

THE SOCIALISING OF THE HUMAN SPECIES

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Humanity and the universe

1. *14 billion years.* The age of the universe. So the astrophysicists tell us. And the universe may contain a *septillion of stars* (10^{24}). *4.5 billion years.* The geologists tell us that that is the age of the Earth – a small satellite of a smallish star.
2. *3.5 billion years ago, or thereabouts.* The emergence of the first life-forms on Earth. Or so the palaeobiologists tell us. *200,000 years ago* – the appearance of *Homo sapiens*, as we politely call our animal species. So the evolutionary biologists tell us.
3. *10,000 years ago* – human beings stopped wandering around and applied themselves to agriculture. So the palaeontologists tell us. *8,000 years ago* – human beings began to form recognisable societies which we politely call civilised societies, centred on cities. So the archaeologists tell us.
4. 8,000 years of so-called civilised life within the 200,000-year life of the human species. 8,000 years of so-called civilised life within the 3.5 billion-year history of life on Earth, within the 14 billion-year life history of the universe.

5. So what is humanity? Tiny specks of organised energy, troubling the existence of the universe for infinitesimally small periods of time – one species among countless species that have, and have not, survived the process of evolution by natural selection – one species of animal inhabiting the Earth in the company of countless other species of animals, many of whom are our cousins or our ancestors.
6. What is humanity? Alexander Pope, 18th-century poet, in his *Essay on Man*, says we are ‘the glory, jest and riddle of the world’. ‘What a piece of work is man!’ as Hamlet rightly says. These tiny specks of organised energy, this particular species of animal, somehow came to imagine that the whole universe revolves around it, that it has some sort of power over the whole universe. How on earth did this happen?
7. The answer, of course, is that this otherwise insignificant animal species found that it had a remarkable species-characteristic – the human mind. And the consequences of this will be the central feature of what I will be talking about today.

My thesis

8. At some stage in its 200,000-year life history, the human species became *self-evolving*. Itself the product of a process of natural evolution – a slow process full of chance and accident – the human species became able to develop itself by its own activity. And human self-development acquired an ever-increasing momentum, an acceleration that has increased greatly over the last six centuries, a self-development that is now a sort of frenzy.
9. My thesis will be that the human species is now at a great turning point in human self-evolving. And, by “now” I mean “now in the 21st century CE”. Whether we like it or not, we are now all participants in *the self-socialising of the human species*, the emergence of a society of all human beings, a society of all human societies.

10. I will convince you of this improbable thesis using two different kinds of argument – the one philosophical, the other historical. The philosophical argument will take us into some of the great problems of traditional philosophy. The historical argument will require us to review the whole of human history. Very briefly, in both cases. I promise.

So, first – the *philosophical argument*.

PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT

The nature of human society

11. To begin the philosophical proof, we must try to determine the nature of human society. I will ask you to accept four propositions about the nature of society that may not be entirely self-evident.

- (1) Society is an activity of the human mind.
- (2) Society is the means of the self-evolving of the human species.
- (3) Society is a form, a subjectivity, and a philosophy.
- (4) Society contains the potentiality of a society of the human species..

(1) Society is an activity of the human mind

12. Human society exists only in the human mind, nowhere else. From outer space, you might see the effects that society causes – agriculture, cities, engineering works, the movement of armies, the movement of ships. You would not see society. Society is an idea, invisible, intangible. And yet society has changed the world.

13. When we say that something is *in the human mind*, of course we mean that it is *in the human brain*. The human mind is an aspect of the activity of the human brain. We use the idea of *the mind* to cover the activity of the brain that cannot *yet* be

explained in terms of causes and effects in the human brain. That word ‘yet’ is important. Brain science is progressing rapidly – finding the location of mental events in the brain, mapping connections between parts of the brain, uncovering the electro-chemical processes that are the physical basis of thinking and feeling. And many of the other natural sciences – including microbiology and physics – are being used to explain the functioning of the brain. And physical causes can explain aspects of the functioning of the mind – structural peculiarities of a particular brain, genetic factors, alcohol, drugs, environmental factors of all kinds.

14. But, *as yet*, most of the activity of the human *mind* is beyond physical explanation. The idea of the *human mind* will be necessary for the foreseeable future.

15. Above all, *the interaction of human minds* will be monstrously difficult for the natural sciences to explain. It may be *impossible in principle* to understand the interacting of many human minds – ‘understand’ in the way that the natural sciences understand the physical world – that is to say, creating models of reality that can be used to create repeatable states of the world, that can be used as the basis of correct predictions about the future.

16. Think of a conversation between a teacher and student, between two lovers. Through communication in the widest sense – language, gesture, mutual sense perceptions – two human beings create a packet of mental energy hovering invisibly somewhere between their minds – like the mysterious action-at-a-distance of gravity or electromagnetism in the physical world. And that packet of mental energy is also active within both interacting minds, affecting each mind separately and differentially.

17. But think now of the interacting, not merely of two minds, but of ten minds, a hundred minds, a thousand minds, millions of minds, seven billion minds. At the social level, the shared packet of invisible mental energy produced by mental

interaction is infinitely complex and infinitely active, separately and differentially, within the minds of each person affected by it. But the packets of interacting interpersonal human mind-energy are invisible and intangible. It is surely impossible in principle that natural science will ever explain such a thing as social consciousness.

18. This means that philosophers, I'm glad to say, will also remain vitally necessary for the foreseeable future. Philosophy is thinking about thinking, the human mind thinking about itself. Thinking about thinking is now more necessary than ever. Philosophy is now more necessary than ever.

19. The interacting of human minds has created an infinity of overlapping and ever-changing mental *entities of consciousness* which together add up to a new kind of reality – a human mental reality – a human-made world – a human world utterly embedded in the physicality of the human brain as an integral part of the natural, physical world – but a parallel non-physical world, utterly distinct from the natural physical world.

20. Society is the primary phenomenon of this mind-made human world. The idea of *society* is to the understanding of the *human* world what the idea of *things* is to our understanding of the *physical* world. *Societies*, invisible and intangible, are the primary forms of organised energy in the human world, as *things* are the primary forms of organised energy in the physical world.

(2) *Society is the means of the self-evolving of the human species*

21. The idea of *human self-evolving* invokes the idea of *evolution* as more than a mere metaphor. It obliges us to form a good idea of *evolution* as an idea of biological science – in particular, Darwinian *evolution by natural selection*.

22. Darwin welcomed Herbert Spencer's neat formula – *survival of the fittest* – because the term 'natural selection' in Darwin's formula had seemed to confer on Nature an anthropomorphic capacity to 'select' the species that survive. But Spencer's formula contains a new ambiguity which is undesirable, which Darwin did not accept, and which misled Spencer down an undesirable path, a path he renounced late in life. In his idea of *social evolution*, Spencer suggested that societies that win in the endless struggle of human existence are *ipso facto* the best societies.

23. A species that survives the struggle to survive by self-reproduction is not necessarily *fitter* in any sense other than that it did survive. Survival may be due either to a modification of the species in the process of reproduction or to an alteration in the environment, or to both together. The survival of a species is, we may say, in Darwinian terms, a successful *adaptation* of that species to its *habitat*. It would have been better if Spencer had said – 'survival of the fit to survive'.

24. Applying the idea of evolution more than metaphorically to human societies, we may say that societies survive either by *adapting* themselves to their environment (physical and mental) or by *modifying* that environment. The idea of *self-evolving* reflects the fact that human societies are not merely the product of physical reproduction. They are products of the human mind, existing in their own mind-made environment.

25. A society that survives is a society that makes itself fit to survive in its environment, physical and mental. A society's self-made past is a continuous present that contains the potentiality of its self-made future. Human self-evolving is human self-engineering.

(3) *Society is a form, a subjectivity, and a philosophy*

Society is a form

26. A society has a threefold *form* – (1) a universal generic form as a *society*, (2) a universal specific form as *this kind* of society (family, corporation, club, church, university, state), and (3) its own particular unique form as *this society*. A given society is universal and particular, generic and specific, possessing the *haeccitas* and the *quidditas* of its being (echoing the useful formula of medieval philosophers).

27. The form of a particular society is contained in the structures and systems of its self-constituting. Like the personality of a human being, the constitution of a society is a process not a thing, a permanent process of self-creating. Its structures and systems - institutions, law, systems of education, customs, socialised morality, historiography, media of communication – are ceaselessly at work re-forming the society with a view to its survival and prospering in relation to its ever-changing environments, natural and human.

Society is a subjectivity

28. A society's *subjectivity* is as complex as the subjectivity of an individual human being. A society is not only a body politic. It is also a mind politic. A society's subjectivity includes its own *recognition* of its *generic* identity as a 'society' and its recognition of its *unique* identity in relation to other societies – borrowing a relevant Hegelian term: 'recognition' (*Anerkennung*). A society's subjectivity also includes recognition of its generic and unique identities in relation to the dual identities of its members (their identity as members of that society, and all the rest of their personal identity). A society's subjectivity also includes the active participation

of its collective consciousness *in the minds of its members*, and in the minds of other people whose minds it affects, and the active participation *in its collective consciousness* of the minds of its members and in the minds of other people whose minds affect its collective consciousness.

29. So the subjectivity of a society is constant two-way flow of consciousness between the public mind of the society and the private minds of individual human beings. And, of course, a society may contain many subordinate societies (think of a state or an international organisation). That means that the subjectivity of the super-ordinate society contains also the subjectivities of all its subordinate societies.

Society is a philosophy

30. So, a society is a form and a subjectivity. But a society is also a philosophy. A society has a set of ideas that explain and justify and enable its continuing existence as a society, and as this particular society.

31. In fact, it is convenient to say that a society has a philosophy on three different levels of abstraction. A society has what you may call a *practical philosophy*, that it uses to organise its everyday structures and systems, including, of course, the law. Democracy or capitalism or democratic centralism are practical philosophies of particular actual societies.

32. But a society also has what you may call a *pure philosophy*, a philosophy that explains and justifies and enables the practical philosophy. Social contract theory or libertarian economic theory or Marxism are background philosophies that make possible the corresponding practical philosophies.

33. But behind society's practical and pure philosophies there must be a *transcendental philosophy*, a set of ideas that explains the working of the human

mind, individually and collectively – a philosophy that explains *language* (how we communicate with each other, person to person, and socially), rationality (how we communicate efficiently), morality (how we control our behaviour, individually and collectively) – and all the other traditional focuses of philosophy at the highest level.

(4) *Society contains the potentiality of a society of the human species*

34. In offering such an analysis of the nature of a society, I am, of course, laying the groundwork for *recognising* (the Hegelian word again) a society that we may call International Society, the society of all human beings, the society of all human societies – that is to say, the ultimate form of human self-socialising, the self-socialising of the human species.

35. I am suggesting that it is perfectly possible, in principle, for society as an activity of the human mind to actualise itself *at any level* from the level of the family to the level of all human beings. I am suggesting that it is perfectly possible, in principle, for us to recognise *the form, the subjectivity and the philosophy of a human society* at the level of all human beings and all human societies. I am suggesting that it is perfectly possible, in principle, that this should be the means of a further step in *the self-evolving of the human species*.

36. But the philosophical argument of principle is not enough. We have to ask another question. Does the study of human history tell us that socialising at the level of all-humanity is possible – or impossible – or inevitable? Does the actual human past contain the potentiality of a socialising of the whole human species?

HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

The problem of human history. Memory and imagination.

37. Our ideas about the human past are a powerful factor in the making of our ideas of the human present and the human future. Some people have suggested (Diderot and Tolstoy and Proust, among many others) that the ability of a human being to say the word 'I', our personal identity, is a product of our *memory*. We may say the same thing about what we call the *history* of a human society. A human being or a human society is a particular collection of ideas about the past. And we know that we can only be, and become, what the past allows us to be. Memory and history are the power of the past over the human present and the human future.

38. For the identity of a society, or of humanity as a whole, there is a very big problem in supposing that our collective self-consciousness is a product of memory. The problem is that our collective memory – so-called *history* – is a very unsatisfactory thing, even more unsatisfactory than the memory of an individual human being. History-writing is a chronically problematic activity.

39. There is the *sacred* history of religions and mythologies, which may provide a story of the origin and purpose of the universe and of human beings, and stories about the lives of more or less imaginary human or superhuman beings, but profoundly affecting the human self-consciousness of believers.

40. There is history in the form of *charismatic literature* (the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Mahabharata, Homer, the Greek tragedies, Virgil, the Norse Sagas), where it is intrinsically impossible to distinguish reliably between fact and fiction, but the work is liable to affect substantially the human self-consciousness of the audience.

41. There is what came to be called *scientific* history – beginning with the promise of Thucydides to tell 'the truth of things done', up to the 19th-century historians led by the promise of Leopold von Ranke to say 'what actually happened' (*wie es eigentlich*

gewesen ist). Scientific history tries to apply the rigour and the rationality of the natural sciences to the uncovering of the human past.

42. There is *narrative history* – one might call it retrospective journalism – accounts of great events and the doings of great figures, including memoirs written by leading participants.

43. And, finally, there is *imagined history* – the history of historical novels and plays, where fact and fiction are confused *ad libitum*.

44. But all history-writing, including so-called scientific history-writing, faces three gross problems – (1) we can only know with relative certainty a tiny fraction of what actually happened; (2) each historian must select material from the available material and arrange it in a form which is bound to be an interpretation, a creation, a construction of the past; and (3) history's close connexion with the subjectivity of particular societies means that it is wide open to abuse, for nationalistic or ideological purposes, in particular. History as an instrument of power.

45. Herodotus, the so-called father of history, said: 'I don't have to believe all the stories I have put in my *History*. I am reporting. I don't necessarily believe it.' A former Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge (J.B. Bury) said: 'I do not believe that freedom from bias [in the writing of history] is possible, and I do not think it is desirable.' Jacob Burckhardt, the great Swiss historian of the Italian Renaissance, said: 'To me history is still in a large measure poetry; it is a series of the most beautiful and picturesque compositions.' The mental faculties of memory and imagination are inextricably linked, in human beings and in human societies.

The fallacy of historicism

46. But these problems of history-writing have not prevented some people from supposing that they can find patterns, or even laws, ‘iron laws’ even, in human history. This is called *historicism*.

47. The ancient Greeks were deeply puzzled by the problem of human progress. They found it hard to decide whether to be optimists or pessimists about the human future. They had abundant evidence supporting both attitudes. In the light of what we now know of the human past, should we be optimistic or pessimistic about the human future? Is civilisation on an inevitable upward or downward slope?

48. In almost every civilisation known to us, there seem to have been people to say that everything is going to the dogs; it’s the end of civilisation as we know it; the vandals and the barbarians and the philistines are taking over.

49. In European history since the Renaissance, there have been countless such negative voices, but there has also been a powerful theme of progressivism. One form of progressivism has been to uncover a historical pattern of progress. Among many other examples, there is Condorcet and the idea that civilisation has progressed from theology through metaphysics to science. And we are living in this happy third period, when human rationality can at last control human destiny.

50. Then there was Hegel – who led people to believe that human history is the history of the development of something transcending human consciousness that he calls *Geist* (spirit or mind) and this has reached its apogee in European civilisation – ‘Europe is the absolute end of history’. Hegel saw Greek civilisation as the boyhood of civilisation, Roman civilisation as the adolescence of civilisation, and German civilisation as the final maturity or manhood of civilisation. He also took the view that Europe had discovered the ultimate *form* of human society – which he called ‘the state’. (European universal history has tended to be rather Eurocentric!)

51. And then there was, of course, Karl Marx, who thought that he had found the motor-principle of the *progress* of civilisation, explaining past history and enabling us to take power over the improvement of the human future. And historicism continued in the 20th century – Arnold Toynbee explaining the rise and fall of civilisation in ten volumes (*A Study of History*) – Oswald Spengler diagnosing the inevitable *Decline of Western Civilisation* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*). And historicist writing continues to the present day, telling us about the inevitable future of existing civilisations, including, in particular, the decline and fall of European civilisation, of American civilisation.

52. I will not say any more about historicism. There are no such things as fixed overall patterns or laws of history.

The myth of human nature

53. In my view, we must also reject an idea which has played a powerful role in human subjectivity, the idea labelled as *human nature*. The idea suggests that we cannot escape from the inherited evolutionary nature of the human species. We are programmed in a certain way that inevitably conditions, at some level, all that we do. Our species-nature, on this view, is a sort of fate or destiny.

54. The idea of human nature has been present in philosophical thinking about the human condition in all cultures and at all times. Oddly enough, however, it is the gloomy view of human nature has proved to be by far the most popular – the idea that human beings are inherently evil and selfish and aggressive, that natural human life is nasty, brutish and short – and it takes vast efforts of mind-management and social organisation to tame us, and to make us into reasonably well-behaved creatures.

55. In recent centuries the myth of human nature has been powerfully supported by the power of the natural sciences – physiology, neurology, biology, zoology, ethology, socio-biology – suggesting that our mind is a secondary phenomenon of the brain and the nervous system - so that the mind is wired-in, programmed to a significant extent.

56. I am going to say no more here about the myth of so-called *human nature*. Machiavelli (in the *Discourses on Livy*) dealt with both the fallacy of historicism and the myth of human nature correctly. It is not a matter of iron laws of history or biological pre-programming, but simply the way people of ultimate social power have behaved. We look at past events in order to see the future ‘because those events are brought about by men, whose passions and dispositions remaining in all ages the same, naturally give rise to the same effects.’

57. As I said at the beginning, I believe that natural science will never usefully explain interpersonal consciousness, still less collective social consciousness. What we should do is to take note of the important progress made by natural science in explaining the physical basis of human consciousness and then incorporate that information into the human mind’s ever-more-sophisticated understanding of itself.

Human self-evolving. Le travail de soi sur soi (Michelet)

58. I have suggested that there can be no transparent and coherent story of humanity’s past, and no ultimate and permanent view of human nature. And I have suggested that the story of the human past is not simply a story of human progress – things keep on being the same in some respects, things are always new in other respects, sometimes better, sometimes very much worse. But I have suggested that the presence of the past is a fundamentally significant factor at every social level,

embodied in a society's form, subjectivity and philosophy. The past has a great effect not only on the making of society's future, but also on society's ideas about its own potentiality.

59 *Human self-evolving* is the process by which society works on its past to make its future. There is a fine sentence in the Preface to Michelet's *History of France*. He says that he is telling the story of France's 'work on itself' (*le travail de soi sur soi*). That is a perfect definition of human self-evolving. A society works on itself; and *human history* is a never-ending effort to give an account of society's work on itself. So can we say anything in very general terms about the work on itself of humanity as a whole, human self-evolving?

60. I am going to suggest that we can say *six very general things* about the present state of human self-evolving, things which we can use to identify human potentiality, to imagine the human future. Needless to say, such a list could be extended indefinitely.

(1) *The perennial dialectic. The individual versus society. I–We –All*

61. The ancient Greeks – especially the wonderful philosophical troika of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle – noticed that the ultimate formative pattern of society is a universal and perennial dialectical tension between the individual and society. Rousseau expressed it in characteristically exaggerated form. The human individual is an individual (*born free*) but is always at the mercy of society (*everywhere in chains*). Hegel thought that the final resolution of the dialectic (what he called 'the End of History') will be achieved by the final integration of the human individual in society; and that final integration will be what he calls, somewhat paradoxically, 'freedom'.

62. The Greek philosophers also noticed – as did classical Chinese philosophy and Hindu philosophy – that there is a further dialectical question – the relation of the individual and society to what transcends the human individual and human society – what we may call *the dialectic of I and We and the All*. And that has been the foundational dialectic of certain kinds of philosophy, certain kinds of religion, and certain kinds of society, especially more or less theocratic societies.

63. (I should add that I myself believe that *all* societies have a *transcendental dimension*, resolving the dialectic of I-We-All, linking the society to all that is beyond the self of the society. That transcendental dimension is latent or patent in the society's pure and transcendental philosophies.)

(2) *Kaleidoscope of social forms*

64. Every society contains its own resolution of the dialectic of individual-and-society in its *form*, its *subjectivity* and its *philosophy*. It is a never-ending dialectical process in any given society. A society never reaches a settled state of existence. A society does not have a constitution. It is an endless process of self-constituting.

65. Liberal democracy is a particularly ingenious resolution of the dialectic – the individual seen as both the master and the servant of society. But liberal democracy itself takes many different forms in different societies, and is itself in a constant process of evolutionary development in each liberal-democratic society.

66. Humanity's amazing social creativity is evidenced in the countless different forms of human society that have existed. I have always like the ideas of the French ancient historian Fustel de Coulanges – who, controversially, sees the evolving of social forms as the expansion of *the family* – through the phratry (related families), the tribe, the city, the nation, the confederation. He thought that each society had its

religion (what we have called its *philosophy*, perhaps). And this means that societies with different religions cannot be integrated, except by a super-ordinate form that allows each to preserve its own religion. A useful way, perhaps, of diagnosing the contemporary problems of so-called multiculturalism, affecting the future of Europe, the future of the United States, and, I would say, the future of the world.

Nation (genetic, generic)

67. There is one social form that I should mention particularly. The *nation* – the birth-society, the genetic society. There have always been *nations* in this sense, in which their subjectivity is powerfully anchored in an ultimate form of shared identity. And that identity may then reinforced by a sense of uniqueness and superiority – we think of the speech Thucydides puts in the mouth of Pericles about how marvellous the Athenians are – or the encomium of Rome by Livy – or American ‘city on the hill’ rhetoric – examples of *genetic* nations that make themselves also into self-consciously unique *generic* nations, and in which the Other often becomes another reinforcing agency in the imagining of the Self of the nation. (Shakespeare tried, unsuccessfully, to make England into a genetic-generic nation, especially by using France as the creative Other.)

68. Under the influence of the French Revolution and Herder and Hegel, the 19th century saw the rise of an intense idea of the genetic-generic nation, reinforced by a ruthlessly instrumental use of national history. When this hyper-idea of *nation* was allied with the Hegelian hyper-idea of the *state*, as the ultimate social form, the consequences were dramatic – and a price was paid in calamities in the 20th century.

69. We might fairly conclude that history shows that there is no limit to human ingenuity in inventing *forms* of human society, including the creation of multi-societal

super-ordinate collections of societies - in federations, confederations, empires, multinational unions, international organisations.

(3) *Explosion of the power of the human mind*

70. The story of the development of the human mind is certainly not simply a story of orderly and progressive self-evolving. It has been a disjointed and confused story. There having been enlightenments, followed by returns to darkness. There have been periods in which the human mind developed in bad ways. There have been extremely differential and unequal developments in different places and different cultures. There have been long periods of time in which there was no perceptible change in general human consciousness.

71. There have been *structural changes* of human consciousness, particularly caused by the emergence of new geographical and cultural horizons – Egypt and Persia and India for the Greeks; the Arab world and China for medieval Europeans; pre-Columbian America for late-medieval Europeans. And, from a European point of view, there have been so-called *enlightenments* which we associate with particular historical developments - ancient Greece, Rome, Roman Christianity, the Carolingian renaissance, Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolutions, the 18th -century Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the Technological Revolution.

72. But the point I want to make here is a particular one. For the last six centuries there has been an explosive development of human consciousness, of the human mind. It has been socially generated. It has been profound and dynamic. But it has also been *continuously accelerating*, paying itself in compound intellectual interest, as it were.

73. The most striking feature of the development of the human mind is the development of the natural sciences and engineering. Francis Bacon – master-mind of a structural change in human consciousness at the beginning of the 17th century – recognised that *knowledge* is a form of *power*, so that our increasing knowledge gives us increasing power, not only over the natural world but also over the human world, increasing power over ourselves and our future. ‘I am building in the human understanding a true model of the world.’ ‘From a natural philosophy [natural science] pure and unmixed, better things are to be expected.’ (*New Organon*).

74. The amazing development of natural science has led to a whole series of fundamental restructurings of human self-consciousness – the idea of geological time measured in hundreds of millions of years (Lyell, 1833); evolution by natural selection (Darwin, 1859); genetics (Mendel, 1865); atomic theory (Thomson, Rutherford, Einstein) – to mention only the most obvious examples. Our most fundamental human subjectivity must now reflect what science tells us about our participation in the natural world.

75. But the explosion of the human mind has not been only in science and engineering. It has been in every field of human mental activity. Over the last few centuries, every conceivable aspect of human existence has been explored and exploited, speculatively and rationally and imaginatively, including human social existence.

76. We have available to us an overwhelming and inexhaustible store of *human self-knowledge*. However little individual human beings may know about such things, our new self-knowledge is an active presence in collective human consciousness – an inheritance from the past available to us in the present to help us make the future.

(4) *Explosion of social power – political, legal, economic, cultural*

77. I have suggested that society socialises human beings, so that each individual human being acquires a second identity as a member of human societies. I have also suggested that at the root of the self-constituting of human societies is a perennial dialectic of the individual and society - I and We – which varies over time, constantly establishing new equilibriums between the individual and society.

78. I want now to draw attention to another development in the most recent centuries – the tendency of societies to acquire something close to an *absolute hegemony over the human individual*. It is fascinating to study the status of the individual human being through historical time. Jacob Burckhardt, whom I mentioned earlier, took the view that the essence of Italian Renaissance humanism was the discovery of the individuality of the human being. Others have suggested that the modern conception of human individuality is due to the Protestant Reformation, re-centring Christianity as an immediate relationship between the human individual and God, the mediation of religious institutions being at best secondary.

79. Others again have referred to the American Declaration of Independence which strikes a subtle balance between the unalienable rights of human individuals and the ‘right of the People’ – a balance inherited from English constitutional history. It is a balance reflected also in the French Declaration of *the Rights of Man and the Citizen* (1789) – distinguishing between the inherent *droits de l’homme* (human rights) and the rights of the human being as a member of society (as a *citoyen*), and using *la nation* as the key social category.

80. But, in the 19th and 20th centuries, a paradoxical thing happened. As the claims for individual so-called *liberty* increased, in the rhetoric of democracy and capitalism, so did the power of society. Society became a vast machine of political,

legal and economic control. Just to mention one example, the Adam Smithian *division of labour*, seen to be at the root of the new capitalism, turned out to be the most extreme form of *integration of labour*, the reduction of the individual worker to virtual slavery – and not only the *manual* worker. And so-called free markets and consumerism proved to be the submission of human voluntarism to systems with absolute hegemonic power – including the power to define the meaning of the word *freedom*. Law and government and administration assumed an absolute power of micro-management over every aspect of everyday human life.

81. And all these developments produced a phenomenon that we may call the *communalising of the human mind* – in the 20th century and, especially now, in the 21st century. All kinds of cultural forms have worked together to produce a way of thinking and feeling *en masse*, and not only in the minds of the mass of the people. The subjectivity of the individual human being is becoming residual and secondary in relation to the subjectivity of the socialised human being. At the same time, the human individual feels less and less significant in the face of the triumphal power of science and engineering and the immensity and complexity of the natural world.

(5) *Universal social interdependence*

82. *Globalisation* is to the 21st century what *imperialism* was to the 19th century. Imperialism linked societies all over the world into worldwide systems, making those societies into political and economic and legal and cultural dependencies. It was no coincidence that the 19th century also saw a fabulous increase in the *gross global product* of goods and services. The world was transformed by the universalising of the amazing wealth-creating capacity of a new capitalism – industrial, commercial, and financial – however imperfect and unequal and crude that universalising proved

to be. Societies all over the world began to develop, socially and economically, in ways that they would never have otherwise achieved. (I am not here offering or implying any general judgment, for or against imperialism or globalisation.)

83. Now in the 21st century, we have a situation in which social phenomena are flowing freely and dynamically across the world, creating a new kind of human world. Economic phenomena are interacting in a virtual *economy of all economies*. Legal phenomena are interacting in a virtual *legal system of all legal systems*. Cultural phenomena are interacting in a virtual *culture of all cultures*. Mathematics and science and engineering and money are already universal languages. English is becoming a universal language.

84. Over the last fifty years, there has been a massive extrapolation into the international system of characteristically political institutions – governmental, administrative, legislative, judicial – in forms that are reminiscent of national institutions, but are anomalous adaptations to an anomalous extra-national existence.

85. The most powerful driving force is economic – as it was in the unification of many national societies – think of German unification, or Soviet Russian unification, or American unification (at least in Charles Beard's analysis), or, on one view, British post-medieval unification. And it may be that we see what may be a troubling instance of economy-led extra-national social unification in the European Union.

86. Every society everywhere is now a dependency of an inchoate and disorderly world system, an international unsociety or pre-society which may contain the DNA of a true international society.

(6) *The species-subjectivity of humanity.*

87. So, there are now plentiful social *forms* at the level of all-humanity. Could there possibly be a *subjectivity* of a society of all-humanity? Could there possibly be a *philosophy* of a society of all-humanity, a *society of all societies*?

88. You may be surprised to hear that there has always been a species-subjectivity of humanity – in religion, science, and philosophy. A subjectivity of all-humanity is as old as the subjectivity of human societies.

89. Mythologies treated human beings as co-participants in a natural universe that is a shared destiny. The universal religions – Hindu, Buddhist, Christianity, Islam – have as their primary focus the relationship between the I and the All, between the human individual and the universe. The human individual is seen as being in an intimate and essential relationship with the universe, a natural and supernatural relationship with a universe that is seen not merely as a physical universe – a relationship that is a human identity shared by all human beings.

90. Natural science has always been universal in character, from its earliest beginnings. And it has always been able to treat human beings as co-participants in a natural universe in which the universal identity of human beings shares, to a greater or lesser extent, the universal identity of an animal or a machine.

91. It is *philosophy* which, from its earliest beginnings, took as its special focus the unique and universal identity of human beings, especially the unique and universal significance of the human mind.

92. In the Western tradition of philosophy, the human universalism of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle was handed on, in particular, to the Stoic philosophers for whom humanity (*humanitas*) was both the fundamental identity of all human beings and also the ideal human virtue (*humaneness*). When a Stoic claimed to be a ‘citizen of the

world' (*cosmopolites*), he was asserting that human beings are, first and last, an integral part of the order of the universe, so that society and law and morality are derivative – and the ultimate social and individual virtue is to seek to live in harmony with the natural order of the universe.

93. This led the Romans, especially Seneca and Cicero, to the idea of a *natural law* (*ius naturale*), that is, law above all law, applying equally and supremely to all human beings. And the Platonic and Stoic ideas formed part of the Greek and Roman philosophical inheritance that inspired the medieval re-opening of the human mind that resulted in Renaissance *humanism* and the 18th-century Enlightenment.

94. Dante spoke of *humana universitas* (the society of humanity); Suárez of *la sociedad universal* (universal society); Locke of *the great and natural community* of mankind; Vico of *la gran città del mondo* (the great city of the world); Wolff of the *civitas maxima* (the universal society); Rousseau of *la société générale du genre humain* (the general society of the human species).

95. So you might say that the idea of *humanity* was a commonplace idea until recently – humanity as the species-subjectivity of the human species. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the philosophical idea of *human subjectivity* was lost from sight in the new intellectual hegemonies of the natural sciences and the so-called human sciences. A *naturalist* approach to human phenomena was also a form of reductionism. *Human* identity was reduced to an analytical status equal to that of *non-human* phenomena.

96. But, more fatefully, the idea of the ultimate unity of the human species was powerfully negated by the irresistible rise of the phenomenon of the *state*, and especially the rise of the *nation-state* that I mentioned earlier. Hegel, once again, embodies this fateful paradox. The eloquent advocate of a universalising history of

humanity paradoxically declares that the state is the ultimate social form, the ultimate expression of human will. ‘States are in a state of nature in relation to each other.’

‘It follows that if states disagree and their particular wills cannot be harmonized, the matter can only be settled by war.’ (*Philosophy of Right*)

97. In the 20th century, professional philosophy perversely marginalised itself, leaving nothing from the intellectual wreckage but a sad residue of scepticism and pragmatism and superficial sophistry – a residue within which the perennial philosophical idea and ideal of *humanity* could have no place.

CONCLUSION

98. For the past thirty years, I have been preaching and predicting the coming of a true international society of all-humanity, of which international law would be, at last, the true law. I had not expected to see this happen in my lifetime.

99. None of us anticipated that human self-evolving would take off in an unprecedented frenzy over recent decades. None of us anticipated that globalisation would transform the human world in so short a period of time. Still less did we anticipate that the worldwide *industrial* and *scientific* revolutions of the 19th century which produced the worldwide *technological* revolution of the 20th century would produce a worldwide *electronic* revolution, now familiar to us in the 21st century.

100. I hope and believe that people will now see that the idea of a true international society is a natural and necessary and inevitable part of the future of human self-evolving. That idea would help *all-humanity* to realise the wonderful potentiality of human society as an instrument for optimising the human condition and maximising human happiness. We are now, I hope and believe, witnessing the beginning of the worldwide revolution of all revolutions – a *philosophical* revolution.