

proletariat and something approaching the fascist concept. In both cases, the authoritarian approach suppresses the initiative of the individual in the belief that the way to achieve the good life for the individual is through imposing radical change in social structure.

The third of Laserna's models is what he himself proposes. It is the model of traditional humanism, of the humanism that rests its case upon the tradition of religion and upon the tradition of culture. To Laserna, this means those values, standards, and attitudes that have come down to the present out of the past; they are essentially concerned, not with society as a collective structure, but with man as man, either as an individual or as a family or group. What Laserna appears to be trying to say here, in a very general sense, is that some kind of merging of the first two attitudes he has stated is the only possible answer in accordance with an honest recognition of human values as the basis for social action. Although Laserna does not specify his idea of the corresponding basic institution, it would appear to be something within the traditional structure of family-church-community-society-state.

This third attitude or model also seems to be essentially one that analyzes the social problem against historical experience. If so, we are led to an important series of questions as to what we understand by the historical way. These questions seem especially important today, when so much of the present generation is rejecting the relevance of historical experience and of historical thinking. In considering the role of tradition we confront the whole question of the nature and meaning of human history.

THREE THEORETICAL APPROACHES

These three models of Laserna suggest three basically different theoretical approaches to understanding the relationship of man to society. His first model resembles that of the traditional (Christian) natural law, as developed by Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Francisco Vitoria, and Francisco Suárez. It is Aristotelian and Thomistic. The second rests upon empirical sociological views as developed in nineteenth century positivism and Marxism, expressing a kind of natural law of empirical-historical derivation. It is also akin to twentieth century psychological and socio-analytical thought, as for example in the thought of Erich Fromm:

Laserna's third model, in emphasizing the role of human culture, and by implication the importance of historical tradition, raises the question of a third and more distinctively historical approach. To be sure, both Marxism and positivism rest upon a "scientific" view of history in which history provided

the basis of a science of society, and it is very important today to emphasize that the Marxist social theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels rested essentially upon their scientific historic materialism. As you will recall, the essentials of this Marxist historical view were that society was basically an economic phenomenon, that the system of production determined all aspects of the social order, including religion and philosophy, and that the basic social structure changed when control of the system of production (the "objective conditions") became such a narrow monopoly that it could be overthrown by an uprising of the proletariat. This was what Marx and his followers derived from the study of history, and upon these bases they erected their science of law and society.

Actually, the difference was not great between this view of history as the basis of a social order and that of such non-Marxists of the nineteenth century who developed what we call our science of sociology as Auguste Comte of France and Herbert Spencer of England. Their view of history was different from the Marxist view, but was like Marxism in resting the science of society upon principles derived from history.

But while the historical basis of all theory of social action was equally clear in these two streams of nineteenth century thought, the differences were likewise fundamental. The sociologists Comte and Spencer did not adopt historical materialism, nor did they view history as a struggle of classes. Rather, they saw the process of history as the gradual liberation of man's mind from superstition, so that increasingly man and society became reasonable, coming under the control of institutions based upon knowledge and reason rather than upon force. As society progressed it became more highly structured. These structures consisted of laws that represented intelligent action to deal with social problems. An increasingly complicated and institutionalized social order, working through an evolutionary process, eventually produced the good society.

The important thing to notice is the extent to which most of the thought of the nineteenth century, whether positivist or Marxist, rested upon certain simple conclusions that were drawn from the study of history. As one looks at the world today, seeing the significance of this kind of historical thought rejected, it begins to appear how great the twentieth century revolution in thought has been. One can either say that this rejection makes it important to get back to some kind of historical basis of thinking or one can say about history, with what is perhaps the majority among our youth today, "Eso no me dice nada" — that history means nothing to us and that only in the contemporary world can we look for solutions to our problems. This historical skepticism, as we shall note, is a major element in the alienation and anomie so characteristic of our intellectual age.

But this sociological history, whether Marxist or positivist, is not the really historical way of thinking. In fact, both Marxism and positivism, while laying a scientific historical basis for social science, rejected all *philosophy* of history as metaphysical. So, one must also ask of anyone defending an historical way of thinking: Is this Marxist or positivist "scientific" history? Is it the classic view, as old as Saint Augustine and repeated, in a sense, in Giambattista Vico's *New Science*? Or is it the idealistic view of history, seeing history as the manifestation of man's thought, becoming reality through man's action? This is the neo-Kantian view of history, one that is not too far from the idea of the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset — from his "vital" concept of law and history.

Ortega's philosophy of history has had considerable influence upon the present generation of intellectuals, particularly in Spanish America. It is also the idea represented in part in the contemporary Spanish philosopher, Julián Marías, who has popularized the Ortegian interpretation of history as "the method of the generations" (*El método de las generaciones*). The Marías historical method is an existentialist idealist interpretation of history which assumes that each generation makes a new formulation of values and principles, which the generation then proceeds to give reality by turning these ideas into facts.⁴

Finally, we may ask, is the historical theory better defined as institutional, a history that also centers around the ideas upon which institutions are built. This theory found expression in the United States, for instance, in the work of the historian James Harvey Robinson. In the Spanish tradition it is represented in the work of Rafael Altamira of Spain, of Ricardo Levene of Argentina, and of Silvio Zavala of Mexico. In considering the problem of revolutionary thought today, the ideas expressed by this trio have a special relevance, precisely because they view the process of social change as it finds expression in institutional changes that embody ideas.

THREE ASPECTS OF MAN'S HUMAN CONDITION

1. MAN AS BIOLOGICAL BEING (Physiological)
2. MAN AS SOCIAL BEING (Psychological - sociological)

⁴ José Ortega y Gasset, *History as a System and Other Essays toward a Philosophy of History* (New York: W. N. Norton & Co. 1962); Julián Marías, *El Método de las Generaciones* (3a. ed. Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1961).

3. MAN AS HISTORICAL BEING (Cultural - historical - anthropological)

Historical Materialist View:	Philosophical - idealist	Historical
Economic motivation to action.	View: Values and beliefs as basis of human action.	

One may consider the human condition of man today in terms of three fundamental aspects. These are also aspects of man's capacity or power to act in society. One may look at the condition of man as a biological being, one may look at his condition as a social being, or one may look at his condition as a historical being. If one looks at man as a biological being, he is looking at his physiological condition, that is to say his health, his housing, his material well-being, the aspects of his living as a biological organism. If one looks at man as a social being, one looks at his psychology, at his intellectual life, at his beliefs, at his standards of behavior, at his ethics, at his esthetics. In short, one look at man in terms of social or group behavior of how men think and react toward each other and toward the society of which they are a part.

But when man is considered as a historical or cultural being, he is considered not just in terms of the way in which his mind operates — his psychology, his mind, his whole mental and psychological and nervous aspects. He is also considered in the cultural and historical setting in which he has developed and in his reaction to this setting. The last work of the Spanish philosopher José Gaos, recently published in Mexico where he spent the last decades of his life, consists of his lectures on anthropological philosophy given at the National University of Mexico. This is perhaps one of the more philosophical approaches that can be made to a study of man in his human condition as a historical being.⁵

But when man is regarded as an historical being from the standpoint of his power to act in society — or to be organized for action — it is necessary to make a choice which is not always clearly enough made in the thinking of the present day between two views of history we have previously discussed. We must choose between historical materialism, in which the basis of history is seen as the system of economic production, and the essentially idealist approach to history. This distinction becomes particularly important when it is remembered that historical understanding is an essential element of power. How people look at society today — and how they act in relation to their community, their nation or the world, rests on what they think they are and

⁵ *Del Hombre* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica y Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1970).

what they think they believe. This in turn depends on how they look at their history. One may well say that a sense of history provides power which makes the difference between willingness to act and unwillingness to act. A sense of history represents the difference between a sense of identity and a state of alienation. One of the tragic effects of the rejection of history in the thought of the world today is that is the rejection of this major constituent of the power structure — its cement, but even more significantly, its basic element.

One of my favorite poets, Ralph Waldo Emerson, expressed this idea of history in the following verse:

*There is no great and no small
To the soul that maketh all:
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere.*

*I am the owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Caesar's hand and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain.*

If Emerson had been writing for a Spanish-speaking audience he would have said Cervantes instead of Shakespeare and would have been saying essentially the same thing about the power that is history.

VARIETIES OF ALIENATION

1. Alienation from self — diverted from normal function, especially mental or psychological.
2. Alienation from spouse, friends, or relatives by the action of another person.
3. Alienation of the generations (Ortega y Gasset and Julián Marías).
4. Alienation in industry.
5. Alienation from society. Man feels himself impoverished, frustrated, imprisoned by powers outside his control, and rebels against society as irrational or unjust (Erich Fromm).⁶

⁶ *The Sane Society* (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1966).

6. Alienation from God.

These varieties of alienation derive in part from Erich Fromm, but have other sources as well. The first, alienation from self, is the most primitive or simple concept of alienation. It concerns alienation as something essentially mental or psychological — an abnormality or insanity. This is a specialized meaning, but also the original from which the other meanings seem to derive. In this case the word has essentially the same meaning in Spanish and Portuguese as it has in English.

The second variety of alienation represents another common use of the term in every day speech. We speak of alienation from one's wedded spouse or from friends or relatives by the action of another person. Thus we speak of a third person alienating the affection of a wife or of a husband or of a child or of a friend.

The third kind of alienation is the one already noted in the historical thought of Ortega y Gasset and of Julián Marías. Thus we speak of the alienation of each generation from the generation that preceded it, of the alienation of children from parents. This concept of alienation is one of historical process.

Today, we are concerned with a fourth type, alienation in industry. This is a phenomenon of industrialization in which the worker comes to feel that he is not really a part of the factory or of the process of production. He thinks of himself as somehow separated and apart from it — that he is not personally involved in anything he is creating, and so is alienated from the whole system of industrial production.

The sixth and even broader kind of alienation, alienation from society, is the kind that is spoken of most commonly today. This is an alienation, as Erich Fromm has suggested in his *Sane Society*, in which man feels himself frustrated, impoverished, a prisoner imprisoned by powers outside his control, and so rebels against society as irrational or unjust. In passing, it may be noted that Fromm's book might be more accurately called *The Insane Society*, since he is viewing this society, at least from the standpoint of the human being, as insane. Hence, alienation from this kind of society is in a sense the search for a sane society, and Fromm is describing what he believes a sane society would be like.

The last variety of alienation to be mentioned is alienation from God, or from religion in general. This kind of alienation is also a characteristic of much of the world today. Some would say it is the root of the three preceding types.

At this point we should be reminded that these forms of alienation are not

new. History provides numerous examples of all the kinds mentioned, including alienation from society, from industry, and from God. Moreover, some of the great intellectual and moral figures in our history have been alienated individuals. In this sense, one may speak of Jesus as alienated from the world in which he lived and one may speak of the Buddah as alienated from his Hindu world.

Literature provides many expressions of this idea of the insane society. Among the numerous, excellent plays of the Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, for example, is one called *The Enemy of the People* (*El Enemigo del Pueblo*). "The Enemy" is a physician who discovers that a spa of which he has charge uses polluted water. Since it has been advertised as a health spa, he proceeds to reveal this truth about the water supply in an effort to get the community to stop killing the people who come there for a cure. But the result of his zeal is that he is ostracized by the whole community in a kind of near lynching in which he is called the enemy of the people. At one point he says, in effect, that he is not sure whether it is the society that is mad or that he is insane. This theme of alienation occurs in many of the Ibsen plays, suggesting that the concept of alienation from society was common in his day.

The alienation of Thoreau has been mentioned, and many other figures of U.S. intellectual history would be recognized as embodying in some respects this alienation from the world in which they lived. This would be true particularly of those who have been identified with some kind of reform movement. A modest acquaintance with the writers of Spanish America and of Brazil suggests that a number of them would also fit in this category of literary and cultural figures whose essential position has been that of feeling themselves somehow or other rejected by the world and the situation in which they lived.

Is the alienation today different? If it is, it may be in part because it is so widespread. Because today we have not just the alienation of the individual intellectual or religious leader or reformer, but a great wave of popular alienation — of the separation of great masses of people from the values and the institutions in which they grew up. The alienation of today, therefore, is probably not so much a difference in kind as a difference in degree, a quantitative difference, traceable at least in part to modern mass communication. At times, of course, a quantitative difference becomes a qualitative difference. So it may be true today that the quantitative difference actually makes the alienation of today something different from the kind of alienation we have experienced before. In any event, it would be a mistake simply to assume that these feelings of alienation are something which have never occurred in the world before. At least gain further by perspective on the problem we are dealing with today

by recognizing that alienation has been a common occurrence in the history of man's culture.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALIENATION

1. Idolatrous worship of persons, leaders, gods (Erich Fromm).
2. Egocentrism and a cult of self.
3. Withdrawal from family, church, school, community, and society.
4. Rejection of accepted ethical, esthetic, political, legal, economic, and other norms and values.
5. Rejection of accepted religious beliefs.
6. Rejection of history.
7. Resistance to political, social, economic, and cultural institutions:
 - a. Passive resistance (Ghandi, Thoreau),
 - b. Violent, revolutionary resistance (Camilo Torres, Tupamaros).
8. The counter-culture (*contracultura*) of today embraces elements of most of above manifestations.

The manifestations of alienation set forth above illustrate in a general way the varieties just discussed. The first manifestation, one taken from Erich Fromm, is the idolatrous worships of persons, leaders, gods, and passions. Extreme personalism in one form is the exaggeration of the leader concept. It is the exaggeration of the importance of Lenin in the U.R.S.S., of Mao in China, of Hitler in Germany, and of Mussolini in Italy. It would not be difficult to enumerate some notable instances in Latin America of this manifestation of an exaggerated personalism that expresses a feeling of rejection by society. This exaggerated cult of persons also finds expression in such religious manifestations as the contemporary Jesus cult among our youth. This cult manifests alienation not only from the society, but from the established religion as well.

Egocentrism and a cult of the self is one of the most obvious expressions of alienation among our educated youth today. It finds expression in the belief that nothing matters except one's self — that satisfaction of self is the measure of all things.

The phenomenon of withdrawal from family, church, school, community, and society is a third manifestation of alienation. Some of our most sensitive and educated youth have become itinerants. We see them walking around the streets, migrating from one town to another. They are "tramps" in the classical English use of the term (*vagabundos* in Spanish or Portuguese). We are seeing a generation who reject family, church, school, community the whole

society. Of course, we have had this phenomenon in our societies before, but not in such large numbers as today.

A fourth manifestation of alienation is the rejection of accepted ethical, esthetic, political, legal, economic, and other norms upon which the social structure has rested in the past. A fifth manifestation is closely related to the fourth — the rejection of accepted religious beliefs. Both resemble, and are interconnected with the third manifestation. We have already spoken of the sixth instance, the rejection of history.

The seventh manifestation, that of resistance to political, social, economic, and cultural institutions, takes either of two forms, that of passive resistance or that of violent rebellion. One should certainly not underestimate the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in this respect. Gandhi has been a great figure in the minds of the present generation. His influence may even have been greater outside India than it was in the India movement for independence. The fact that India, the second most populous country in the world, acquired its independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has made this influence, perhaps more clearly than that of anyone else, one of the great cultural and psychological facts of this age. Its influence probably tends to be diluted as it moves out from India, but it certainly has had great influence in the United States.

A few years ago, in connection with a series of lecture given in the India International Center, in New Delhi, concerning impressions of India various parts of the world, this author was asked to state the concept of India generally held in the United States. His off-hand reply was that the average person in the United States had two strong impressions of India. The first was the impression given in a book by Katherine Mayo, called *Mother India*. This book gave a dismal picture of social, health, and cultural conditions in India, as viewed through the eyes of foreign missionaries. The second impression was that of Mahatma Gandhi and his passive resistance movement.

The eighth and final manifestation of alienation is that of the counter culture or *contracultura*. The counter culture is the positive response to the rejection of the existing culture. It appears in the "communities" of disillusioned youth that have mushroomed in contemporary society as well as among class conscious and ethnic groups. We hear a great deal of talk today about this counter culture which rejects the existing culture and presumes, with a good deal of naivete, that a new culture is being established with values basically different from those of the existing cultures. This new culture, it is assumed, finds its value systems in the little communities of the disenchanted, or in class conscious or ethnic groups.

SOME CHOICES

1. ERICH FROMM: "Man today is confronted with the most fundamental choice; not that between Capitalism or Communism, but that between *robotism* (of both the capitalist and the communist variety), or Humanistic Communitarian Socialism."⁷
2. HERBERT MARCUSE: Severe critic of both marxist-leninist and Capitalist society; influence on youth. Treats society as irrational, pretending to be rational. No solution. PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM. Socialist Solidarity (vague). "... we shall be free to think about what we are going to do."⁸
3. ANTONIO CASO: "... let us organize our specific conscience, the national conscience now torn to pieces, ... hoping that other happier days will see Mexicans closer to one another in the mysterious and royal realm of the soul. After all, love is easier and less disturbing than hatred."⁹

Five different choices, from among many that appear in the present day dialogue on these issues, are suggested above. The first comes from Erich Fromm, the German existentialist philosopher and psychologist, as he may be called. In his *Sane Society*, Fromm says that the most fundamental choice man confronts today is not that between capitalism or communism, but rather between robotism of both the capitalist and the communist variety and the humanistic communitarian socialism. In speaking of the humanistic communitarian socialism, Erich Fromm is really speaking of the counter culture that finds its expression in a community. He speaks of values that are humanistic but are also communitarian. One suspects that for Erich Fromm the humanism is a product of the community rather than the creator of the community, although the meaning is not clear.

Another German philosopher, now resident in the United States, who has influenced youth movements of today, both in Europe and in the United States, is Herbert Marcuse. His *Essay on Liberation* states what may be called a second choice. Marcuse is a revisionist Marxist, a severe critic of both Marxist-Leninist and capitalist society. Like Fromm, he says that society is insane,

⁷ *The Sane Society*, p. 315.

⁸ *Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 79-91. See also Manuel Velázquez, "El Socialismo Antisocial de Herbert Marcuse", in *Pensamiento Político* (México), Vol. III, número 9 (Enero 1970), pp. 55-68.

⁹ *El Problema de México y la Ideología Nacional* (2a. ed. México: Libero-Mex, 1955. Original ed. 1924), p. 83.