IV. Forms of Individuality

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FREEDOM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Posthumous

THE GENERAL European consensus is that the era of the Italian Renaissance created what we call individuality. By this is meant a state of inner and external liberation of the individual from the communal forms of the Middle Ages, forms which had constricted the pattern of his life, his activities, and his fundamental impulses through homogenizing groups. These had, as it were, allowed the boundaries of the individual to become blurred, suppressing the development of personal freedom, of intrinsic uniqueness, and of the sense of responsibility for one's self. I will set aside the question whether the Middle Ages lacked all traces of individuality. The conscious emphasis on individuality as a matter of principle certainly does seem to have been the original accomplishment of the Renaissance. This took place in such a way that the will to power, to distinction, and to becoming honored and famous was diffused among men to a degree never before known. If for a time in Florence at the beginning of this period, as has been reported, there was no pervasive fashion in masculine attire, since each man wished to deport himself in a manner peculiar to himself, it was not a matter of simple distinctiveness, of being different. The individual wanted to be *conspicuous;* he wanted to present himself more propitiously and more remarkably than was possible by means of the established forms. This is the

From "Das Individuum und die Freiheit," in *Brücke und Tür*, ed. Michael Landmann and Margarete Susman (Stuttgart: Koehler, 1957), pp. 260–69. Translated by Richard P. Albares.

behavioral reality of the individualism of distinction, which is associated with the ambition of Renaissance man, with his ruthless self-aggrandizement, with his value emphasis on being unique.

It is self-evident that such yearning and realization as this cannot remain a constant condition of men and society, but must pass away like an intoxication. Appearing here as a striving for aggrandizement, individualism still left behind in the lowlands and commonplaces of existence so many restrictions, so many impossibilities for the individual to develop his powers, to live out his life freely, to sense the self-sufficiency of his person—so many of these that the accumulation of this pressure led once again to an explosion in the eighteenth century. But this occurred from a different direction; it was led by a different ideal of individuality, one whose innermost impulse was not to distinction, but to freedom.

Freedom becomes for the eighteenth century the universal demand which the individual uses to cover his manifold grievances and self-assertions against society. This is readily observable in a variety of contexts. One sees it under the garb of political economy among the physiocrats, who extol the free competition of individual interests as the natural order of things; in its sentimental elaboration by Rousseau, for whom the ravaging of man by historical society is the source of all atrophy and all evil; in its political manifestation in the French Revolution, which elevated the idea of individual freedom to the point of forbidding workers to form unions even for the protection of their own interests; and in its philosophical sublimation by Kant and Fichte, who conceived the ego as the bearer of the knowable world and made its absolute autonomy *the* moral value.

The inadequacy of the socially sanctioned forms of life in the eighteenth century, compared with the material and intellectual productivity of the period, struck the consciousness of individuals as an unbearable restriction of their energies. Those restrictive forms included the privileges of the higher estates as well as the despotic control of commerce; the still powerful survivals of the guild system as well as to the intolerant pressure of the church; the corvée expected from the peasant population as well as paternalism in the life of the state and the restrictions imposed on municipal constitutions. The oppressiveness of such institutions, which had lost their intrinsic justification, gave rise to the ideal of pure freedom for the individual. If only these restraints would collapse and cease forcing the powers of the personality into their own unnatural channels, then all the internal and external values that were already in full vigor, but which were politically, religiously, and economically crippled, would unfold, leading society out of the era of historical unreason and into the era of natural rationality.[1]

The individualism that sought its realization in this way was based on the notion of the *natural equality* of individuals, on the conception that all the restrictions just mentioned were artifically produced inequalities and that once these had been banished along with their historical fortuitousness, their injustice, and their burdensomeness, perfected man would emerge. And since he was perfect, perfect in morality, in beauty, and in happiness, he could show no differences. The deep cultural-historical movement that generated this conception flows out of the eighteenth century's concept of nature, which is entirely mechanistic and scientific in orientation. In that concept, nothing exists except the general law, and every phenomenon, be it a human being or a nebula in the Milky Way, is merely a single instance of some law or laws. Even if the form of an individual phenomenon is absolutely unrepeatable, it is still a mere crosspoint and a resolvable constellation of purely universal laws. This is why it is man in general, universal man, who occupies the center of interest for this period instead of historically given, particular, and differentiated man. The latter is in principle reduced to the former; in each individual person, man in general lives as his essence, just as every piece of matter, peculiar as its configuration may be, exhibits in its essence the pervasive laws of matter in general.

It is at this point that freedom and equality can be seen to belong together by right from the very outset. For if universal humanity—natural-law man, as it were—exists as the essential core of every man, who is individualized by empirical traits, social

1 Some of these formulations are drawn from my two books, *Kant, 16 Vorlesungen* and *Goethe.*

position, and accidental configuration, all one need do is *free* him from all these historical influences and diversions that ravage his deepest essence, and then what is common to all, man as such, can emerge in him as this essence.

Here lies the pivotal point of this concept of individuality, which is one of the great conceptions of intellectual history: when man is freed from everything that is not wholly himself, what remains as the actual substance of his being is man in general, mankind, which lives in him and in everyone else, the ever identical fundamental essence that is merely empiricohistorically disguised, diminished, and distorted. It is this significance of the universal which makes the literature of the Revolutionary period continually speak about the "people," the "tyrant," and "freedom" in such general terms. It is for this reason that "natural religion" has a providence in general, a justness in general, a divine education in general, but does not recognize the right of any particular manifestations of this generality. It is for this reason that "natural law" is based on the fiction of isolated and identical individuals. And this is why Frederick the Great can call the prince "the first judge, the first man of finance, the first minister of society," but then in the same breath, call him "a *man* like the least of his subjects."

The basic metaphysical motif that finds expression during the eighteenth century in the practical demand for "freedom and equality" is this: the worth of each individual's configuration is based, to be sure, on him alone, on his personal responsibility, but along with that it is based on what the individual has in common with all others. Perhaps it was also part of this motif that the individual felt it to be an extraordinary demand that he should bear the sum total of his existence with his own solitary powers, which center upon the point of his uniqueness, and that he lightened or threw off this burden through having the human species, man in general, living within him and actually accomplishing the task. The deepest point of individuality is the point of universal equality, regardless whether this lies in "nature," whose universal lawfulness we are all the more merged into as we increasingly rely on our free ego aside from all historical diversities and restrictions, or whether it is the universality of "reason," which is where our

ego has its roots for Kant and Fichte, or whether it is "mankind." Whether it is nature, reason, or man, it is always something shared with others in which the individual discovers himself when he has discovered his own freedom, his own selfhood.

By freeing individuality from every restriction and special determination, and hence by making perpetually identical individuality—man in the abstract—the ultimate substance of personality, this era simultaneously elevated that abstraction to the ultimate *value* of personality. A man, says Kant, is certainly profane, but the mankind in him is sacred. For Rousseau, who certainly had a strong sense for individual diversities, this is still at a superficial level: the more a man returns to his own heart, holding to his inner absoluteness rather than to external relations, the more strongly does the fountainhead of goodness and happiness flow into him, that is, into everyone equally. Once a man is truly himself in this way, he possesses an accumulated power that is sufficient for more than his own self-preservation, a power that he can let overflow, so to speak, onto others, through which he can take them into himself and identify himself with them. We are morally more worthy, more compassionate and authentic, the more each person is merely himself, that is, the more each person allows this inner core to become sovereign within himself, the core in which all men are identical beyond the muddle of their social bonds and accidental guises.

In the practical dimension, this concept of individuality obviously flows into laissez faire, laissez aller. If in all men, ever identical "man in general" exists as what is essential to them, and if the full, unhampered development of this core is assumed, there is naturally no need for special regulating intervention into human relations. The play of forces must take place there in the same natural-law harmony as in the events in the heavens which, if a supernatural power were suddenly to change their intrinsic movements, could only collapse into chaos.

To be sure, the shadow that lay across the freedom of individuals could not be banished entirely. Their equality, by which their freedom was justified, never did exist in reality as accomplished fact, and at the instant individuals received unlimited freedom, unmistakable inequality would generate a new repres-

sion, a repression of dullards by the smart, of the weak by the strong, of the shy by the aggressive. And it seems to me that it was an instinctive sense for this that resulted in the extension of the demand for *liberté* and *égalité* to include *fraternité*. For it was only through the voluntary act of renunciation as expressed in this concept that it would be possible to prevent *liberté* from being accompanied by the total opposite of *égalité*. Nevertheless, this contradiction between the equality and the freedom of individuality remained latent in the general eighteenth-century conception of the essence of individuality, and it was the nineteenth century that first [brought it out into the open. . . .[2]]

I shall now sketch the peculiar form of individualism that dissolved the eighteenth-century synthesis which based equality on freedom, and freedom on equality. In place of that idea of equality which expresses the deepest being of man and yet is still to be realized, this other form of individualism substitutes inequality. As was true for equality under the other form of individualism, so now inequality requires nothing but freedom in order for it to shape human existence as it emerges from its mere latency and potentiality. Freedom remains the common denominator, despite this opposition between its two correlates. As soon as the ego had become sufficiently strengthened by the feeling of equality and universality, it sought once again inequality—but this time an inequality determined only from within. After the individual had been liberated in principle from the rusty chains of guild, hereditary status, and church, the quest for independence continued to the point where individuals who had been rendered independent in this way wanted also to distinguish themselves *from one another*. What mattered now was no longer that one was a free individual as such, but that one was a particular and irreplaceable individual.

With this development, the modern striving for differentiation is heightened to the point of repudiating the form it has just won.

[2] There is a gap in the manuscript at this point, probably because Simmel took some pages from this essay when reworking the general topic for a later publication. The latter has been translated as "Individual and Society in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Views of Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 58–84.—Ed.

At the same time, the drive underlying this development remains one and the same: throughout the modern era, the quest of the individual is for his self, for a fixed and unambiguous point of reference. He needs such a fixed point more and more urgently in view of the unprecedented expansion of theoretical and practical perspectives and the complication of life, and the related fact that he can no longer find it anywhere outside himself.

All relations with others are thus ultimately mere stations along the road by which the ego arrives at its self. This is true whether the ego feels itself to be basically identical to these others because it still needs this supporting conviction as it stands alone upon itself and its own powers, or whether it is strong enough to bear the loneliness of its own quality, the multitude being there only so that each individual can use the others as a measure of his incomparability and the individuality of his world.

In the eighteenth century, to be sure, the latter ideal is adumbrated in the works of Lessing, Herder, and Lavater; and it achieves its first full artistic expression in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Here, for the first time, a world is depicted that is based entirely on the personal peculiarities of its individuals and that is organized and developed on this basis alone—quite irrespective of the fact that these figures were intended as types. No matter how often these character types may be repeated in reality, it remains the intrinsic meaning of each of them that he is fundamentally different from the others with whom fate has brought him into contact, that the *accent* of his life and development does not fall on what is similar to others, but on the absolutely idiosyncratic. Here we have the absolute opposite of the ideal of free and equal personalities that is speaking—which Fichte, condensing the intellectual movement of the eighteenth century in a single sentence, formulated thus: "A rational being must necessarily be an individual, but *not* this or that particular one." In pointed antithesis to that ideal, Friedrich Schlegel captured the *new* individualism with the formula: "It is precisely individuality that is primordial and eternal in man; in personality, not so much is involved."

This form of individualism found its philosopher in Schleiermacher. For him, the moral task is that each person should repre-

sent mankind in a *particular* manner. Certainly, each individual is a synthesis of the forces that constitute the universe. Yet out of this material that is common to all, each one creates an entirely unique configuration. It is the realization of this incomparability, the filling of a space held in reserve for him alone, that is the moral duty of the individual. Each person is called to realize his own, his very own prototype. Through Schleiermacher, the great world-historical idea that not only the equality of men but also their differentiation is a moral imperative becomes the pivotal point for a world view.

This individualism could be called qualitative, in contrast to the numerical individualism of the eighteenth century, or it could be named the individualism of uniqueness [*Einzigkeit*] in contrast to that of singleness [*Einzelheit*]. Romanticism was perhaps the broadest channel through which the new individualism penetrated the consciousness of the nineteenth century. Goethe created its artistic, Schleiermacher its metaphysical basis; Romanticism created for it a basis in feeling, in experience. Following Herder, the Romantics first immersed themselves again in the particularity and uniqueness of historical realities. It is in this sense that Novalis wants to allow his "one spirit" to transform itself into infinitely many alien spirits. But above all, the Romantic experiences in his internal rhythm the incomparability, the special claims, and the sharp contrast of elements and motives—the same contrast that this form of individualism sees between the components of *society*. The Romantic psyche feels its way through an endless succession of contrasts. At the instant it is being experienced, each one of them seems absolute, complete, self-contained; at the next instant, it is overcome by another, and in the difference between the two, the self of each is first fully appreciated. "He who holds fast to only one point," says Friedrich Schlegel, "is nothing but a rational oyster." The life of the Romantic translates the synchronic opposition of a social scene in which each individual finds the meaning of his life in his difference from all others, in the personal uniqueness of his nature and his activities, into a protean succession of contrasting moods and tasks, beliefs and feelings.

Incessantly, these great forces of modern culture strain toward accommodation in countless external and internal domains and in countless permutations. One force is the yearning for the autonomous personality that bears the cosmos within itself, whose isolation has the great compensation of being identical to all others at its deepest, natural core. The other is the yearning for the incomparability of being unique and different, which is compensated for its isolation by the fact that each person can exchange with another some good that he alone possesses and whose exchange weaves both of them into the interaction of organic parts of the whole. By and large, one can say that the individualism of simply free personalities that are thought of as equal in principle has determined the rationalistic liberalism of France and England, whereas the individualism that is based on qualitative uniqueness and immutability is more a concern of the Germanic mind.

In their elaboration into economic principles, to be sure, the nineteenth century let the two forms coalesce. For clearly the doctrine of freedom and equality is the basis for free competition; and the doctrine of differentiated personality is the basis for the division of labor. The liberalism of the eighteenth century set the individual on his own two feet, and he could go quite as far as they would carry him. The theory left it up to the natural order of things to see to it that unlimited competition among individuals would yield a harmony of all interests, that the whole would fare best in the setting of ruthless individual strivings for advantage. That is the metaphysic with which eighteenth-century optimism about nature socially justified free competition.

In the individualism of otherness, of the deepening of individuality to the point of incomparability in essence as in the performances of one's calling, the metaphysic of the division of labor was found. The two great principles which operate, inseparably, in nineteenth-century economic theory and practice—competition and the division of labor—thus appear to be the economic projections of metaphysical aspects of social individualism. To be sure, unlimited competition and individual specialization in the division of labor have affected the subjective culture of individuals in ways that show that they are not exactly the most suitable processes for promoting that culture.

But perhaps, over and above the economic form in which these two ideals are mutually operative—the only one thus far realized—there is a higher form that constitutes the hidden ideal of our culture. I would prefer to believe that the idea of free personality as such and the idea of unique personality as such are not the last words of individualism—that, rather, the unforeseeable work of mankind will produce ever more numerous and varied forms with which the human personality will affirm itself and prove the worth of its existence. And if, in fortunate periods, these varied forms may order themselves harmoniously, even their possible contradiction and struggle will not merely disrupt that work, but rather will stimulate it to new demonstrations of strength and lead to new creations.

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SUBJECTIVE CULTURE

1908

ALL SEQUENCES of events based on human activity can be viewed as natural—that is, as causally determined developments in which every stage must be understood with reference to the combinations and tensions of the preceding stage. In this sense one does not need to distinguish between nature and history, since what we call "history," if seen purely as a course of events, takes its place as part of the natural interrelationships of world happenings and their causal order. But as soon as some of the contents of these sequences move under the concept of culture, the concept of nature acquires a narrower and, so to speak, local meaning. For in that case, the "natural" development extends only to a certain point, beyond which cultural development replaces it.

The wild pear tree bears woody, sour fruit. Such is the end point of its development in the wild. At this point, human will and intellect have intervened and have led the tree by means of a variety of influences to the production of edible pears, that is, have "cultivated" it. Similarly, we believe that the development of the human species through its physical and psychological structure, by heredity and adaptation, arrives at certain forms and contents of existence. At this point, teleological processes set in that raise existing energies to a level that was in principle unattainable

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GROUP EXPANSION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALITY[1]

1908

EACH OF THE THEMES around which the inquiries in this book have thus far been organized into chapters is a single concept from the general domain of sociology. They have made room for considerable diversity and often contrariety in the historical configurations and types of configurations that present these concepts. The assemblages of material required by the practical need for organization have had no other internal justification than the fact that the phenomena and reflection on them have involved the particular concept in question. The content in each of these chapters could not have been expressed as a central argument whose proof is gradually adduced, but only as a collection of arguments that find themselves under the title of a concept.

The following inquiry is of a different sort. It is devoted to the demonstration of a relational pattern, of a *single* pattern, even though it emerges in conjunction with many modifications, wrappings, and admixtures. What is common to the sections of the present chapter is not a concept, but a proposition. Rather than pursuing a single abstracted form in the phenomena where it happens to appear, phenomena whose contents are not constrained in any particular direction by the form, this chapter presents a particular

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1 Part of this chapter is taken from my *Soziale Differenzierung*, chapter 3.

correlation, an interactionally determined pattern of development among forms of association.

Group Expansion and the Transformation of Social Bonds

Individuation of personality, on the one hand, and the influences, interests, and relationships that attach the personality to its social circle, on the other hand, show a pattern of interdependent development that appears in the most diverse historical and institutional setting as a typical form. *Individuality in being and action generally increases to the degree that the social circle encompassing the individual expands.*

Of the diverse modalities in which group expansion occurs and gives rise to the correlation just underscored, I will first mention the one that occurs when circles that are isolated from one another become approximately alike. Imagine that there are two social groups, M and N, that are sharply distinguished from one another both in characteristic attributes and in opposing systems of shared belief; and imagine further that each of these groups is composed of homogeneous and tightly cohesive elements. This being so, quantitative expansion will produce an increase in social differentation. What were once minimal differences in inner predilection, external resources, and actualizations of these will be accentuated by the necessity of competing for a livelihood with more and more people using more and more specialized means. Competition will develop the speciality of the individual in direct ratio to the number of participants.

Different as its points of origin in M and N may have been, this process will inevitably produce a gradually increasing likeness between the two groups. After all, the number of fundamental human formations upon which a group can build is relatively limited, and it can only slowly be increased. The more of these formations that are present in a group—that is, the greater the dissimilarity of constituent elements in M and N respectively—the greater is the likelihood that an ever increasing number of structures will develop in one group that have equivalents in the other. Deviation

in all directions from what had thus far been the prevailing norm in each group complex must necessarily result in a likening—at first a qualitative or ideal equivalence—between parts of the two complexes.

This likening will come about if for no other reason than because even within very diverse groups, the forms of social differentiation are identical or approximately the same. What I have in mind here are such forms as the relational pattern of simple competition, the alliance of many who are weak against one who is strong, the pleonexy of lone individuals, the progression in which relationships among individuals, once initiated, become stabilized, the attraction or repulsion that arises between individuals by virtue of their qualitative differentiation, and so on.

This process, quite apart from all bonds based on shared substantive interests, will often lead to actual relations between the elements of any two—or of many—groups that have been made alike in this way. One observes this, for example, in the international sympathy that aristocrats hold for one another. To an astonishing degree, these feelings of solidarity are independent of the specific character of the individuals concerned, a matter that is otherwise decisive in determining personal attraction and repulsion. In the same way, by specialization within groups that were originally independent of one another, solidarities also develop at the other end of the social scale, as in the internationalism of social democrats and in the sentiments underlying the earlier journeymen's unions.

After the process of social differentiation has led to a separation between high and low, the mere formal fact of occupying a particular social position creates among the similarly characterized members of the most diverse groups a sense of solidarity and, frequently, actual relationships. Accompanying such a differentiation of social groups, there arise a need and an inclination to reach out beyond the original spatial, economic, and mental boundaries of the group and, in connection with the increase in individualization and concomitant mutual repulsion of group elements, to supplement the original centripetal forces of the lone group with a centrifugal tendency that forms bridges with other groups.

For example, the guilds were once ruled by the spirit of strict equality. On the one hand, the individual's production was limited to the level of quality and quantity that all other guild members attained; on the other hand, the guild's norms of sale and exchange sought to protect the individual from being outdone by other members. In the long run, it was impossible to maintain this condition of undifferentiation. The master who became rich under whatever circumstances was not inclined to submit further to regulations stipulating that he might sell only his own products, might maintain no more than one salesplace, might have no more than a very limited number of apprentices, and so forth.

Once the affluent masters had won the right—partly after intense struggle—to ignore these restrictions, a certain duality began to appear. The once homogeneous mass of guild members became differentiated with increasing decisiveness into rich and poor, capitalists and laborers. Once the principle of equality had been broken through to the extent that one member could have another labor for him and that he could select his sales market on the basis of his own personal capacity and energy, his knowledge of the market, and his assessment of its prospects, it was inevitable that just these personal attributes, once given the opportunity to unfold, would continue to develop, leading to an ever increasing specialization and individualization within the fellowship of the guild and, finally, to the dissolution of that fellowship. On the other hand, however, structural change made possible an extension far beyond the confines of previous sales regions. Formerly, producer and merchant had been united in *one* person; once they had been differentiated from one another, the merchant won an incomparable freedom of movement, and previously unattainable commercial relations were established.

Individual freedom and the expansion of commercial enterprise are interdependent. Thus, in the case of the coexistence of guild restrictions and large, factory-style workshops around the beginning of the nineteenth century in Germany, it always proved necessary to let the factories have freedoms of production and trade that could or would have been collectivistically restricted in the circles of smaller and more modest enterprises. In this manner, the development away from narrow, homogeneous guild circles prepared their dissolution along two lines: one led to individualizing differentiation, the other to expansion involving ties across great distances. For this reason, the differentiation of English guild members into merchants and actual workers was exhibited most strikingly by those, such as tanners and textile manufacturers, who produced articles of foreign demand.

A fissioning is inherent in this correlation with group expansion that involves not only the content of labor but also its sociological dimension. Even given a certain technical division of labor, as long as the small, primitive group is self-sufficient, a pervasive equality exists in that each member of the group works for the group itself; every achievement is sociologically centripetal. However, as soon as the boundaries of the group are ruptured and it enters into trade in special products with another group, internal differentiation develops between those who produce for export and those who produce for domestic consumption—two wholly opposed inner modes of being.

The history of the emancipation of the serfs, as for example in Prussia, demonstrates a process that is similar in this regard. As he existed in Prussia until about 1810, the enserfed peasant found himself in a peculiar intermediate position regarding both his lord and his land. The land belonged to the lord, to be sure, but not in such a way that the peasant himself could have no right at all to it. Likewise, the peasant was of course bound to work the lord's fields for him, but close by he also worked the land that had been allotted to him for his own benefit. With the abolition of serfdom, a certain part of the land that the peasant had formerly owned in a limited sense was converted into true, free property. The lord was left to seek wage laborers, whom he recruited for the most part from among the owners of smaller parcels that he had purchased. Thus, whereas the peasant had had within himself the partial attributes of owner and of laborer for another's benefit, a sharp differentiation of these attributes followed the abolition of serfdom: one part became pure owner, the other part pure laborer.

It is obvious how free movement of the person and his involvement in spatially more distant relations emerged from this situation. Not only the eradication of the external bond to the soil was involved, but also the very condition of the laborer as one who

receives work first in one place, then in another. On the other hand, alienable property was involved, since it made possible sale and hence commercial relations, resettlement, and so on.

So it is that the observation made at the beginning of this section has its justification: differentiation and individualization loosen the bond of the individual with those who are most near in order to weave in its place a new one—both real and ideal—with those who are more distant. . . .[2]

An Englishman who had lived for many years in India once told me that it was impossible for a European to get at all close to the natives where castes existed; but that where caste divisions did not prevail this was very easy. The insularity of the caste—maintained by an internal uniformity no less strict than its exclusion of outsiders—seems to inhibit the development of what one has to call a more universal humanity, which is what makes relationships between racial aliens possible.

Consistent with the above, the broad uneducated masses of one civilized people are more homogeneous internally, and they are separated from the masses of a second people by more distinct characteristics, than is the case either within or between the educated strata of these populations. This same pattern of synthesis and antithesis repeats itself intraculturally. The older German corporate system set out to unite guild *members* tightly in order to keep guild *memberships* strictly separated. The modern voluntary association, on the other hand, restricts its members and imposes uniformity upon them only so far as the strictly circumscribed organizational goal requires. In all other matters, it allows members complete freedom and tolerates every individuality and heterogeneity of their full personalities. But for all that, the modern association gravitates toward an all-embracing union of organizations by virtue of interpenetrating division of labor, leveling that results from equal justice and the cash economy, and solidarity of interests in the national economy.

These examples hint at a relation that will be found everywhere in the course of this inquiry. The nonindividuation of elements in the narrower circle and their differentiation in the wider one are phenomena that are found, synchronically, among coexistent groups and group elements, just as they appear, diachronically, in the sequence of stages through which a single group develops.

2 Simmel digresses here briefly to speculate on analogies with the plant and animal kingdoms.—ED.

The Relation between Personal and Collective Individuality

This basic idea can be generalized to the proposition that in each person, other things being equal, there is, as it were, an unalterable ratio between individual and social factors that changes only its form. The narrower the circle to which we commit ourselves, the less freedom of individuality we possess; however, this narrower circle is itself something individual, and it cuts itself off sharply from all other circles precisely because it is small. Correspondingly, if the circle in which we are active and in which our interests hold sway enlarges, there is more room in it for the development of our individuality; but *as parts of this whole*, we have less uniqueness: the larger whole is less individual as a social group. Thus, the leveling of individual differences corresponds not only to the relative smallness and narrowness of the collectivity, but also—or above all—to its own individualistic coloring.

Expressed in a very terse schema, the elements of a distinctive social circle are undifferentiated, and the elements of a circle that is not distinctive are differentiated. Of course this is not a sociological "natural law," but rather what might be called a phenomenological formula that seeks to conceptualize the regular outcome of regularly coexisting sequences of events. It designates no cause of phenomena; instead, it designates a single phenomenon whose underlying, general structure is represented in each individual case as the effect of very diverse causes, but causes whose combined effect is always to release identical formative energies.

Illustrations of the Formula in Religious and Political Settings

The first aspect of this relationship—lack of differentiation among the members of a differentiated group—is exhibited by

the social order of the Quakers, in a form that is based on the deepest motives of its members. As a whole, as a religious principle of the most extreme individualism and subjectivism, Quakerism binds members of the congregation to a style of life and a mode of being that are highly uniform and democratic, seeking to exclude, as far as possible, all individual differences. And in turn, Quakerism lacks all understanding for the higher political union and its goals so that the individuality of the smaller group not only precludes the individuality of the person, but also his commitment to the large group. The specific manifestation of this is as follows: in the affairs of the congregation, in the assemblies of worship, each person may act as preacher and may say whatever he likes whenever he likes. On the other hand, the congregation watches over personal affairs such as marriage, and these cannot occur without the permission of a committee that is appointed to investigate each case. Thus, the Quakers are individual only in collective matters, and in individual matters, they are socially regulated.

Both aspects of the formula are exemplified in the differences between the political structures in the Northern and Southern states in the United States, most clearly so during the period before the Civil War. The New England states in North America had a pronounced local orientation from the very beginning. They developed townships in which the individual was tightly bound by his obligations to the whole, and although this whole was relatively small, it was also self-sufficient. The Southern states, by contrast, were populated to a greater extent by lone adventurers who were not particularly predisposed to local self-government. The South very early developed extensive counties as units of administration. Indeed, for the Southerner, the state as a whole is the site of true political significance, whereas in New England, the state is more a combination of towns. The more abstract, less colorful general political structure corresponds to the more independent—to the point of anarchistic inclinations—Southern personalities that were included in it, whereas the more strictly regulated Northern personalities were inclined toward narrower municipal structures that each, as wholes, possessed strongly individual coloring and autonomous characters.

The Basic Relation as a Dualistic Drive

With all the above qualifications in mind, one could speak of a particular quantum of the tendency toward individualization and of the tendency toward nondifferentiation. This quantum is determined by personal, historical, and social circumstances; and it remains constant, whether it applies to purely psychological configurations or to the social community to which the personality belongs.

We lead, as it were, a doubled, or if one will, a halved existence. We live as an individual within a social circle, with tangible separation from its other members, but also as a member of this circle, with separation from everything that does not belong to it. If now there is a need within us both for individuation and for its opposite, then this need can be realized on either side of our existence. The differentiation drive receives satisfaction from the contrast of one's particular personality with one's fellow members, but this plus corresponds to a minus in the satisfaction that the same person, as a purely social being, derives from oneness with his fellows. That is to say: intensified individualization within the group is accompanied by decreased individualization of the group itself, and vice versa, whenever a certain portion of the drive is satiated.

A Frenchman has made the following observation about the mania for clubs in Germany: "It is this that accustoms the German, on the one hand, not to count solely on the state; on the other hand, not to count solely on himself. It keeps him from locking himself up in his particular interests, and from relying on the state in all matters of general interest." Thus, in this negative mode of expression it is argued that a tendency to the most individual and one to the most general are present, but that they cannot both be satisfied in radically separated special structures; rather, the club is said to constitute an intermediate structure that satiates the dualistic drive quantum in a certain fusion.

The Differentiation Drive as a Heuristic Principle

If one uses this notion as a heuristic principle (i.e., not as designating the actual causality of phenomena, but merely as main-

taining that phenomena occur *as if* they were governed by such a dual drive whose manifestations on the two sides of our existence balance one another), then what we have here is a most universal norm that is particularly salient when differences in group size are involved, but one that also applies to other arrangements. For example, in certain circles, and perhaps even in certain peoples, where extravagance, nervous enthusiasm, and moody impulsiveness predominate, we notice nonetheless a decidedly slavish preoccupation with fashion. One person perpetrates some madness, and it is aped by all the others as though they were automatons. In contrast, there are other circles whose life style is of a more sober and soldierly cut, hardly as colorful as the former, but whose members have a far stronger individuality drive, and distinguish themselves much more sharply and concisely within their uniform and simple life style than do those others in their bright and transitory way. So in one case, the totality has a very individual character, but its parts are very much alike; in the other, the totality is less colorful and less modeled on an extreme, but its parts are strikingly differentiated from one another.

Fashion, in and of itself, as a form of social life, is a preeminent case of this correlation. The adornment and accentuation that it lends to the personality is accorded to it only as the member of a class that is collectively distinguishing itself from other classes by adopting the new fashion. (As soon as a fashion has diffused into the other classes, it is abandoned and replaced with another.) The adoption of a fashion represents an internal leveling of the class and its self-exaltation above all other classes.

For the moment, however, our principal concern is with the correlation that involves the *extent* of social circles, the one that generally relates the freedom of the group to the restriction of the individual. A good example of this is the coexistence of communal restrictions and political freedom as found in the Russian governmental system during the preczarist period. Especially in the period of the Mongol wars, Russia had a large number of territorial units, principalities, cities, and village communes that were not held together by any kind of unifying political bond; and thus on the whole they enjoyed great political freedom. For all that,

however, the restriction of the individual in commune society was the narrowest imaginable, so much so that there was absolutely no private ownership of land, which only the commune possessed. This narrow confinement in the circle of the commune, which deprived the individual of personal property and often of freedom of movement as well, is the counterpart of the lack of all binding relations with a wider political circle.

Bismarck once said that there was a much more narrow-minded small-town provincialism in a French city of 200,000 than in a German city of 10,000, and he explained this by the fact that Germany was composed of a large number of smaller states. Apparently the very large state allows the local community to have a certain mental self-sufficiency and insularity; and if even a relatively small community views itself as a whole, it will exhibit that cherishing of minutiae which constitutes small-town provincialism. In a smaller state, the community can view itself more as a part of the whole; it is not so much thrown back upon itself. Because the community does not have so much individuality, it can dispense with that internal, coercive leveling of individuals which, because of our psychological sensitivity to differences, must produce a heightened awareness of the smallest and most petty events and interests.

In a narrow circle, one can preserve one's individuality, as a rule, in only two ways. Either one leads the circle (it is for this reason that strong personalities sometimes like to be "number one in the village"), or one exists in it only externally, being independent of it in all essential matters. The latter alternative is possible only through great stability of character or through eccentricity—both traits that are conspicuous most often in small towns.

Stages of Social Commitment

We are surrounded by concentric circles of special interests. The more narrowly they enclose us, the smaller they must be. However, a person is never merely a collective being, just as he is never merely an individual being. For that reason we are naturally speaking here only in terms of more or less, of single aspects and determinants of human existence in which we can see the develop-

ment away from an excess of one and into an excess of the other.

This development can go through stages in which memberships in both the small and the larger social circle coincide in characteristic sequences. Thus, although commitment to a narrower circle is generally less conducive to the strength of individuality as such than it is in the most general realm possible, it is still psychologically significant that in a very large cultural community, belonging to a family promotes individuation. The lone individual cannot save himself from the totality: only by surrendering a part of his absolute ego to a few others, joining himself in with them, can he preserve his sense of individuality and still avoid excessive isolation, bitterness, and idiosyncrasy. And by extending his personality and his interests around those of a set of other persons, the individual opposes himself in the broader mass, as it were, to the remaining whole. To be sure, individuality in the sense of eccentricity and every kind of abnormality is given broader scope by life without a family in a wider social circle; but for the differentiation that also benefits the greatest whole, for the sort that derives from strength, not from succumbing to one-sided drives—for this, belonging to a narrower circle within the widest is often useful, frequently, to be sure, only as preparation or transition.

The family's significance is at first political and real; then with the growth of culture, it is more and more psychological and ideal. The family as a collective individual offers its members a preliminary differentiation that at least prepares them for differentiation in the sense of absolute individuality; on the other hand, the family offers members a shelter behind which that absolute individuality can develop until it has the strength to stand up against the greatest universality. Belonging to a family in a more advanced culture, where the rights of individuality and of the widest circle developed simultaneously, represents a mixture of the characteristic significance of the narrow and of the expanded circle.

The same observation has been made with respect to the animal kingdom. The tendencies to the creation of families and to the creation of large groups are inversely related. Monogamous and even polygamous relations have something so exclusive about them, and concern for the progeny demands so much from the parents, that a more extensive socialization suffers among such animals. Hence, organized groups are relatively rare among birds, whereas among wild dogs, to name an example in which complete sexual promiscuity and mutual indifference after the act are the rule, the animals live mostly in tightly cohesive packs.

Among the mammals that have both familial and social drives, we invariably notice that during those periods in which the former predominate, that is, during the period of pairing off and mating, the latter decline significantly. The union of parents and offspring is also tighter if the number of young is smaller. I will cite only one distinctive example: within the class of fishes, those whose offspring are left entirely on their own lay countless millions of eggs, whereas among the brooding and nesting fish, where the beginnings of a familial cohesion are found, few eggs are produced.

It is in this sense that it has been argued that social relations among the animals originated not in conjugal or filial ties, but rather in sibling ties alone, since the latter allow much greater freedom to the individual than do the former; hence, they make the individual more inclined to attach itself closely to the larger circle, which certainly first proffers itself in the individual's siblings. Being confined in an animal family has thus been viewed as the greatest hindrance to becoming involved in a larger animal society.

The Sociological Duality of the Family

The family has a peculiar sociological double role. On the one hand, it is an extension of one's own personality; it is a unit through which one feels one's own blood coursing, one which arises in being closed to all other social units and in enclosing us as a part of itself. On the other hand, the family also constitutes a complex within which the individual distinguishes himself from all others and in which, in opposition to other members, he develops a selfhood and an antithesis. This double role unavoidably results in the sociological ambiguity of the family: it appears sometimes as a unitary structure that acts as an individual, thereby assuming a characteristic position in larger and in the largest circles; and sometimes it appears as an intermediate circle that intervenes

between the individual and the larger circle that encloses both family and individual.

The developmental history of the family, at least as it still seems to be recognizable from a series of points, recapitulates this schema. The family appears first as the embracing circle that entirely encloses the life horizons of the individual, while it is itself largely independent and exclusive. Then it contracts into a narrower structure and thereby becomes adapted to playing the role of an individual in a social circle that has expanded considerably beyond the boundaries of the previous one. After the matriarchal family had been displaced by the rise of masculine force, at first it was much less the fact of procreation by the father that established a family as *one* than it was the domination that he exercised over a particular number of people. Under his unitary authority, he held together not only his offspring, but also his followers, those whom he had bought, those whom he had married and their entire families, and so on. From this primal patriarchal family, the more recent family of mere blood relationship differentiated itself, a family in which parents and their children constitute an autonomous household. This one was naturally far smaller and more individual in character than the embracing patriarchal family had been. That older group had been self-sufficient in all matters, in gaining a livelihood as in carrying out warlike activity; but once it had individualized itself into small families, it became possible and necessary for these to be amalgamated into a newly expanded group, the superfamilial community of the state. The Platonic Ideal State merely extended this line of development by dissolving the family altogether, setting in place of this intermediate structure only individuals, on the one hand, and the state, on the other.

Methodological Implications

Incidentally, there is a typical epistemological difficulty in sociology that finds its clearest example in the double role of the family: when instead of having simply a larger and a smaller group standing opposed to one another so that the position of the individual in them can readily be compared, one has several continuously expanding, superimposed circles, this relation can seem to shift, since a circle can be the narrower one in relation to a second, but it can be the wider one in relation to a third. Short of the largest circle around us that is still effective, all circles included therein have a double meaning: on the one hand, they function as entities with an individual character, often directly as sociological individualities; while on the other hand, depending on their makeup, they function as higher-order complexes that may also include complexes of lower order in addition to their individual members.

It is always precisely the *intermediate* structure that exhibits the pattern in question—internal cohesion, external repulsion—when contrasted with a more general higher structure and a more individual lower structure. The latter is a *relative individual* in relation to the former, regardless of whether in relation to still others it is a collective structure. Thus, wherever one seeks, as we do here, the normal correlation between three levels that are distinguished by their magnitudes—between the primarily individual element, and the narrower and the wider circle—there one will find that under different circumstances one and the same complex can play all three roles, depending on the relationships into which it enters. This hardly diminishes the theoretical value of the statement of this correlation; on the contrary, it proves that the correlation has a formal character that is open to every determinate content.

The Individuation of Collectivities

There are naturally more than enough sociological constellations in which the value of individuality and the need for it focus exclusively on the individual person, where in comparison to him, every complex of several persons emerges under all circumstances as the essentially other level. But on the other hand, it has already been demonstrated that the meaning and the motive power of individuality do not always stop at the boundaries of individual personality, that this is something more general and more formal that can affect the group as a whole and the individual as its element as

soon as something is present that is more inclusive, antithetical; over against this something, the (now relatively individual) collective structure can gain its conscious particularity, its character of uniqueness or indivisibility.

Given this formulation, we can explain phenomena that would seem to disconfirm the correlation at issue here, one of which is the following from the history of the United States. The Anti-Federalist party, which first called itself the Republicans, then the Whigs, then the Democrats, defended the autonomy and the sovereignty of the states at the expense of centralization and of national authority—but always with an appeal to the principle of individual freedom, of noninterference by the totality in the affairs of the individual. On no account does this contradict the relationship of individual freedom to just the relatively *large* circle, for here the sense of individuality has permeated the *narrower* circle enclosing many individual persons, and thus the narrower circle serves here the same sociological function as the discrete individual would otherwise.

The Indeterminacy of Collective Individuality

The boundary between those spheres that the individuality drive infuses and those that it requires as its antithesis is indeterminate in principle because the drive can spread from the locus of personality over an indefinite number of concentric structures around the personality. The power of the drive manifests itself, on the one hand, in the fact that any sphere infused by it immediately defines all neighboring spheres as antithetical and anti-individualistic, and on the other hand, by the fact that the need for diversity does not arise so quickly there, so that these neighboring spheres also become individualistically colored.

The political disposition of the Italians, for example, is regionalistic on the whole: every province, and often as not every city, is extraordinarily jealous of its idiosyncrasies and its rights, frequently in complete opposition to all others and with complete indifference toward the values and rights of the whole. One would seemingly have to conclude, in keeping with our general formula, that the elements in these single individuated divisions had a collectivistic, egalitarian disposition. But this is not at all true; rather, among families, and then again among individuals, there is a most extreme craving for autonomy and distinction. Just as in the American case, all three levels of our correlation—single individuals, smaller circles composed of them, and a large group embracing everyone—are clearly present here. But there is no impetus for the characteristic relation between the first and third strata as they orient themselves in common opposition to the second, since in practical awareness, the second is subsumed under the aspect of the first. The sense of individuality has overstepped the boundary of the individual, as it were, and has absorbed the social aspect of the person that normally constitutes the antithesis to his individual aspect.

Attachments between the First and Third Levels

Now, in general, the first and third parts of this three-part structure are oriented toward one another and create a common antithesis—in all the different meanings of that word—against the middle part; and this is manifested, no less than in objective relational patterns, by the subjective relations of the person with these levels. A personal, passionate commitment by the individual human being usually involves the narrowest and the widest circles, but not the intermediate ones. Whoever will sacrifice himself for his family will perhaps do the same for his homeland, perhaps also for an abstract idea such as "mankind" and the demands implicit in the concept, perhaps also for his city and its honor in those eras when "the city" constitutes the widest practical circle of life. For intermediate structures, however, he will scarcely do it, neither for his province nor for a voluntary association. One might sacrifice oneself for a *single* human being or for the very few who make up a family circle; and then again, for an incomprehensible multitude; but for a hundred people, hardly anyone brings himself to martyrdom.

The psychological significance of purely spatial "near and far" thoroughly corresponds to the figurative meaning in which it sub-

sumes the quite "near" and the quite "far" under what is practically speaking a single category. The deepest sentimental interest attaches itself, on the one hand, to the person whom we constantly have before our eyes, with whom we are involved in our daily lives, and, on the other hand, to the person from whom we are separated by vast, unbridgeable distance with as much agitation as unappeased yearning. But a relative coolness, a lesser stimulation of consciousness, befits the person who is neither quite near to us nor unreachably far from us.

This same form squares exactly with a fact that has been noted by a prominent expert on North America. He observes that the county has very little significance there: "It is too large for the personal interest of the citizens: that goes to the township. It is too small to have traditions which command the respect or touch the affections of its inhabitants: these belong to the state."

This "touching of extremes" holds just as good when its sign is reversed to the negative. The Indian caste is endogamous, but in it there is another very narrow circle within which marriage is forbidden. Marriage prospects are thus confined to the narrower circle, a state of affairs that is also found elsewhere; and indeed, in a certain sense, it may be universal, at least for the behavioral reality of marital arrangements. In the Indian case, both the widest and the ultimately narrowest circles are proscribed. This mode of the correlation is exhibited yet again in historically sequential stages: the strength and extent of control with which the guild formerly grasped the individual is no longer exercised by this type of circle at all, but rather by the family, on the one hand, and by the state, on the other.

Freedom and Individuality

THE MEANINGS OF FREEDOM The relatively most individual and the relatively most extensive configurations relate to one another over the head of the intermediate one, as it were. And at this point we have arrived at the basis of a fact that figures prominently in the foregoing discussion as well as in what now

follows: the larger circle encourages individual freedom, the smaller one restricts it.

As it is used here, the concept of individual freedom covers various meanings that are differentiated according to the diversity of our provinces of interest. They range, say, from freedom in choosing a spouse to freedom in economic initiative. I will cite one example each for just these two.

During periods of strict group separation by clans, families, occupational and hereditary estates, castes, and so on, the circle within which a man or woman can marry tends to be a relatively narrow one—narrow, that is, relative to advanced or liberal conditions. But so far as we can survey this state of affairs, and so far as we can judge by certain contemporary analogies, selecting a partner from among the available individuals was not at all difficult. The lesser differentiation of persons and of marital relations had its counterpart in the fact that the individual male could take almost any girl from the appropriate circle, choosing on the basis of external attractiveness, since there were no highly specific internal impulses or aloof reservations to be considered by either side.

Culture as it has matured has now displaced this earlier condition in two directions. The circle of possible marriage partners has been vastly expanded by the mixing of status groups, the elimination of religious barriers, the decline of parental authority, free mobility in both the geographic and the social sense, and so forth. But for all that, individual selection is far more stern, a fact and a right of wholly personal inclination. The conviction that out of all mankind, two and only two people are "meant" for each other has now reached a stage of development that was still unheard of by the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century.

A more profound meaning of freedom emerges here: individual freedom is freedom that is limited by individuality. Out of the uniqueness of the individual's being, there arises a corresponding uniqueness of that which can complement and free him, a specificity of needs whose correlate is the availability of the largest possible circle of possible selections, since as one's wishes

and inner drives become more individual, it becomes that much less likely that they will find satisfaction in a narrowly bounded domain. In the earlier condition, conversely, there was far less restriction by the rigidity of personalities: *from the standpoint of his own concerns*, the individual was much more free in making a choice, since instead of a compelling differentiation of choice objects, there was an approximate equivalence of all those that might come under consideration. For this reason, there was no need for the circle of choice objects to be significantly more extensive. So the relatively undeveloped condition certainly imposed a social constraint on the individual; however, this was linked to the negative freedom of nondifferentiation, to the *liberum arbitrium* that was provided by the mere identical worth of objects. In the more advanced state, on the other hand, social possibilities are much enlarged, but now they are restricted by the positive meaning of freedom in which every choice is—or at least ideally should be—the unambiguously determined expression of an unalterable kind of personality.

Now in the general, societal meaning of freedom, I would say that feudalism generated nothing but narrow circles that bound individual to individual and restricted each by his obligation to the other. For this reason, within the feudal system there was room neither for national enthusiasm or public spirit, nor for the spirit of individual enterprise and private energy. The same restrictions that prevented the emergence of conceptions of a higher social union also prevented, at the lower level, the actualization of individual freedom. For just this reason, it is especially pertinent and profound that during the feudal period, the "freeman" is defined as a man who is subject to the law of the realm; bound and unfree is the man who is party to a feudal tie, that is, whose law derives from this narrower circle to the exclusion of the wider one.

If freedom swings to extremes; if the largest group, as I indicated above, affords greater play to extreme formations and malformations of individualism, to misanthropic detachment, to baroque and moody life styles, to crass egoism—then all this is merely the consequence of the wider group's requiring less of us,

of its being less concerned with us, and thus of its lesser hindering of the full development even of perverse impulses. The size of the circle has a negative influence here, and it is more a matter, so to speak, of developments outside rather than inside the group, developments in which the larger circle gives its members more opportunity to get involved than does the smaller one.

THE MEANINGS OF INDIVIDUALITY The meaning of individuality in general can be separated into two more specific meanings. One has been emphasized in the above, namely, individuality in the sense of the freedom and the responsibility for oneself that comes from a broad and fluid social environment, whereas the smaller group is "narrower" in a dual sense: not only with regard to its extent, but also with regard to the restraints it imposes upon the individual, the control it exercises over him, the trifling radius of the prospects and the kinds of impetus it allows him. The other meaning of individuality is qualitative: it means that the single human being distinguishes himself from all others; that his being and conduct—in form, content, or both—suit him alone; and that being different has a positive meaning and value for his life.

The elaborations that the principle or ideal of individualism has undergone in the modern era differ according to the accentuation given to the first or the second of these meanings. On the whole, the eighteenth century sought individuality in the form of freedom, the lack of every kind of restraint on personal powers, regardless whether this restraint came from the estates or from the church, whether it was political or economic. But at the same time, the assumption prevailed that once men had been freed from all sociohistorical fetters, they would show themselves to be essentially equal; that "man in general," along with all the goodness and perfection of his nature, was inherent in every personality, needing only to be emancipated from those distorting and diverting bonds. That once men had freedom, they would use it to differentiate themselves; to rule or to become enslaved; to be better or worse than others; in short, to unfold the full diversity of their individual

powers—this fact escaped the kind of individualism for which "freedom and equality" were two peacefully coexisting—indeed, two mutually necessary—values.

It should be obvious how this kind of individualism was involved in blowing apart every narrow and narrowing accommodation; partly, this was its historical, real effect, and at least partly, it was involved as a yearning and a demand. In the French Revolution, even the workers were forbidden to join into unions for better working conditions: such a federation would limit the freedom of individual members! So it is that the correlate of this kind of individualism is a wholly "cosmopolitan" disposition; even national integration recedes behind the idea of "mankind." The particularistic rights of status groups and of circles are replaced in principle by the rights of the individual, and these, quite significantly, are called "human rights"; that is, they are the rights that derive from belonging to the widest conceivable circle.

It was the other meaning of individuality that was developed by the nineteenth century, and its contradiction of the meaning just described was not seen on the whole by the eighteenth. This other meaning found its preeminent theoretical expression in Romanticism and its practical expression in the ascendancy of the division of labor. Here individualism means that the person assumes and should assume a position that he and no one else can fill; that this position awaits him, as it were, in the organization of the whole, and that he should search until he finds it; that the personal and social, the psychological and metaphysical meaning of human existence is realized in this immutability of being, this intensified differentiation of performance. This ideal image of individualism seems to have nothing at all to do with the earlier notion of "the generally human," with the idea of a uniform human nature that is present in everyone and that only requires freedom for its emergence. Indeed, the second meaning fundamentally contradicts the first. In the first, the value emphasis is on what men have in common; in the second, it is on what separates them. But with regard to the correlation I am seeking to verify, they coincide.

The enlargement of the circle that is associated with the first conception of individuality also promotes the emergence of the

second. Although the second conception does not look to the totality of mankind; although it makes individuals mutually complementary and dependent instead of atomizing society into uniform and absolutely "free" individuals; although historically it promotes nationalism and a certain illiberalism instead of free cosmopolitanism—nevertheless, it too requires a group of relatively considerable size for its origination and survival. One need only refer to the manner in which the mere expansion of the economic circle, the increase in population, or the geographic boundlessness of competition has directly compelled a specialization of performance.

It is no different for mental differentiation, especially since this usually originates in the meeting of latent mental abilities with objectively preexisting mental products. The unmediated interaction of subjectivities or the purely inner energy of a human being rarely elicits all the mental distinctiveness that one possesses; rather, this seems to be associated with the extent of what has been called "objective mind," that is, the traditions and the experiences of one's group, set down in thousands of forms; the art and learning that are present in tangible structures; all the cultural materials that the historical group possesses as something supersubjective and yet available to everyone. The peculiarity of this generally accessible Mind that crystallizes itself in objective structures is that it provides both the material and the impetus for the development of a distinct personal mental type. It is the essence of "being cultured" that our purely personal dispositions are sometimes realized as the *form* of what is given as a content of objective culture [*Geist*], sometimes as the *content* of what is given as a form in objective culture. Only in this synthesis does our mental life attain its full idiom and personality; only thereby do its unique and wholly individual attributes become tangibly incarnated.

This, then, is the connection that links mental differentiation to the size of the circle in which objective mind originates. The circle may be a social, real one, or it may be of a more abstract, literary, historical sort: as that circle enlarges, so too do the possibilities of developing our inner lives; as its cultural offerings increase, regardless of how objective or abstract they may be, so too

do the chances of developing the distinctiveness, the uniqueness, the sufficiency of existence of our inner lives and their intellectual, aesthetic, and practical productivity.

The individualism of equality is not, from the very beginning, a *contradictio in adjecto* only if one takes it to mean the freedom and self-sufficiency that are not limited by narrower social bonds. The individualism of inequality is a consequence of that freedom, given the infinite variability of human capacities, and therefore it is incompatible with equality. In the fundamental antithesis of these two forms of individualism, there is one point at which they coincide: each of them has a potential for development to the degree that quantitative expansion of the circle that encloses the individual provides the necessary room, impetus, and material.

INDIVIDUALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM I now return to the relation that was mentioned above, the one between the strong development and high prestige of individuality, on the one hand, and a cosmopolitan disposition that leaps, as it were, over the individual's *nearest* social milieu. I would remind you first of the teachings of the Stoics.

Whereas for Aristotle the sociopolitical milieu of the individual was still the source of ethical valuation, the Stoical interest in the practical actually involved only the individual, and the elevation of the individual to the system's prescribed ideal became so exclusively the arbiter of Stoical practice that the interrelations of individuals became no more than a means to that ideal, individualistic end. This goal, of course, was defined in content by the idea of a universal Reason that infused all individual beings. Every person was thought to partake in this Reason, and its realization in the individual constituted the Stoical ideal. Transcending all barriers of nationality and social exclusiveness, Reason wove a bond of equality and brotherhood around all human creatures. Thus, the individualism of the Stoics had its complement in cosmopolitanism; the rending of narrower social bonds, which during this period was promoted no less by the political situation than by theoretical contemplation, shifted the center of gravity toward the individual, on the one hand; and on the other, toward that widest circle to which every human belongs simply by virtue of his humanity.

In countless variations, historical reality has conformed to the same pattern. The medieval knight combined his ethos of purely individual authenticity and worth with a firm, cosmopolitan bent. His self-reliance made room for the forms that produced a European knighthood transcending all national boundaries. And with this formula, one also describes the forms that came to life throughout the Holy Roman Empire and that eventually dissolved it. The empire collapsed, on the one hand, because of the particularism of its constituent parts, and on the other hand, because of binding relations with the remaining components of pan-European politics; that is, because of the contraction and expansion that shattered intermediate national structures.

That particularism was evoked essentially by an identical constellation, although one that extended in another dimension. When elements that are already differentiated or that press toward differentiation are forced into an embracing union, the outcome, more often than not, is an increased incompatibility, a more intense mutual repulsion. The large, embracing framework, which naturally requires differentiation, on the one hand, in order to exist at all, causes a friction of elements against one another, on the other hand, an actualization of antitheses that would not have come to pass except for this crowding. Unification into a great amalgam is the means—even if a transient one—to individualization and to its emergence in consciousness. Thus, the politics of world domination pursued by the medieval empire only served to release the particularisms of peoples, tribes, and princes; indeed, that policy brought them to life in the first place. The intended, partially successful fusion into a great whole contained the instrument of its own destruction, namely, the individuation of its components, which it created, intensified, and brought to awareness.

In a more intuitively obvious configuration, the culture of the Italian Renaissance has conformed to this norm. On the one hand, it developed perfect individuality; on the other hand, it developed a disposition and a morality that transcended by far the boundaries of the narrower social milieu. This is explicit, for example, in the words of Dante where he says that—with all his passionate love for Florence—the world is as much home to him and his kind as the sea to fish. Indirectly and a posteriori, as it were, this is shown

in the adoption of the life styles created by the Italian Renaissance by the entire cultured world, an adoption that came to pass precisely because these styles gave free play to individuality, whatever kind it might be, to a degree that had never before been imagined.

As a symptom of this development, I will mention only the low prestige of the nobility in this epoch. Nobility is of real significance only so long as it defines a social circle that is highly cohesive and that hence sets itself off all the more energetically from the mass of all other circles; from those below *and* from those above. To deny the worth of the nobility signifies a breakdown of both these criteria: on the one hand it signifies a recognition of the value of the personality, whatever circle of birth it belongs to; on the other hand, it signifies a leveling with regard to those above whom one would otherwise raise oneself. Both of these find unequivocal expression in the literature of the Renaissance.[3]

Individuation in the Economic Sphere

The preeminent historical instance of the correlation between social expansion and the individuation of life contents and forms is provided by the emergence of the cash economy. The primitive economy engenders small, relatively insular economic circles; the difficulty of transportation alone restricts their perimeters, and it accordingly prevents the technology of the primitive economy from arriving at a significant degree of the differentiation and individualization of activities.

The cash economy changes this condition along two lines. The general acceptance of money, its ease of transport, its eventual sublimation into cashless transactions in bank drafts and bills of exchange—all these allow the effects of money to extend into unboundable distances, and ultimately to engender from the whole civilized world a single economic circle with interpenetrating interests, complementary sectors of productivity, and similar practices. In the other line of development, money causes an enormous individualization of the participant in the economy. The form of cash wages makes the worker infinitely more independent than does any kind of payment in the primitive economy. The possession of money gives a man previously unheard of freedom of movement. The liberal norms that are regularly associated with the cash economy set each individual in a free competitive struggle with every other. And finally, no less than the dilation of the economic circle, this competition compels a specialization of function that would not otherwise come into question, one whose extremes of compartmentalization are made possible only by accommodations in the framework of a very large circle.

3 In the original text, the lengthy "Note on the Nobility" appears between this section and the next. In this volume it appears separately as chapter 14.—Ed.

Within the economy, money is the connection that relates maximal expansion of the economic group to maximal differentiation of its members, both in the dimension of freedom and a sense of responsibility for oneself, and in the dimension of a qualitative differentiation of labor. A more precise formulation is that money develops the smaller, more insular, internally more uniform group of the primitive economy into another whose unitary character bifurcates into the two aspects of expansion and individualization.

The Political Sphere

Political developments actualize this constellation in a great number of domains, although of course with multiple variations on the basic relationship. From the smaller, constrictingly socialized circle to the large group and the differentiation of personalities, there is no necessary pari passu progression; rather, there are processes of selection and alternation. The emphasis in the more evolved condition falls *either* on the creation of an embracing public realm and the enhancement of the significance of its central organs, *or* on the autonomy of individual elements. Then too, the expansion of the group may not be related to the development of personality for the members of the group themselves, but instead to the idea of an ultimate personality to whom individual will is surrendered, as it were. I will cite a few examples from the various domains of politics.

In the agrarian domain, the dissolution of the peasantry's communal property since the end of the Middle Ages has taken place in just these forms. The evolving centralist states struck down community holdings, the common pasture land. Part of this, as a public commodity, was absorbed into the property of the state and was attached to the administrative organism of the polity. The rest, to the degree that this did not occur, was distributed among enfranchised persons as private property. In this latter fact alone, the simultaneous tendencies toward both individual and general outcomes are evident once again: on the one hand, the distribution was guided by concepts of Roman law with their enthronement of individual interests; on the other hand, it was guided by the notion that the partitioning of common holdings would bring about a betterment in the state of national culture, that is, precisely in the broadest public realm.

Under very different material and overall conditions, a particular phase of the history of the common pasture, the case of the collective property of Swiss communities, exhibited the same form, and that as recently as the nineteenth century. To the degree that common pasture was annexed to the holdings of partial communities, of local and village corporations, it was dealt with in a few cantons (Zurich, Saint Gallen, and others) by legislation that tended either to distribute the pasture land among individual community members or else to let it be incorporated into larger national communities, the idea being that the smallest communities lacked the personal and territorial resources to make their holdings adequately productive for the commonwealth.

In the course of postmedieval developments in Germany, the form of agrarian policy measure that is stressed above was diffused throughout domestic politics generally. The higher authorities manipulated separate, self-segregating circles in a manner that tended to differentiate them: some into creatures of private law that would be merely the personal affairs of their members, and others into institutions of the state. The corporations that had dominated medieval society had become so hardened and constricted that public life threatened to collapse into an incoherent mass of egotistic factions. Counterposed to these, and dissolving

them as the modern era began, was the idea of an all-embracing public realm, an idea that first took the form of princely absolutism. In accordance with its inner principle, absolutism generated "equal justice for all," that is, it detached the individual, on the one hand, from the restraint placed on his practical life by the privileges of the corporations; and on the other hand, it canceled the privileges that he himself enjoyed as a member of the corporations, but which often forced him into unnatural alliance with his fellow members. Thus, it was fundamentally a matter of destroying the narrow, internally homogeneous, "intermediate" association whose hegemony had characterized the earlier condition in order to conduct development upward toward the state and downward toward the unprejudiced freedom of the individual. That the state, in turn, found its practical effectiveness in the form of an ultimate personality, the absolute ruler, is hardly a counterinstance to the fundamental pattern; indeed, the pattern is actualized in just this manner, both diachronically and synchronically, in an extraordinarily large number of cases.

This is the often-stressed relationship that history demonstrates between republicanism and tyranny, between despotism and leveling. Every system of government that derives its character from the aristocracy or the bourgeoisie—in short, all those that offer social and political consciousness to a plurality of contiguously bounded narrower circles—as soon as it attempts to go beyond itself at all, surges, on the one hand, toward consolidation in a personal, guiding power, and on the other hand, toward an anarchistically tinged socialism that seeks to establish, with the obliteration of all differences, the absolute right of the free personality. The shattering of group constraints within a whole that somehow belongs together is so intimately related to the accentuation of individuality that both the cohesion of the ruling personality and the individual freedom of all group members center upon it like two variations on a single theme.

It is noteworthy that political aristocracies, which are always constructed after the type of closed and rigorously bounded circles, are often militarily unsuccessful under conditions of social expansion. This may result from their aversion to those two forces that,

alone or in combination, appoint their disintegration: on the one hand, the aristocracies shrink from summoning the whole populace to united action; on the other, they distrust individual generals who have broad power of authority and striking success.

The correlation between the *volonté générale* and autocracy is one in which the latter has not infrequently been used as the official cloak for designs leading ultimately to the suppression of the former. When the Earl of Leicester had been called to the governor-generalship of the Netherlands (1586), he sought to establish an unlimited dominion over the heads of the narrower bodies that had ruled previously, the states general and provincial status groups. He proceeded under cover of unqualifiedly democratic principles: the will of the people, so it was said, was the absolute ruler; and it had called upon Leicester. Yet it was explicitly stressed along with this that tradesmen and lawyers, peasants and craftsmen had nothing to say in that rule and could do no more than simply obey. Thus, the—purportedly—democratic leveling was carried so far that the higher as well as the lower status groups were disfranchised, and only the ideal entity of "the people as a whole" remained. Opponents soon declared that this newly discovered concept of "the people" served only to transfer "the people's" unlimited sovereignty to a single man.

Further elaborations of our basic relationship are found in the domain of municipal politics. As early as the Middle Ages, English cities exhibited a pattern in which the larger municipalities were ruled by single corporations or magnates, whereas in the smaller cities, the people as a whole held dominion. Corresponding to the smaller circle, there is a homogeneity of elements that underlies the unvarying rate of their political participation; but in the larger circles, this homogeneity is fragmented, allowing only for the mass of private individuals on one side, and for the single ruling personality on the other.

In a certain rudimentary form, the administrative arrangements of North American cities exhibit the same pattern. As long as cities are small, administration of each office by a majority of persons presents itself as the most suitable mode; but if they grow into metropoles, it would seem more practical to entrust each office to a single person. Largeness of scale requires representation and guidance by an individual, fully responsible personality; the smaller circle could administer itself in a less differentiated fashion, since a greater number of its elements was always directly at the helm.

This sociological distinction fully corresponds to a line of development in which the general political tendency of the individual states of the Union conforms to the basic type at issue here: that development is said to have loosed, in recent decades, a thorough weakening of parliamentarianism, which it is replacing along two other dimensions—on the one hand, with direct plebiscite; and on the other hand, with monarchistic institutions, with the surrender of power to individual persons.

The Religious Sphere

Finally, ecclesiastical politics provides us with examples, and these have analogies even in purely religious developments. The polytheism of antiquity had many of the essential characteristics that I have subsumed here under the concept of "the narrower circle." For the most part, the cults set themselves off from one another by sharp internal and local boundaries. The circles of believers were centripetal; often they were mutually indifferent to one another, often hostile. The gods themselves were often aristocratically ranked, with complicated relationships of superordination and subordination, and with segregated spheres of potency. At the outset of the Christian era in the domain of classical culture, this condition led to monotheism, to the enthronement of a single and personal God who united in himself all the powers of those discrete and segregated deities.

A religious individual originated who had an unconditional sense of responsibility for himself. A "religiosity of the closet" developed. And there came to pass an independence from all bonds to world and man except for the one inherent in the undiverted and unmediated relation of the individual's soul to his God, to a God who was no less "his" because he was the God of all, but rather who was "his" precisely because of that universality. Individuality within the large, leveled collectivity, as it originated in the dissolu-

tion and fusion of all previous discrete gods, was the reflected image of the absolute and unitary personality of a God who had grown out of the same processes of analysis and synthesis of all earlier gods.

The developmental form exhibited by Christianity in its original purity was recapitulated in the politics of the Catholic church. Within the church, the tendency toward the generation of particularized circles rose anew, leading to sharp demarcations of rank and interest, to the rise of an aristocracy of the clergy over the status group of the laity. Yet Gregory VII early united his quest for absolute power with a decided demagoguery that pulled together the most powerful antitheses and reached over the heads of the exclusive aristocratic bishops. After celibacy had most effectively supported this endeavor—since a married priest would have had attachment to a narrower circle and thus would have engendered a closed opposition within the church, whereas as a celibate, a priest's only recourse in his individual isolation would be to the unqualified totality—the Jesuits took it up with the greatest success. They fought the status aspirations of the clergy on all fronts, and they laid stress on the universal character of the priest that permitted him to feel at one with all believers, whatever their status. In opposition to all aristocratic systems of church rule, their goals were a thorough leveling of all believers, on the one hand, and papal absolutism, on the other.

General Modes of Actualization of the Correlation

The entire relational pattern under discussion here takes shape in the most diverse modes of simultaneity, sequentiality, and alternation. Perhaps one could symbolically express this complex of relations by saying that the narrower circle constitutes in some measure an intermediate proportionality between individuality and the expanded group. Thus the narrower circle, closed upon itself and requiring no other factor, can be seen to result in the same outcome of life chances as results from the conjunction of individuality and the large circle.

I will now select a few examples from the realm of law, exam-

ples from domains that are absolutely different, historically and materially. The idea of total power that was contained in the Roman concept of the state had its correlate in the notion that next to the *jus publicum*, there was a *jus privatum*. The norm of behavior that the all-inclusive whole defined for itself required that there be a corresponding norm for the individuals whom it enveloped. On the one side, there was only the community in the broadest sense; on the other side, there were only single persons. The oldest Roman law recognized no corporations, and this spirit generally remained with it.

Conversely, German law did not have different legal principles for the community and for individuals; however, these collectivities were hardly as all-embracing as those of the Roman state; rather they were smaller ones that were called into being by the many shifting needs of individuals. In smaller commonwealths, there is no need for anything like the Roman divorce of public from private law, since in them, the individual is more intimately bound up in the whole.

As a unitary development, the correlation is demonstrated in the right of blood vengeance, for example, in Arabia. The essence of this right resided entirely in the solidarity and the autonomy of sharply bounded tribal groups: it applied to the whole tribe or family of the murderer, and it was executed by the whole tribe or family of the victim. Mohammed's intention clearly ran counter to this in the direction of the bifurcation I have emphasized. Over these particularized groups, leveling them with the common religion, a national or political collectivity was to have arisen, and from it the legal judgment would be promulgated that the law of particularistic interest would be replaced by an ultimate, universally recognized authority. Correspondingly, judgment would henceforth be passed on the guilty individual alone, and the collective responsibility of particularized groups would be abolished. The largest collectivity and the individually circumscribed personality, as products of the differentiation of those intermediate structures, were to face one another alone.

With the same clarity, although in the setting of completely different contents, this type of form appears as the final stage in an

unbroken sequence when, in ancient Rome, developments shattered the patriarchal family grouping. When civil rights in war and peace accrued to both father and sons, and when the sons were able to acquire personal significance, influence, booty, and so on, a fissure had been opened in the *patria protestas* that inevitably split the patriarchal relation more and more widely apart to the benefit of the expanded needs of the state and of the law of the great whole over each of its members, but also to the benefit of the personality. Out of its relation to this whole, the personality could gain an importance that the patriarchal relation had incomparably restricted.

Finally, a formally identical process runs its course in an oddly mixed phenomenon where it can be recognized only by holding rigorously to our basic idea. Until the Norman period, each English sheriff, each royal judge, seems to have been assigned a single community, so that adjudication had a certain local coloring or constraint in which the interest of the community and that of the state were fused. These two interests began to separate after the middle of the twelfth century; royal jurisdiction then came to be executed by judicial commissions that rode large circuits, and their administration was obviously of a more general, locally unconstrained sort, while the interests of the community were protected by the growing significance of the local jury. Here the community, in its purely internal interests, played the role of the individual in our correlation; it was a social individual whose judicial life had once run its course along with that of the political state-collectivity, but which later gained a purer autonomy of being with which it then stood along side of, or in opposition to, the equally more purely elaborated law of the large collectivity.

The Ideals of the Equality and Unity of Mankind

It is no more than a corollary of the idea of such a relation between individuality and sociality if we state the following: as man as individual, and so his attributes as man qua man, come to replace man as social element in the foreground of interest, the bond must tighten that pulls him—over the head of his social

group, as it were—toward all that is human, suggesting to him the notion of an ideal unity of mankind. There need be no mistake about this developmental tendency, even though in generating this notion of ideal unity—which is really logically required—it has been restricted by all manner of historical limitations.

So in Plato, we find, on the one hand, an interest in pure individuality and the perfection of personality, an interest that broadened to include the ideal of friendship, and on the other hand, an interest in pure statehood that was completely indifferent to intermediate confederations and their respective interests. The manner of his emphasis on the cultivation and practical exemplification of the individual human being, on the value of his psyche as a self-sufficient and discrete entity, should logically have led to the rejection of the final barrier, the barrier of the form of the Greek state, which other philosophers of his epoch did reject. It was only the accident of his political inclination and his Greek nationalist disposition that prevented Plato from drawing out of his ideal construction the real conclusion for the individual: beyond the individual conceived of by Plato, only all mankind could stand as a collective value.

Similarly, Christianity lays stress on the absolute concentration of all values in the soul and its salvation, and yet fails to recognize the link which this position establishes between Christianity and all human beings. The process of unification and equalization (gradated as that equality may be), rather than extending into all mankind, tends far more to stop at the barrier of affiliation with the church. It is roughly this spirit that one finds in Zwingli's declaration that all orders, sects, special confederations, and so forth must be abolished because all Christians are brothers—but all Christians, not all men.

Altogether consistently, in contrast to the above cases, extreme individuality has frequently been associated with the doctrine of the equality of all men. It is, psychologically speaking, quite obvious that the frightful inequality into which the individual was born during certain epochs of social history would elicit a reaction along two lines, one leading in the direction of the right to individuality, and the other toward the right to universal equality,

since either of these alone tends to be inadequate in the same degree for the broader masses. Only in this dualistic connection can a phenomenon such as Rousseau be understood.

The increasing development of education exhibits the same tendency. It seeks to eliminate glaring differences in mental level and, precisely via the creation of a certain equality, to secure for each person the previously denied chance of making good his individual capacities.

I have already spoken of the form assumed by our correlation in the idea of "human rights." Eighteenth-century individualism wanted only freedom, only the removal of the "intermediate" circles and middle levels that separated men from mankind, that is, those that inhibited the development of the pure humanity that supposedly constituted the value and core of each individual's existence, but which was hidden and truncated by particularistic historical groupings and bonds. So as soon as the individual is made reliant upon *himself*, upon the ultimate and essential within himself, he is on the same footing as everyone else, and freedom has revealed equality. Individuality that truly is such, that is not diverted by social coercion, represents the absolute unity of human kind and is fused with it. There is no need to discuss how this theoretical, ethical conviction of the eighteenth century was perfected in thoroughly practical, real situations, and how it came to have an immense effect on them.

The later meaning of individualism—according to which the factual reality of human nature is comprised of the uniqueness of individuals' qualities and values, a uniqueness whose development and intensification are moral imperatives—this meaning of individualism is the denial of every kind of equality. For it seems inadmissible to me to construe equality from the fact that each individual is as special and incomparable as every other. That an individual is incomparable is hardly his own positive quality; rather, this arises only out of comparison with others, who are different only in the judgment of an observer who does not find in one person what he found in another. This point is perfectly obvious when one compares only two objects: a black object and a white object certainly do not have the common quality of one's being not white, and the other not black.

But even if to speak of the *equality* of mankind in the presence of the qualitative singularity of individuals is no more than a misuse of words, the ideal of the *unity* of mankind is not at all incompatible with this supposition. For one can conceive of the diversity of individuals, even if it implies neither economic production nor more generally a direct cooperation of everyone, as a kind of division of labor. To be sure, this takes us into the speculations of sociological metaphysics.

As the individual becomes more incomparable, as he comes more and more to occupy—in his being, his conduct, and his destiny—a position that can be filled only by him and that is reserved for him alone in the organization of the whole, all the more must this whole be grasped as a unity, as a metaphysical organism in which each psyche is a vital element, exchangeable with no other, but presupposing all others and their interaction for its own life. Wherever the need exists to perceive the totality of psychic existence in the world as a unity, it will sooner be satisfied by an individuation in which single beings necessarily complement and need one another, each taking the place left for it by all the others; this need for unity and hence apprehension of the totality of being will sooner be satisfied by that than by an equality of beings in which any one could essentially replace any other, in which each member seems actually to be superfluous and without proper relation to the whole.

Nevertheless, the ideal of equality, which unifies, in quite another sense, the most extreme individualization with the most extreme expansion of the circle of associated beings, has never been more encouraged than by the Christian doctrine of the immortal and eternal soul. The soul that faces its God with reliance only upon itself in its metaphysical individuality, the only absolute value of all being, is identical to all others in what ultimately matters. For in the eternal and the absolute, there are no distinctions: men's empirical differences, confronting the eternal and transcendental, are of no consequence. These individuals are not just the sums of their attributes, in which event they would be as diverse as those; rather, beyond those attributes, each of them is an absolute entity by virtue of personality, freedom, and immortality.

Thus, the sociology of Christianity offers the greatest historical

as well as metaphysical example of the asserted correlation: the psyche that is free from all bonds and from all relations, whatever the ends for whose sake they were instituted, the psyche that is oriented only toward the powers beyond that are the same for everyone—such a psyche, in conjunction with all others, constitutes a homogeneous being that encompasses all sentience. Unconditionality of personality and unconditional expansion of the circle of its kind are but two expressions for the unity of this religious conviction. And insofar as this has become the metaphysics or the given meaning for life in general, it is unmistakable in the extent to which it influences, as a priori disposition and mood, the historical patterns of relation among men and the attitude with which they approach one another.

Group Expansion and the Determinants of Will

OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY Indeed, the sociological significance of a universal world view, both as cause and as effect within our correlation, is manifest even when inquiry into the narrowness or breadth of environmental image does not halt at the borders of the human world. Its significance still holds when inquiry apprehends objectivity in general, whose forms we frequently construe by way of analogy with socially habituated forms.

One may well say that antiquity lacked both the broadest and purest conception of objectivity and the deepest and most precise conception of subjectivity. The concept of natural law as an absolutely substantive, universal rule, indifferent to all "values," was as foreign to antiquity as the real concept of the ego, with its productivity and its freedom, its problematics, and its value that outweighs the world. The psyche neither went so far beyond itself nor so deeply into itself as it later did via the synthesis—or also the antithesis—of the Christian ethos with modern natural and historical sciences. This cannot have been without internal and at least indirect connection with the sociopolitical structure of the Greek world. The enormous internal prerogatives of the narrower state circles bound the individual by and large to a certain intermediate image of life and the world that fell between universality

and ultimate personality; and the whole form of existence inherent in these restrictions had to be abolished in order to make room for development toward those two extremes.

ETHICS AND INTERESTS More directly than in its significance for metaphysical images of the cosmos, our correlation becomes intuitively clear in the domain of ethics. Very early, the Cynics had already rejected the otherwise typically Greek link with narrower social structures by embracing a cosmopolitan disposition, on the one hand; and on the other hand, by eliminating the intermediate element of patriotism. The expansion of the circle that fills the view and interest of individuals may frequently give rise to a particular form of egoism that engenders a real and ideal restriction of social spheres. It may promote a greatheartedness and an enthusiastically outreaching vault of the psyche, both of which are inhibited by the amalgamation of personal life with a narrow interest circle of solidary comrades. But whenever circumstances or character retard this outcome, then, quite significantly, its exact opposite easily results. To the greatest extent, as I have already discussed, the cash economy and its associated liberalistic tendencies have loosened or dissolved narrower confederations—from guild to nation—and have inaugurated a world economy; and on the other hand, they have encouraged economic egoism to every degree of remorselessness. The less, as a result of enlargement of the economic circle, the producer knows his consumers, the more exclusively is his interest focused on the level of the price that he can extract from them. The more impersonal and qualitatively empty is the public that confronts him, the more his own orientation comes to rest exclusively on the qualitatively empty result of labor, that is, on money. Apart from those lofty domains where the energy of labor stems from abstract idealism, the worker will impart his person and his ethical interest to his labor to the degree that his circle of consumers is personally known to him, and this occurs only under conditions of smaller scale. Along with the growing size of the group for which he works, and along with the growing indifference with which he is able only to confront it, many factors are lost that once restricted economic egoism.

Along many dimensions, human nature and human situations

are so positioned that when the individual's relations begin to exceed a certain extensiveness, he becomes all the more thrown back upon himself. This is not only a matter of the quantitative extension of the circle, which must inevitably reduce the personal interestedness in it of each of its points down to a minimum; it is also a matter of qualitative diversification within the circle that impeded the focusing of interest upon any one point, and which thus leaves egoism as the logical outcome of the general paralysis of irreconcilable demands. In keeping with this formal motif, for example, one of the factors giving rise to the colorfulness and internal heterogeneity of the Habsburg possessions has been held to be the fact that in all their political activity, the Habsburgs had nothing in view except the interests of their house.

Finally, spatial extension of the interest circle into greater distances—not necessarily coinciding with its actual enlargement—is what enables the individual to confront at least his narrower circle in an egoistic way. Until the time of Henry III and Edward I, English status groups were deeply divided because their interests extended variously beyond their homeland. An English nobleman had a much more intense interest in a foreign war conducted by other nobles than in domestic struggles over the law. An urbanite was much more interested in the orderliness of the commercial situation in the Netherlands than in that of English cities, unless some matter directly touched his own concerns. The great officers of the church felt themselves to be members of an international ecclesiastical entity, rather than showing any specifically English sympathies. Only after Henry and Edward did these classes begin to merge into a unified nation, and with that the segregation ceased whose egoistic character had been associated in every respect with the earlier cosmopolitan extensions of interest.

Group Expansion and Consciousness of the Ego

Beyond the significance that expansion of the circle has for the differentiation of the determinants of will, one sees its significance for the emergence of the *sensation* of a personal ego. Surely no one can fail to recognize that the style of modern life—

precisely because of its mass character, its rushing diversity, its unboundable equalization of countless previously conserved idiosyncrasies—has led to unprecedented levelings of the personality form of life. But neither should one fail to recognize the countertendencies, much as these may be diverted and paralyzed in the joint effect that ultimately appears.

Life in a wider circle and interaction with it develop, in and of themselves, more consciousness of personality than arises in a narrower circle; this is so above all because it is precisely through the *alternation* of sensations, thoughts, and activities that personality documents itself. The more uniformly and unwaveringly life progresses, and the less the extremes of sensate experience depart from an average level, the less strongly does the sensation of personality arise; but the farther apart they stretch, and the more energetically they erupt, the more intensely does a human being sense himself as a personality. Just as duration can be determined only in the presence of alternation, and just as it is only the alternation of nonessential properties that throws constancy of substance into bold relief, so too the ego is apparently perceived as the one constant in all the alternation of psychological contents, especially when these contents provide a particularly rich opportunity.

Personality is *not* a single immediate state, not a single quality or a single destiny, unique as this last may be; rather it is something that we sense beyond these singularities, something grown into consciousness out of their experienced reality. This is so even if this retroactively generated personality, as it were, is only the sign, the *ratio cognoscendi* of a more deeply unitary individuality that lies at the determinative root of the diverse singularities, an individuality that we cannot become aware of directly, but only as the gradual experience of these multiple contents and variations.

As long as psychic stimulations, especially the stimulations of sensation, occur only in small number, the ego is fused with them and stays latently embedded in them; it rises above them only to the degree that, precisely via a fullness of dissimilarity, it becomes clear to our awareness that the ego itself is common to all this variation. This is just the same as when a general concept cannot be

abstracted out of single phenomena if we are familiar with only one or a few of their elaborations, but only if we know very many of them; and its abstractness and purity are all the greater as dissimilarity contrasts more distinctly with the generality. Now this alternation of the contents of the ego, which is what actually first poses the ego to consciousness as the stable pole in the play of psychic phenomena, is extraordinarily more lively within a large circle than it is for life in a narrower group. Stimulations of sensation, which are especially important for subjective ego consciousness, occur most where a highly differentiated individual stands amid other highly differentiated individuals, and where comparisons, frictions, and specialized relations release a profusion of reactions that remain latent in a narrower undifferentiated circle, but which in the larger circle, by virtue of their abundance and diversity, elicit the sensation of the ego as that which is absolutely "one's own."

Personal Autonomy and the Elaboration of Social Organs

A more indirect route by which the relatively large circle gains a special intrapersonal freedom and autonomy of being for its members is the elaboration of functional organs. This elaboration—which was investigated above—permits the originally direct interaction of individuals to crystallize and to be transferred to particular persons and complex structures. The more purely and completely this division of labor occurs—visible in the magnitude of the group's enlargement—the more the individual is emancipated from the interactions and coalescences that it replaces, and the more he is left to his own centripetal concerns and tendencies. The generation of functional organs is the means whereby the cohesion of the group is united with the greatest freedom of individuals.

To be sure, the organs bind each group element to themselves and thus to one another; but the decisive point is that the direct interactions that preceded this system drew the totality of a human being into special achievements that required disproportionate expenditures of energy. He who is not a judge for his whole life

long, but only when the community is called together, not only is inhibited in his actual functioning, but is also encumbered in the execution of the judicial office by inappropriate conceptions and interests, in a manner entirely different from the professional judge. In contrast, he is only involved with the court in an advanced situation when his whole interest is really engaged in it. As long as each head of a household is a priest, he must function in that capacity whether he feels like it or not; but once there is a church with a professional priest, he enters it only when he feels the urge and thus really has his heart in it. As long as there is no diversification of production, the individual has to consume whatever happens to have been produced, even if very different needs and wishes have arisen in the meantime; but as soon as there are special producers for each need, he can search out whatever he might like so that he need not consume with mixed feelings.

Thus, the differentiation of social organs does not mean that individuals are detached from their connections with the whole, but rather means that they devote only the substantively relevant parts of their personalities to those bonds. The point at which the individual momentarily touches the totality or the structure of the whole no longer pulls parts of his personality into the relationship that do not belong there. It is with social organs—the consequences and distinguishing characteristics of the growth of the group—that the involvements become dissolved wherein the individual has to convey and yield into situations and activities elements of himself that do not belong to what he wants of himself.[4]

[4] The remainder of this chapter consists of three sections: a "Note on the Analogy between Psychological and Social Patterns," a discussion of comparable analogies with intellectual patterns, and an analysis of the basic categories for organizing the data of human experience. The last of these appears in this volume as chapter 4.—Ed.