui la sphère publique".

From this genesis, Rosanvallon argues, there developed two myths in French political culture, the myth of consensus and the myth of transparence (3).

The first myth, consensus, dates from the Revolution and embodies the concept of a unified populace, "le peuple un" and is meant to symbolize the victory of the people over l'Ancien Régime. This had the advantage of contributing a certain mystique to the idea of "Nation" and at the same time simplified politics. But it also polarized politics: there was either consensus or there was civil war. Any opposition to a proposed course of action risked being seen as the beginning of a counter-revolutionary plot.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 161
 2. -- idem. p.162
 3. -- idem. p. 166

Thus the nation became an abstract figure and there was a consequent refusal to see it as merely being the sum of a large number of specificities. Thought of in such terms, the nation became politically irrepresentable, a fact which fired the multiplicity of debates around the concept of political representation during the revolutionary years. The echoes of this problem resounded well into the latter half of the twentieth century. The apparent ending of the problem in "la République du centre" of the last decade of the century is illusory, Rosanvallon warns (1):

"Nous sommes aujourd'hui dans une phase idéaliste. Les mots de consensus, de cohabitation et d'unité brillent au firmament de nos valeurs politiques. Nous sommes brutalement passés du fantasme de la guerre sociale à la célébration mièvre de l'unité. Nous sortons naïvement de l'âge idéologique pour entrer tout aussi naïvement dans un ersatz de maturité démocratique".

He believes (2) that the consensus of the decade of the 1980s was a false consensus which contributed to the growing number of "exclus", people shut out of the political process. He argues that there is only one fact, one consensus, upon which unanimity is indispensable in a democracy: the mutual recognition of and respect for a democratic majority and an opposition which will alternate at the helm of political power. A consensus which goes beyond this basic position risks stifling all political debate and careful deliberation.

1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 168

2. -- idem. --

In parallel with the myth of consensus is that of transparency, Rosanvallon continues (1), but the image is inverted. In 1789 "[on] aspire à un pouvoir immédiat et transparent de la volonté générale". Bureaucracy was regarded as being the practices of the monarchy in other clothes. At this time it was believed that the executive power should be no more than a simple mechanism of auto-administration of the civil society and that all social problems and difficulties could be resolved by legislation.

Rosanvallon sets out a concept which was simply not envisaged by the architects of the new society of the Revolution (1):

"L'art de la politique, qui consiste à gérer l'imprévu et l'accident, n'est donc pas véritablement reconnu et pris en compte. Cette double ambiguïté s'exprime de façon très spécifique dans le contexte français, en se greffant sur la notion de souveraineté de la nation qui postule un rapport global et immédiat entre le peuple et ses représentants. De là provient la tendance permanente à gouverner en légiférant."

Against this background Rosanvallon argues that the question of representation crystallizes what he calls "trois équivoques de la culture politique française"(3). These are: first, a permanent tendency to confuse liberalism and democracy; second, a critical ambiguity at the heart of the institutionalization of politics; and third, a difficulty in conceptualizing political legitimacy.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 169
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 170-171
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 175-176

The confusion between liberalism and democracy leads to a difficulty in distinguishing between the exigencies of political participation and the demands of a rule of law. The practice of politics in France, Rosanvallon argues (1), has the effect of reducing the democratic process to a mere positive process of political legitimation. Thus two contradictory objectives are apparent. The first gives political legitimacy to a government or an assembly by a formal transfer of sovereignty following a legislative election. The second is to ensure simply that one party or faction does not take over the government permanently.

The criticism of the institutionalization of politics has at its heart a long-established concern about the role of the bureaucracy and, specifically, a sometimes loosely-expressed popular mistrust of élitism in the higher echelons of the administration.

Concerning legitimation, Rosanvallon (1) perceives a difference between what he calls "légitimation constitutionnelle" and "légitimation politique" (emphases in original. JT). The first concerns the observance of the regulations and procedures embracing the performance of their duties by the various public bodies whilst the second seeks always to found the principle of legitimacy on sociological or cultural realities.

1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 178

This difference has led to a mutual suspicion between French civil society and the political system. Rosanvallon believes that, as a result, (1):

"La notion de volonté générale est ballotée entre ces deux conceptions de la légitimité, renvoyant tantôt à l'une, tantôt à l'autre, montrant par là même ses limites".

Manifestations of these limits are exemplified by the relationship between public opinion polls and the formal electoral procedures, with the first tending to take away the importance of the second. Again, the frequent contradictions between the short term and the long term can result in excessive opportunistic power being given to a recently-elected government at the expense of the longer-term interests of the nation.

Subsequently, some ten years later, Rosanvallon examined in considerable detail the history of democratic representation in France (2). In an introduction headed "Malaise dans la démocratie" he asks about the causes of this "malaise" and points out that it is by no means a new phenomenon in France.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. p. 179
 2. ROSANVALLON -- **Le Peuple introuvable**, op. cit. (p. 246 supra)

In seeking an answer to his own question, Rosanvallon recalls the obvious fact: democracy means the power of the people. He continues (1):

"L'imperatif est indissociablement politique et sociologique: il implique d'un même mouvement la définition d'un régime d'autorité et d'un sujet l'exerçant. Mais il est aussi pressant qu'obscur. Si le principe de la souveraineté du peuple fonde avec évidence la politique moderne, sa mise en oeuvre apparaît fort incertain. Dès son origine, la définition du régime moderne est marquée par une double indétermination, concernant tant la mode d'incarnation que des conditions de mise en forme du pouvoir démocratique".

In both these cases, he continues, the difficulties arise around the question of representation, a question which has two aspects, "mandat" and "figuration" (2). Further, there is a degree of conflict between the philosophical idea of democracy and the conditions of its institutionalization.

One cause of the problem is that the power of the people is not exercised directly in the modern world. This power tends to be moulded by the media and by the procedures of representative government.

1. ROSANVALLON -- **Le Peuple introuvable**, op. cit. p. 10

2. -- idem. -- p. 11. Rosanvallon signals a problem of semantics and argues that the German words Repräsentation (which he translates as "figuration symbolique") and Stellvertretung ("mandat") make the distinction clearer. In English, I argue, the French word "figuration" in this context is faithfully rendered as the mechanics of representation; there is no ambiguity with the translation of "mandat".

In terms of the mechanics of representation, Rosanvallon argues that (1) "[l]e peuple est un maître qui est à la fois impérieux et insaisissable". But, he asks, how is the concept of "the people" to be defined and recognized?

There are two principles, the one political and the other sociological. The political principle focusses the power of a collective subject whilst the sociological principle tends to weaken this power and make it obscure. In the past, the notion of the sovereignty of the people had little difficulty in accommodating the resultant tension, especially if it were a question of opposing absolutism or facing up to an external threat. Difficulties arise when this sovereignty has to perceive itself as an active and institutionalizing force.

These difficulties are accentuated by the imperative of equality in the modern world which serves to make each man and woman a subject before the law and a complete citizen and thus to make "man" a relatively abstract consideration, an autonomous subject. In other words, Rosanvallon argues (2): "c'est le sacre juridique de l'individu qui conduit à rejeter comme archaïque et insupportable toute appréhension substantielle du social".

1. ROSANVALLON -- **Le peuple introuvable**, op. cit. p. 12

2. -- idem. -- p. 13

Democratic society thus carries with it a radical rejection of all forms of organization and a permanent suspicion of any institution which might impede personal freedom or make mankind dependent upon an extraneous power. The requirements of equality and the conditions of autonomy impose their own imperatives: the only legitimate social ties are those which emanate from a voluntary agreement between free individuals and which relate either to the demands of nature or the legacy of history. The contemporary reality is different. Modernity, Rosanvallon contends (1):

"impose ainsi de désubstantialiser le social pour le ramener à une pure quotité: celle des conditions d'équivalence et de commensurabilité entre des individus indépendants. Le social perd en ce sens toute consistance propre pour céder la place à un principe formel de construction juridique. Substance et procédure se confondent [...]"

Thus in modern democracy, the concept of "the people" has no structure; it loses its corporate density and becomes simply "numbers", a force composed of equals, of individuals whose only equality is before the law. This is the reality of universal suffrage; society becomes no more than an arithmetical fact and the substance is lost in cyphers. The consequent contradiction between the nature of democratic society (a society without substance) and the presumption of democratic politics (constructing a representative fictional individual) engenders an endless fruitless search for an identity (2).

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le Peuple introuvable*, op. cit. p. 13
2. -- idem. -- p. 18

This search for an identity has, in the past, taken place in two separate ways: first, to give substance to "the people" but also to clarify the links between the representative and the represented. From this position, Rosanvallon argues that (1):

"[l]es deux principes de figuration de la totalité et d'incarnation des particularités vont ainsi être tour à tour convoqués pour tenter de donner chair à la démocratie".

It is not enough, Rosanvallon continues, to describe the inherent malady of the democratic experience simply as a tension between the abstract and the concrete, or even as another, somewhat banal, example of the conflict between the ideal and reality. He stresses that it is the concept of the "peuple concret" which remains indeterminate; there is nothing upon which the imperative of the sovereignty of the people may be founded. It is not a question of simply locating or redefining this concept; rather, it is to be constructed. Thus the question of the mechanics of representation becomes one of prime importance.

Rosanvallon traces the history of thinking about the problem of representation from the Revolution through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting, inter alia, the thinking of Proudhon and such initiatives as the "Manifeste des soixante".

1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le Peuple introuvable*, op. cit. p. 18

Drawing together the threads of his argument, Rosanvallon contends (1) that the search for rationalization of the mechanics of representation risks leading to one or the other of two extremes: the political power may absorb society completely (the totalitarian threat) or the political structure may be fragmented into a large number of small units. Yet the problem of making the mechanics of representation effective lies somewhere between these extremes. Neither more effective political parties nor concepts of specialized second elected assemblies point towards a solution.

In his formal Conclusion (2), he expresses a degree of pessimism (3):

"Il est ainsi illusoire, désormais, de rêver à une politique qui prendrait commodément et solidement appui sur des corps intermédiaires, exprimant des identités sociales évidentes. Il est aussi vain de renouer avec l'utopie de reformulation des identités qui était à l'oeuvre dans la vision originelle de la démocratie des partis. La question de la figuration politique se pose maintenant de face, dans toute sa radicalité. La difficulté est devant nous, irréductible."

Rosanvallon recognizes that there is no simple solution to the problem which he has analysed with such depth and elegance.

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1. ROSANVALLON -- *Le Peuple introuvable*, op. cit. p. 306
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 337-363

Summary

Rosanvallon emphasizes the fundamental importance of taking into account the political developments in France over the entire revolutionary period (1789-1814) as a basis of understanding the subsequent evolution of French political thought. This period represented a break in the way in which both history and politics was considered. A crucial question, still not entirely settled, is the dichotomy in relationship between political liberalism and democracy in France. A major element in Rosanvallon's work, has been the exploration of the continuing reasons for this dichotomy or why the democratic ideal of public participation turned so strongly against the idea of individual liberty during much of the history of contemporary France.

The revolutionary experience provided a major difference between the development of liberalism in France and in England. In England, this was a gradual experience over the centuries from 1688; in addition, any serious difference between concepts of economic and political liberalism made little sense in English political thinking. The French problem of defining the relationship between the citizen and the individual simply did not arise in England.

Rosanvallon argues that his focus on the thinking and achievements of Guizot during the period of the Restoration and the July Monarchy is relevant to contemporary France in that, just as now (Rosanvallon was writing in the early 1980s) the priority was to take the passion out of politics and, above all, to seek radically new solutions to the problems emanating from notions of democracy and citizenship. He signals what he regards as an error in Guizot's thinking: the concept that the democratic ideal might be disassociated from the reality of social divisions.

Against this background, Rosanvallon considers the evolution of the modern state. He stresses the need for a clear understanding of exactly what is meant by the term "l'Etat". For him a comprehension of the term requires four essential and discrete elements. These elements are, first, a recognition that "l'Etat" is not monolithic and is not to be assessed by detailed economic data and statistical analyses; second, a sensitivity to the evolution of all the elements which have contributed to the development of a specific national state at a given point in its history is needed; third, a recognition that "l'Etat" has many facets, being at one and the same time a political reality, an administrative mechanism, a form of social representation and an image of the society which it represents; finally, due regard must be given to the multifarious character of "l'Etat" and the fact that it comprises a large number of differing areas of competence.

Rosanvallon constructs a matrix, as it were, of four functions of the modern state, which he names a democratic Leviathan, a social administrator, a source of charity and an economic regulator.

He defines three stages in the evolution of this modern state: the emergence of political secularity, the advent of liberalism and the birth of democracy. Whereas in England each of these stages evolved one after the other over a period of centuries and thus seldom presented any serious problem of comprehension to the people as a whole, in France the whole process was telescoped into the Revolution, thus destroying linearity and continuity and providing a problem for popular comprehension.

Subsequently, Rosanvallon has concentrated his thinking on the problems associated with democracy and citizenship in the modern state, and specifically in contemporary France. He has considered both the history of and the current implications of modern democracy as being a society of equals, the question of the meaning of the sovereignty of the people (he seeks an acceptable definition of the concept of "the people") and the mechanics of representative government ("la figuration").

A problem to which he gives considerable attention is the relationship between the implications of individual autonomy and the collective ideal and the effective incorporation of a solution to this problem into a social totality. He stresses that, in his view, it is simply not possible to build a viable political system around human rights. In contemporary occidental societies there is a contradiction between the desire of individuals to maximize their personal liberty and at the same time to exact the maximum benefit from the collectivity.

Rosanvallon argues that the apparent political consensus in contemporary France is a false consensus in that there are far too many "exclus", people who feel themselves outside the democratic process. This is revealing of a substantial problem in the mechanics of political representation and, behind this problem, conceptual and philosophical difficulties with definitions of "the people". The extremes shuttle from the revolutionary concept of "le peuple Un" of the Revolutionary period (experience has shown that this is an invitation to totalitarianism, with the people being incorporated in the state) to an anarchic ideal of a large number of small units with no strong central unifying political entity.

In contemporary occidental societies, "the people" approximates to Hobbes' "multitude", a mere collectivity of numbers. Rosanvallon is concerned that opinion polls in such a perceived collectivity tend to weaken the essential democratic process and to encourage the primacy of short-term considerations.

He argues that the imprecision in the representation process and the consequent looseness of definition of democracy leads, almost inevitably, to the strength of the bureaucracy; this is also an invitation to élitism. France, he feels, is tending to be governed by an élite in both the administration and in large corporations; this élite, having generally a common background, has little difficulty in finding common cause and in setting common objectives.

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MARCEL GAUCHET

Introduction

"A commencer par la présupposition cardinale qu'il faut qu'une société veuille être pour être, avec la conséquence qui en découle, l'union nécessaire du gouvernant et des gouvernés grâce à laquelle advient cet indispensable savoir de soi du social -- union dont la composition générale et la coïncidence claire des volontés individuelles au sein du souverain fournit la version la plus rigoureuse. Le plus moderne même de la philosophie du contrat -- l'artificialisme individualiste -- prend tacite appui sur un reste de représentation ancienne des conditions d'existence du lien social -- la coïncidence (consciente) de l'atome avec le tout et la conjonction (réfléchie) de la communauté politique prise en corps avec son principe instituant. Ou pour le dire autrement, c'est à l'intérieur toujours du modèle de la société assujettie que s'est opérée l'invention du social-sujet." (1)

Marcel Gauchet, an eminent scholar from a humble background, was appointed a Director of Studies at the EHESS in 1989. Claude Lefort, whom he met as a student in the University of Caen in 1966, was an important early influence. Subsequently, he worked with Cornelius Castoriadis and Miguel Abensour.

With Pierre Nora, he became joint editor of *Le Débat*, in 1980, a fact which established his professional reputation as a thinker. His thinking develops from the meeting point of history and philosophy.

1. GAUCHET, Marcel -- *Le désenchantement du monde: une histoire politique de la religion*, Gallimard, Paris, 1985, p. 251

Gauchet acknowledges his debt to Max Weber for the title of his first major work, **Le désenchantement du monde**. Weber used the expression "the disenchantment of the world" to mean "the elimination of magic as a salvation technique" (1).

In addition to his **Le désenchantement du monde**, I consider in this chapter Gauchet's **La Révolution des pouvoirs** (2), published in 1995, as well as, briefly, a lengthy article on Tocqueville which appeared in the review **Libre** in 1980 (3) and an editorial essay and analysis to a critical edition of the work of Benjamin Constant (4), also published in 1980.

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1. GAUCHET -- **The Disenchantment of the World**, English language translation by BURGE, Oscar, Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 3
 2. -- idem. -- "Tocqueville, l'Amérique et nous" in **Libre**, Vol. 7, 1980, pp. 43-120
 3. CONSTANT, Benjamin -- **De la liberté chez les modernes**, Collection Hachette Pluriel, 1980

Le désenchantement du monde

The Universality of Religion

Gauchet believes that a clear understanding of the importance of religion in primaeval societies is an essential prerequisite to an appreciation of the importance of an absence of religion from the current European political equation. "Pas d'entente de la prégnance d'autrefois sans un discernement exact de la déprise d'aujourd'hui." (1)

He argues (2) that in earlier polities in which religion was dominant, the principle that the will of the individual had always to be subservient to the principle of collective communal organisation was inevitably the most general characteristic: the dependency of individuals on the collectivity was paramount. In such societies there could be very little room for personal choice. He emphasizes that by "choice" he means the various ways in which it is possible to accept a specific number of elemental constraints; situations in which a choice is required for a fundamental reason to the extent that it is of the nature of these constraints to have "de leur teneur même de ne pas se laisser rapporter à des causes qui décideraient de leur prévalence" (3).

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. "Présentation", p. iv
 2. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 18
 3. -- idem. -- "Présentation", p. xiii

There is, Gauchet maintains, a core of basic possibilities governing the relationship of individual men and women with themselves, with their peers and with the wider world. Briefly, and in other words (1):

"[...] il y a du transcendantal dans l'histoire, et il est de la nature de ce transcendantal de ménager la latitude d'un rapport réfléchi au travers duquel l'espèce humaine choisit de fait entre un certain nombre de manières possibles d'être ce qu'elle est."

He argues (2) that the acceptance by some ancient societies of the idea of a personal god was a development of fundamental significance. Such a belief tended to exclude any perceived need for institutional intermediation (through a priestly caste, for example) and was to lead, eventually, to a degree of religious individuality, a concept which was still, however, far from any idea of the individual as a social or a political entity.

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1. GAUCHET -- Le désenchantement du monde, "Présentation", op. cit. p. xiv
 2. -- idem. -- p. 77

Making a case for what he calls the "historicité du religieux" (1), Gauchet avers that the religious element is found constantly, even invariably, in the development of human societies. Calling this reality a primordial and an essential precondition for the survival of human society which may be traced back to the earliest recorded history of our species, he maintains that religion is a "Phénomène originel, qu'on trouve aussi loin qu'on puisse remonter dans le temps des hommes, phénomène universel, auquel on ne connaît aucune société qui ait échappé [...]" (2).

There is very often a considerable satisfaction to be found in Gauchet's prose and specifically in some of his more felicitous phrases. Thus in describing the place of religion in our society, he writes that (3):

"Le religieux, c'est le principe de mobilité mis au service de l'immobile, c'est le principe de transformation mobilisé pour garantir l'intangibilité des choses, c'est l'énergie du négatif tout entière retournée au profit de l'acceptation et de la reconduction de la loi établie. Là est tout le mystère de notre histoire, que dans son rapport conflictuel avec lui-même l'homme ait commencé par repousser cela précisément, cette vérité discordante de lui-même, cette incertitude de son insertion dans le monde et sa féconde instabilité d'être du mouvement. La religion, en ce sens: l'énigme de notre entrée à reculons dans l'histoire. "

1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 9

2. -- idem. --

3. -- idem. -- p. 11

In other words, a significant element in the political history of religion in Occidental societies is tied to the fact that mankind in these societies has sought to rationalise and to understand the Christian religion. In the pre-Christian era, it could be said of Greek mythology, for example, that the power of the gods was greatest when people believed wholeheartedly in them and that this power vanished with the knowledge that natural phenomena and human triumphs and disasters did not have a divine origin; in short, the gods existed for just as long as people believed in them.

Thus for Gauchet (1): "Des religions primitives au christianisme moderne, le trajet est celui d'une réapprobation de cela, la source du sens et le foyer de la loi, qui a été initialement rejeté, et radicalement, hors de la prise des acteurs humains."

1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 12-13

Gauchet believes that the ubiquity of religion in one form or another throughout the human race and its history makes it possible to identify the essential elements underpinning the need for mankind to establish and codify behavioural rules (1). Religion in a pure state puts, in Gauchet's words, (2): "[...] le présent dans une absolue dépendance envers le passé mythique [...]".

All major religions by their very character are radically conservative and demand an unstinting conformity (3) as well as representing a desire for mankind to return to nature (4). He introduces the idea of a rule of reciprocity, a more elegant way of describing an Old Testament concept (5). Gauchet's prose is unambiguous (6):

"Il y a, dans ce qui attache constitutivement l'homme à ses semblables, le ferment d'une indétermination conflictuelle. La loi de réciprocité, c'est, dans la paix de l'échange consenti comme dans le déchaînement restitutif de la vengeance, l'inquestionnable religieux du fondement mis en forme de rapport social, la prévalence unanime des raisons dernières assurée en acte contre ce qui engage les individus les uns envers les autres, libre délibération ou mortelle opposition."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 13
 2. -- idem. -- p. 15
 3. -- idem.
 4. -- idem. -- p. 17
 5. Exodus, 21:23: "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."
 6. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 19

The rule of reciprocity is, of course, closely allied to concepts of choice (1); a major consideration in religion as a code of social behaviour is to ensure that the process of choice is qualified. In short, at the heart of religious attitudes is the acceptance, Gauchet avers, of (2) "[...]le dehors comme source et l'immuable comme règle" (emphasis in original. JT).

He develops his argument (3) and closes it (4) by identifying two major cultural elements in primaeval religion: first, an unshakeable conservatism expressed as a determination to hold on to existing beliefs and, second, the claimed conformity of collective experience to these beliefs. All subsequent evolution of religions questions these tenets.

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 20
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- pp.20-21
 4. -- idem. -- p. 25

The Emergence of the State

Gauchet argues that a development of fundamental significance for the ultimate emergence of men and women as autonomous individuals, but a development which at first sight seems paradoxical, was the gradual emergence of the state ("l'Etat") as an authoritarian institution imposing a hierarchy and illiberal and inegalitarian codes of practice by coercion. Such a state was almost invariably allied with established religion and became, in Gauchet's words, a "transformateur sacré" (1). Thus, in essence: "Les dieux s'éloignent, ce bas-monde se scinde de l'autre monde qui le détermine et le comprend, mais en même temps, l'inquestionnable institué entre de plus en plus dans le questionnable, comme s'affirme la prise des hommes sur l'organisation de leur propre univers." (2)

The emergence of the state was one of three crucial consecutive developments, Gauchet argues, which, taking place over a period of three or four millennia, constituted "major upheavals" (3). The second such development was the appearance over a period of some 600 years (Gauchet, citing Karl Jaspers, says 800 to 200 BC) (4) the idea of an extra-terrestrial divinity, and the third the advent of Christianity.

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 26
 2. -- idem. -- p. 27
 3. -- idem. -- p. 28
 4. -- idem. -- p. 42

Gauchet regards the first of these upheavals as being the most important, with religion becoming embodied in the state as part of a mechanism of domination (1): "Dominants et dominés, ceux qui sont du côté des dieux et ceux qui ne le sont pas".

The idea of divinity thus became translated into the politics of human domination and coercion (2):

"[...] l'essentiel est qu'il y aura désormais au coeur du visible et de l'accessible un répondant de l'ailleurs instituant, et des hommes absolument différents de leurs semblables dans la mesure où ils participent directement ou indirectement de l'invisible foyer sacré où s'alimente l'existence collective. Il en est qui parlent et ordonnent au nom des dieux, qui ont la maîtrise des rites où renaît le sens originel des choses, en la chair des quels on touche, littéralement, au principe supérieur qui commande le monde."

Gauchet outlines three discrete dynamics of transformation wrought by the development of the state and its institutional apparatus: the creation of a hierarchy, the fact of domination and, following on from a need for domination, a desire for conquest (3).

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 42.
 2. -- idem. -- p. 30
 3. -- idem. -- p. 32

By hierarchy he understands (1): "[...] l'incorporation de l'altérité du fondement dans la substance même du lien social et sa diffusion ou sa réfraction tangibles à tous les niveaux". Domination through coercive tension ensured that a tyrant, either individual or institutional (2): "[...] garde [le reste de la société] fidèle à sa loi et en harmonie avec les forces de l'univers". And conquest carried the ultimate implication and perspective of (3): "[...] une domination universelle, de l'unification dernière du monde connu sous la férule du plus puissant parmi les puissants".

The second "upheaval", that of the evolution of the concept of religion as being built around an extra-terrestrial divinity, gave rise to what Gauchet summarizes as the (4): "Ecart de l'ici-bas et de l'au-delà, subjectivation du principe divin, universalisation de la perspective de vie: ce sont les résultantes fondamentales de la subversion religieuse [...]".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 32
 2. -- idem. -- p. 36
 3. -- idem. -- p. 38
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 42-43

This led to the third "upheaval"; the concepts and practices of Christianity; the search for a meaning in human life no longer depended on a divine gift but could be found in this world within each individual (1). Gauchet does not mention St Luke's "The kingdom of God is within you" (2), but it would seem that this is the idea he is wishing to convey.

In any event, the ultimate realisation by mankind of the essential indifference of "the gods" to human endeavour and human suffering is a major milestone along the road of genuine independence and hence of individual autonomy. As Gauchet says, inimitably, a (3):

"[...] ligne de partage s'établit autour de la fracture de fond impersonnalité immanente/subjectivisme transcendant, même ultime/autre séparé -- et comment, plus particulièrement, ce que nous nommons rationalité dépend quant à sa naissance d'un mode déterminé de subjectivation et de séparation de l'Autre qui fait être."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 48
 2. St Luke, ch. 21
 3. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, p. 49

This awareness caused in turn the evolution of a communal code of behaviour which could deviate from then-current perceptions of what the Creator intended and which hence could create a potential dichotomy of loyalty between divine law and the law of the community (1). As Gauchet explains (2):

"Reste qu'il y a désormais autre chose, qu'elle ne saurait épuiser le champ de bonne harmonie entre la règle de ce monde et les nécessités de l'autre, leur désemboîtement et leur écart irréductible fondent un conflit toujours possible. Par-dessus les pouvoirs terrestres, toujours concevable d'en appeler aux exigences plus élevées d'un au-delà excluant par nature qu'on parvienne à totalement s'arroger sa représentation souveraine ici-bas."

Refuting the common suggestion of religion as an "instrument of legitimation" (3), Gauchet argues that the more a divinity is respected for its omniscience, the less it will be the subject of dark and superstitious fears. He suggests a precept which might be termed a law of human emancipation through divine affirmation (4): "[...] plus les dieux sont grands, plus les hommes sont libres".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 50
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 52
 4. -- idem. -- p. 53

He is thus distinguishing between pure religion, which might be thought of as an innate love and respect for a divinity on the part of mankind, and any expression of religion as dogma, which, he has no doubt, has had the effect throughout history of being a coercive instrument for enforcing submission. Thus for pure religion (1): "En sa teneur dernière, la croyance devient socialement incontrôlable par quelque instance régulatrice que ce soit". The evolution of a recognition of a growing dichotomy between the temporal and the spiritual gave increasing power to the temporal state, which, in Gauchet's words, is (2):

"[...] ramassant en lui, avec le principe actif de la cohésion collective -- ce qui continue de tenir la société ensemble -- , le droit général d'administration inhérent à l'autosuffisance de la sphère terrestre".

The inevitable result was the subversion and ruin of the system of ecclesiastical hierarchy (3). But at the same time the temporal state was sowing the seeds of its own enfeeblement by encouraging independence and autonomy among individuals. In Gauchet's words, the state (4): [...] produit suicidairement l'indépendance des individus quand il continue de supposer le primat de l'ordre social comme assise".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 52
 2. -- idem. -- p. 65
 3. -- idem. -- p. 66
 4. -- idem.

Thus, he continues (1): "[...] la restitution du lien de société à la puissance des hommes est-elle au bout de ce grand mouvement de dépli de la dualité ontologique dont c'est l'originalité unique de l'histoire que d'avoir été le théâtre."

In summary (2), he argues that the hallmarks of western religion are rationality, freedom for the individual and an assumption of the right of mankind to exploit his natural environment.

Gauchet considers that Calvin's idea of a City-Church marked a stage in the evolution of the individual in western society, even though Calvin's vision was of a complete fusion between the spiritual and the temporal. Calvin's concept of individualism was some way from the modern conception of a society of independent and self-sufficient equals. Geneva under Calvin was more a social collectivity with imposed communal homogeneity than a society of free individuals. Calvin believed that the individualism of its citizens could be, and should be, expressed in personal quests for spiritual salvation through worldly activity (3).

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 67
 2. -- idem. -- p. 73
 3. -- idem. -- p. 77

It was not until a central political authority, the state ("l'Etat") became completely secular that religion could become a matter of a personal and private faith for each individual man or woman, an expression of his or her own code of values. Gauchet maintains that the nature of the bond between civic society as a whole and individuals changed with the emergence of the modern state, an institution receiving its political legitimacy from a specific act of delegation by sovereign individuals rather than from a claimed divine authority. The result was a freeing of the individual from obligation towards the central political authority; the political and administrative institution became the state and autonomous human beings gained control of themselves (1).

He summarizes the logical outcome of western religious experience, that is, the principle of individuality: (2):

"Ainsi l'histoire du principe d'individualité se confond-elle avec le procès d'expression et de transcendance: il émerge avec elle, sous forme timide d'intériorité; il passe dans les faits en fonction absolument seul devant un dieu absolument hors de ce monde; le citoyen seul et libre devant l'incarnation dans l'Etat souverain de l'autonomie humaine: mutation de rapport à l'autre monde et révolution de rapport entre les créatures de ce monde, deux figures complémentaires du mouvement religieux occidental à son terme."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 79
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 79-80

Upon this basis, there were two developments unique to Christian Western Europe which shaped subsequent political evolution: the growth of the state ("l'Etat") as a discrete and autonomous entity, and the proliferation of economic activity built around production rather than trade, changing communal economies from a basis of subsistence to a market orientation national in extent as western mankind assumed for himself the right to exploit his natural environment. Gauchet describes both as elements in religious rejection (1), as religious indebtedness to a Divine Authority evolved into, remarkably, a duty to create (2). This provided what he calls "l'énergie du changement" (3), specifically as far as man's relationship with nature, that is, with his environment, is concerned.

The outstanding characteristic of the application of this original and decisive "énergie de changement" was (4): "sa dimension économique ou dynamique, l'extraordinaire libération-mobilisation de forces à laquelle il correspond".

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1. GAUCHET -- *Le désenchantement du monde*, op. cit. p. 82
 2. -- idem. p. 92
 3. -- idem. p. 90
 4. -- idem. p. 91

In addition, Christianity's specificity, as compared to Buddhism or Islam (1), was that it rejected what Gauchet calls stabilizing solutions, amounting to either the lack of involvement of Buddhism in the affairs of this world or the complete submission to the Divine Will of Islam. Rather for Christian Western Europe, Gauchet argues, there could be (2):

"Ni doctrine radicalement escapiste, ni morale de la parfaite soumission, ni vraie possibilité de pur renoncement -- même si l'option a durablement représenté une tentation majeure."

In short, Gauchet argues, in Christian Western Europe secular economic efficacy came to be identified with spiritual virtue (3), thus providing a solid base for the evolution of more or less autonomous individuals (4) and, for these individuals, the concomitant (5): "[...] liberté d'organiser son labeur en laquelle s'esquisse cette antériorité de la relation aux choses sur le lien de société qui constituera le coeur de l'individualisme économique des modernes [...]".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit.
pp. 93-95
 2. -- idem. p. 96
 3. -- idem. p. 99
 4. -- idem. p. 114
 5. -- idem. p. 116

With this evolution, the nature of political power changed, resulting in the genesis and birth of the modern state. What was needed by a society in which economic expansion through efficient markets was, in Gauchet's words (1) "[l]a perpétuité collective". Primacy was given to effective administration and the maintenance of an ordered environment in which contracts were honoured and legal redress was obtainable at the expense of military glory, conquest and domination.

Gauchet considers this development to be of fundamental importance. He maintains that (2):

"[...] l'émergence de l'Etat apparaît clairement comme l'événement majeur de l'histoire humaine. Elle ne marque pas une étape dans un progrès continu de différenciation des fonctions sociales et de stratification des statuts. Elle ne représente pas un surgissement inexplicable venant abolir par malencontre un ordre plus naturel et plus juste. Elle correspond à une gigantesque remaniement des articulations constitutives de l'établissement humain, à une transformation, au sens strict du terme -- tous les éléments du dispositif d'avant se trouvent dans le dispositif d'après, autrement répartis et liés."

1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 117

2. -- idem. -- p. x ("Présentation")

Describing modern man as "homo oeconomicus" (1) and modern individualism as economic individualism, Gauchet summarizes the achievements of what he calls the Christian revolution and avers that this revolution had three main components (2):

"Un changement d'assiette du pouvoir politique par délocalisation du souverain incarnateur, une transformation de la sociabilité religieuse à la fois par la spécification d'une communauté de salut, et par l'élargissement de l'autorité sacerdotale en fonction de la nécessité d'une herméneutique du mystère divin, une réforme de l'être-au-monde, enfin, de façon plus générale, par division des impératifs et l'impossibilité de hiérarchiser de façon stable entre consentement et refus, indépendance et soumission: telles nous paraissent être les trois composantes fondamentales de la révolution chrétienne."

Thus, Gauchet argues, the two strands which make up the dominant features of contemporary Western civil societies, that is, the power of the state and national productive economic activity built around a market economy, have their origins in the unique nature of the evolution of Christianity in Western Europe over several centuries. As these strands developed over the centuries, they were accompanied by a concomitant -- and inevitable in the circumstances -- fundamental reassessment of the nature of the union between the governing and the governed, the peak of which is reached with what Gauchet calls (3) "la coïncidence claire des volontés individuelles au sein du souverain".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 126
 2. -- idem. -- p. 202
 3. -- idem. -- p. 251

A prime element in Gauchet's basic thesis is that the sacral element of devotion to a concept, which used to be removed from day-to-day human activity, is now reincorporated in this activity, not for the glorification of a deity, as in the past, but for the glorification of the individual (1):

"A savoir [...] que l'originalité radicale de l'Occident moderne tient toute à la réincorporation au coeur du lien et de l'activité des hommes de l'élément sacral qui les a depuis toujours modelés du dehors."

He maintains that the evolution of contemporary individualism rests intellectually on a foundation evolved from ancient society and is based upon a subjective relationship (2):

"Le plus moderne même de la philosophie du contrat -- l'artificialisme individualiste -- prend tacite appui sur un reste de représentation ancienne des conditions d'existence du lien social -- la coïncidence (consciente) de l'atome avec le tout et la conjonction (réfléchie) de la communauté politique prise en corps avec son principe instituant. Ou pour le dire autrement, c'est à l'intérieur toujours du modèle de la société assujettie que s'est opérée l'invention du social-sujet."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p.i ("Présentation")
 2. -- idem. -- p. 251

The consequence of this "artificialisme individualiste" in contemporary France may be seen from a double viewpoint: the social implementation of sovereignty as being freedom for individuals to evolve and the political implementation as being a generalization of the role of the state (1).

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1. GAUCHET -- **The Disenchantment of the World,** Princeton, 1997, p. 182. The original French text is (p. 264): "Il résulte deux choses de cette évolution associant l'exercice social de la souveraineté comme liberté du devenir et son double politique comme généralisation du rôle de l'Etat: une transformation de la figure de l'avenir et une transformation du dispositif au travers duquel son souci prend corps."

The Separation of Civic Society and the State

Gauchet emphasizes the acceptance of this freedom of individuals to evolve and links it to the role of the modern state; he distinguishes "l'Etat" from the wider civil society in a development which might be thought to be at the heart of the evolution of "libéralisme" in France in the last decades of the twentieth century. Civil society retains the element of a collective self-presence in a rapidly changing social, economic and political environment; the state is no longer the agent of immutability.

This, Gauchet insists, is a remarkable development (1).

"Le remarquable, en regard, avec la subjectivation occidentale de l'être collectif, c'est de faire naître l'immuable du changement même. Plus des agents visibles non seulement se succèdent à travers le temps, mais innovent, ajoutent, apportent, brisent avec les formes établies et les renouvellent, plus ils confirment l'inaltérable identité à soi qui conserve, à distance, l'englobant immortel censé les réunir, plus ils en alimentent l'invisible individualité, plus ils en certifient la perpétuité transcendante. D'où, soit dit au passage, la pertinence particulière que conserve envers et contre tout la notion de progrès s'agissant de désigner cette manière de présence immobile de l'être collectif à lui-même au milieu des bouleversements d'un univers matériel par ailleurs en expansion."

1. GAUCHET -- *Le désenchantement du monde*, op. cit. p. 270-271

He emphasizes the importance of understanding the separation of the state from civil society, what he calls the (1) "autonomisation de la société civile, cela veut dire libération d'un pôle pratique de mouvement par rapport à un pôle transendant de stabilité," as part of the culture of change which marks contemporary society, specifically contemporary France.

In France scarcely more than half a century ago, Gauchet points out (2), the counter-revolutionary political grouping which had as its objective the re-establishment of traditional and hierarchical "order" lost its political credibility. The same has now happened to what used to be thought of as the political allegiances of the future, the revolutionary parties. Gauchet insists that this development does not constitute any sort of potential crisis, but is in fact the recognition of a normal state of affairs. These political ideologies might be thought of, Gauchet argues, as the last vestiges of religion (3):

"Ce qui se délite avec les idéologies, c'est la forme dernière, vestigiale qu'aura revêtue le religieux en notre monde -- l'ultime recomposition à avoir été possible de l'image d'un ordre social laïc en termes d'ordre du dehors, soit par décalque du contenu (eschatologie), soit par emprunt de structure (éternité 'bourgeoise' de rapports sociaux simplement soumis à progrès, de l'autorité familiale aux lois du marché, en passant par l'obligation politique)."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le Désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 272
 2. -- idem. -- p. 266
 3. -- idem. -- p. 267

Gauchet signals the importance of understanding apparently contradictory elements in contemporary relationships between civil society and "l'Etat", what he calls (1) "cette double dynamique si déroutante au premier abord de la libéralisation et de l'étatisation". Civil society becomes the sphere of individual autonomy and social change (2) "devient en un sens profond le mouvement des individus".

A principal element is the economic role of the state. Although Gauchet does not use the expressions, this might be thought of as a recognition by the state of its general inefficacy in micro-economic matters and the concomitant recognition that its role can be little more than one of macro-economic "fine-tuning" in an international market economy. He sets out the consequences (3):

"Il en résulte notamment la séparation de l'économie, avec la dissolution de tout plan corporatif fixant à l'avance, au nom des intérêts supérieurs de la chose publique, la répartition des tâches et l'ajustement des fonctions. S'y substitue la libre dynamique d'une division du travail social réglée par les seules nécessités internes du procès de production-consommation, nécessités elles-mêmes individuellement assumées (liberté d'entreprendre) et anonymement régulées (la 'main invisible' du marché)."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 268
 2. -- idem. -- p. 275
 3. -- idem. -- p. 273

This represents, for Gauchet, a development of prime importance. What is important now in contemporary French society is the future, not the past, which means that any element of control becomes (1): "le règne du temps d'avant contre la régulation par après". The market brings an anonymous collective order resulting from the actions of individuals in a situation in which no single individual has the power to impose his will on the collectivity. The result is that Western societies in general manifest a certain ambiguity, being at one and the same time (2) "les plus en proie à un bouleversement de tous les instants et les mieux solidement ancrées dans la permanence".

This is a result of the political neutralization of economic power, Gauchet avers (3). This neutralization of economic power is a mark of the state's success; entrepreneurs know that they cannot control the political process. Accepting that the future is more important than the past, there is a general acceptance that the role of the state amounts to a guarantee to individuals of their right to be individuals, that they do not have to conform.

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 274
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 276

This situation is what Gauchet calls (1) "la légitimation par l'avenir", which might be thought of as another way of describing market forces. The effect of the spirit of market forces on political conflict means that the erstwhile quasi-revolutionary confrontation in the French polity has ceded place to what Gauchet calls (2) "institutionalized conflict". The classic French political confrontation, echoing the schisms of the Revolution, had, Gauchet insists, little to do with democracy. Effective democracy has to move beyond mere broad intellectual consensus and become an (3) "[...] étroite association au sein d'une volonté collective pleinement consciente d'elle-même".

This leads to the contention that modern effective democracy can no longer be an affair of class conflict and of conflicting economic interests. Gauchet has no doubt that contemporary political conflict (4):

"[...] est ni plus ni moins l'équivalent formel, au plan de l'organisation de la société politique, du marché comme principe de structuration de la société politique, et le pendant nécessaire, à l'intérieur du système politique, de l'impersonnalité du pouvoir".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 277
 2. -- idem. -- p. 279
 3. -- idem.
 4. -- idem. -- p. 280

If "market forces" in the widest sense are to govern the practice of contemporary politics, if the present is to be considered as being controlled by the future with its attendant unforeseen events, then the impact of the market in this sense on the practice of democracy is a matter of fundamental concern. Gauchet would appear to be optimistic (1):

"Le développement démocratique moderne se sera de la sorte déroulé de bout en bout sous le signe de l'imprévisible et de la surprise. Nullement sous celui de l'invention (emphasis in original. JT). Deux siècles de mouvement historique n'ont pas ajouté un seul principe de base, une seule règle fondamentale à ceux et celles que l'on connaît depuis le XVIIIe siècle. Les projets politiques les plus extrêmes d'aujourd'hui --le conseilisme ou l'autogestion -- ne font que porter à leurs dernières conséquences des possibles contenus dans les prémisses, à savoir les droits de l'individu. A ce titre, par tout un côté, la démocratie est entrée dans les faits en pleine connaissance de cause, en stricte conformité, d'un bout à l'autre, avec ses principes de départ."

Thinking about "libéralisme" in late twentieth century France cannot avoid a consideration of the role and the power of "l'Etat". At the same time it might be thought that any major work analysing the political dimension of the evolution of religion would also have to take into account the relationship between "l'Eglise" and "l'Etat" in French history.

1. GAUCHET -- *Le désenchantement du monde*, op. cit. p. 282

Gauchet has no doubt about the development of the state at the expense of the Church (1): "[...] on a eu un développement de la séparation de l'Etat dans les proportions défiant toute anticipation", a development which he calls: "[...] le passage d'un système de l'extériorité à un système de la séparation."

In other words, Gauchet says, the impingement of "l'Etat" on the social scene in France meant that this institution became an integral part of day-to-day life, acting with detachment and indifference. Whereas the all-pervading influence of the Church as a spiritual power in an earlier period was patently outside everyday affairs, the power of the state was temporal, immanent and transcendent (2).

This was a development of very great significance; according to Gauchet (3):

"L'entrée dans la modernité politique, en effet, c'est l'appropriation monopolistique par l'Etat de l'institution du lien de société et l'irrésistible dessaisie des anciens flots se socialité de leur dimension publique."

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 284
 2. -- idem. -- p. 285
 3. -- idem.

The minutely organized, all-pervasive, omni-present power of the state assures citizens a day-to-day equanimity which was formerly, in theory at least, emanating from a divine authority. Perversely, perhaps, as far as the state is concerned, the result for civil society became (1): "Fatalité de la désymbolisation du monde: elle appelle son administration."

The state's role became a major social determinant, to the detriment of ideologies and religious faiths (2): "C'est l'administration du détail, pourtant, qui l'a emporté pour finir sur la sublimité des doctrines." Yet, paradoxically, there operates what Gauchet calls (3): "[...] une loi de développement de l'Etat en démocratie [...]". The role and the influence of the state seems to grow as the state itself becomes less intrusive, or, as Gauchet summarizes: "[...] autre manière de dire qu'il gagne en différence pratique ce qu'il perd en extériorité symbolique".

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 286
 2. -- idem. -- p. 287
 3. -- idem. -- p. 288

Gauchet's summary bears witness to the characteristic elegance of his prose (1):

"[...] le pouvoir moderne [est] le plus formidable agent de connaissance qu'on ait vu, mais dans la mesure où ce n'est pas sa science qu'il essaie de faire prévaloir; le plus omniprésent, le plus obsédant les législateurs, mais pas que ce n'est pas sa règle qu'il prétend imposer. C'est que la dépossession est ici l'instrument de l'approbation: tout ce travail immense d'extraction du savoir et de redéfinition généralisée des normes n'a autre nécessité que d'assurer au corps collectif comme tel sa souveraine détermination de lui-même. Insistons-y: au corps collectif comme tel, c'est-à-dire à personne en particulier d'entre ses membres, les détenteurs du pouvoir pas plus que les simples citoyens, le processus s'accomplissant au travers de l'action des uns et des autres dans une égale indifférence à leur conscience."

In other works (2) Gauchet traces the historical development of thinking about "libéralisme" in France since the Revolution. In these works, he expresses ideas relevant to the development of liberal, pluralistic democracy in contemporary France.

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1. GAUCHET -- **Le désenchantement du monde**, op. cit. p. 288
 2. GAUCHET, Marcel (ed.) -- CONSTANT, Benjamin -- **De la liberté chez les modernes**, Collection Pluriel, Livre de poche, Paris, 1980 and idem. -- "Tocqueville, L'Amérique et nous" in **Libre**, vol. 7, 1980, pp. 43-120. See also my bibliography.

He argues that Tocqueville was mistaken to postulate democracy as being a profound agreement of minds arising out of the conflict of opposing ideas. Rather, he says, as far as the historical development of democracy in France was concerned, the conflict of opposing ideas opened a long-irreconcilable schism between "le passé hiérarchique et le présent égalitaire". Thus democracy came to mean (1) "l'existence de l'inconciliable au sein de la société".

He maintains that the irreconcilable elements of the schism were (2):

"[...] d'un côté la sphère des intérêts privés et des regroupements collectifs que leurs convergences et divergences entraînent, et de l'autre côté, bien distincte au plan symbolique, la sphère de la représentation légitime des divisions du corps social, de la traduction en termes de pouvoir s'appliquant à l'ensemble de la société du jeu de forces mouvant qui travaille celle-ci".

This fundamental difference underlined the essential philosophical problem of the men who sought to implement the Revolutionary ethic: this ethic held that the locus of political power had to be sited in society as a whole, "la volonté générale", in which there could be no room for parties and factions and no recognition of any difference between the people collectively and their representatives.

1. In "Tocqueville, l'Amérique et nous", **Libre**, op. cit.
p. 64

2. -- idem.

La Révolution des pouvoirs

In an introductory chapter to a work which must be regarded as being complimentary to his overall perception of societal relationships to the state (1), Gauchet analyses the evolution from the hitherto apparently irreconcilable conflict inherent in French democracy into the modern democratic pluralism of the Fifth Republic, an evolution which, he says, forms a case study (2):

"Le devenir politique français depuis deux siècles en offre le cas d'école: l'implantation de la démocratie contre les démocrates mêmes, contre les valeurs, les préjugés et les conceptions des héritiers républicains de la Révolution, y compris lorsqu'elle s'est accomplie au travers de leur action."

This "implantation de la démocratie" in late twentieth-century France involved a reconciliation between principles and practice and involved a step, apparently simple from the point of view of outsiders, but of fundamental significance for French republicans, that is, giving primacy to the executive at the expense of the legislature. As Gauchet summarizes (3):

"Le phénomène reste pour l'essentiel à penser. Faire la théorie de la démocratie aujourd'hui, c'est expliquer en quoi ce pouvoir de décision et d'action est au moins autant, sinon plus 'représentatif', par sa nature même, (emphasis in original. JT) que le pouvoir d'expression de la volonté générale qui se matérialise dans l'édiction des lois."

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1. GAUCHET, Marcel -- La Révolution des pouvoirs: La souveraineté, le peuple et la représentation, 1789-1799, Gallimard, Paris, 1995
 2. -- idem. -- p. 13
 3. -- idem. -- p. 16

This amounts to a pragmatic dilution of the principles enunciated at the time of the Revolution and firmly defended subsequently. This dilution manifests itself in the recognition and acceptance of the need for a plurality of political powers in the society-state relationship, a (1):

"[p]luralité des pouvoirs qui suppose elle-même comme sa clé de voûte l'existence d'un pouvoir tiers d'une nature très spéciale, que de fortes et contradictoires contraintes de définition enferment dans le rôle de gardien de la constitution".

Gauchet outlines three phases in this development (2): the acceptance of the idea of plurality itself, the concomitant and linked development of a quasi-independent (at least on constitutional interpretations) judiciary with an informed and powerful public opinion, and the unambiguous recognition that ultimate sovereignty does belong with the people. This last underlines the gradual divorce of the hitherto apparently omnipotent "Etat" from the wider civic society.

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1. GAUCHET -- *La Révolution des pouvoirs*, op. cit. p. 26
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 27-51

Gauchet outlines the reasons for past French uneasiness with the concept of a plurality of political forces, essentially reasons emanating from the universalist monism descended from the Révolution (1). The plain fact, now widely recognized, was that the classic French republican model had become anachronistic; it could not ensure effective government in the market place of the global economy and, in addition, the rapid urbanization of France had had the effect of weakening, if not destroying, traditional communal solidarity. As Gauchet explains (2):

"[...] la division du travail social atteint un degré critique qui tend à rendre indéchiffrable la coordination d'ensemble des activités. Et, parmi celles-ci, la réorganisation de l'économie, sous les traits de la grande entreprise dépendante du marché financier, confère à la prophétie de l'universelle soumission aux lois d'airan du capital un angoissant surcroît de crédibilité. Tandis que, dans le creuset de l'indifférence urbaine, l'individu achève de se désinscrire et se délier, la communauté se délite en foule anomique. Autant de dérives grosses d'un péril de dislocation face auquel les régimes délibératifs semblent condamnés par leur incurable faiblesse."

Gauchet considers the political transformation of the France of the Fifth Republic as being little short of miraculous (3). No longer did France have to think in terms of an imposed unity, of a planned authoritarianism or of corporatist organization.

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1. GAUCHET -- **La révolution des pouvoirs**, op. cit. pp. 29
 2. -- idem. -- p. 30
 3. -- idem. -- p. 31

The evolving society is based upon an informed awareness of national issues, an acceptance of the need for a coherent economic strategy related to France's place in the global economy, and of the recognition by politicians and bureaucrats of the need for openness in government (1).

In short (2): "C'est cette incorporation massive du social dans la politique qui explique, d'ailleurs, la manière dont le système représentatif a trouvé son équilibre durant cette phase décisive de consolidation." As a result, "l'Etat" is seen as being less omnipotent and more agnostic vis-à-vis civic society and the practice of politics has matured. At the same time, thanks largely to the universality of television, the political process and "l'Etat" have lost any arcane features they may once have had. Men and women aspiring to power have to ensure that their message is audio-visually communicable and public opinion has become a reality, another aspect of the divorce of "l'Etat" from civil society. Concomitantly, the public exercise of its responsibilities by the Conseil constitutionnel is seen by French citizens as providing a necessary and respected brake on the activities of politicians; Gauchet calls this duality (3) "le couple de l'opinion et du juge".

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1. GAUCHET -- *La Révolution des pouvoirs*, op. cit. p. 32
 2. -- idem. -- p. 34
 3. -- idem. -- p. 35

Gauchet continues (1):

"C'est à une double extériorisation que nous avons assisté, avec l'affirmation de l'opinion comme instance globale, au-delà de la société concrète et des stratifications, et avec l'élévation du juge comme pouvoir du dernier ressort, au-delà de la tâche gestionnaire des pouvoirs de gouvernement. L'opinion comme mise en image et en signes, comme mise en représentation de l'indépendance de la société par rapport aux pouvoirs. Le juge comme rappel de l'action publique à sa règle, comme renvoi réflexif de l'action conduite au nom du peuple aux principes par rapport auxquels elle prend sens."

The effect of the operation of public opinion and an independent judiciary (at least as far as monitoring the operation of the Constitution is concerned) is, Gauchet maintains, of a double control on the political executive, a control from above and a control from below (2). The power of public opinion is a disengaged power; it is the power of those who have no opinion as well as being that of those who do and (3) "[...] c'est du côté de ce désengagement qu'il faut chercher le secret de sa puissance."

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1. GAUCHET -- **La Révolution des pouvoirs**, op. cit. p. 36
 2. -- idem. -- p. 38
 3. -- idem. -- p. 39

Public opinion underlines and confirms citizenship; it provides a link between individuals and the wider society, a fact which has led to (1) "[...] l'irrépressible montée de sa légitimité, en dépit -- ou à cause -- de son caractère insaisissable". Gauchet argues that the political elevation of the judiciary has its origin in the same sources as that of public opinion, that is (2): [...] par l'affirmation de l'individu, sous l'aspect de la revendication de ses droits". In contemporary France, he continues, it is this (3): "[...] individu établi dans son indépendance grâce à la collectivisation des risques de dépendance en vient à regarder les créances qu'il tire sur le collectif comme autant de droits individuels et universels".

This strengthening of the political position of the individual leads Gauchet to his third point, that of the new-found effectiveness of popular sovereignty. This affirmation of popular political power is a product of the operation of the Constitutional Council and the voice of public opinion (4). "Les barrières que le juge constitutionnel oppose aux entreprises des gouvernements sont bien réelles, et la pression de l'opinion sur leur conduite n'est pas à démontrer."

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1. GAUCHET -- **La Révolution des pouvoirs**, op. cit. p. 40
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- p. 41
 4. -- idem. -- p. 43

Yet over and above this undeniably significant development is a new awareness of the ultimate power of the people. Gauchet emphasizes the topical awareness in France of a principle which the architects of the Revolution, and those who followed them for almost two centuries had difficulty in understanding (1): "Le peuple n'est souverain que s'il est expressément marqué qu'il l'est, et pas seulement dans les textes".

1. GAUCHET -- *La Révolution des pouvoirs*, op. cit. p. 49

Summary

Gauchet argues that religion is a universal, world-wide phenomenon, a phenomenon which ensured in the past, inter alia, that the will of the individual was always subservient to the principle of the primacy of the social collectivity in the name of religious conformity.

A development of great historical significance was the emergence in some communities of the concept of a personal god, a concept which had the effect of lessening the political power of a theocratic priesthood. This is a concept which is unknown in Buddhism and Islam, for example. It has led, in occidental societies, to a sustained philosophical effort on the part of mankind to understand and rationalise the relationship between man and God, an effort epitomised by the endeavour of mankind to establish and codify rules of social behaviour based upon religious principles. In Gauchet's view, this amounted to creating an absolute dependence by the present on the mythical past and hence to an unshakeable conservatism and determination to conformity.

Early state forms were an authoritarian alliance of temporal and spiritual powers determined to impose an illiberal and inegalitarian social hierarchy by coercion and domination.

Christianity, by maintaining that individual men and women were equal before God, created an idea of pure religion, in other words, the concept of an innate love and respect for the divinity by individuals which was not related to religious dogma. Out of this evolved the characteristics of occidental mankind: rationality, individual freedom and the right to exploit the natural environment.

From these roots there emerged in Western Europe the evolution of the state as a discrete and autonomus entity and at the same time the proliferation of economic activity built around production as well as around trade. This led, in turn, to economic efficiency and material welfare being equated with spiritual values.

The ultimate consequence was that the state, instead of seeking aggrandizement and expansion through domination and conquest, gradually assumed a role of ensuring the optimum operation of markets through efficient administration and the maintenance of an ordered environment, thus encouraging economic expansion and national wealth.

This has led to a development, described by Gauchet as being remarkable: the separation of civil society from the state with the primacy of the former over the latter.

As a result, instead of the older concept of the present being in thrall to the myths of the past, the emergence of free market economics as a prime social motive force means that the present is controlled and given legitimacy by the future. Economic power has become neutral and entrepreneurs cannot control either the political or the social process.

For contemporary France, Gauchet maintains, the implication of this development is that market forces have replaced the older institutionalized conflicts of the Third and Fourth Republics built around class conflict and opposing economic interests. This means an unambiguous acceptance of pluralism, an acceptance which has only been possible because of constitutional developments introducing a quasi-independent judiciary, because of an informed and powerful public opinion and because of an ultimate recognition that political sovereignty does belong with the people.

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LUC FERRY AND ALAIN RENAUT

Introduction

Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut are both Professors of Philosophy in the University of Paris, Ferry at Paris-VII and Renaut at Paris-IV Sorbonne.

They achieved a certain fame, even notoriety, in 1985 with the publication of their joint *La pensée 68* (1). This sometimes polemical but essentially closely-argued deconstruction of the French political thinking of the 1960s and early 1970s, thinking based on the work of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, had a catalytic effect on French political thought when it was published in 1985. In it, Ferry and Renaut analyse what they call "le nietzschéisme français" through the work of Foucault, "l'heideggerianisme français" through the work of Derrida, "le marxisme français" (Bourdieu) and "le freudisme français" (Lacan).

1. FERRY, Luc and RENAUT, Alain -- *La pensée 68*, Gallimard, Paris, 1985

Subsequently, they have written jointly **Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine** (1), the third and final volume of **Philosophie politique** (2), the first two volumes of which were written by Ferry. Each writer has a significant oeuvre to his credit (see bibliography for details).

In this chapter I consider only **La pensée 68** and **Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine** in order to make the task manageable. This selection allows me to concentrate on the political content of their work as distinct from the more purely philosophical elements.

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1. FERRY, Luc and RENAUT, Alain -- **Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine**, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985
 2. FERRY, Luc -- **Philosophie politique**, Presses Universitaires de Paris, 1985

La pensée 68

A critical analysis of post-structuralist philosophy, and especially its anti-humanist elements, form the subject of Ferry and Renaut's **La pensée 68** (1). Dosse maintains that Ferry and Renaut are mistaken in correlating the structuralism of the 1960s with the events of May 1968 (2). In fact, they begin their analysis with a disclaimer: they write that, in spite of their title, the subject of their work is the "philosophie française des années 68" (3), in other words, a specific aspect of structuralism, sometimes referred to as post-structuralism.

Ferry and Renaut specifically exclude the thinking of Emmanuel Lévinas and of Paul Ricoeur as well as the efforts of Jean Beaufret in introducing the thought of Heidegger into France, all three of whom were philosophers active in the decade of the 1960s.

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1. FERRY, Luc and RENAUT, Alain -- **La pensée 68: Essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain**, Gallimard, Paris, 1985.
 2. DOSSE -- **Histoire du structuralisme**, Vol. 1., op. cit. p.450.
 3. FERRY and RENAUT -- **La pensée 68**, op. cit. p. 11.

Their analysis embraces, inter alia, the published works broadly synchronous with the year 1968 of Michel Foucault (**Les Mots et les choses**, 1966 and **L'Archéologie du savoir**, 1969), Louis Althusser (**Pour Marx**, 1965, the first volumes of **Lire le Capital**, 1965 and **Lénine et la philosophie** and **Marx devant Hegel**, 1969), Jacques Derrida (**L'Écriture et la Différence** and **De la grammatologie**, both in 1967, Jacques Lacan (**Écrits**, 1966) and Pierre Bourdieu (**Les Héritiers**, 1964 and **La Reproduction**, 1970). These works constitute, for Ferry and Renaut, "la pensée 68"; the two philosophers maintain unequivocally that this thought is anti-humanist; "la philosophie française des années 68, elle, a résolument choisi le parti de l'anti-humanisme" (1).

Ferry and Renaut argue that "la question de l'humanisme [...] est sans doute la question centrale de la philosophie contemporaine," (2). They give two reasons for this claim: first, it is necessary in contemporary France to ensure clarity of the concept of the subject and the possibility of giving specific values ("valorisation") to mankind, and second, even if it is not possible to go back to the values of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, it is equally impossible to scrap these values completely, as was the wish of "la pensée 68".

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- **La Pensée 68**, op. cit. p. 18

2. -- idem. -- p. 22

In short, they are seeking a non-metaphysical definition of humanism; they recognize that "la pensée 68" had a virtue in that it did bring into question the metaphysical basis of what they call "traditional and naïve humanism".

Ferry and Renaut set out four discrete characteristics of what they persist in calling "la pensée 68": a. the theme of the end of philosophy; b. the paradigm of philosophical lineage ("le paradigme de la généologie"); c. the collapse ("dissolution") of the idea of truth; and d., the historicisation of categories which implies the end of all reference to the universal (1). Each one of these characteristics had at its heart a denial of humanism.

The theme of the "death of philosophy" was common to structuralist thinking. There were many variations of the theme, but two were dominant, reflecting the two principal deconstruction models of the time, Marxism and the Nietzschean/Heideggerean lineage. For Marxists, for example Althusser, classical philosophy was "petit-bourgeois ideology", a path which led nowhere, a pointless exercise; science was the true philosophy, replacing classical philosophy and ideology.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée 68*, op. cit. chapter I, --"Le Type idéal des 'sixties' philosophantes", pp.27-37

The second, expounded by Derrida (following Heidegger) in his *De la grammatologie*, maintained that the deconstruction of metaphysics would permit thought to be released from its captivity "in this period of onto-theology, in this philosophy of the presence" and that classical philosophy had very little to say that mattered. The only task which continued for philosophy as such lay in a deconstruction of the history of philosophy; thus philosophy became a dubious activity, condemned to ensure its survival only by the continuous celebration of its own death.

The theme of the paradigm of philosophical lineage, common to Marxism, to the philosophy evolved from the work of Freud and to the Nietzschean-Heideggerian tradition, was that philosophical activity should stick to the method of philosophical lineage in the sense understood by Nietzsche.

According to Nietzsche, the fundamental philosophical question would no longer be "what is it that...?" but "who is it who...?", an idea taken on board by Foucault, among others. In other words, in examining any discourse, it is more important to find out about the external conditions leading to the production of the discourse rather than to the discourse itself. These might be thought of either as a product of historicism, or of a pre-determined unconsciousness or from the subconscious, depending on whether the interpretation is Marxist, Nietzschean or Freudian.

The rationalist Marxist lineage, which follows Hegel's **Phenomenology of the Spirit**, holds that the historical process is a result of the deployment of reason which finds itself ultimate justification in absolute knowledge ("le Savoir absolu").

The Nietzschean lineage is antinomically opposed to this rationalist concept, as is in part that of the Lacanian psychoanalytical concept derived from Freud. It holds that any human action is capable of an infinite number of variations. In other words, there is nothing but the "signifiant", and there is no way to come back to the original position of a "signifier".

As to the collapse of the idea of truth, traditionally truth has been defined as the appropriateness of the subject to the matter and as being non-contradictory, or coherent. Nietzsche, followed by Heidegger, pointed out that if there is no benchmark, appropriateness loses all sense; in addition, an insistence upon coherence rules out any possible hypothesis relating to the unconscious.

Marxism has long had difficulty in taking a position between these two concepts of truth, the traditional and what might be called the "Heideggerian". Either there is an idealist myth, part of the "tissue of errors" or "theoretical deviation" belonging to pre-history inherent in the traditional concept, or it is necessary to accept the Heideggerian position that a given discourse may be conditioned and determined by history.

The final characteristic, that of the historicisation of categories and the end of all reference to the universal, has also two contrasting positions. These are, first, rational historicism (following the precepts of Hegel) which holds that categories are historic and that their deployment follows a perfectly systematic logic. Second, the historicism of Nietzsche and Heidegger holds also that categories are historic, in that they are intrinsically linked to time, but refuse to accept a causal chain of linkage.

These four characteristics of "la pensée 68" were the forerunners of significant effects, including what Ferry and Renaut call "stylistic effects" ("les effets du style"). By this they would appear to mean self-conscious philosophical attitudes. They outline two of the most apparent: first, the cult of paradox together with an insistent claim to complexity, and second, deliberate marginality and conspiracy.

In summary, Ferry and Renaut maintain that "la pensée 68" had little lasting significance. What is important, however, is an analysis of the arguments behind the four characteristics which they have defined. This analysis requires a recognition of the intellectual debt owed by the French philosophers behind "la pensée 68" to German philosophers, specifically, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger (1).

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée 68*, op. cit. p. 46

Ferry and Renaut make clear that, in making this point, they are not implying a criticism of their French colleagues. They argue that French thought has radicalised (emphasis in original. JT) the themes taken from German philosophy and that it is from this radicalisation that the anti-humanist content of "la pensée 68" was born.

Foucault (1) never ceased to acknowledge his intellectual debt to Heidegger and, through Heidegger, to Nietzsche. An analysis of his major work **Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique** suggests that Foucault viewed the emergence of classical reason as coinciding with a rejection of the irrational (therefore of the mad) in the name of rationality. His thinking was thus in tune with the anti-normative ideas of the events of May 1968: it would be sufficient to abolish norms in order to get rid of the problems they create. Evoking figures from the past regarded as outstanding examples of madness (Goya, Sade, Nietzsche), Foucault postulated the unfettered exercise of violence as the free exercise of man's sovereignty over and against nature.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée 68*, op. cit. chapter III, pp. 105-164

Overcoming reason means that the irrationality of madness, or unreason, will have triumphed over those who would deny it. If the history of madness is related to the history of the internal contradictions of liberal economics, with its alternating phases of crisis and growth, Foucault's analysis is not too far removed from that of Marx, in that it points to an absurdity in bourgeois society and in the domination of one class over another. It is also characteristic of French philosophy of the period in that it evokes constantly two scenarios: that of a "nietzschéo-heideggerienne" critique of reason in the name of "without-reason", of the irrational even, and that of a critique of bourgeois rationality in the name of another rationality. Integral to most of the variants which made up "la pensée 68" was a denunciation of reason as the instrument of power.

In an interview published in 1984, Foucault asked himself the question: "Is it necessary to put reason on trial?" His answer is revealing: "To my mind, nothing would be more sterile. First, because the field to be covered has nothing to do with guilt or innocence. Then, because it is absurd to dismiss reason as the contrary entity to non-reason. Finally, because such a trial would condemn us to play the arbitrary and tedious rôle of rationality or irrationality."

Ferry and Renaut maintain that Foucault's **Histoire de la folie** is an inaugural work in the totality of "la pensée 68" and points to its essential anti-humanism, not in the sense that it might seem to be liberating unbridled violence but in the sense that Foucault's view of subjectivity destroys all possibility of a genuine dialogue between consciences which might be ready to think through their differences on the basis of individual identity. For Foucault, "the other" becomes "the total other", the "bar-bar". This link between his critique of subjectivity and his rejection of the problem of communication, his denial of the possibility of consensus (a position which he softened somewhat later in his career), marked his contribution to "la pensée 68".

Turning to the work of Derrida and its links to "L'heideggerianisme français" (1), Ferry and Renaut stress that they are focussing on Derrida's interpretation of Heidegger and hence exclude the work of, for example, Beaufret, who, in the 1950s, was the first to introduce Heidegger's thought into France. They also argue that in so far as they are concerned specifically with the philosophy of "the sixties", they have chosen Derrida rather than Lyotard for their analysis, because the latter's close links with Heidegger's thought did not become fully apparent until the publication of his **Le Différend** in 1983.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- **La Pensée 68**, op. cit. Chapter IV pp. 165-197

In essence, Ferry and Renault argue, through concern with linguistics and through his ingenious word games, specifically his idea of "la différence" and "la différance" ("La différance semble nous ramener à la différence ontologique" and "la différance est ce qui rend possible la présentation de l'étant-présent") Derrida questions the possibility of the authority of presence which has existed throughout the history of metaphysics and which culminates in the accession of subjectivity, that is to say, in modern humanism.

Ferry and Renault propose a formula: "Derrida = Heidegger + le style de Derrida", which means, of course, that the essential problems they find in Heidegger's thought continue in that of Derrida. These problems are twofold: those of fact and those of principle.

The problems of fact revolve around the challenge to and elimination of reason and of individual will in human actions implicit in the thought of both Heidegger and Derrida. Heidegger considers the idea of giving specific values ("valorisation") to mankind a blasphemy; Derrida wrote in his **Positions** (1972): "That which has seemed to me to be necessary and urgent, in our situation in history, is a general determination of the conditions of the emergence and the limits of philosophy, of metaphysics and of all that which bears upon them and of all that which they mean."

As to the problems of principle, these spring from the problems of fact. It is necessary either to accept these difficulties of fact, which means recognizing that no discourse between reason and will is possible, and thus accepting a gloomy view of the future of thought, or not to see (or to pretend not to see?) this difficulty, and simply seek an "écriture de la différance".

In short, "l'heideggerianisme français" is to be regarded as anti-humanist because of its insistence upon the "destitution du sujet".

As to "le marxisme français" (1), Ferry and Renaut explain that they have chosen the sociology of Bourdieu to illustrate their thesis rather than the oeuvre of Althusser for three reasons. First, they aver, Bourdieu's work is particularly representative of the attitude of "les années 68" which consisted of proclaiming the death of philosophy and of celebrating its handing on to another type of discourse.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée* 68, op. cit. Chapter V, pp. 199-235

In this sense, they argue, the sociology of knowledge is to Bourdieu what cultural history (or the history of morality) is to Foucault, the writing of the non-book to Derrida or a renewal of the curative practice of Lacan. In each of the four cases, an approach partly animated by one or several philosophies has tended to develop over and above philosophy, independent of all philosophies, against philosophy, or in the margins of philosophy.

In the case of Marxism, this concept clearly takes on a specific form: that of the break between philosophy and science which one can assuredly analyse in Althusser's work just as much as in that of Bourdieu. However, in so far as Bourdieu sets out to theorise and to practice "le métier de sociologie", he is using philosophy to argue the case for the end of philosophy.

Second, it is through the work of Bourdieu that French Marxism of the 1960s continues to maintain an intellectual place, whereas the work of Althusser, even among his disciples, has become very dated. Finally, Bourdieu's influence has meant that French Marxism has been able to survive the crisis of international Marxism.

The nature of the Marxism of Bourdieu, analogous to the heideggerianism of Derrida or even to the Nietzscheanism of Foucault, is profoundly representative of the intellectual style of the 1960s. In each case, what characterises this style (and ensures its French character) is that the reference to the founding father tends to become an euphemism and takes on a certain distance, even open criticism, in order to give the appearance of a new and original position. One of the traits of French philosophy of the 1960s consisted, in many cases, in forgetting its theoretical identity.

Bourdieu's general position could be summarised as being a generalised materialism, described as "une variante distinguée du marxisme vulgaire" (1)", or as a marxism denied, and it is as such that it makes up a component of "la pensée 68" with which it shares the themes of an end of philosophy or of the death of the subject in the exacerbation of its genealogical lineage.

In an interview in 1984 published in Le Nouvel Observateur on the occasion of the publication of his **Homo Academicus**, Bourdieu made clear his attitude towards philosophers, describing them as "ces gens qui parlent sans cesse de doute radical, d'activité critique, de déconstruction [...]". (2)

1. FERRY and RENAUT, op. cit. p.217

2. -- idem. -- P. 228

Turning to Lacan, his contribution (1) to "la pensée 68" lies, Ferry and Renaut maintain, in his attitude to the theory of subjectivity. They consider this central to their argument for two reasons. First, there is the need to relate Lacan's thinking to the question of humanism which, very explicitly, Lacan questions in the context of his own doctrine of the subject. Second, arising directly from the first, Lacan himself indicated that the theory of the subject, and specifically, the opposition of "the subject" and of "the self" ("du moi") made up the central axis from which it was appropriate to reconstruct the work of Freud.

In his *Séminaire*, (Vol. II), Lacan opined that everything that Freud ever wrote was aimed at re-establishing the exact perspective of the eccentricity of the subject in relationship to the "moi"; it is around that idea that everything must arrange itself. (The originality of Lacan's thought tended to be matched by the opacity of his literary style.)

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La pensée 68*, op. cit. Chapter VI, "Le freudisme français", pp. 237-261

In a concluding chapter, "Retour au sujet" (1), Ferry and Renaut revert to their basic theme: that the anti-humanism integral to the structuralism of the 1960s was antipathetic to fundamental thinking on human rights and the status of the individual in contemporary French society. They are not seeking to defend a status quo but rather to mount a strong philosophical argument against the anti-humanism derived from French developments emanating from the thought of Marx and Heidegger; this anti-humanism, if accepted, would deny the possibility of rational, pluralist philosophical debate. The denial of the possibility of human autonomy (and hence of humanism, which they define as the desire to make such an idea the distinctive feature of mankind) they regard as being particularly serious.

The two philosophers maintain that the sum of the arguments of "la pensée 68", if accepted, would amount to two distinct ideas of the death of man as a philosophical concept and thus two distinct anti-humanisms. For Marxists, Ferry and Renaut argue, the idea of an individual autonomy in the thoughts and actions of man (even allowing for some minor exceptions in the sociology of Bourdieu) has always been denounced as a pure and simple hoax. For orthodox Marxism, they continue, the "subject" was no more than a machine which one could take apart and examine the working, in other words an object.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée 68*, op. cit. Chapter VII, pp. 263-285

Following the Heideggerian perception, the constituent autonomy of the subject was seen also as an illusion, being at one and the same time due to a lapse of memory and as an obstacle to be overcome.

Ferry and Renaut conclude that the notion of post-modernism, which takes away all sense from an idea of mankind which had constituted the genuine contribution of modernity, thus takes on the strange allure of a regression. The effect is one of substituting the Kantian idea, set out in the Critique of Practical Reason, of nature being subject to the will of man, to the pre-modern idea of a nature to which the will of man is subject.

In a final summary (1), Ferry and Renaut ask whether there is not a certain paradox, even a certain contradiction, in the fact that they have stressed as being essential the individualist component of May 1968. Further, they ask, does not this contradiction extend to their designation under the rubric "la pensée 68" those philosophies, as diverse as they may be (apart from their denial of humanism), which have appeared to have had little sympathy for the mass consumer society in which the reign of the individual would appear to be limitless? They argue that their book in its entirety constitutes a response to this point.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- *La Pensée 68*, pp. 287-289

However, they summarise in a few words a concept which would seem to be of fundamental importance in any consideration of the import and reality of a plurality of incommensurable ideas. Ferry and Renaut say (1) that the critique of truth in the sense of an Absolute Knowledge, when it is not completed by a reflection on the regulatory value which the demands of reason, in the name of an ideal, may nevertheless keep and may be in agreement marvellously with the individualist pathos so well expressed by the formula: "To each his own truth".

I argue that the importance of Ferry and Renaut's **La Pensée 68** in the overall context of thinking about democracy and its values in contemporary France is that it pronounces the end of anti-humanism and at the same time a return to the philosophy of the subject with all that that signifies in terms of incommensurable human values.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- **La Pensée 68**, op. cit. p. 287: "[...] la critique de la vérité au sens du Savoir Absolu, lorsqu'elle n'est pas complétée par une réflexion sur la valeur régulatrice que peuvent néanmoins conserver, à titre d'idéal, les exigences de la raison, peut merveilleusement s'accorder avec le pathos individualiste si bien exprimé par la formule: 'A chacun sa vérité'" (emphasis in original. JT).

Les droits de l'homme

"C'est fondamentalement le libéralisme qui, en donnant ses cadres institutionnels à l'individualisme démocratique, crée les conditions à la fois sociales, juridiques et politiques du développement de l'Etat providence." (1)

Following the student demonstrations of 1986, Ferry and Renaut brought out a work that their publisher's blurb calls "Un essai de philosophie immédiate." (2)

Of the three-volume **Philosophie politique**, the first two volumes were written by Ferry and he shared the authorship of the third volume, "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", with Renaut. This work takes the evolution of the complementary concepts of subject and individual through the acceptance of human rights to the idea (and the ideal) of republican government.

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1. FERRY, Luc and RENAUT, Alain -- **68-86: Itinéraires de l'individu**, Gallimard, Paris, 1987
 2. -- idem . -- back cover
 3. FERRY, Luc -- **Philosophie politique: Vol. 1 "Le droit" and Vol. 2 "Le système des philosophies de l'histoire"; (with RENAUT, Alain) Vol. 3 "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" --** Quadrige (Presses universitaires de France), 1996

Citing Marcel Gauchet (1), Ferry and Renaut begin their exposition with a warning: "Les Droits de l'homme ne sont pas une politique". This is a warning against any tendency to regard the principles set out in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 as an unqualified alternative to totalitarianism (2).

They point out the fundamental problem in equating the rights of the individual with those of a wider community (3):

"[...] la rhétorique des droits de l'homme, historiquement issue [...] de la tradition individualiste (emphasis in original. JT) du droit naturel moderne dans son effort pour construire la communauté à partir de l'individu et en faisant fond sur l'individu, n'est-elle pas condamnée par définition à se heurter à de sérieuses difficultés dès lors qu'elle aborderait le problème proprement politique (emphasis in original. JT), soit: le problème de l'organisation d'une collectivité, (emphasis in original. JT) avec la reconnaissance qu'il implique d'une nécessaire négation, au moins partielle, de la souveraineté personnelle des individus (emphasis in original. JT)?"

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1. GAUCHET, Marcel -- "Les Droits de l'homme ne sont une politique" in *Le Débat*, July-August 1980
 2. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 9
 3. -- idem.

Ferry and Renaut pose a question of considerable importance (1): do human rights and democratic values together make up a consensus or a dissensus? They recall (2) that the Preamble of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic proclaims the attachment of the French people to the declarations of the rights of man as set out in the Declaration of 1789 and as confirmed and completed by the Preamble to the Constitution of the Fourth Republic.

But, they continue (3):

"[...] si la définition des valeurs démocratiques offre à ce point matière à discussion, une réflexion s'impose, quelque pénible qu'elle puisse être, sur la faible consistance de l'idée démocratique dans notre imaginaire politique. Certes, l'on s'accorde aujourd'hui pour relier étroitement 'le premier développement de l'Etat démocratique et l'institution des droits de l'homme' [(4)] et pour considérer les droits de l'homme comme 'constitutifs de la démocratie' [(5)]. Mais à quelle idée des droits de l'homme, mieux, à quels droits de l'homme associe-t-on ainsi l'idée démocratique? (emphasis in original. JT)

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" op. cit. -- idem. -- p. 13
 2. -- idem. -- p. 16, Note
 3. -- idem. -- p. 16
 4. and 5. Ferry and Renaut are citing here LEFORT, Claude -- **L'invention démocratique**, Fayard, Paris, 1981, p. 63

Thinking through precisely what human rights should be associated with the democratic ideal brings Ferry and Renaut to perceive (1): "L'équivoque fondamentale de la référence démocratique" which is, they aver, the fact that modern political liberalism cannot readily encompass the aspirations of the popular masses whilst modern socialism has the greatest difficulty in thinking of rights and of law ("le droit") as themselves constituting intrinsic values. It could be said that Ferry and Renaut are suggesting a variation on the theme of the liberal dilemma (2), when they point to the subtle distinction between the principle of the sovereignty of the people and the temptation to bow to popular demands (3).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 19
 2. -- idem. -- p. 22
 3. I would argue that recent European history is not short of examples of governments having to resist popular pressure to introduce recriminatory or excessively coercive legislation following a wave of popular emotion engendered by an extraordinary event and fanned by dramatic media coverage.

Ferry and Renaut allude to the past difficulties in finding a compromise between the (1) "deux grandes traditions" inherent in the French polity since the Revolution and especially since 1848 (2):

"[...] aveuglement congénital de la tradition socialiste à l'égard de la portée proprement démocratique des droits les plus formels, réticence congénitale de la tradition libérale à prendre en compte certains des exigences (notamment en matière de justice sociale) que semble véhiculer avec elle l'affirmation de la souveraineté du peuple [...]".

They sum up (3) the different concepts as representing social democracy and political democracy, a corollary embracing the dichotomy in the idea of "human rights" between which might be termed permissions ("droits-libertés") and entitlements ("droits-créances"), in other words, that which individual citizens are allowed to do by law and that which they expect the collectivity to provide for them.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op, cit. p. 25
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 25-26
 3. -- idem. -- p. 26

This dichotomy, they maintain (1), underlines the equivocal nature of the recent democratic process in France, a schism between a liberal tradition noted for its reluctance to take too much note of popular demands ("les droits-créances") and a socialist tradition characterised by the devaluing of individual rights ("les droits-libertés") at the expense of a belief in historical inevitability.

According to Ferry and Renaut, the political extension of subjectivity and individualism into the concept of codified human rights needs to be the subject of three discrete questions (2):

"1. Si leur proclamation ne constitue pas une politique, quel statut accorder cependant au discours des droits de l'homme par rapport aux théories politiques qui s'y réfèrent?

"2. Quel contenu attribuer par ailleurs à ce discours? L'intégration des droits-créances, à côté des droits-libertés, témoigne-t-elle d'une équivoque politique insurmontable de la référence aux droits de l'homme, susceptible d'être mobilisée aussi bien par la tradition libérale, au nom des libertés, que par la tradition socialiste, au nom des créances?

"3. Quelle portée, enfin, reconnaître à la proclamation des droits de l'homme, si l'on perçoit que, par le biais du problème de la réalisation du contenu des Déclarations, l'humanisme juridique risque de charrier avec lui des configurations intellectuelles (le volontarisme éthique, l'historicisme) qui portent en elles les germes de radicales négations du droit?"

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 31
 2. -- idem. -- p. 39

Supplying definitive and detailed answers to these three questions leads Ferry and Renaut into an exposition of the philosophy of human rights (1). They admit the attraction of a return to the classical concept of right (2) but have no doubt that modern juridical humanism is incompatible with this ancient concept (3). If human rights are to underline the power of the individual, it being recognized that modernity is defined by the evolution of the individual, then such a concept is incompatible with classical ideas of right in which: [...] le droit apparaissait au contraire comme une limite imposée par la nature des choses (par l'ordre du monde) au pouvoir de l'individu (la loi contre l'hybris de l'homme)"(4). In summary, they argue for (5):

"[...] une défense philosophiquement non naïve de l'humanisme contre les objections qu'on peut lui opposer au nom de naturalisme des Anciens".

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. pp.43-69
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 47-55
 3. -- idem. -- p. 55
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 59-60
 5. -- idem. -- p. 61

Ferry and Renaut conclude by maintaining that juridical humanism, in other words, the concept of man-made human rights, does not automatically negate all classic ideas of what constitutes right. It is conceivable that man-made human rights could be subverted to the object of a momentary consensus reflecting merely the spirit of a narrowly-defined epoch (1). Such "antihumanisme radical" (2), or a conflict of what ought to be with what is, remains a stumbling block in any political expression of human rights. Being critical of historicism or of totalitarianism does not lead one automatically to a theory of human rights nor of a revalorisation of these rights (3).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des Droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 68. In this context it is possible to envisage a referendum in Germany in the autumn of 1936 (that is, immediately following the Berlin Olympics) having demonstrated massive popular support for strongly anti-humanist measures.
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 69

Any consideration of the historical evolution of the concept of the rights of man will come eventually to Rousseau. Ferry and Renaut aver that it was only with the emergence of the modern problem of the state and the social contract that the concepts of legitimacy and subjectivity became inextricably mixed (1). Out of this conjuncture there appeared two essential conditions giving substance to the idea of human rights (2): "[...] subjectivisation du droit dans le droit naturel moderne, apparition de la problématique des rapports Etat-société comme centre de la théorie politique [...]".

Rousseau's thinking marks a watershed between classical and modern political ideas. Ferry and Renaut write (3) that for partisans of the classical tradition, Burke, for example, Rousseau seemed to epitomize modernity whilst for modern liberals contemplating the separation of society and the state he tends to be classified as belonging to the classical stream.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 71
 2. -- idem. -- p. 72
 3. -- idem. -- p. 85

This leads them to make a point of no little importance
(1):

"[...] l'opposition du libéralisme au rousseauisme [...] laisse ouverte une question, qu'il nous faut ici prendre en compte: si la théorie rousseauiste de la volonté générale marque bien l'apogée de la rupture avec la pensée antique du droit, si elle est, comme telle, l'une des représentations fondatrices de notre modernité, que reste-t-il du rousseauisme après sa critique libérale?"

Ferry and Renaut expand this point by maintaining that the modern concept of human rights takes for granted the discrediting of naturalistic or psychological doctrines of sovereignty, simply because this modern concept embraces the idea that (2): "[...] l'homme est sujet de droit implique en toute rigueur une conception conventionnaliste, subjectiviste, de l'origine et de la légitimité du pouvoir politique".

However, the moment this concept of human rights becomes accepted, the dichotomy between "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" appears, and leads ineluctably to a second dichotomy, that between society and the state. Thus even though modern concepts of human rights have their genesis in the Contrat social, these concepts have moved on considerably from Rousseau's political environment (3).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 85
 2. -- idem.
 3. -- idem. pp. 85-86

Putting this essential point into their own inimitable prose, Ferry and Renaut argue that (1):

"[...] si la volonté générale de Rousseau n'apparaît en aucune des théories politiques comme une description, adéquate sociologiquement, de ce qui constitue la réalité des sociétés modernes et qui, sans nul doute, a quelque chose à voir avec le couple société-Etat, il reste que l'unité sociale et politique visée dans la doctrine de la volonté générale comme lieu de la souveraineté continue à la fois de fonder et d'animer toute la pensée politique moderne, même lorsqu'elle prend explicitement la forme d'une critique du jusnaturalisme. Face à la prise en compte des divisions réelles qui travaillent la société, la volonté générale, loin d'être reléguée au musée des archaïsmes, devient l'idée régulatrice de la philosophie politique moderne. Philosophiquement thématifiée, l'émergence du couple société-Etat, en tant qu'il va conduire à préciser la notion des droits de l'homme, et à y susciter le conflit majeur des libertés et des créances, comprend donc deux moments: un moment libéral, qui s'exprime au mieux dans la critique constantienne [(2)] de Rousseau, et un moment qu'on pourra qualifier de kantien, par où la division étant prise en compte, la volonté générale devient une Idée dont il faut indiquer comment les diverses approches sont constitutives de la pluralité des théories politiques modernes" (emphases in original. JT).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 86
 2. Ferry and Renaut are referring to CONSTANT, Benjamin - **De la liberté chez les modernes** (Edition Le Livre de poche, Paris, 1980) and, specifically, to the lengthy introductory preface by Marcel Gauchet to this work.

Following Gauchet's prefatory analysis of Constant's thought (1), Ferry and Renaut set out and analyse the four elements in Constant's argument against Rousseau (2). These are, briefly: first, that the confusion between "la volonté générale" and "la souveraineté du peuple" is an invitation to tyranny; second, the interpretation by the men of 1793 of the **Contrat social** showed that Rousseau had not escaped from the idea inherent in the ancien régime of a dirigiste government; third, political power is not, and must not be, either a transcendent cause (that is, belonging to a prince) or an immanent cause (that is, coming from "la volonté générale"), but an effect; finally, Rousseau could not comprehend any division between society and the state, both being fused in "la constituant".

They maintain that a signal element in Constant's thought is his appreciation of the reality of individualism (3); for all that, they believe that Constant's criticism of Rousseau goes too far and that what he (and others who have used his arguments) ignore is that (4):

"La doctrine de la volonté générale, par les bornes qu'elle impose à la loi, est donc aussi, en un sens, une théorie des limites de l'Etat [...]"

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1. See note 2 on the immediately preceding page; also page 21 supra.
 2. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. pp. 87-91
 3. -- idem.
 4. -- idem. -- p. 91

The foundation of modern political theory comes from Rousseau via Kant, Ferry and Renaut affirm (1), citing specifically at the outset Kant's Critique of Practical Reason.

They summarize by setting out what they maintain to be the three possible types of political theory based upon human rights. These are (2): the liberal discourse, which reduces human rights to "droits-libertés" only and which sees in these rights the basis for a limitation of the powers of the state ("l'Etat"); the Marxist-inspired socialist discourse which gives primacy to "droits-créances", whence to state intervention to assure these rights, with "droits-libertés" being of secondary importance; finally, the anarchist discourse, which has no time for either form of human rights on the grounds that both pre-suppose in one way or another a central authority (3).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 96
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 101-102
 3. On page 51 supra, a reference is made to an article by Ferry and Renaut in which they cite Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and aver that Kant sets out three structures of philosophy: dogmatism, scepticism and criticism.

In a lengthy second section of the work under reference, Ferry and Renaut analyse these three discourses (1). In an introductory "Liminaire" they outline their arguments (2).

They argue that it is reasonable to begin their analysis with the events of 1848 in France for two reasons: first, it was during the debates in the National Assembly on the right to work being formalized in the Constitution that the distinction between "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" emerged as a major issue, a fact which opened the schism between the liberal thinkers and the socialist thinkers of the time; second, over and above this difference, the republican ideal with its inbuilt dedication to human rights provided a reference point, admittedly fragile, for the unification ("rassemblement") of the nation.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. pp. 105-181: "Anarchisme, socialisme, libéralisme: les trois théories politiques face aux droits de l'homme"

2. -- idem. -- pp. 105-107

Ferry and Renaut consider together in a single chapter (1) "La division de la société et de l'Etat comme problème: critique anarchiste et critique marxiste des droits de l'homme". Both these political philosophies contest any distinction between society and "l'Etat". Proudhon had no time for any form of central authority and saw political organization as a loose federation of autonomous communities. For Marx, civil society had to be incorporated into the state as a necessary pre-condition for the withering away of the state. According to Ferry and Renaut, both anarchism and Marxism have pronounced totalitarian elements, if it be admitted that totalitarianism be defined at least as representing a denial of any distinction between the state and society (2).

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1. -- idem. -- pp. 109-129
 2. -- idem. -- p. 107

As for "libéralisme" and human rights (1), Ferry and Renaut spell out a fundamental characteristic (2):

"Si la tradition libérale, quelles qu'aient été en être les diverses inflexions de Constant à nos jours, s'est définie sans cesse par le refus d'une réconciliation entre société et Etat qui supposerait la disparition de l'un des deux termes, il est évident qu'il lui fallait, pour garantir la différence ou la distance entre la majorité des membres de la société et la minorité qui exerce le pouvoir, autrement dit l'appareil de l'Etat, mettre l'accent sur un 'cran d'arrêt' infranchissable, capable de prévenir les risques d'une confusion totale (totalitaire) entre le civil et le politique."

After considering Tocqueville's intervention on the question of a right to work enshrined in a constitution (3) and Guizot's concern about republican democracy becoming despotic (4) and engendering nothing but social strife, Ferry and Renaut turn to the work of Hayek. They cite (5) the thought that the idea of social justice is illusory as being a principal element in Hayek's **Law, Legislation and Liberty** and, specifically, in the first volume "The Mirage of Social Justice". They refer to Hayek's view that socialist ideas of social justice would lead to a totalitarian system in which there could be no personal freedom (6).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. pp. 130-155
 2. -- idem. -- p. 130
 3. -- idem. -- pp. 131-135
 4. -- idem. -- pp. 135-138
 5. -- idem. -- p. 139
 6. -- idem. The reference here is to the second volume of Hayek's work, p. 77

Ferry and Renaut point out that, although a reading of Hayek's case might suggest that he is dismissing modern concepts of human rights in favour of a return to classical concepts of natural order and natural law, in fact what Hayek is arguing is the case "de l'ordre et des lois du marché" (emphasis in original. JT) (1).

According to Ferry and Renaut, Hayek dismisses the unrealistic notion of a market based on a complete availability of information by producers and consumers and prefers to think in terms of a market in which there is a continual and continuing exchange of information between prospective buyers and prospective sellers. The information exchange obviates any need for an outside planning or regulatory authority. This presupposes a political system in which (2):

"L'Etat sera par conséquent avant tout le défenseur des libertés individuelles: le seul pouvoir légitime d'un gouvernement consistera à préserver les droits formels de l'individu comme tel, 'droits négatifs' dont la proclamation consiste seulement à interdire à quiconque d'interdire à l'individu l'usage de ses libertés dans la mesure où elles sont compatibles avec celle d'autrui".

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 141
 2. -- idem. -- p. 142. In this context Ferry and Renaut draw attention to the works of Raymond Aron: **Essai sur les libertés** (see my bibliography, p. xxx) and **Etudes politiques** (Gallimard, Paris, 1972)

Ferry and Renaut argue that Hayek maintains that the political error creeps in when governments seek to add "positive rights", that is, economic and social rights, to this formal negative right of individual liberty, an addition which carries the implication that governments have an obligation to underwrite these rights for each citizen. Hayek's basic point is that the free and spontaneous operation of market forces cannot carry any implicit denial of social justice; who has been unjust to whom? The idea that an authority should seek to decide such a question is, to Hayek, anathema (1) and inequality of conditions is an essential element in a process ensuring equality of opportunities (2).

Hayek defends the operation of a free market, Ferry and Renaut say (3), precisely because it offers the greatest benefit to all and ensures equality before the law, an idea which is, after all, at the heart of the modern concept of rights.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- ""Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 143

2. -- idem. -- p. 144; this concept is, of course, at the heart of pure economic liberalism.

3. -- idem. -- pp. 146-147

Yet Hayek's model is unsatisfactory; according to Ferry and Renaut (1):

"[...] si c'est l'autodéveloppement du marché qui est 'profitable à tous', toute initiative politique qui corrigerait les effets de cet autodéveloppement est en droit impossible à légitimer; si, face aux difficultés, non exclusivement d'ordre moral (cf. l'objection construite par Aron dès 1965), auxquelles exposerait un rejet total du problème de la justice sociale, on est forcé d'accorder une prise en compte minimal des exigences qui se sont incarnées dans la notion des créances, il reste alors à renvoyer la solution aux initiatives individuelles, relevant donc de la bienfaisance" (emphasis in original. JT).

The theme of charity, touched upon, Ferry and Renaut say (2), in Tocqueville's speech to the National Assembly in 1848 on the question of the right to work and underlined by Guizot in his **De la démocratie en France** on the problem created by the concept of "droits-créances", emphasizes the fact that the liberal solution to the problem is decidedly non-political.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 148
 2. -- idem. -- p. 149

This leads them to a detailed theoretical analysis of Hayek's work (1). While recognizing that Hayek's main objective was to counter Marxism, of which he was a fierce opponent, Ferry and Renaut contend that the difficulties inherent in (2) "[...] un modèle libéral dont la version hayékienne, par son caractère hyperbolique, grossit certaines virtualités" means that Hayek does not provide a genuine theoretical alternative to marxist-inspired socialism.

They summarize their position vis-à-vis Hayek (3): "On dira qu'Hayek, dans la tradition libérale, représente un extrémisme de mauvais aloi et que les conclusions atteintes à partir d'un tel exemple sont excessives." For all that, they continue, it is the very hyperbolic nature of Hayek's thought which makes it attractive to provide an alternative way ahead after the collapse of socialism.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. pp. 149-155
 2. -- idem. -- p. 149
 3. -- idem. -- p. 153

Concluding their analysis, Ferry and Renaut maintain that

(1):

"Il n'est donc pas si aisé, pour qui voudrait se réinscrire aujourd'hui dans la tradition libérale, d'écarter les prétendus excès auxquels se serait abandonné Hayek: l'hyper-libéralisme hayékien révèle une pente historiciste et économiste du libéralisme le plus classique, et par conséquent, selon cette ligne de plus grande pente, il n'est pas certain que le discours des droits de l'homme puisse échapper ici à une nouvelle, et plus insidieuse, évacuation".

This problem leads Ferry and Renaut to their main theme (2), alluded to in the title of their joint work: providing an intellectual framework to permit moving on from the concept and acceptance of human rights to the synthesization and endorsement of a solution to the dilemma of ensuring both "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances", or combining the hitherto antinomial republicanism and social democracy, in a stable modern polity.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine"-- op. cit. -- p. 155
 2. -- idem. -- p. 156

Their synthesis, they write, is based largely on French experience, for obvious reasons, but they also acknowledge the contribution of Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), the German philosopher of social democracy, especially because of Bernstein's links to Kantism (1). They reaffirm the view that the Revolution of 1848 forms an appropriate starting point because the debates around this revolution underlined the split between socialists and liberals. In addition, French democratic socialism contains a number of significant ambiguities, perhaps the most outstanding of which is the difficulty it has in escaping from its past. Finally, if in the case of Bernstein these ambiguities are less in evidence, they do not in any case invalidate the real nature of their synthesis, that is, the republican project.

French socialism, Ferry and Renaut argue, owes a considerable debt to Jaurès, and specifically to an article which he wrote in 1901 analysing critically the **Communist Manifesto** of 1848 and maintaining that although a great merit of the work of Marx and Engels was to bring together the socialist ideal and the workers' movement, for the most part Marxist ideas were out of date.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 156

According to Ferry and Renaut (1) Jaurès maintained that the problem with Marxism was that it postulated a worst-case scenario, in other words, that the revolution would only happen when the misery of the proletariat reached a peak. Further, Marx and Engels did not understand the capacity of capitalism to accept a compromise with the proletariat.

As far as the ambiguities in French democratic socialism are concerned, Ferry and Renaut summarise an explanation (2):

"Intégrant les valeurs libérales, plus réformiste que révolutionnaire, profondément humaniste -- tout devait, semble-t-il, conduire le socialisme démocratique français de tradition jauresienne à 'oser paraître ce qu'il était' et à opérer une conversion semblable à celle que connut, sous l'influence de Bernstein, son cousin allemand. Et pourtant la tradition socialiste française reste sans nul doute, au moins jusqu'à une date récente, marquée par de sérieuses ambiguïtés touchant son attitude à l'égard des droits de l'homme et, plus généralement, des valeurs de la démocratie formelle."

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 159
 2. -- idem. -- p. 162

They argue (1) that French democratic socialism is in fact staunchly legalist, not only in the exercise of power but in its strategy for taking political power whereas in theory it continues a revolutionary discourse. This equivocal attitude, manifested by Blum in 1936 for understandable political reasons at the time, gave rise to an opacity in so far as "droits-libertés" were concerned, even though there was never any genuine plan to suspend such rights.

This leads Ferry and Renaut to consider (2) "l'idée républicaine". Citing Nicolet (3), they touch upon the evolution, of this "idée", or, rather, this "raison républicaine", described as a complex mixture of ideas and sentiments which in fact meant very much more than might be thought from a casual study of the history of the Third Republic (4).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. pp. 164-165
 2. -- idem. -- pp. 166-181
 3. NICOLET, Claud -- **L'idée républicaine en France: essai d'histoire critique**, Gallimard, Paris, 1982
 4. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 166

"Républicanisme" in this sense, they continue is first of all the desire to accept and enrich the spirit embodied in the heritage of the various Declarations of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of the Revolutionary decade. If the intellectual framework which defines republicanism allows an anti-historicist affirmation of the Declaration and its implications, it becomes important to understand precisely what interpretation of human rights is integrated into the republican tradition (1).

Ferry and Renaut put the question (2): "Quelles sont, en effet, pour les républicains, ces valeurs juridiques dont la sphère leur apparaît irrédicible à leurs conditions d'émergence?" They point out that the texts of the Declaration accompanying the Constitutions of 1793 put the concept of the "bonheur commun" alongside "droits-libertés" and cite Constant's wry aphorism (3): "Que l'autorité se borne à être juste: nous nous chargeons d'être heureux".

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. p. 168

2. -- idem.

3. -- idem.

The necessary linkage between "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" (the latter intended to assure "le bonheur"), according to the republican creed, is provided by a third "droit", that is, "droit-participation". Ferry and Renaut emphasize that the genuine rights of man are the rights of the citizen expressed as a political right to participate in the exercise of power, essentially by universal suffrage, a fact which pre-supposes "droits-libertés" and, on the other hand, guarantees the taking into account of the demands of solidarity and fraternity (1).

Philosophically, the republican idea is to be considered, Ferry and Renaut argue (2), in the Kantian tradition, specifically in that part of Kant's thought which distinguishes between l'entendement and la raison. The development of the republican idea in the second half of the nineteenth century through the concept of "droits-participations" is seen as a synthesis at one and the same time both humanist and anti-historicist (3).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine" -- op. cit. pp. 174-175
 2. -- idem. -- p. 175
 3. -- idem. -- p. 177

Specifically, the antinomy between "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" may be described philosophically as emanating from a confusion between political entendement and political raison, which leads them to affirm that the liberal thesis, to ensure its own legitimacy, must be prepared to defend entendement against droit as Tocqueville did in his 1848 address to the National Assembly on the question of the right to work being enshrined in the constitution (1).

In summarising the synthesis, Ferry and Renaut argue that (2):

"L'Idée républicaine, pour sa part, fournit clairement la solution de l'antinomie : elle est indissolublement, mais sans confusion métaphysique, politique de l'entendement (ce par quoi elle intègre le libéralisme) et politique de la raison (ce par quoi elle assigne à l'Idée socialiste des créances la place qui lui revient: celle d'une tâche infinie, ou, si l'on préfère, d'un principe de la réflexion" (emphases in original. JT).

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 177
 2. -- idem. -- p. 178

The humanist element in the development of the republican idea is, Ferry and Renaut maintain, that of the modern humanism of the Enlightenment, in other words, simply the right to be different (1) (see below). The recognition of human rights in turn underlines the essential anti-historicism of the republican ideal (2):

"[...]le] caractère suprahistorique de certains valeurs. Les droits de l'homme, certes, apparaissent à un moment historique déterminé, et pourtant, une fois déclarés, ils contiennent en eux une telle exigence d'universalité qu'ils ne paraissent plus réductibles à l'histoire."

In a postface to the third edition of this work, Ferry and Renaut pick up the expression, the "droit à la différence" (see above) and affirm that, although superficially akin to human rights, this concept represents in fact a complete antithesis. They emphasize their concern with republican universalism, not liberal differentiation (3) and stress the importance of tolerance (4). Whereas in private individuals are entitled to their own beliefs, in the public sphere, and above all in politics, it is not a matter of whether an individual is a member of this or that community; what is important, according to the republican creed, is that he or she is a human being.

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 179
 2. -- idem. -- p. 179
 3. -- idem. -- p. 183
 4. -- idem. -- p. 184

This is why, Ferry and Renaut continue, the French state has always looked askance at the wearing of religious emblems. Thus the "right to be different" in the public domain can obscure the republican ideal and create a risk of the republic becoming racist or fundamentalist (1).

In conclusion, Ferry and Renaut repeat their argument that (2):

"[...] l'idée républicaine se présente indissolublement, mais sans confusion métaphysique, comme politique de l'entendement (ce par quoi elle fait justice à la pensée libérale) et politique de la raison (ce par quoi elle assigne à l'idée des créances, correctement conçue, la place qui lui revient: celle d'une tâche infinie, ou, si l'on veut, d'un principe régulateur pour la réflexion et l'action politiques qui trouve néanmoins à s'incarner dans ses 'traces symboliques' bien réelles). C'est en ce sens que, sans constituer par eux-mêmes une politique -- ce qui est l'évidence -- les droits de l'homme continuent de fournir le cadre des revendications qui donnent leur dynamique aux sociétés démocratiques."

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 184
 2. -- idem. -- p. 189. See also page 319 supra.

Summary

Ferry and Renaut examine and seek to refute the arguments of those who deny humanism and subjectivity. Specifically, these were Marx, who saw the individual as no more than an element in an inevitable class struggle, Nietzsche, for whom the will to power of the individual created a state of chaos which dominates all other considerations, and Freud, for whom the human sub-conscious played a greater role than the conscious in human endeavour.

Heidegger, whose influence on mid-twentieth century French intellectuals was profound, offered a technocratic and anti-humanist condemnation of subjectivity. Critics of the concept of subjective humanism point to the barbarities of the middle years of the twentieth century committed in the name of humanism and the ultimate projection of the spirit of the Enlightenment.

Renaut and Ferry together take this concept into consideration when looking at the history of liberal ideas and human rights in France since 1848, signalling the schism between what they term the liberal and the socialist attitudes to human rights. The liberal idea of human rights put liberty first, emphasizing the primacy of personal freedom; the socialist idea put social justice ("égalité") first. From 1848 to 1958 the proponents of these two major traditions -- the one encapsulating the idea of liberal democracy, the other of republican social democracy -- in the French polity had serious difficulty in finding common ground and thus made something of a mockery of the various declarations of the rights of man prefacing some constitutional documents.

The problem became one of a political extension of ideas of subjectivity and individualism into a codified expression of human rights, given that a mere statement of human rights could not, per se, make up an effective policy. Again, the consideration becomes complicated by the dynamic of economics, and especially by the fact that economic forces have now attained global significance, with the world-wide operation of free market forces reducing the possible effectiveness of democratically based domestic political authorities.

Historically, political authorities, either princely or based upon a perceived form of la volonté générale, have tended to be the causes of political activity. In contemporary Republican France, political activity is an effect of a constitutional form which, Renaut and Ferry maintain, offers an optimum solution to the Kantian antimony of the liberal "politique de l'entendement" and the source of socialist political ideas, the "politique de la raison". In this context, la volonté générale is not an anachronism; removing the myth of infallibility makes the concept synonymous with contemporary "public opinion", measurable by the device of opinion polls.

This constitutional position does not represent, of course, an abstract, objective value. Renaut and Ferry added a postface to a later edition of their joint work touching upon the idea of individuals and groups in a contemporary polity claiming the right to be different. Extreme expressions of this right, they argue, can subvert the liberal Republican ethic and risk a resurgence of racism or religious fundamentalism.

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PART III

CONCLUSION

Chapter 9

THE ACCEPTANCE OF AGONISTIC VALUE PLURALISM (1)

The thought of the seven scholars whose work is considered in this thesis was described by Lilla as manifesting (2) "the almost universal abandonment of the Hegelian, Marxist, and structuralist dogmas that nourished intellectual contempt for liberalism after the war". To conclude from this statement that each one of the selected seven might be considered politically "liberal" would be, I contend, jejune and misleading.

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1. John Gray, in his **Enlightenment's Wake** (London, 1995, p. 68 et seq.), recalls that the word "agonistic" has a Greek origin: the word agon, which can mean either a contest, a competition, or a rivalrous encounter or the conflict of characters in tragic drama. Contemporary geneticists use the word to describe the encounter of cells which meet and react positively together. The essential idea is of productive conflict; the antonym is antagonistic, or destructive, conflict.

As Gray points out, "value pluralism" is a concept introduced by Isaiah Berlin.

2. LILLA, Mark -- **New French Thought: Political Philosophy**, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 15; see also p. ix supra

It can certainly be argued with confidence that present-day French political thought is taking place in a generally more liberal intellectual environment than in the past. The belief, current in previous years, in ultimate revolution (or in the possibility of being able to "complete the Revolution") no longer has credibility. In contemporary France political debate on questions of political and social principle and basic human values is encouraged and the exposition of conflicting views is respected. In another, more recent, work Lilla describes the consequence of this major change and argues that the relationship between individualism and modernity is the most important theme in the development of French political philosophy over the last three decades (1). Considerations of this relationship involve debates regarding definitions of human rights and concepts of humanism in contemporary France.

This is in marked contrast to the three decades following the Liberation and, indeed, is in general contrast to the attitude towards political debate over substantial periods in France since the Revolution of 1789. Intellectually, the revolutionary, monist thought descended both from *Du contrat social* and from the Marxist canon could not accept that political values might be incommensurable and hence could not reconcile itself to the concepts of agreeing to differ or of accepting dissenting views.

1. LILLA, Mark -- "L'humanisme en questions" in RENAUT, (Ed.) -- *Histoire*, op. cit. p. 28; see also p. 8 supra

There were times, especially during peaks of revolutionary and reforming fervour, when arguments against an excess of zeal (the Terror provides an extreme example of such excess) were regarded as being dangerously counter-revolutionary, even heretical, and hence might attract a draconian response; the case of Condorcet provides an excellent early example of this and that of Raymond Aron a less drastic later one.

A salient fact of the contemporary debate in France about political principles is that this debate is topical and related to today's polity. Over the period from the end of World War II until the late 1970s (and, arguably, for several decades previously) there was often a substantial divide between the thinking about politics and the reality of the practice of government (1).

For as long as there was a belief in the possibility of forging a political and social utopia through revolution, the exponents of this ideal held that, by and large, present-day politics had little relevance because the whole edifice which they underpinned would be swept away in the inevitable revolution.

1. LILLA in "L'humanisme en questions" op. cit. p. 19; see also p. 8 supra

The contemporary debate is about the nature of democracy and its values (1). France, an economically rich nation, has been a property-owning society for most of its modern history and also a nation with a strong dirigiste tradition. In present-day France, the post-Revolution preponderance of small rural proprietors has been replaced by a large group of small urban proprietors; I contend that the well-known apophthegm that the historic "fin des terroirs" has evolved into a progressive embourgeoisement loses nothing in repetition. Pleas for a recognition of "l'exception française" have yielded to a recognition of the imperatives of the global market place.

Furet sums up the consequent re-orientation of popular French perceptions of the priorities of governments (1):

"[...] l'opinion a perdu le goût de la réglementation bureaucratique et de la tutelle administrative sur les professions ou l'activité économique. Elle n'est moins égalitaire que naguère, mais la revendication d'égalité ne passe plus par la révolution jacobine ou par la demande d'un contrôle de l'économie par l'Etat; elle est prise en charge à travers l'idée des droits des individus, notamment des droits sociaux."

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1. RENAUT (ed.) -- **Histoire**, Vol. V. op. cit. p. 5
 2. FURET, François -- "La France unie ..." in FURET, François, JULLIARD, Jacques and ROSANVALLON, Pierre -- **La République du centre**, op. cit. p. 31

Each of the seven scholars whose work has been considered in this thesis has demonstrated a sensitivity to this contemporary reality. There is an awareness of the salience of the issues of the rights of individuals and of social rights in the present-day French polity. He or she has approached the seeking of an understanding of the nature of the contemporary socio-political problem through a demonstration of a deep awareness of the history and evolution of political ideas.

For Dumont, Kriegel and Gauchet, the history of ideas has to be traced back to the early Christian, pre-Christian or Classical past and represents a continuing process or evolving stream of thought. For Manent, Rosanvallon, Ferry and Renaut, the history of contemporary political ideas begins with the advent of the modern age, broadly the Renaissance, and is equated with the recognition of individualism.

For each of the seven, the thought of Rousseau (specifically *Du contrat social*) and the Revolution together form benchmarks of major significance in the evolution of French political thinking.

Each of the seven is concerned with various aspects of human rights as seen from the point of view of the question of the relationship of the autonomous individual to modernity, with a recognition that this individual is a prime inspiration for values in contemporary society and that the values of individuals are becoming increasingly measured as aspects of short-term satisfaction, either commercial or hedonistic, at the expense of what in the past have been regarded as transcendent moral values or an accepted greater common good. Regarding contemporary French civil society, it can be argued that individual values tend to have primacy over collective values. This tendency, sustained by demands for "rights" by sub-groups, is creating a challenge to more traditional democratic values.

This essentially fragmentary nature of contemporary society, which may be thought of as the ultimate manifestation of Kantian heteronomy, is tending to erode more traditional communal democratic values without necessarily replacing these values with a viable alternative.

Thus, for contemporary French society, any concept of la volonté générale will be a veritable kaleidoscope of often-conflicting and incommensurable individual and sub-group values, far removed from the Rousseauian concept of a homogeneous and autonomous whole, predicated upon a concept of infallible and like-minded individuals motivated solely by vertu.

An acceptance of this reality is at the heart of the thinking of the seven scholars whose work is considered in this thesis. Each is concerned about the establishment of an intellectual base upon which a topical, credible, realistic and sustainable development of a framework of humanist democratic values respecting the rights of individuals may be constructed. Without exception, all see this base as emanating from history, either the history of occidental ideas (Dumont, Kriegel, Gauchet) or the shorter-term history of occidental individualism and modernity (Manent, Rosanvallon, Ferry and Renaut).

Dumont is the only one of the seven to give a place to economic history (1), although Manent, Rosanvallon and Gauchet consider the impact of contemporary economics on social values and Ferry and Renaut consider Hayekian laissez-faire concepts.

1. DUMONT -- **Homo aequalis I: Genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie économique, op. cit.**

Whereas Dumont's analysis of the evolution of the individual takes early Christianity (the schism implicit in "rendering unto Caesar ... ") as a starting point, his analysis of occidental economic thinking begins in the eighteenth century (Locke, Mandeville, Quesnay, Adam Smith) and continues to its "flowering" with Marx.

Giving due recognition to Marx's thought and to his argument that history would demonstrate that economic forces would prove to be more significant than political forces, Dumont none the less signals what he regards as a fundamental failure by Marx to envisage a possible future development: the democratisation of the ownership of property. This situation, one in which a large segment of the erstwhile proletariat has a great deal to lose through violent political upheaval, is strongly anti-revolutionary. In addition, Dumont argues, the fact that many of the followers of Marx have made a quasi-religion of his thought has had a detrimental effect on much of its significance.

Manent categorizes (1) three dominant forms of political thinking in the late eighteenth century: absolutism, liberalism and the thought of Rousseau. Both absolutism and the thought of Rousseau represented extremes. Liberal thought occupies what might be considered an amorphous centre ground, without precisely-defined boundaries; at its heart is a recognition of the ultimate sovereign power of the people and an unambiguous dichotomy between society and the state. In a liberal intellectual environment, personal endeavours or individual initiatives in creativity, commerce, exploration or science were not discouraged.

The society of *Du contrat social* was utopian and monist, premised upon a belief in the ultimate infallibility of mankind. *La volonté générale* of Rousseau could not admit minority opinion, government was minimal and in thrall to the legislature, and the realities of economics -- commerce, industry and trade -- were simply not considered. Nor was there any overt question of the acceptance of differing ethnic, gender and sexual values.

1. MANENT -- *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, op. cit. p. 152; see also p. 157 *supra*

There could be no place for individualism in the society of **Du contrat social**, Manent argues. The social values of the inherited Rousseauian ideal were based upon the primacy of the community and a supposed human infallibility. Upon this was grafted the Jacobin belief in revolution as the ultimate cathartic socio-political act for the achievement of the perceived nirvana of social justice. On this foundation was Hegelian, Marxist and structuralist determinism built.

Rousseau's ideal society was intensely egalitarian; in that fact, it differed from the hierarchical traditional societies studied by Dumont. In so far as the totality of the idealized society of **Du contrat social** was greater than the sum of its individual parts, such a society could be described by Dumont's epithet "holist".

Rousseauian society was also, by implication, a static society in which social evolution arising from the achievements and results of individual endeavour in scientific, economic or geographic exploration simply would not happen.

Dumont argues that, as far as traditional pre-modern occidental societies were concerned, the social evolution consequent upon successful exploration undermined traditional and inherited patterns of political authority and created a dynamic which resulted in a dichotomy between the essential civil society and the necessary political authority ("the state") which administered the affairs of this society. Out of the consequent conflict arose an associative concept between society and the state, a concept upon which the formal creation and acceptance of laws could be based.

Manent traces three phases in this development of modern political thought: initially a "natural law" based upon a mutual necessity governing the society-state relationship; then, the perceived inadequacy of natural law, which induces a crisis and the consequent emergence of history; finally, what he calls "radical historicism".

He signals two conflicting streams in this evolution: the one realist, recognizing necessity, focusing on "what is"; the other idealist or utopian, seeking to conceive "what should be". It could be argued that Kant pointed this out with his distinction between Verstand and Vernunft.

These conflicting streams were evident in the constitutional debates, and those surrounding the various early "Déclaration[s] des droits de l'homme" of the Revolutionary years. The relationship between the values of "liberté" and "égalité" could not be defined in precise, unambiguous terms and in any case tended to be hyperbolic. The device of "fraternité" was intended to provide an acceptable link between sets of values which could, and often did, come into conflict (1).

I argue that late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century concepts of "fraternité" have evolved into more sharply-focused considerations of "les droits de l'homme" at the end of the twentieth century. Thus a major thrust of the work of each of the seven scholars is to define what might be regarded as the contemporary equivalent of "fraternité" in the values of the idiom of the present day, that is to say a degree of social responsibility in individuals, and, specifically, in terms of what human rights might mean in France. For Manent, this definition is the expression of modernity embodied in an ultra-realist accent on the ultimate power of market forces.

1. See JAUME -- **Les Déclarations des droits de l'homme, 1789, 1793, 1848, 1946** op. cit. p. 299; see also p. 46 supra

Gauchet shares this idea; he argues that market forces have the effect of giving the future a power and a legitimacy over the present and also, by implication, that they accent the importance of agonistic pluralism in a heteronomic situation, that is, of seeking to ensure that an argument broadly acceptable to a majority emanates from the clash of values thrown up by topical events.

Dumont is a sociologist and an anthropologist concerned primarily with the social nature of mankind and with the belief that society per se is the product of the interaction of individuals. He contends that, in a secular society of free individuals, the concept of human rights, the surety for which emanates from the ultimate reality of non-negotiable social values and rules of behaviour will tend to ensure that the relationship between aspirations of individual liberty and concepts of social equality is optimized.

Kriegel distinguishes between concepts of morality (ethics) and of political rights and argues for the autonomy of both. The rules of behaviour for groups (communal rights, the rights of a state, the rights of a people) do not automatically mesh with the rights of individuals (ethics). She argues that neither the total cloaking of rights in an ethical covering so that a code of rights becomes a sort of civic religion, nor the effective juridification of ethics to ensure human rights, is acceptable. By implication, the relationship between rights and ethics may be described as being agonistic.

The republican ethic, she continues, may be categorized philosophically as being the meeting place of human rights and individual liberties; a concept of the rule of law based on the sovereignty of the people and a consequent separation of powers is at the heart of this ethic.

Modern republican political right, she concludes, has four principal elements: the rights of the state, human rights, the rights of peoples and national rights. The values associated with this tetrad will rarely be commensurable and are more likely to be pluralist; there can never be an infallible or unchallengeable statement of these rights. Rather, an acceptance and recognition means a continuing agonistic cycle of seeking improvement through a positive conflict of ideas, as there has been throughout the history of occidental mankind.

Ferry and Renaut ask a question of some moment: do human rights and democratic values together make up a consensus or a dissensus? (1) What is really understood by the concept of democratic values in present-day France, they ask? Precisely what rights should be considered as being an integral part of the democratic idea? They argue that there is a fundamental equivocation in French ideas of democracy, the result of an ambiguity dating from 1848: the liberal stream cannot readily accept a massed popular voice whereas the socialist stream has difficulty in considering rights as representing intrinsic values. This dichotomy manifests itself in considerations of what Ferry and Renaut call "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" (2).

They argue that the political extension of the individualism and subjectivity which is the hallmark of contemporary society can only be incorporated in codified human rights, and ask three salient questions. First, given that human rights per se cannot be regarded as a discrete policy, what legal status should a declaration of human rights have? Second, how should these rights be defined, given the dichotomy between "droits-créances" and "droits-libertés"?

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 13; see also p. 326 supra

2. -- idem. -- p. 26; see also p. 329 supra. This concept recalls Berlin's positive and negative liberty.

Third, what should the scope of such a codified declaration be, given the raft of often-conflicting and emotive ideas linked to juridical humanism, ethical codes and historicism?

The concept of man-made human rights, which Ferry and Renaut term "juridical humanism", contains a potential anti-humanist challenge: such "rights" may be subverted and become "radical anti-humanism" by what passes for a democratic process in a short-term, emotively-charged, mass popular reaction.

As philosophers concerned with the history and evolution of ideas, Ferry and Renaut seek to establish the relevance of the thought of Rousseau to the present day: "[...] que reste-t-il du rousseauisme après sa critique libérale?" (1)

The starting point of their response is the acceptance of the concept of the sovereignty of the people. However, this leads to a double dichotomy: first, the conflict between "droits-libertés" and "droits-créances" and, second, the division between society and the state. These two concepts were simply not conceived of by Rousseau. However, they contend (2), this does not relegate la volonté générale into a "musée des archaïsmes".

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1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 85; see also p. 322 supra
 2. -- idem. -- p. 86; see also p. 333 supra

On the contrary, it becomes the regulating idea of modern political philosophy, an idea built around two poles, referred to by Ferry and Renaut as being "constantien" and "kantien", and constituting in totality the plurality of modern political theories.

This concept of plurality, Ferry and Renaut argue, has become an inherent part of the contemporary French republican ideal, or, as they prefer to call it, "la raison républicaine" (1). This "raison" affirms a strongly moralizing spirit and concept of a higher good built around the concept of human rights in the essential republican ethic. The republican idea permits an acceptable reconciliation between the erstwhile extremes of the antinomic "politique de la raison" (the ultimate maximization of social justice) and "politique de l'entendement" (pragmatic liberal thought). The republican ideal is anti-historicist; if it were not so, it could not embody the concept of human rights.

Beyond considerations of human rights there has to be a reflection upon the authority which would be the guarantor of these rights, no matter how defined and codified. Ferry and Renaut emphasize what is undoubtedly a truism: the role of the state ("l'Etat") has an historic significance and importance in France.

1. FERRY and RENAUT -- "Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine", op. cit. p. 166; see also p. 347 supra

Manent emphasizes the modern (his emphasis) state and argues that the very fact that there is a perceived need to think about the liberal and democratic principles sustaining the modern state suggests that the perfect form of the state is yet to be found.

Yet, he continues, only the modern state can uphold human rights. Manent underlines the dynamic nature of the modern state and argues that it is continually recreating itself through the democratic process and through a deeper and ever-present insoluble conflict between nature and law.

Kriegel also recognizes the essential conflict between nature and law which is at the heart of the practice of contemporary liberal democracy and hence of ensuring that a defined and accepted codification of human rights is upheld and defended. She traces the evolution of the modern state through the history of political theory. This history has three elements: a doctrine of power, that is, sovereignty; a doctrine of individual rights; and the political morality of law.

The sovereignty of a specific state, she argues, is a matter of independence vis-à-vis other sovereign powers, of internal coherence and of the acknowledged supremacy of the law.

This means that the state is limited by law; the law upholds human rights, which may be sub-divided between human liberty and civil liberty. Kriegel recalls Kant's search for a link between morality and law and argues that morality is a system of obligations which imposes duties and ideals. She links a specific morality of law to national identity and contends that the idea of "la République" in France may be regarded as an expression of a national moral identity.

For Kriegel, the definition of an acceptable link between individual autonomy and social justice must emanate from specific statements of law and of the differing but ultimately complimentary statements of the rights of the state, of individuals, of citizens and of peoples.

Rosanvallon sees this definition coming out of a clear understanding of the functions and power of "l'Etat" and being a question of improving the quality of democratic representation to ensure that the concept of popular sovereignty is effective. He writes about "le malaise dans la représentation" (1) and refers to "[l]e peuple introuvable" (2).

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1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation" in FURET, JULLIARD, and ROSANVALLON -- *La République du centre*, op. cit.
 2. -- idem -- *Le peuple introuvable*, op. cit.

Rosanvallon points out a contradiction, even an absurdity, in the current practice of politics: individuals are wary of the intervention of "l'Etat" in their day-to-day lives, but at the same time look to "l'Etat" for protection, as a source of subsidy and as the upholder of the law.

In addition, there is a specific problem in France resulting from the legacy of the Revolution, he argues: in spite of the fact that (pace Furet) the Revolution "est terminée", the relationship between civil society and the political system still tends to be one of conflict, a conflict arising from what he calls the myths of consensus and of transparency. For example, he believes that the consensus of the various periods of alternance and cohabitation is a false consensus in that it has created a significant number of exclus, men and women shut out of the functioning of the society/"Etat" relationship and hence being denied social justice. He defines what he calls "trois équivoques de la culture politique française" (1): a permanent tendency to confuse liberalism and democracy, a critical ambiguity at the heart of the institutionalization of politics and a difficulty in conceptualizing political legitimacy. In essence, all three in one way or another touch on the role of "L'Etat" in the French political system and the associated reality of an acknowledged elitism.

1. ROSANVALLON -- "Malaise dans la représentation", op. cit. pp. 175-176; see also p. 251 supra

In this context, Rosanvallon worries about the ever-growing importance of public opinion polls, which, he contends, are tending to weaken the normal representational process. The opinion of the people, he argues, tends to be moulded by omnipresent popular media and sounded by regular opinion polls. This creates opportunities for manipulation arising from a possible commonality of interest between the ownership of popular media and that of polling organizations.

Rosanvallon argues that, in modern democracy, "the people" have become "introuvable", a mere collectivity of cyphers whose only equality is before the law. Awareness of this fact can easily be brushed off as yet another banal example of the difference between the ideal and the real, he continues, and expresses a degree of pessimism about this conclusion: "La difficulté est devant nous, irréductible". (1).

1. -- idem. -- **Le peuple introuvable**, op. cit. p. 306; see also p. 259 supra

Gauchet expresses a different point of view, a view which opposes Rosanvallon's pessimism. He does not see this fragmentation into extreme individualism as other than a natural progression of modernity, a final affirmation of the division between civil society and "l'Etat". He signals a paradox: the apparatus of the modern state represents the most all-embracing expression of political power in the history of occidental societies, but it is not its own power it is expressing; rather is the power of the sovereign people.

It is an impersonal, agnostic power, generally indifferent to the minutia of the lives of individuals, a power which is, in general, capable of being challenged on that most public of media, universal television. He argues that this ultimate manifestation of the democratic principle has evolved in a way which is, in essence, contrary to all the judgements, prejudices and values of the republican legatees of the Revolution.

Today's civil society is a modern and contemporary expression of la volonté générale, Gauchet contends, not in a way which Rousseau and the architects of the thought of the Revolution would recognize, but one which reflects present-day realities.

He writes (1):

"Tel est le sens des transformations du mécanisme représentatif qui se déroulent sous nos yeux: elles achèvent de mettre en évidence l'extension qu'il convient d'accorder à la notion de représentation et la centralité de son acception scénographique au sein du fonctionnement démocratique. Essentiellement représentative, la démocratie l'est en ceci que, loin de se réduire à l'exercice en acte de la souveraineté du peuple, elle exige inséparablement la mise en scène institutionnelle de cette souveraineté dans sa véritable nature. Elle est en quête d'une disposition collective de soi, mais une disposition qui n'existe qu'à la condition de se signifier elle-même et à laquelle il n'est pas moins indispensable de se figurer que de s'effectuer.

"C'est là justement la dimension que la politique de la Révolution française a par excellence manquée."

Gauchet contends that a people is not sovereign simply because a text, for example a constitution, tells it that that it is. The sovereignty of the people has to be expressed in the day-to-day reality of politics and in the certainty that individual men and women really can (and have a right to) have their voices heard. Both television and public opinion polls are an integral part of this. Gauchet draws attention to the removal of arcane features from "l'Etat" and the political process consequent upon media attention; the ordinary French man and woman in France has never been better-informed on current affairs and issues.

1. GAUCHET -- *La Révolution des pouvoirs*, op. cit. p. 48; see also p. 300 supra

Gauchet believes that this openness of contemporary French society is the best assurance of a continuing upholding of human rights. He maintains (as do Kriegel, Rosanvallon, Ferry and Renaut) that statements of human rights can never equate to a specific and effective policy.

Ferry and Renaut worry further; they share neither Manent's nor Gauchet's confidence in the ultimate effectiveness of the global market place as a social regulator and express a concern that the dynamics of this market may erode the effectiveness of democratic governments in ensuring that human rights are respected. Although they do not say so specifically, it would seem that they are concerned about the possibility of social Darwinism in a global competitive economy.

Further, they contend that, although the implicit acceptance of value pluralism in the present-day practice of politics in France permits an optimization of the relationship between concepts of liberal democracy and social justice, extreme claims of a racist or fundamentalist nature by individuals and sub-groups for specific rights create a risk of subverting the contemporary concept of republican liberal democracy.

In summary, I argue that the broad intellectual recognition that (pace Furet) "la Révolution est terminée" is a caesura in the continuum of some two centuries' monist political principles built around Rousseauian precepts drawn from *Du contrat social* and leavened by the thought of Marx. A common popular reading of these principles suggested that they promised the certainty of perfection tomorrow in the form of a maximization of social justice and hence the only valid political thinking was that which patently contributed towards completing the Revolution.

In such an intellectual environment, an environment which persisted well into the decade of the 1970s, there was no place for incommensurable ideas and conflicting values. The concept of political pluralism was derided and the expression of contrary views was strongly discouraged, as Raymond Aron found.

The contrast with the present-day situation is marked. Political tolerance, a recognition that the values of democracy may be incommensurable, an acceptance of the concept of an agreement to differ and an acceptance of productive conflict, long-established practices considered unremarkable in American and British democratic practice, have, taken together, presented a certain novelty in France.

The result is a body of thought which, at one and the same time, highlights French concerns about the implications of extreme expressions of individualism in a multi-ethnic national environment for humanist thought and the consequent practice of human rights. This makes a significant contribution to wider occidental political thinking about the individual and modernity. Given the discussion in the body of the thesis, I do now argue that the work of these seven scholars contributes a new and coherent philosophical current.

It is intended that my study of the work of the seven scholars should make an original contribution to the understanding of contemporary French political thinking. I hope that it will also serve as a starting point for scholars in the future.

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