X. THE 1960s

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As part of the general questioning of all the bases of our contemporary culture, including those which socialism has taken over from capital; I returned to the study of Marx's 1844 Manuscripts and to the critiques of science from Galileo to nuclear fission and the driving of a shaft into the world of the particles. More and more I felt that the realisation of what was implied by Marx's analysis of alienation had not even begun. Mechanistic quantitative science was exactly paired off with the extension of the cash-nexus; one depended wholly on the other. To get rid of all the thingifications induced by the cash-nexus meant to overthrow the grip of mechanistic thinking in all spheres. The criterion that a thing is true simply because it works and that every exploration or application of the way things work must be carried on merely because it is possible, was the direct result of the elimination of humanity from science, the surrender of humanity to the mechanistic principle. In the early days – right into the 19th century – it was easy to maintain the illusion that thus men were gaining mastery over nature, over things, whereas in fact the things were gaining mastery over men. In the early phases the extension of human controls, the growth of the power to manipulate aspects of matter, could easily produce the illusion; the controls were still comparatively small. The way in which quantitative methods enabled men to grasp and manipulate matter in various stable states gave the effect than man was really the master and that the whole universe corresponded to the stable states in question. Questions of the structure of development and of the critical points of change could be ignored or treated in abstract ways which totally perverted their nature. Action and reaction could be equal and opposite only in a dead universe where in fact there was no action and reaction at all. In all post-Galilean thought, including that of Einstein, all processes are ideally reversible; for with the elimination of all the qualities that constitute humanity and organic life, Time has become a ghost of space and space itself an abstraction born from matter-in-stable-states. Einstein indeed made an important step by thinking in terms of space-time, not of space and time; but the crucial step was to realise space-time in concrete

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terms as structural, consisting of nodal points of revolutionary change as well as of levels of stable states which could be grasped in mechanistic terms.

The post-Galilean mechanistic world had as its subjective aspect the drive to find ways of actualising blast-power. The notion of blast-power goes back to such things as the sun-box of the Australian witch-doctor, in which he can concentrate heat-power and direct it at a victim far away, thus achieving "action at a distance." Egyptian dreams of hell conjured up mechanisms of blast-power, and in the transitional period between the ancient and the medieval worlds, Syria-and-Byzantium devised Greekfire; then with the growth of the new concepts of impetus or motion (John Philoponos to Buridan and on to thinkers of the 16th century) there were born both ballistics and gunpowder proper. Herein lay the great emotional drive of destruction that made Galileo and Newton possible. From one angle the Newtonian theory of gravitation is a ballistical theory. Gunpowder, steam-power, and nuclear fission are the landmarks along the line of the mechanistic approach; all the concepts of energy can be reduced to a form of power-madness, of blast-power. (This anal conception of power ties up at every point with money, a faecal symbol, but I do not want here to complicate my thesis with the psychological aspects of the fundamental bourgeois ideas.)

To say that science and its methods are neutral and that what matters is only the use made of them, is to show a blank ignorance of the formative process. It is to introduce into the heart of the moral problem the very system of alienation against which we are protesting. What we need is a radically new approach, which drops the mechanistic principles on which all post-Galilean science has operated, and seeks a quite different set of principles. Whyte with his formative unitary principle, in which the ceaseless emergence of asymmetry leads to a struggle to reassert symmetry on a new level, gives us important clues. The Soviet astronomer Kosyrev, suppressed by the powerful nuclear physicists, with his thesis that Time itself is energy, and that the gap between cause and effect can be used an energy-source, again seems to be pointing in the required direction. But before such new ideas can be grasped and applied, it is necessary to work out the critique of mechanist science in order to free men's minds from the spell, the devastating preconceptions, which have sent them hurtling along certain grooves

of thought, unable to lift their eyes and see anything outside those grooves. If you can on look for a certain type of phenomena, you could only find evidence that further verifies the rigid ideas with which you began.

In the situation where we find ourselves – in which the constructive side of the quantitative analysis of stable states of matter has reached its end, and the irrational destructive side grows ever more dominant – we must ask ourselves afresh what the concept of Progress means. We must be profoundly skeptical of all concepts born from the era of capitalist accumulation and mechanistic extension. And sure enough we find that the concept of Progress as an indefinite expansion of factual knowledge and of technological application is the counterpart of the idea of indefinitely expanding capital-accumulation. Against it we must set the goal of a stable and harmonious equipoise with nature – a goal that could only be reached when everyone on earth has all that is necessary for an existence free from malforming deprivations. The aim of communism is to free man from alienation, not to clog him with a wealth of consumer-goods, which in fact have the effect of increasing alienation. The way of communist man must be to see how to live a full life with a minimum of goods, gadgets, and property-paraphernalia. Just how development will go on under communism we may leave to the people of that epoch; but what we can be sure about is that the notion of progress which is an automatic reflection of capital-accumulation will disappear and be recognised as an aspect of alienation.

A deep misfortune of the socialist societies so far come into existence is that they have had to emerge in a world where imperialism still rules half the world, centred in the U.S.A. but dominating one way or another all the advanced industrialist countries. This has meant that as a prime basis of survival the U.S.S.R. had to develop heavy-industry at breakneck speed; and that fact provided the rationale for the Stalin system. But this also meant a largescale distortion of socialist planning so that a gap appeared between genuine social considerations and the system evolved under the war-threat. The idea of plenty (in the capitalist sense) was thus dangled before the workers like the carrot before the donkey, to overcome the resistances to the sacrifices required by the construction of heavy-industry. With the postponement of

bourgeois plenty into the indefinite future, individual freedoms had to be postponed too – and not "individual freedoms" merely in the bourgeois sense, but also in the socialist sense of spontaneous and organised initiative ceaselessly coming up from below. As a result a true socialist morality could not develop except sporadically and in limited ways. (The Stalin epoch was in one sense an epoch of heroic construction, but the heroic element was at every point entangled with the authoritarian pressures; the extremely complicated result of freedom and unfreedom has been defined to some extent in Soviet literature, but not with full comprehension of the entanglement and its sources.) It inevitably comes about that, as in such a situation the creation of true socialist morality, which involves a full release of socialist freedom, becomes ever more difficult, the carrot of consumer-plenty has to be more and more dangled before the donkey. The goal of socialist society is seen as achieving more plenty in the bourgeois sense than bourgeois society itself can. All the talk about overtaking the U.S.A. (which was one of Khruschev's weak sides) derives (a) from the war-pressures and (b) from the surrender of the attempt to achieve a socialist morality. That morality can be achieved only by a full living up to Leninist norms, of which the first axioms are (a) nothing whatever must be hidden from the people, all deliberations of the party, at all levels, must be in the open and must be presented without any equivocations or reserves (b) the primary aim of the party must be to stimulate and release the energies of the people at the level of the local soviet, the factory, the farm (c) the officials of the party and the government, whatever their level, must accept the position of Marx (stated in relation to the Paris Commune) and of Lenin (repeating Marx's views in his April Theses) that their wages should be on the level of the average earnings of a skilled worker. Once economic incentives become central – and they can do so only when there is increasing differentiation of wage-levels – then socialist morality is lost. At most we get appeals for a civic spirit and so on. Individuals may discover the nature of socialist morality and live up to it, but the collective cannot but be dominated by money-values and by a worsening alienation.

The failure of the U.S.S.R. to solve the problems of socialising agriculture is closely linked with the issues raised above. Certainly there are many difficulties in that socialisation;

but they are not insuperable if there is full Leninist freedom and initiative in the industrial areas and the adoption of the policy (set out for while[1] by Kruschev) of reversing the tendency to build big towns and of developing small urban areas of some 25,000 people as cultural and industrial centres for the surrounding countryside. It may be remarked that China is in its own way taking the line I propose, of developing rural areas with various additions of industrialisation instead of indefinitely expanding industrial areas; and as far as I can make out, this is indeed so. But it is so hard up to the present to get a coherent picture of what is going on in China and just how stable are certain aspects of its development, that I prefer to leave the matter here at a blessing upon it in so far as it is taking this line, and a hope that it persists consciously in avoiding the gap of town and country. (The one thing for which I find it hard to forgive China is the virulent abuse of the U.S.S.R. Even if all that it alleges is true, the tone is still hopelessly wrong. Each socialist country must find its own way forward, in terms of its own traditions and its understanding of Marxism; other socialist countries may criticise the way things are done, but they must refrain from mere abuse; they must maintain a fraternal spirit in the international sphere, even if disagreements are deep.) Mao's genius as a revolutionary leader finding a way forward for the lands with vast peasant populations cannot be gainsaid; but I can see only contempt for people in the inculcation of an unreasoning worship of any leader, however great his achievements. I believe that the people can be trusted to find their own way forward in a dialogue with the party which maintains its Leninist standards. But against the wild glorification of a leader (however good), we must set the fact of Mao's extraordinary courage in calling on the masses, especially the young, to take things into their own hands, in the Cultural Revolution; an act which shows a tremendous faith in people, in the revolutionary élan which will carry them along and preserve the country from a breakdown despite the many ruptures in party and governmental structures.

Cuba appears to be a socialist land where it is understood that the idea of human dignity is what must come foremost, with all monetary matters subordinated. Castro further

[1] As per typescript; possibly should be 'a while'.

seems to understand Lenin's insistence that the people must be taken fully and unreservedly into their leaders' confidence. (A fine soviet novel of the Khruschevian period of the early 1960s, stressing the Leninist point, is Kazekevich's Blue Notebook.)

One tragic effect of the failures to achieve a socialist morality, which implies a way of life leading as fast as is historically possible into communism, is that the acceptance of the bourgeois notion of progress involves also the acceptance of technology as a sort of abstracted force with its own laws, to which human needs must be submitted, not the other way round (whatever meaningless talk about man mastering nature is indulged in). The fact that the objections to mechanist science which I briefly set out above are not in the least an academic matter is shown by the whole issue of environment-destruction and pollution which has come up in the last few years. We have reached the point where practically all large-scale extensions of technology are disastrous, whether bringing about supersonic aeroplanes, vast dam-projects which upset the whole ecology of regions or irritate the earth's surface into fractures and quakes, huge oil-tankers that foul the seas, nuclear-fission projects that beget incalculable hazards with their waste-materials, insecticides, detergents and other chemicals that more or less permanently poison the soil, in fact all big chemical production or usage, vehicles and engines that send out toxic fumes, and so on. We cannot expect a decisive reorientation in scientific theory or a reversal of tendencies that would undermine profits to be brought about in a class-society; but we can and must expect a socialist society to do precisely these things. However the capitalist concept of progress as an indefinite extension of technology and of the production of consumer-goods inevitably inhibits any fundamental thinking outside the scope of mechanistic science. So we reach the strange and depressing situation where the socialist societies seem even less aware than the class-societies of the dangers of pollution. To some extent this lack of awareness may be attributed to the vastness of space in the Soviet Union and the fact that many industries such as chemicals have been less developed than under capitalism. But Khruschev gave a strong impulsion of Soviet chemical production, and there have been more than enough unfortunate experiences of the destruction of the environment for the lessons to have been learned. In the early postwar years Leonov has to his credit the novel

The Russian Forest in which he exhaustively set out the disastrous nature of the forest-destruction begun under the Tsars and continued under the soviets; more he effectively used the implied attitude to nature as an emblem of the treatment of human beings as economic units with all the aspects of alienation thus involved. (The one flaw in the novel is the conclusion. To express an ultimate optimism he has his professor-hero, the champion of the forests, suddenly justified at the end by some unclarified decision from high-up – that is, from Stalin. He should have shown him arrested as a traitor to the people.)

To reverse such a situation as that created by Stalin was and is no easy task. Khruschev certainly had the will to do so, but he lacked the philosophic and political understanding. He was too much the product of the very thing he had come to detest. More by character than by any Leninist conviction, he blurted out his thoughts and in this way to a considerable extent did allow the people to eavesdrop on what was being said in the corridors of power. Many of the trends he sought to initiate were excellent: for example, his attempts to decentralise, to encourage agorots (country town-centres), to stir up activity from below. But his inadequate grasp of what was at stake introduced indecision, confusions, error, which brought about his downfall. His virtues provoked opposition from the heirs of Stalin, but were not clear or strong enough to create a situation where he could not be displaced. However, with all his weaknesses, there was an important movement forwards of soviet literature, indeed of soviet culture as a whole, during the period of his domination making Solzhenitsyn's advent possible. It was with a deep sense of shame that I read the words of a soviet writer, whom I have found a likeable and intelligent person, at the party-congress of 1971. He declared that in the period up till the last party-congress in 1966, soviet writers were in dire need of "clarity in certain important ideological questions;" they had had enough of "voluntaristic turbulence." Thus he denigrates the phase of revived creative energies, in which a genuine penetration into the conflicts and needs of soviet society was being achieved; thus he acclaims the obstructions put in the way of creative release. I recall how I sat in a café in Kensington High Street a few years ago with this writer. Looking out at the passers-by, he remarked, "You can talk as much as you like about dehumanisation and alienation and all the

rest of it, but put a group of our people in this scene and all they would see would be the glamour, the goods to be bought, the surface prosperity. We see there a total lack of faith in the soviet people, a lack of faith which sadly has its element of truth because of the failure to develop in any adequate way a deepgoing socialist morality of the kind I have discussed. Instead of insisting that the struggle for the extension and stabilisation of that morality must be opened consistently and unceasingly, so that no soviet citizen would be dazzled and deceived by Kensington High Street, the defender of the status quo praises the hardening of the situation which inhibits the people's moral growth: the creed that they have to be told from above what is good for them. Such an attitude however is inseparable from the wrong attitude to consumption under socialism. In that attitude consumption is considered as something passive and purely individualistic. Though in many ways the position is the opposite of that in our class-society where all possible pressures are brought to bear on the individual to create "artificial needs" so that as consumer he is the exact reflection of the commodity-man as producer; the governmental institutions regulate the way in which the production-system operates, and lays the least possible emphasis on individual consumption – with the result that commodity-man is idealised as the creature of an earth of careless plenty. That is why the ordinary soviet citizen in Kensington High Street would see himself, not in the hell where he in fact is, but in the utopia of commodity-man.[2]

The Stalin period was prolific in chatter about Bourgeois Survivals to explain everything that went wrong; but the real Bourgeois Survivals – division of labour, the State, money, alienation in its myriad forms – were not discussed at all except in terms of some indefinite future. The problem of starting to do something about them here-and-now was never even remotely raised. Socialism has in fact the huge and pressing problem, from the first moment, that it has no choice but to carry on with factories and machine-production in the

[2] Lindsay footnote: Another anecdote which I may add here deals with the visit of a group of soviet industrialists to one of the big monopoly-firms here. The man who acted as their translator told me that the first halfhour or so of the discussion with the management was slow and guarded. Then one of the English high-ups made some caustic remark about workers and production-problems; at once the soviet eyes lighted up and an animated conversation began.

forms that continue, and even exacerbate, the division of labour which Marx always denounced as central in alienation. How is this division (which in one sense goes much deeper than class-division, since it operates at the crucial point of the productive act) to be dealt with by a socialist society, which has as its prime goal the ending of alienation? True, revolutionary *elan* and a general sense of owning the productive system may do much in the first phases to alleviate and lift the sense of alienation; but to give this emotion a solid basis there must be a speedy development of forms that can sustain it. First of all, on the Leninist principle of telling the whole truth, there must be no attempts to gild and falsify the situation. The workers must be helped to realise the contradiction between division of labour and the communist goal. Nothing could be more disastrous than efforts to hide or blur the contradiction out of fear that the truth would create discontents and resistances. There are many problems in clarifying the situation, but in the long run the really dangerous discontents and resistances come from the continuing mystification. From the outset the powers of initiative among the people can be stimulated in all directions, and people can begin to feel powerfully that they are in charge of their own lives – at the place of residence and its surroundings, in the local soviet, in the place of work, in all spheres of education, leisure, and culture. The more that individual activity and responsibility are released, with a continual raising of cultural levels, the more will people feel confidently that they are moving to the full socialist freedoms, and what elements of their life and work still remain outside their direct control will correspondingly lose the aspect of being set over against them as alien powers. The here-and-now becomes genuinely free in a concrete way and the vistas of a poly-technical education securely involve a steady breaking-down of the limits to human potentiality which are raised by labour-division. There is thus no need to posit the problem as all-or-nothing, a total casting-off of alienation in terms of some anarchist utopia or a passive acceptance of the vast burden of alienation, centred in the productive act, which is inherited from capitalism. The act of social appropriation of the spheres of production and distribution is the first necessary step; but by itself it merely opens the gates to a solution which is forever denied to class-society.

Perhaps I have always felt this issue with extreme force because of my early anarchist rejection of any kind of enslavement to the wages-system. I have always felt that I'd rather live at subsistence-level doing roadwork than enter a factory or office of any kind, where one was up against the alienating-pressures in a massive way. Yet I came to realise the enormous importance, both political and spiritual, of the gathering of large numbers of workers inside capitalist enterprises: not only the power thus generated on their side, which alone could enable them to stand up against the power of capital, but also the qualities of comradeship and loyalty, gradually shaped into a new kind of social consciousness in the course of struggle against the ever-greater weight of capital. This new kind of social consciousness, given specific and concrete force in the experience of the workers, was what I in my turn was seeking to express in my writings. All that I had learned of initiation-ritual, of Greek drama, of the mass-image of the earthly paradise which had emerged at great moments of crisis in the past, of poetic transformation, was linked in the last resort with the mass-movements of my own day, and whatever was concrete and significant in my writing could not be separated from elements of fraternity developed in the factories and enterprises I had shrunk from, given organisation form in the trade-unions and other working-class bodies, and released finally into the political struggle for socialism. The statement that the industrial working-class has lost the cultural traditions of peasant-days (which had roots far back into tribal times) has a certain truth – though one that has to be modified variously for certain regions, as I found in Betrayed Spring: see also my remarks on the question of popular speech in After the Thirties. But even with the worst evaluation of the extent to which the industrial working-class has been submitted (in Britain for the last hundred years) to the most debasing of commercialised pressures in entertainment and the like, in the struggle for socialism with all its ups and downs that class rediscovers the pattern of death-rebirth – and in the most significant of all situations: that's where the breakthrough into the classless society happens.

So I had to find out that in my lonely course, in so far as it became significant, I was going the same way as the workers under imperialism, and with the same goal, the same life-pattern. To the extent that I fought against alienation and sought to unveil it, defeat it in terms

of the imagery and patterns of the life-process, I was entering into the ranks of the workers at a different level. And so I suddenly realised that what I felt as death in the factory, the office, was not the work itself, but the alienating reduction there of men to things. In a socialist society, at all phases of life – and even now in my seventies – I should have no objection to taking my share in industry or work on the land. What I could not accept was to be paid for such work. So I thoroughly accept and welcome the system, used at times in Russia and much stressed in China, of intellectuals playing their part in manual work.

It followed that with my effort to reject a way in which division of labour is central, I should find myself driven to try to live up to Hegel's definition of the educated man as one who can do anything. I have always felt the need to do manual as well as mental work; from my teens I have kept on at carpentry, building (including bricklaying), and craftwork like printing in all its aspects (from type-setting to press-work). I have run (small) publishing firms, doing practically every job thus entailed at sometime or another, carried out a fair amount of political organising work (in the cultural sphere), worked as an army-clerk, done script-jobs of every kind, lectured, written just enough music and made enough drawings to feel that I would work also in those disciplines, struggled with a large number of different fields of thought and study, from philosophy to anthropology and history (including the theory and history of science), written novels, drama, poetry. As well as using archaeology in my writings, I have worked as field-archaeologist, discovering several new Roman and medieval sites in my Essex locality, And so on. At least a range wide enough to make me feel that I could tackle any sort of job or task that came my way. But it is not the number of items in this list that matters. What matters is the extent to which they all express a unitary viewpoint – to which they are not and never have been mere hobbies, but have been activities in which to the best of my abilities I have always struggled to put my whole self. So I feel that I can claim they represent, however modestly and imperfectly, an effort to realise in myself Marx's human goal: the breaking-down of the limits set up by the division of labour.

A brief account of my work during the 1960s will give some idea how I tried to follow out the new trails in my thought. First the novels. In The Revolt of the Sons I took a family with nonconformist money-minded father (based roughly on one I had known in Kent); the sons are kept working in his timber-business at low wages by threats and promises connected with his will. The theme was the differing forms of resistance found in the sons, one of whom becomes truly conscious of what is at stake. A murder committed locally [by] a U.S. soldier supplied another theme. The various strands came together in the death of the father – the day-of-judgment by the sons. All on the Never-Never took the subject of a woman trying to prostitute herself to meet hire-purchase payments – and incidentally finding that it wasn't so easy. Thus prostitution was used a symbol for the consumer-society where all things become commodities. I chanced later on a newspaper item stating that most of the amateur prostitutes in provincial towns consisted of women trying to raise cash for hire-purchase payments. (A film was made out of the book, Live Now and Pay Later. I was asked to write the script, but refused; the man who took it over swung the theme [from] the consumer to the seller end.) The thought for The Way the Ball Bounces came from the film Hiroshima Mon Amour. I came away with the feeling: Everyone, even the greatest monsters of politicians, agree that the atomic bomb is foul and mad. The problem then is not to show its foulness and madness, but to ask: How is it that people can forget the existence of such an inhuman thing? How can they put it out of mind and go about their daily work instead of demanding as the first axiom of a civilised world that it should be abolished? So I came on the story of a young fellow, a provincial solicitor's clerk, who has been a conscript in the Korean War, then has returned to his dull round, apparently having put all memories or thoughts of the war out his mind. The agitation brought into his life by a lodger, a young West-Indian nurse, forces him to let go the censoring controls, he lives again through the days in Korea, and emerges as a human being ready to face his fears and begin to do something about them. Masks and Faces took again the death-of-the father as a moment of stark judgment, with the setting of a county-family. The father has been a high-ranking officer in the First worldwar; he has three daughters, who have

married respectively an atomic physicist, a Foreign Office official, and a German industrialist. Chloe, the main character, lives through certain aspects of the family-past, especially their holidaying on Ischia in Mussolini's days, in a restless effort to find the truth of all their relationships. Choice of Times deals with two families in Cheshire, both of the new-bourgeois working-class, who become pointlessly entangled; as a background-contrast there is the old Lancashire of Uncle Harry. The Choice of Times refers to both the choice of ways-of-life and the dilemma before Time as a principle of human integration and Time as the repetitive tick of alienation. In the dedication to a friend through whom I had come to know the old Oldham of Harry, I wrote:

> So many different things must mix,
> concordant discord, ere we make
> a book and all its bag of tricks.
> I never would have dared to take
> this theme unless I had at hand
> your Oldham and its blackened bricks,
> its brave and terrifying scene,
> its warped and splendid lot of folk,
> its champing mills, its years of smoke,
> to pose against the TV screen
> of flickering nullity, to stand
> for something strong, persisting, grand
> despite the stereotyping brand
> that dwarfs and maddens still our land.
> So please receive the thing you gave.
> I've tried to show the costly grave
> of all our hopes, and then as well
> the spirit reviving out of hell,
> the contradictory force of things
> that at the heart of winter brings
> the hawthorn smell of spring and breaks
> the ruthless iron spell, the threat
> darkening above us as it seems
> fixed in an everlasting pain,
> an irrevocable loss that aches
> and mourns the death of all our dreams.
> This paradox makes the adage true:
> each life, newborn, is born anew –
> the ancient curse comes down, and yet
> the chance of resurrection too.

In slighter forms than in the historical novels the theme of the death-rebirth of personality appears in these works, together with the theme of the worsening falseface of our lives in a decaying society that cannot confront its reality and has recourse to ever more deathly and

extravagant disguises and lies. Finally in Thunder Underground I returned to the heroic form of these themes in a novel set in Nero's Rome, dealing with the Pisonian conspiracy. The main narrative was in the first person but along with it go four lesser streams in the third person, dealing with the poet Lucan, the philosopher Seneca, a soldier, and a senator concerned in the plot: the character of these was in turn defined stylistically in terms of the four elements of ancient thought – Lugan as fire, Seneca as air, the profligate senator as water, the soldier as earth. (I wrote portions of these at first partly in verse, to gain a rhythm expressive of the element in question, which in turn linked with certain philosophic or scientific concepts in ancient formulations.)

To date, there have been some million copies of my novels printed in the U.S.S.R. in translation.

I had for some time been studying the papyri of Graeco-Roman Egypt, which enable us to see the life of this province of ancient life with a fullness of detail and character that is incomparable. Because work on the papyri only began at all seriously near the end of the last century, and publication of new texts and clarifications of old ones is still going on in a score or so of learned periodicals, the findings have only imperfectly been absorbed by historical scholars. And indeed, apart from a couple of early books, I can claim that those I now proceeded to write are the only efforts yet made in any language to summarise and generalise the world that had been revealed, I began with Daily Life in Roman Egypt, then turned to Leisure and Pleasure in Roman Egypt (in which the Dionysiac cult in its late forms provides a unifying element). Men and Gods on the Roman Nile dealt with the ideas and rituals surrounding the Nile and with what we learn of the ships and the people journeying up and down – including the tourists to the Valley of the Kings. The Origins of Alchemy broadened the picture and required a general critique of ancient science and the crisis which issued in alchemy; as Egypt was the scene of most of the early development in alchemy, the book belonged to my series. I had now found that I had to move back in time as well as concentrate on the papyri, for old traditions had deep roots in Egypt. A connecting link between Leisure and Pleasure and Alchemy lay in the two chapters in the former book on the 5th century poet,

Nonnos of Panopolis, in whom I showed a pervasive concept of alchemic transformation. (All previous criticisms have treated Nonnos from the angle of the classical past and failed to grasp anything of his method.) Next I wrote Origins of Astrology as a companion piece to Alchemy. Here the main ingredients were Babylonian mathematics and Greek thought, but the Egyptians played a part in the final formulations.

These books on Roman Egypt had thus broadened into studies of the whole of Graeco-Roman culture with its eastern and Egyptian infusions, and with its flow of ideas at certain points from below; with the new forms taken by old mythological ideas and images to meet new stresses, new developments. The deep split in culture represented by Plato, the answering notions of an organic cosmos, of total interrelationship, of pneuma as a continuous dynamic tensional field of force. The struggle of new forces to break the social deadlocks of a slave-society and build up dialectical concepts of transformation. The point of breakdown in ancient culture was thus, in scientific thought, the exact opposite of the point of breakdown in our own society. The intuitions of a concrete universe of living qualities in alchemy and astrology; the systems of abstract quantitative measurement in science after Galileo. Thus the critique of ancient thought and science turns into the critique of modern postulates and preconceptions. In Leisure and Pleasure I show how the unifying Dionysian concept of enjoyment of the here-and-now, with its dream of an earthy paradise, failed because it could not gather the emotions of revolt in the suffering masses – so that the Christian concept of enjoyment in an hereafter as a paradise regained, because it was linked with a total rejection of the existent State, won those masses over. Later, in Cleopatra I showed this sort of conflict of ideas and choices at work in the revolutionary epoch of Caesar, with the opposed propagandas of the Roman world (their highest expression in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue) and then of Cleopatra's eastern world, expressed through the god-masquings of herself and Antony, plus the mass-demand for a brotherly world of peace, without money, uttered in the Sibylline poems. These hopes and aspirations of the crucified masses give depth and boundless significance to the drama of Octavian-Augustus against Antony and Cleopatra.

In The Clashing Rocks I tried to explore the origins of Greek culture, starting from the pre-Homeric episode of the Rocks in the Argo's voyage of tests and trials, and showed that it represented the moment of shamanist entry into the spirit-world. (The culture-hero of early legends is a reflection of the shaman in its adventurous dance–song rites.) On this basis I explored the function of the shaman in the phases of tribal breakdown as poet, prophet, at times as leader in a violent struggle against the forces disintegrating tribal unity; then the link of shamanism and the Dionysiac cult, especially in the person of the dithyrambic poet, and the light thus thrown on the origins of Greek drama. In The Ancient World I gave as much particular colorations of life as it was lived, as space permitted, while outlining what seemed to me the key-structures in Greek and Roman society – the persisting tribal elements, which were transformed at various stages of development, without certain important ideas and forms being altogether lost. Despite the differences between Greeks and Romans, both societies at crucial points threw off the twin yokes of the kingship and of a professional priestly caste. Hence the mobilities, social and intellectual, which they variously were able to generate. In an essay contributed to Hommages à Marie Delcourt I attempted to reopen the question of Totemism, pointing out how all analyses had blankly neglected the question of the historical phase of the tribes considered, and offered a new set of criteria.

I translated Giordano Bruno's Cause, Principle and Unity, with a long introduction seeking to show his crucial place as the last medieval and the first modern thinker, stressing among other things his strong influence on Donne and our 17th-century (Metaphysical) poets. The concepts of Time abstract and Time concrete I have mentioned above in relation to my novels of the 1930s; I now tried to analyse how Time was treated as an integral element in the expression of Proust and Joyce (in the Festschrift to Lukacs) and in that of Thomas Mann in the issue of Sinn und Form devoted to him in 1965. But I had less luck with some attempts to formulate the views on Marx at which I had been arriving. I drafted a book on the impasse of mechanistic science, and another on Alienation; but the two or three publishers on whom I tried them were not interested. One of my hopes for this book is that by giving the general background and perspective of my Marxism, I might have a better fate if I tried again on such

themes, revising my theses in the light of such clarifications as I hope I have gained in the last few years.

Besides the books here described in a very sketchy and compressed way, I also carried on the lines of thought opened up by The Death of the Hero, writing Lives of Turner, Cézanne, and Courbet. I had been asked to make a collection of Turner's verse for a small publisher interested in the poems of artists. I had written an essay on Turner and his verse in Life and Letters far back in 1947; now I tried to make a more systematic inquiry into his writings, and only a few glances at his sketchbooks in the Print Department of the British Museum was needed to show what a wealth of material had been neglected by art-critics. So, at the suggestion of my friend Adams, who had been instrumental in bringing me the suggestion of the verse-collection, I embarked on a Life. I found all sorts of clues in his verses and in his response to other poets like Thomson and Akenside, and thus was able to reconstruct the poetic or symbolising systems at work in his mind as he studied nature. Cézanne was also, in his own way, a recluse with a mind hard to read, but which his close relations with Zola in particular help to elucidate. Courbet as the first great artist who was a consistent (Proudhonian) socialist made the decisive breakthrough, crashing through the whole structure of academicism and opening the way to complex new forces (of which the art of Cézanne was one of the most positive with his demand for an art of "full realisation"). My aim in the studies of all these three artists was to bring into a unified focus their personal life with its deep psychic stresses, their social relations, their historical situation, and the new aesthetic they achieved – without any element of reductionism. A dialectical interconnection of all the fundamental aspects of their lives, with their aesthetic sensibility issuing out the innermost core of their being. These three artists, as the representatives of the vanguard-sensibility of their age, come together to reveal the basis of modern art, its full potentialities as an integrative and disintegrative force. One of the aspects that interested me was the element of dynamic timespace in both Turner and Cézanne (though differently expressed): Turner discarding accepted forms of composition and developing his vortex-systems which treat space as made up of fields of force; Cézanne with his construction of space by means of

vitally linked and contrasted colour-planes – each artist thus adding to his space-definition a subtly pervasive dynamic of time: stable structure and inner movement being fused in new integral ways.[3]

3

If Marxists had had an adequate knowledge of Marxism they could long ago have forecast the conditions of the postwar world, the corrosion of all coherent standards by the cult of the abstract individual, the disintegration of art by the concentration on some small isolated aspect of the aesthetic faculty, the cult of pornography (that is, of sex as a mere mechanism – with all stress on masturbation – since, once we drop the idea of integrative sexual experience, there is no need of a partner, any odd bit of mechanism that irritates, excites and provokes orgasm is as good as another). All these trends – super-objective or super-subjective – are one-sided expressions reflecting one way or another the final triumphs of alienation, the thingification (reification) of man through the cash-nexus, the reduction of all things, including man himself through the sale of his labour-power and the growth of ubiquitous commercialisations, narcisms[4], consumer-manias – the vast creation through the nature of capitalism of what Marx called "artificial needs and imaginary appetites." To carry on this analysis would mean the writing of yet another textbook on the 1844 MSS and the application of the concept of alienation in all Marx's later-works. The point to be made here is the way in which in the last couple of decades the alienation-principle, steadily at work over the centuries, has suddenly got quite out of hand. Such a wild efflorescence must surely betoken the final stages of capitalist inner-contradictions, the naked emergence of alienation from its central lair, the economic sphere, into open and universal celebration of chaos, of abstract individualism breaking through all restraining social bonds. In turn the extreme disorder of this extension of alienation must surely be linked with very deep perturbations and disequilibria in the economic sphere itself, which we cannot yet evaluate.

[3] Lindsay footnote: These are the years I should add of my final taking root at Castle Hedingham, my marriage with Meta (of Dutch peasant stock and a fine potter) and the birth of my son Philip and my daughter Helen.
[4] As per typescript; should be 'narcissisms'.

Roughly we may say that after 1945, with the defeat of Germany and the emergence of the Soviet Union as a great war-power, there was no longer the possibility of a major war between rival imperialist powers. Yet all the forces which had made for the two worldwars were internally at work in the capitalist world, indeed operating at an incomparably greater intensity. Part of this inner strain was relieved by the cultivation of the home-market through hire-purchase and various forms of consumer-credit, increased overtime and the drawing of women into full or part-time jobs, and so on. Hence the sharp turn from the old capitalist ethic of thrift and savings to one of reckless spending, vast expansions of advertising, the growth of the supremely passive mass-entertainment TV, and so on. But though nobody "willed" the moral or immoral results (except in so far as they wanted to make money, the core of all alienating forces), this movement soon involved the systematic extension of all the worst elements in commercialised culture, sensationalism, terror-themes, sadism, murder-fantasies and (masturbation) pornography. We thus reach the bedrock of the culture of commodity-man. By a neat trick of the dialectics of reality, the capitalist ethic inverted itself from ascetic thrift to wild self-indulgence.

In this context science-fiction and its actualisation in space-flights appear as the final expression of alienation from the earth. Amusingly the otherworldliness of religion shifts over to the scientific sphere which had been supposed to be its enemy; the fear of the earth and the inability to be at home on it – an at-homeness which is a counterpart of socialist freedom and fraternity – is projected into the desire to get actually off the earth and away from it, into humanly meaningless timespace. The efforts to find excuses in certain gains of knowledge and so on is a mere rationalisation of the mad impulse. Space-flight thus exemplifies in supreme form all the anti-human aspects of technology got loose and acting as an uncontrollable force to which man must submit, even at the cost of suicide of the species. The "alien life" of science-fiction is an abstraction of the alienation-forces diabolically at work every moment of the night and day on earth: cut off from men and abstractly opposing them. The response to this set of images is based in actual experience; but the form of presentation removes the images from the earthly reality and defines the situation as one of war, with the enemy as

external things. So alienated man fights his thingified self in a phantom battle – a situation that pairs off with the diversion of technology into an externalised religious (otherworldly) form.

There is only one point I should like to make. Marx, dealing with alienation, pointed out four consequences of the basic political-economic situation of capitalism. Man is alienated (a) from nature (b) from himself, from his own activity (c) from his species-being, from his being as a member of the human species (d) from man, from other men. I should like to draw attention to the third aspect of alienation and its effects on culture. Among the freedoms claimed by the deeply alienated artist is freedom (alienation) from tradition, from all normal modes of communication, from the effects of his work on other men, from the time-process altogether (in the name of a spurious immediacy or spontaneity). Such an attitude has been contrasted with the position of the 'classical" artist with his claims (or hopes) for immortality, for ceaseless rebirth; and it has been asserted that here we have a truly democratic art since it makes no claim to "aristocratic" survival, to a unique power of individuality. Its abstract-individualism is indeed essentially faceless and ephemeral, the act of self-creation being conceived as an act of self-destruction. But the apparently arrogant claim to immortality is in fact the individual refraction of a collective belief in the endless life of the species; the artist can be immortal only if the species is immortal itself. The artist, like the shaman, has taken into himself the collective initiation-rite of death-rebirth, and his individual expression, in all its truly creative aspects, is also a collective act, drawing together past, present, and future in the aesthetic unity of the here-and-now. The abstract-individualist, by severing himself from the species, cannot sustain any faith in such a procedure; for past, present, and future are all alike obliterated by the abstract moment of his faceless surrender to the naked alienating pressures.

There are of course in our world today, poised between the atomic bombs and the ruthless forces destroying the environment, good reasons indeed to doubt survival. But to give up hope while there is still any ground left for the struggle to become human, is to aid the forces of alienation. To act on the basis of no-survival is to do one's best to ensure that no-survival will triumph. Thus the artists who recede from what I have called for want of a better

word the classical standpoint (though in fact it is also the standpoint of the totemic tribe) are translating an emotion of death (suicide) into a wish to see the species-end. The need in our world to realise afresh species-membership is thus at all points linked with the need to struggle for world-socialism in which, not only is the dangerous corner turned, but the consciousness of universal humanity will be securely one with the sense of species-membership.

This sort of analysis might be indefinitely continued, taking each field of expression or behavior in our world, and continuing from such generalisations to a detailed examination, with almost everywhere the same depressing results. Yet among the young there is in many large sections, especially among the students, a widespread realisation that our way of life is wrong and destructive of all human values, they see above all that there is only corruption and deathliness in the forms of thought and living among commodity-men (all in our societies who do not consciously revolt against the dehumanising cashnexus which alienates men at the very heart of their life-process, productive activity). At times this emotion leads to an understanding of the root-causes of the perversion; but often it is sidetracked or dispersed into a blind desire to break or injure the hated system anyhow, any way, or into an effort to contract out of it in small communal groups. Between these extremes are all sorts of blind-alley trivialisations of the revolt-impulse, ranging from sexual promiscuity to drug-taking, nomadic rootlessness to orgiastic excitations at big pop-festivals. Thus the revolt turns into its opposite; the revulsion from a commodity-world at one level recedes into the glorification of that world at another level. The rejection of bourgeois marriage leads to the treatment of sex as a matter of mere physical stimulation and release – that is, as an external thing, the final form of sexual alienation. The rebel thinks he is expressing a sharp dissidence by turning to drugs, when he is in fact expressing even more crudely than his parents a submission to the drug-world. (The mechanistic stage of medicine, now at its extreme, together with the chemical industry and its vast drug-manufactures, had created a drug-society, with tranquillisers, mood elevators, antibiotics, cortisone and other cortisone-like hormones, the arsenicals, chlorpromazine and hundreds of others (which incidentally damage the gastro-intestinal tract) as the characteristic form of poisoning people.)

And yet with all its aberrations, which turn revolt into a final state of deliquescent submission to the alienating pressures, the youth movement is one of the most positive factors in our world, linked as it often is with a thorough-going protest against the imperialist war-machine and with a demand for grass-roots democracy. We must not however think of it as a revolutionary force in itself, and contrast it with the working-class's general subservience to the commodity-world, which it challenges only when it feels it is getting an insufficient share of the commodities. In the long run the working-class, the mass of the people who are involved in productive activity (albeit alienated productive activity), can alone constitute the force capable of overthrowing capitalism. The problem is to bring together all the groups rebelling in some significant degree or another against capitalism, and to link them with the working-class, on whom the full weight of the increasing capitalist crisis cannot but fall. We need to give the gravity of the working-class (its solid specific relation to the central economic situation) to the more volatile rebels, and give something of the broad and enriched sense of total revolt, found in the advanced sections of the young, to the working-class with its narrower outlooks.

I think I can claim, and my story to have substantiated the fact, that I have suffered often enough from sectarian attacks – at times not guiltless myself of having provoked the attacks through confusions or overstatements of my own. And so I should be fairly sensitive to any sectarian atmosphere. I feel with deep conviction that the British C.P. under Gollan – with excellent work on the cultural side by Jamez Klugmann – has steadily through the 1960s gone on liquidating the elements of sectarianism in its heritage. One crucial point is the role of the C.P. as envisaged in the transition to socialism and as set out in The British Road. In the earlier years I always felt that the strategy could be interpreted as the setting-up of a popular front in which the party, taking the lead, swallowed up the other parties. But certainly that is no longer the case, whatever exactly was the earlier line. The party has learned the lesson of democratic tolerance, and the need for a country like Britain to accept the existence of, say, parliamentary representatives of any party than can continue, at any phase, to command the necessary votes. The one-party system, which developed in the U.S.S.R. largely as a result of

a number of historical accidents, is no longer seen as setting any necessary or even admirable example. (What is less developed in the conception of the British Road is the need to develop democratic forms and activities at all levels as an accompanying part of any decisive advance towards socialism at the parliamentary level. Without such a development, the parliamentary transformation could never come about, nor, having come about could it ensure a future without bureaucratic ossification. But such a conception is in the key of the whole changed attitude to the party's role and the use of political power.) With changes that have been going on in France and the French party (1970-1), there thus emerges at last the chance of effective common action being built up by the western parties on a genuinely democratic basis for the achievement of socialism in Western Europe – as a counter-move to the plans of the Monopolies for an anti-socialist union most nakedly expressed in the Common Market. The tone of discussion inside the party has quite changed from that which ruled in immediate postwar years. It is true that with the breakdown of dogmatism and sectarianism something of the old powerful drive goes as well; but that state may well be merely transitional. As the new concepts generate their own inherent energies and find their outlet in a situation of expanding possibilities, we will find, I believe, that the theme of democratic socialism (socialism in which central controls are from the very first modified and dialectically interlinked with free initiative and organisation from below) can stimulate a devotion and enthusiasm greater than the old simple proletarian rigidities of outlook.

The test came in 1968 with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was perhaps all the better that Gollan was on holiday in the wilds of Scotland, so that the announcement of complete opposition could be made by the party's national organiser – showing that in such a matter the party's principles were so clear there was no need for a worried leadership to confer. Despite pressures it has held to its position, while at the same time working for united action of all parties against imperialism; and early in 1971 it [took][5] the lead in bringing about

[5] Typo in typescript: 'look'.

a preliminary conference of Western Parties to discuss united action against the Common Market – or common socialist policies within the Market if England yet joins.

Looking back, how do I feel about my development since 1936? From that year I have seen myself as [a] Marxist whose place is in the party; and this conception has never been ever seriously shaken despite all my conflicts inside the party or the various rude shocks administered by the U.S.S.R. Years ago, I recall Katharine Raine, told I was in the C.P., remarking with commiseration, "It must be awful to be in a party where you're told everything you must think." I merely smiled. I feel that my development would have been incomparably poorer than it has been if I had not had my long dialogue, sometimes too fierce-toned on both sides. I would have fitted into the established cultural scene as I never have done; but my aim has not at any time been to fit in and gain esteem. I think I can claim that by being in the C.P. and at the same time fighting for my point of view I have maintained an individual standpoint as I could [not] have done otherwise. And perhaps it is a proof of this that I have been in general ignored or attacked since 1936-7 by the establishment in its various forms, and often been similarly treated by the party-organs. (An example that sticks in my mind was in the days of the Marxist Quarterly, Dona Torr, a fine and generous character, suggested that an essay should be written comparing a novel by André Stil, recently issued by L. and W. in translation, with my Rising Tide, as there were certain similarities in material and theme; the essay duly appeared, dealing with Stil but forgetting my book. In my thirty-five odd years in close connection with the party not one single essay large or small has been written on any aspect of my work, though in the U.S.S.R. many studies of my novels have been published.) I do not make these points out of any resentment but to stress the question of my "independence." But this independence has not been gained by withdrawal or standing-aside; what virtues it may have cannot be separated from the rich and fertile intellectual and political life of the party. That rigid and sectarian elements have been present, and no doubt are ready to revive under favourable circumstances is no disproof of my statement. Those who are prepared to engage in the gigantic task of creating an unalienated society of socialist freedoms have simply no sense of what is involved if they demand that all the problems should be

cleared up before they accept the struggle. To accept the struggle in all its complications, imperfections, confusions, and harshnesses must be the first and steadfast decision. After that one can proceed to do the best one can to direct things along the most effective and humanly valid lines; and in the process one will make one's own mistakes as well as the others.

The statement of aim however is again all too simple. I remember asking Alick in 1956 what he felt about the disclosures. "As if the source of all good," he said, "had suddenly shown the face of sheer evil." And indeed unless one felt exactly like that, one had learned nothing. One was in the immoral and indefensible position of those who argued that even the sun has spots and that the errors and crimes of Stalin were merely peripheral matters that could be shrugged aside with a few meaningless remarks about learning from the past. The revelation that a society founded for the purpose of eliminating alienation could set about deepening alienation and breaking down the free participation of its members, meant that a new sort of vigilance was required of all Marxists. Nothing could any longer be taken for granted. This point applies to the inner life of the party where Democratic Centralism, excellent for holding a party together in difficult conditions – the purpose for which Lenin devised it – can lead to complete bureaucratic controls from above and enable the leadership to impose its line in almost any conditions – and also to matters of general policy, whether a party is struggling to build a united front for socialism or is engaged in playing its part in developing a socialist society. The great advantage of the upheavals of 1956 and the disastrous intrusion of the Soviet Union on Czechoslovak politics in 1968 was that the dogmatists and doctrinaires have long been put on the defensive and there is now no barrier to any kind of discussion or activity inside the party as long as it is not conducted in an obviously disruptive way. Every organisation must have its rules and methods; the question is to see that they are applied, modified, and reconstructed according to the need of a changing world by free discussion.

But to return to the disconcerting glimpse of the face of the evil leering out of that which is the source of all good: after all this contradiction was wholly in the key of my lifelong denunciation of arrest and abstraction as essential evil – of my whole vision of cosmic

and human development as formulated in terms of Blakean prophecy. Evil may derive from abstraction, but is not itself abstract; it is the arrest and perversion of the good. Man must become both better and wickeder, said Nietzsche, meaning that every new creative potentiality must beget its characteristic evil or point of arrest and inversion. However frightening, what had happened was in the key of my worldview, not counter to it. If true to my own ideas, I should have plainly recognised that socialism, precisely because it made the good more concrete, also increased the possibilities of arrest within the new dimension. The socialist state, because it was protected against such impacts or modifying pressures as market-forces, was able to develop bureaucracy in the purest form possible; and bureaucracy by its very nature gathers together all that is most ossifying, deadening, and dehumanising in any social situation. It cannot be reformed or vitalised from within; its essence lies in the destruction of communication between levels and in the creation of an endless series of power-struggles at every point in its structure. The true task of socialist society is to treat with the utmost suspicion the bureaucratic forms which it inherits and must make use of for some time – all the while seeking to break them down and transform them into systems of voluntary democratic activity carried out by the people themselves. And so a bureaucratic socialism could not but show the growth of evil forces at the very heart of the new good, of enslavement at the very heart of the new freedom. (I am not here advocating the use of market-mechanisms to relieve a bureaucratic impasse, though they may have a temporary value in the efforts to reverse the centralising trends. The solutions here are not economic at root, but are political, social, moral.)

A word now on the problem of cultural relations between socialist lands and the capitalist areas in their present stage of cultural and moral deliquescence. What is to be gained by a socialist culture from the largescale influx of artistic and moral forms based on the final negation of the human essence? Yet the people of a socialist country cannot be "protected" by the mere building of barriers; that is more likely to defeat its[6] own aims in the end by giving

[6] Typescript reads: '… defeat in own aims…'

the excluded elements a romantic quality of the forbidden – just as we saw that the wrong kind of controls over commodity-production work out as glamouring commodities and commodity-man[7]. Not that I am advocating the indiscriminate flooding of any socialist country by the products of imperialist cultures in their final stages of corruption. But the only sure barrier against the contamination of such imperialist developments lies in the growth of personal initiative and participation in building socialism at all levels, together with the creation of a true socialist morality as the natural concomitant of such a growth.

I have had some hard words to say about the Soviet Union in the course of this narrative; and yet I remain wholly optimistic about developments there – though the throwing-off of Stalinist consequences is not going to be an easy or rapid matter. I feel that when the worst is said there is much more genuine socialism among large sections of the people than general analyses might seem to allow. More, I feel that with every extension of the forms and methods whereby popular initiative (whether in local soviets or in the unpaid taking-over of local-authority work, on the factory-floor or at managerial levels) is released, the effects can be remarkable. They may yet indeed make my comments on the slow pace of reversing Stalinist systems turn out to be quite incorrect. I was briefly in Moscow for the Gorky celebrations of 1968, and spent a month with my family at the Writers Home at Gagra in the summer of 1969, with pauses before and after in Moscow; and though I now see backwardnesses which escaped my eyes in 1949 or even 1954, I again have the feeling all the time of being in a different world, a genuinely socialist world. This extraordinary mixture of confused, vacillating, and backward elements with true socialist convictions and ways of living (often now become second-nature) provided a theme imperfectly grasped and developed by the writers – perhaps because too many of them lack the grasp of fundamental pattern which can alone put the two aspects (and the endless transitions and fusions between them) in

[7] Lindsay footnote: As a rather ridiculous example I may cite an anecdote, 1969, of the young folk (middle administrative level) who thought it wonderful to get hold of a crate of American "Coke" and have a party for its consumption – "Coke" having a high prestige in comparison with their much superior fruit-drinks.

their true relationship and significance. Such a grasp implies both an understanding of all the damage done by the Stalin period and an intimate knowledge of the ways in which the socialist spirit recuperates and reasserts itself, the entanglement of good and evil in new and surprising ways.

4

Now, some final remarks about what I feel to be the pattern of my development as traced in this book. In a way my 1919 decision appears as that of the hippies of today, a contracting-out of the system of money and commodities. But it was linked with an enthusiasm for the 1917 Revolution as well as a fierce antiwar position. Though it had no clear political position it was ready enough to welcome any allies against the system. Then came the entirely aesthetic (in the Nietzschean sense) interpretation, with the creative image seen as the embodiment of the whole man. By the end of the 1920s the idealist element broke down and I sought for solid earth without relinquishing my faith in some sort of creative struggle aimed at achieving wholeness. This, via poetry and history, brought me to Marxism. What saved me from wandering down some side-alley was the stress on activity and the notion of wholeness. The dialectic which at first had seemed the prerogative of the creative act was found to belong to all formative process, to history as well as poetry.

My line of approach to Marxism, with all its complicated zigzags, brought with it certain confusions, a readiness to jump to spontaneous conclusions on partial evidences or situations. But it also had its strength, forcing me to be satisfied with nothing less than a universal dialectic concretely applicable to all issues, all forms of expression – not just a dialectic that could be seen at work in selected examples and moments, but rather a guiding principle which would be actively realised in living, in thought, in emotion, in all disciplines. This line of approach, with a strong existential element, made me responsive to aspects of Marx which were almost totally ignored until recently and which, when revived, seemed a loose idealism to the Marxists nourished on selected aspects of Marx. Thus, when I found him speaking of the need for the "complete emancipation of all human sense and attributes," and declaring that man is "affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking, but with

all his senses," I knew that his philosophy was as aesthetic as it was scientific and that the continual harping on its scientific nature, to the total exclusion of its equally important aesthetic aspect, amounted to a fathomless distortion by its one-sidedness. For one-sidedness is the essential characteristic of metaphysics and of alienated positions. The discovery no doubt went to my head in some respects and I rushed into expounding my intuitions without sufficient clarification of the many issues involved. In a situation where it would have been more sensible, and ultimately more effective, to tread warily and tentatively, I tried to say everything at once, indignant at the straitjacket that has so often been forced on Marx's thought. Considering then the difficulties of the issues I raised, and the incomplete, hurried or oversimplified ways I used, I was not so badly treated.

The consciousness of alienation that enables one to detach oneself from the situation, oppose oneself to it, fight it, and, in fighting, attempt to transform oneself, is not to be mistaken for an unalienated consciousness – that is, the consciousness of someone who lives in a world where the primary sources of capitalist alienation (State, money, law, economic compulsion of any kind) have been eliminated. And yet there must be a vital relationship of some kind or there could be no connection between the struggle against alienation and its goal. But just what this relationship is, it is hard to say. But I feel sure it is there, and is glimpsed in the creative act, in productive labour in so far as it can be realised apart from its simultaneous effect of alienation, in the whole nature of human freedom. Freedom is not an abstract right to this or that; such freedoms are an aspect of the alienated situation. That is why personally I always felt that I have no rights, and have had no wish to claim any; such claims bring one right into the situation of alienation. But the collective struggle for a freedom which can be seen as a step towards the full freedom beyond alienation is another matter. As Marx says, freedom is an "inner necessity." It is self-fulfillment in the self-determined and externally unhindered exercise of human powers; it is an existential positive need of self-realising human labour. That is, of one's powers and labour beyond alienation.

Only as I have arrived at something like a clear and full understanding of such terms as used by Marx do I understand what has driven me on all my life. My oath refusing any

allegiance to money, my devotion to poetry as the power integrally opposed to money, my refusal to take a job for money were all efforts to live in as unalienated a way as one can in a society of alienation – or rather to muster daily as strong a consciousness of that alienation as was possible without actually existing in an unalienated world. When I exalted the creative image I was in effect declaring that this was the only unalienated object in our society – a claim with a fair amount of truth; for such an image, to the extent that it tears off the falseface of alienated man and sets up an ideal of free energy (realised to the extent of the concreteness and fullness of the image, and thus robbed of utopianism), is indeed such an object – not the product of alienated man, but the prophecy of such a product, its prelude, and closely akin to it. It reflects or expresses the productive activity of labour with as great a distance as is historically possible between it and the intrusive alienation.

Without the possibility of this sort of distance intervening there would only be totally alienated acts in a totally alienated society, and nothing could change there. What the movement and clash of contradictions do in the actual world, evoking in varying degrees a consciousness that goes beyond a merely quantitative evaluation of the forces on each side and grasps the possibility and nature of an Aufhebung (a transcendence or overcoming of the conflict on a new level), that is done in the creative image by the degree of intensity and realisation that is brought about through the internal clash of intellectual and emotional elements in the artist's or poet's mind and his power of objectifying the clash and fusion. Thus, in a deeply significant moment of political struggle and a truly creative image, there is an intuition of the transcendence, the movement into a new and more human unity.

When we grasp this truth, we are saved from the mockery of our struggles which always sets freedom and fulfillment far in the future and makes the present an act or moment of self-sacrifice on that altar. Productive activity in all class-societies, in varying degrees, has alienation inextricably entangled with it; but it is also productive activity, the self-renewing human force. Humanity and inhumanity, all that is most concrete in thought and act, and all that is most abstract, here meet, merge, separate, conflict. If there was complete equilibrium at any given historical moment, we can imagine this process halted at a point where the concrete

and the abstract were interlocked in a deadly absence of struggle. But I doubt if such a complete symmetry of parts has ever happened since class-formations, though some periods seem relatively static in comparison with others. In any event, while there is disequilibrium, struggle, discontent, resistance of any kind in and around the productive act, there is more than an aspiration towards freedom, there is a realisation of it. Marx recognises three possible forms of freedom, which have to be considered in relation to the existing property-relations: Freedom from natural necessity, freedom from the interfering power of other men (all forms of otherness from the State to the owners and managers of production), and freedom in relation to a fuller exercise of one's own essential powers. And he denies that capitalist property-relations make men more free in any of these three senses. His arguments are irrefutable in their denial of freedom in the alienated productive act; capitalism as a system cannot advance any human freedoms in the senses defined by Marx. But in so far as the system is resisted, attacked, or demystified, there is an assertion of freedom, which, however insecurely, takes over the denied potentialities of the situation.

So, in this sense, all history is the story of freedom; for the significant events are those expressing the disequilibrium and conflict inside the system. As Mao Tse-Tung has said, "The history of mankind is one of continuous development from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. This process is never-ending." (This attitude is the opposite of Croce's idealist notion [of] history as the story of freedom.) The artist, the poet, the musician, who matters, is he who catches and defines this moment of freedom, of Aufhebung (transcendence), in the concrete here-and-now. Utopian ideas and aspirations to definite goals in the future may well play a part in his synthesis; indeed in some degree or other they cannot fail to be present; but the essential thing, the aesthetic core, lies in the concrete apprehension of the living moment as one of freedom, of the three freedoms defined by Marx. The definition is tied up with the concrete humanity of the particular moment, but in embodying the dialectical structure of the breakthrough, the Aufhebung, it assumes an eternal value – that is, its structure is recognisable as that of a moment of freedom at any later phase, however the specific aspects of the situation have changed.

It was my insistence on these aspects of Marxism – what one may call its existential aspects, which resolve the conflict in both Hegel's idealism and in existentialism proper – which often brought me into collision with my fellow-Marxists. Not that I always expressed the points clearly and correctly, nor that I for long realised that I was only stating in my own way principles already enunciated, if only in a bare form, by Marx. Marx set out the issues I am here sketching in his statement that all necessity is "historical necessity," that is, "a disappearing (or vanishing) necessity." Along these lines he reintroduced the concept of goal, of teleology, after having purged it of all abstract, closed, a priori, or otherworldly elements. We here approach, along more complex lines, the idea of purpose as inherent in the totality of the situation, involving conscious or declared aims, but in no sense narrowed-down to them. The goal for Marx is defined in terms of the immanence of human development as the realisation of the human essence, of the specifically human elements, the universality and freedom of man. Man as the Self-mediating Being of Nature must develop in accordance with the most fundamental objective laws of ontology, of the essence of all reality – with his own active self-mediating role playing a key-part. The goal is thus not an abstract fixable point in the future, with a system that can be worked out beforehand; it lies in the essential nature of man and his self-realising movement.[8]

The core of freedom lies in the productive activity, where also, in an alienated society, lies the core of enslavement. Scientific thought and aesthetic definition, when truly creative, lay hold of this inner conflict and concentrate it to a new depth of realisation of canalised energy; they thus express a specific situation, but at the same time embody in it the human essence, the human goal. The complexity and vanishing-nature of the Aufhebung-moment in turn help to illuminate the issues of developing a socialist society into ever-greater freedom. Marx made it clear that the transfer of the controls of production and distribution to the

[8] Lindsay footnote: Why Solzhenitsyn is a great socialist novelist, the greatest so far produced, is not because he merely deals with the situation under Stalin with a powerful realism, but rather because this realism derives from a full grasp of the Marxist concept of freedom.

community as a whole does not do more than make that community "the universal capitalist." Such a society, he declares, presupposes "labour as a state in which every person is put and capital as the acknowledged universality and power of the community." The problem is then to liberate the productive process from "the universal capitalist," by removing, as fast as circumstances permit, every force or institution which stands over against production – the State, money, plans imposed from above, bureaucratic or governmental systems of any kind. Thus the pressures and mystifications of alienation are steadily diminished; and at the same time the freedom growing at the heart of the productive act is linked with a steady raising of the cultural level, the breakdown of the division of labour, the growth of the all-round or whole man "who can do anything." Such a programme can only be a very prolonged one, in which a Marxist consciousness of all that alienates is active all the while, probing the situation, finding the points at which advance is possible, ensuring that ossification does not set in for any reason whatever. In point of fact, the emergence of the situation where the community is the universal capitalist could never happen – though it is necessary to isolate the possibility from a logical viewpoint. For only revolutionary forces could thus break the hold of the individual capitalists and their vast entangled system, and so they could not but drive fast beyond the point of balance expressed by the logical equation. In so far as the revolution established any elements of initiative and organisation from below it would be moving past that point into the stages of socialism making for enhanced freedom. Still, Marx's point is important, to keep on reminding us that social ownership is only a first abstract step, which becomes concrete only to the extent that the alienating forces are dislodged from the productive process. There is a profound sense in which there was greater human freedom in the U.S.S.R at the height of Stalin's excesses than in any capitalist society at the height of its liberal expansion. We can make this point without in the least palliating any of the crimes and distortions brought about under Stalin; on the contrary we see them all the more glaringly set out precisely because of their contrast and conflict with the socialist freedoms inherent in the post-1917 movement of the Soviet Union.

There is one more point I should like to make. The structure of art-ritual in the totemic tribe cannot be tragic; for it sees a death-birth birth-death cycle in which the emergence of the new forever goes on. (It is true that in groups facing something like extinction we can find death-triumphs defined, but these changes represent a breakdown, not a forward-movement to more complex grasps of process.) Tragedy proper presupposes a strong intrusion of alienating forces, which have set a deep contradiction at the heart of the life-process; the species-member is no longer simply and directly a part of the species. A multiple series of conflicts, inner and outer, are opened up. The aspect which has always been strongly present in my thoughts is the time-gap between event and consciousness; we realise the truth of ourselves and our situation by an experience which the realisation is too late to direct or modify; in the last resort we find the way forward through what destroys us. From another angle the tragic conflict operates in the opposition between the here-and-now grasped in the fullness of its nature, its release of our powers of enjoyment, and abstract time with its blind repetition of moments that lack all qualities. Here is the struggle of life and death concentrated in the reaction to the moment: a struggle that is of primary significance for art. (This problem, raised in idealist terms by Bergson, has been of central importance for the last masters of the bourgeois novel, such as Proust, Joyce, Mann, as I tried to show in the essays mentioned above.) For the socialist writer the problem is to grasp this conflict, but not in a merely analytic way; he must find how to express both the conflict and its resolution. This concept has been one of the guiding principles in my own novels, and on the theoretical level it lies behind much of my other writings. It moves in turn into the problem of redeeming science from the bourgeois limitations and distortions. And thus Marx's formulation brings me back in certain respects to the best elements in Nietzsche's Dionysian positions, with which I began in the first stages of my revolt. Marx states, "To be sensuous is to <u>suffer</u>. Man as an objective sensuous being is therefore a <u>suffering</u> being – and because he feels what he suffers, a passionate being. Passion is the essential force of man energetically bent on its object." And again, "<u>Suffering, apprehended humanly, is an enjoyment of self in man</u>." Because these declarations are linked with the key concepts of freedom as self-realisation, of the productive act as the human core,

and of man as self-mediating with nature, they are robbed of the subjectivist and ultimately idealist element that persists in Nietzsche. But the connection that I can thus point to between the innermost intuitions in Dionysos and the Marxist aesthetic does, I think, bring out the element of continuity in my positions as well as the movement, erratic but constant, into a fully Marxist aesthetic.