

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE  
PHILEMON AND BAUCIS EPISODE  
IN GOETHE'S *FAUST*

Goethe resisted all attempts on the part of his critics and admirers to draw oversimplified and final messages from *Faust*—an understandable reaction, since why should anyone bother with the dramatic trappings if the meaning can be summed up in a few abstract statements? He told Eckermann that people constantly came to him asking the meaning of *Faust*—as if he knew! It was not in his line, he said, to try to embody anything abstract. Goethe's thought process is dialectical, and for almost every one of his aphorisms which seems to illustrate one side of a matter there is another illuminating the opposite side. Goethe carried this tendency so far, in fact, that he once remarked to Eckermann that his Philemon and Baucis had nothing to do with the traditional couple. He added, almost in the same breath, that the persons and the situation were nevertheless similar. Before examining the meaning of Goethe's verse in detail, a brief summary of the action taking place in the fifth act of the second part of *Faust* is necessary:

A Wanderer returns to a land, now Faust's kingdom, where he had been shipwrecked long ago and had found shelter in the home of Philemon and Baucis. He learns from the old couple, who are still alive, that their house on the hill now

stands in the shadow of Faust's castle. Faust wants them to move to the lowlands, which he has reclaimed from the sea with the aid of Mephistopheles, but they have so far refused to obey him. Faust's animosity toward the old couple is then depicted. In the end he assigns to Mephistopheles the task of eviction. Philemon and Baucis resist. They are killed, the Wanderer is dispatched along with them, and the house is burned down. Faust's blindness and death soon follow, but not before he attempts a final project, the construction of a canal.

In the original Philemon and Baucis legend, recounted by Ovid, it is Jupiter himself in the form of the Wanderer, rejected by the people of the lowlands, to whom the pair offer a welcome, food, and shelter. The old couple are thus spared from the deluge which Jupiter sends to punish those who refused to help him. Here the supreme importance of the Wanderer is obvious, while in the Goethean version he is disposed of in a very offhand manner. With a stroke of irony, Goethe arranges the action so that the same power responsible for the transformation of the hostile natural conditions to which the Wanderer had nearly succumbed on a previous occasion is now, rather casually, responsible for his death—as if a man, marveling at a city built where he remembered a desert, were, in the first flush of his enthusiasm, to be struck down in its streets by a passing truck.

Julien Benda observed that for Plato morality determined politics, while for Machiavelli politics and morality had become quite unrelated. The feature peculiar to our own time was not merely the determination of morality by politics but the defense of this position by a large number of intellectuals. It is worthwhile to examine in this light the comments made in recent years regarding Goethe's use of the Philemon and Baucis legend. The various interpretations of the significance of this part of the drama not only enable one to classify commentators in accordance with Benda's comment but also—and this is much more important—to discern a massive revision of outlook toward "Faustian man" which has taken place in recent decades. The Philemon and Baucis episode is a crucial point in Goethe's drama, its evaluation determining the interpretation of later events, including Faust's last actions, his death, and his salvation. Furthermore, it can be shown that Faust's mode of realizing his utopian-social aspirations and his brutal treatment of Philemon and Baucis are generally related to a metaphysical error committed at the outset of his career. This error, the substitution of the *Deed* for the *Word*, worked itself out, on the one hand, in a political policy of pure activism and, on the other, in the substitution of applied technique for genuine knowledge and understanding. At the same time

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he became progressively estranged from the natural world and his fellow men.

It is said that Hitler took particular pleasure in this part of *Faust*. Obviously, he saw in it a precedent, if not a justification, for his own ruthlessness. If a few innocent bystanders were hurt by the tempestuous strivings of the Faustian man, so much the worse for them. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs! Throughout the nineteenth century this was the prevailing view, and, although two wars have had a sobering effect, the view still persists:

The Philemon and Baucis episode has, to the modern mind, a tinge of the maudlin about it, and the traditional device of the Stranger (whereby the extent of Faust's operation is disclosed to the reader) is just a little clumsy. . . . In practice the individual's choice is sometimes not between "right-doing" and "wrong-doing," but between greater and lesser evil. In terms of the symbol, Faust's choice was between the greater evil of passively accepting the "barren kingdom" of the waves and the lesser evil of matters such as the death of Philemon and Baucis and the piratical doings of Mephisto and his minions—that certain allowance which, in the achievement of great and powerful works, must sometimes be allowed to the powers of evil.<sup>1</sup>

The death of Philemon and Baucis (he forgets all about the Wanderer) is not too high a price to pay for the establishment of what Enright calls elsewhere a "community of working people." The certain allowance is offered up with such readiness that it seems more of a votive offering to a new deity than an allowance for the powers of evil. Enright clearly falls into Benda's last category—indeed, he is so anxious to justify political expediency that he fails to read the text carefully. Otherwise he would have understood from Baucis' utterance:

Where by night the flames were swarming  
Stood a dike when we awoke  
Wails of human victims bleeding  
Nightly to our ears were born. . . .<sup>2</sup>

1. D. J. Enright, *Commentary on Goethe's Faust* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1949), p. 136.

2. Wo die Flämmchen nächtig schwärmten  
Stand ein Damm den andern Tag  
Menschenopfer mussten bluten,  
Nachts erscholl des Jammers Qual . . . [*Faust* 11128].

I have used, with the permission of the publisher, George Madison Priest's translation of Goethe's *Faust* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1941).

that all was not well in the “community of working people.” The dikes had already been built before Philemon and Baucis were dealt with, and, in any case, they lived on the hill. Yet their death is not a gratuitous act of cruelty. Their existence is a plague to Faust because they recall a past form of life which he believes he has transcended. Symbols of religious belief, of stubborn individualism, and of the old order of things in general, Philemon and Baucis also remind him that his power is still limited. Thus, when he hears their vesper bells, he cries out:

Accursed bell! Base clangour sending,  
It wounds me like spiteful shot from slings;  
Before mine eyes my realm’s unending,  
Yet at my back vexation stings.  
The envious bell is aye recalling:  
From blemish is my realm not free!  
The lindens, brown hut, church half-falling,  
Not one of these belongs to me.  
And if I’d seek rest, there repairing  
I’ll shudder as with alien fear. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Another analysis of the episode, also written by an Englishman, leaves the moral issue aside and may, therefore, be classified in Benda’s second category—that of the Machiavellians, for whom politics and morality occupy separate spheres. Faust, according to this commentator, has a high degree of “will” at this stage of his career, and, as the old couple have a low degree of will (except for their willingness to oppose the pretensions of Faust, one should add), a fundamental incompatibility, which Faust is unable to tolerate, exists:

It is not simply that he dislikes the ringing of the bell (as does Mephistopheles) but that it appeals to him at a time when he cannot afford to succumb to its charm: it is incompatible with the mood of aggression that is vital to the building up of an Empire.<sup>4</sup>

3. Verdammtes Läuten! Allzuschändlich  
Verwundet’s, wie ein tückischer Schuss;  
Vor Augen is mein Reich unendlich,  
Im Rücken neckt mich der Verdruss,  
Erinnert mich durch neidische Laute:  
Mein Hochbesitz, er ist nicht rein,  
Der Lindenraum die braune Baute,  
Das morsche Kirchlein ist nicht mein  
Und wünscht’ ich, dort mich zu erholen,  
Vor fremden Schatten schaudert mir . . . [*Faust*, 11160].

4. R. D. Miller, *The Meaning of Goethe’s Faust* (London: Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1939), p. 129.

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The moral neutrality of this statement is strikingly at variance with the anguished outcry of Albert Schweitzer, a few years earlier:

All kinds of unnatural conditions are developing daily among us in such a way that man ceases to feel any longer that he is in every respect a being that belongs to nature and himself and becomes more and more a creature submissive to society. So the question is raised which would have been considered impossible only a few decades ago: Do we still desire to remain faithful to the ideal of human personality in the midst of hostile circumstances, or are we now on the contrary loyal to a new idea for humanity which ordains that man shall achieve a differently ordered fulfillment of his nature in the restless merging of his being in organized society? What, however, can this mean except that we, like Faust, have erred terribly in detaching ourselves from nature and surrendering ourselves to the unnatural? After all, what is now taking place in this terrible epoch of ours except a gigantic repetition of the drama of Faust on the stage of the world? The cottage of Philemon and Baucis burns with a thousand tongues of flame!<sup>5</sup>

Schweitzer's words were spoken in Germany in 1932. The nineteenth century, however, of which Miller's viewpoint is a survival, saw Faust as the drama of a man who achieved salvation, after a youth misspent in a romantic effort to gain knowledge and understanding, through work—a man of facts and deeds. Oswald Spengler celebrated this Faustian *Tatsachenmensch* at the time of the first World War, saying that he would count it a success if his book, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, turned young men from lyrics to techniques, and from philosophy to politics.

Others in addition to Schweitzer had, by the thirties, become suspicious of the Faustian man. Hohlenberg, in a very perceptive and original study of Goethe's *Faust*, pointed out that, far from achieving his salvation in any genuine sense, Faust had actually grown worse instead of better in his old age. Faust completely failed to realize how far the actions of Mephistopheles were diverging from his wishes. Immediately after hearing that his trading expedition had been converted into a simple act of piracy, Mephistopheles put all fine distinctions aside with the words:

You have the Power and so the Right  
You ask no How but What it be.  
I know not how the sea is charted  
If war and trade and piracy  
Are not triune and can't be parted.<sup>6</sup>

5. *Goethe: Four Studies by Albert Schweitzer*, trans. Charles Joy (New York: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 50.

6. Man hat Gewalt, so hat man Recht.  
Man fragt ums Was, und Nicht ums Wie

Faust assigned the eviction of Philemon and Baucis to the same devilish agency. Hohlenberg wrote of Faust:

He was completely devoid of understanding of the old couple and he behaved like the unwise rulers who insist on making people happy against their will. . . . The transition from originally well-meaning statesmanship to compulsion and tyranny is almost paradigmatically set forth. Faust shares the fate of all Utopian rulers.<sup>7</sup>

Hohlenberg's remarks take additional force, and their resemblance to ideas which Goethe actually had in mind seems close, when the unwritten drama outlined in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* is recalled. Here Goethe tells us how, while musing over the tragic gap between the designs of men and their actual accomplishments—over the tragedy of the superior man, who, in striving to act effectively, ends by debasing both himself and his doctrine—he conceived the idea of a drama with Mahomet as its protagonist. First Mahomet was to reach his exalted conception of divinity. Then he communicates his feelings and opinions to his relatives. His wife and Ali accept them unconditionally. In the second act he and Ali, the latter with more passion, attempt to further the doctrine in the tribe. Here both agreement and opposition are met with, according to varieties of the characters. Disunion crops up, the conflict becomes violent, and Mahomet must flee. In the third act he overcomes his opponents, makes his religion official, and purifies the Kaabe from idols. Since everything cannot be accomplished by force, he finds recourse to deceit necessary. The wordly side grows and extends itself; the divine side moves into the background and becomes obscured. In the fourth act Mahomet pursues his conquests, and the doctrine is used more as pretext than as purpose. All conceivable means must be employed, and cruelty is not lacking. A woman, whose husband he has had executed, poisons him. In the fifth act he realizes that he is poisoned. His great composure, the return to himself at his former level, makes him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, stabilizes his kingdom, and dies.<sup>8</sup>

Faust's doctrine, which he does not succeed in purifying, is the phi-

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Ich musste keine Schiffahrt kennen:  
Krieg, Handel und Piraterie,  
Dreieinig sind sie, nich zu trennen [*Faust*, 11188].

7. J. Hohlenberg, *Goethes Faust im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Göring Verlag, 1931), p. 152.

8. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Book XIV.

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losophy of the "Deed," formulated early in the course of the drama by perverting the Johannine Gospel:

'Tis written: "In the beginning was the Word!"  
Here now I'm balked! Who'll put me in accord?  
It is impossible, the *Word* so high to prize,  
I must translate it otherwise  
If I am rightly by the Spirit taught.  
'Tis written: In the beginning was the *Thought!*  
Consider well that line, the first you see,  
That your pen might not write too hastily!  
It is then *Thought* that works, creative, hour by hour?  
Thus should it stand: In the beginning was the *Power!*  
Yet even while I write this word, I falter,  
For something warns me, this too I shall alter.  
The Spirit's helping me! I see now what I need  
And write assured: In the beginning was the *Deed!*<sup>9</sup>

The author of the Johannine Gospel enunciated a new version of the philosophical-theological conception of the Logos doctrine, which, in its original form, antedated Christianity by at least five hundred years. The specifically Christian version of the Logos doctrine is the peculiar union of the universal and the concrete or particular, expressed in the theological language in the Johannine Gospel as the *Word* becoming *Flesh*:

In the beginning was the Word (Logos)  
And the Word was with God  
And God was the Word.  
He was in the beginning with God  
All things were made through Him  
And without Him was made  
Nothing that has been made.

9. Im Anfang war das Wort!  
Hier stock' ich schon! Wer hilft mir weiter fort?  
Ich kann das Wort so hoch unmöglich schätzen  
Ich muss es anders übersetzen,  
Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin.  
Geschrieben steht: Im Anfang war der Sinn.  
Bedenke wohl die erste Zeile  
Dass deine Feder sich nicht übereile!  
Ist es der Sinn der alles wirkt und schafft?  
Es sollte stehn: Im Anfang war die Kraft!  
Doch, auch indem ich dieses niederschreibe,  
Schon warnt mich was, dass ich dabei nicht bleibe.  
Mir hilft der Geist! Auf einmal seh' ich Rat.  
Und schreibe getrost: Im Anfang war die Tat! [*Faust* 1237].

The Logos doctrine of Heraclitus of Ephesus, from which the Christian doctrine was derived, may be interpreted as an expression of the union between the universal law of the world (*logos*) and its reasoned statement (*logos*); the conformity, in other words, of rational discourse with the orderly process of natural events. With respect to the development of science this conception is of the utmost importance. Philosophically speaking, Reason thus becomes the ontological foundation of the universe. Once Faust rejected the principle of the Logos, however, he had no grip on *Sinn* (thought, sense) as a constitutive feature of the real world. Nothing remained in the end except the brute irrational fact and its counterpart, the "Deed," as Faust ultimately concluded, with the aid of that supreme nihilist, Mephistopheles. The point is more clearly made in the German language, where the Latinism of "fact" is avoided, *die Tat* having as its counterpart *die Tatsache*. Hitler, it should be noted, once remarked to Rauschning that he had no love for Goethe but that he was able to overlook much for the sake of one phrase, "Im Anfang war die Tat."

Without pushing the interpretation too far, one can see foreshadowed in Goethe's drama the form of that crisis which Husserl described in Western science—the dissolution of the idea of a universal philosophy and the failure of the positive sciences to account for man other than as a scientific object. The path taken by Faust, described by Goethe in theological terminology and poetical imagery, shows an extremely suggestive relationship to the path taken by the West as a whole, during the past few centuries, described by Husserl in philosophical terminology in his posthumous book (*Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*). Husserl gave here his reasons for believing that Western man had reached a dead end in science and philosophy as the result of a metaphysical error which began with the "mathematization of nature" initiated by Galileo and culminated with scientific positivism. To insist that science is at a dead end may, in the face of the overwhelming technical triumphs which confront us on every side, seem both presumptuous and absurd. But Husserl was not primarily interested in these technical triumphs, whose existence, since they served as evidence for his claim that science had been converted into technique, he did not deny. The basis of his criticism rested on the paradox that, although validity is claimed for our scientific formulations, in these same formulations man finds himself reduced to the status of a scientific object among other objects, ulti-



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mately to be described in terms of physical events related merely causally or in accordance with statistical laws. The failure to account for man except as a scientific object not only has left him in a highly vulnerable position—a puppet to be manipulated, a piece of clockwork to be taken apart and reassembled in a fashion more pleasing to society, if need be—but has left the foundations of the sciences in a paradoxically unstable condition, since it was man himself who laid them. The technicalization of the sciences permits the accomplishment of marvels of all kinds, it is true, but the idea which bore these sciences has been lost, together with a loss of faith in reason exemplified most clearly in philosophies attempting to construct a world solely from “data,” that is, from *Tatsachen*.

Faust apparently understands the nature of the error into which he has fallen, when he cries out, shortly after the death of Philemon and Baucis.

Could I all magic from my pathway banish  
Could quite unlearn its spells and make it vanish,  
Nature, could I face thee in thy great plan  
Then were it worth the pain to be a man.<sup>10</sup>

The key to the understanding of this passage lies in the meaning of the word “magic.” Jacob Boeme, with whose writings Goethe was familiar, called magic “die Aktivität in dem Willens-Geist,” the activity in the spirit of will. The aim of magic is directed toward the manipulation of phenomena. This kind of magician wishes to enforce his will on the external world. He has no desire to understand or to contemplate that world; he wishes merely to produce effects, to exert power, to be a demigod:

All things that move between the quiet poles  
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings  
Are but obeyed in their several provinces  
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds  
But his dominion that exceeds in this  
Stretcheth as far as does the mind of man.  
A sound magician is a demi-god.<sup>11</sup>

10. Könnst' ich Magic von meinem Pfad entfernen  
Die Zaubersprüche ganz und gar verlernen  
Stünd'ich, Natur, vor dir ein Mann allein,  
Da wär's der Mühe wert, ein Mensch zu sein [Faust 11407].

11. Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus*.

Those technical devices which work like magic, as the popular phrase puts it, really represent magic in the sense described. If magic be defined as an indefinite expansion of the pragmatically planned will to power, a power in the face of which everything comes to seem an object or a thing to be manipulated, we live today in a civilization with an unhealthy hypertrophy of magical function, as Voegelin pointed out a few years ago. Or, as Maritain put it, our science is fast becoming a kind of *maya*, a *maya* which succeeds. The inner relation between man and man, and between man and his world (the *Lebenswelt* of Husserl), steadily weakens.

The aging Faust manipulates his people, whose happiness he wants to secure, just as he would any other class of objects. Still intent on creating his utopia, shortly before his death we find him calling on Mephistopheles to complete the canal:

Be it done as it may,  
Bring crowd on crowd of workmen here!  
Spur them on with rigour and good cheer,  
Entice, coerce, give ample pay!<sup>12</sup>

But Priest's translation fails to give the force of Goethe's *bezahlte, locke, presse bei!* Instead of working on a canal, as Faust believes, Mephistopheles' workmen are digging his grave. Here we have our first look at citizens from the "community of working people"—the Lemurs, pitiful, nightmare creatures of skin and bone, moving about numbly and clumsily, but still believing that they will inherit the earth:

The call concerns a spacious land  
Where we shall have possession—<sup>13</sup>

they say, as Mephistopheles spurs them on. All this stands in horrible contrast to what Faust believes he is accomplishing:

Thus space to millions I will give  
Where, though not safe, yet free and active they may live.  
Green fertile fields where straightway from their birth  
Both men and beast live happy on the newest earth,

12. Wie es auch möglich sei  
Arbeiter schaffe Meng' auf Menge,  
Ermuntere durch Genuss und Strenge,  
Bezahlte, locke, presse bei! [*Faust* 11554].

13. Es gilt gar wohl ein weites Land,  
Das sollen wir bekommen [*Faust* 11518].

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Settled forthwith along the mighty will.  
Raised by a daring busy people's will.<sup>14</sup>

One of the most violent of the recent rejections of Faustian man was made in response to these lines. Faust, wrote Wurtenberg, was indulging in a masquerade typical of totalitarian dictatorships, and his talk of utopia was only a sham to cover an unappeasable appetite for power:

Pleasures—"With Strength through Joy to Madeira"—and austerities (modern instances are legion), enticements, forced service, displacements, slave-labor, in the troubled midst of modern robot-existence; in truth it is easy to understand Hitler's particular pleasure in Faust II, 5, but it is less understandable when, even to-day, the victims of a similar titanism want to find a real solution here, and to see in Faust's "eternal striving" something which rounds out and crowns his existence.<sup>15</sup>

Germany, the subject of a vast allegory in Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, incorporated the Faust idea as did no other nation in our time. Staggering down to hideous ruin ten years ago, in a seemingly final ecstasy of despair, following the tradition of Marlowe's Faustus and the Chapbook Faust, she has been rescued in a fashion almost as trite as that employed by Goethe for the salvation of his Faust, a salvation which has been the subject of much criticism. It was Heine who first pointed out that Goethe had misconceived the whole purport of the legend, and in Heine's own *Tanzpoem, Dr. Faustus*, a great black hand rose up out of the earth to bar Faust's flight to the church. Nevertheless, Germany merited salvation because, if the standards of poetic justice are to be upheld, the final Faustian downfall must involve all countries of the West. In fact, the Faustian ideal is perhaps given less allegiance in Germany today than in the United States. Even during the second World War there was a group of German intellectuals, writing in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, who more or less openly expressed their disgust with the cult of the colossal, the mass organizations, and the political dragooning of the Nazi government. Röpke, who came in conflict with the Nazi regime early in its course, had this to say of the group:

14. Eröffn' ich Räume vielen Millionen  
Nicht sicher zwar, doch tätig-frei, zu wohnen  
Grün das Gefilde, fruchtbar; Mensch und Herde  
Gleich angesiedelt an des Hügels Kraft  
Den aufgewälzt kühn-emsige Völkerschaft.  
Im innern hier ein paradiesisch Land . . . [*Faust* 111569].

15. Gustave Wurtenberg, *Goethes Faust Heute: Das Ende des Faustischen Menschen* (Berlin: Hummeler Verlag, 1949), p. 166.

Perhaps nothing was more significant or hopeful than the fact that, in the midst of the inferno of the Third Reich, leading intellectuals discovered, apparently for the first time, how dubious a figure was the so-called "Faustian man." . . . It was now suddenly found how empty and senseless is action for the mere sake of action, and Goethe's tragedy, which had lent its name to this type of man was at last given its right interpretation: It is Satan himself with whose help Faust, at the end of his restless life, tramples down the simple human happiness of Philemon and Baucis in order to enjoy "the blessedness of command" and to erect his colossal buildings.<sup>16</sup>

Few postwar German intellectuals, at any rate, would share the insensitivity of an Enright.

If several hundred years of devotion to the magic of technique and the worship of the naked Deed have brought Western man to his current mood of despair, to the recognition of a progressively more severe estrangement from himself and his world, and to the bitter realization that his central experience is one of distance from everything that really concerns him—what is to be done? Probably nothing. It is not possible for Western man to retrace his steps. There is no way back to the world of Philemon and Baucis. Barring a catastrophe of immense proportions, the number of people to be fed, clothed, and housed will double in the lifetime of children now alive. Only a huge technical apparatus can care for these people. The answer, if there is one, certainly cannot be given in terms of another scheme or program. Somehow man must transcend the skeletonized view of the world, and of man himself, dominant today, in order to rediscover the "Nature" of Goethe and the *Lebenswelt* of Husserl. Whether or not one attempts this task is a question of individual decision, and it is a matter of the greatest fortuity whether it is possible at all.

## APPENDIX

1. The expansion of the will to power from the realm of phenomena to the realm of substance, or the attempt to operate in the realm of substance pragmatically as if it were the realm of phenomena—that is the definition of magic. The interrelation of science and power, and the consequent cancerous growth of the utilitarian segment of existence, have injected a strong element of magic culture into modern civilization. The tendency to narrow the field of human experience to the area of reason, science, and pragmatic action, the tendency to overvalue this area in relation to the *bios theoretikos* and the life of the spirit, the tendency to make it socially preponderant

16. W. Röpke, *The German Question*, trans. E. W. Dicks (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1947), p. 86.

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through violence in totalitarian communities—all these are part of a cultural process that is dominated by a flight of magic imagination, that is, by the idea of operating on the substance of man through the instrument of the pragmatically planning will. We have ventured the suggestion that in retrospect the age of science will appear as the greatest power orgy in the history of mankind; we now venture the suggestion that at the bottom of this orgy the historian will find a gigantic outburst of magic imagination after the breakdown of the intellectual and spiritual form of medieval high-civilization. The climax of this outburst is the magic dream of creating the superman, the man-made being that will succeed the sorry creature of God's making; this is the great dream that first appeared imaginatively in the works of Condorcet, Comte, Marx, and Nietzsche, and later pragmatically in the communist and national socialist movements.

From "The Origins of Scientism," by Eric Voegelin. Reprinted with permission from *Social Research*, XV (1948), 462.

2. The science of the ancients was steeped in philosophy. Their scientific imagery was a pseudo-ontological imagery. Consequently, there was a kind of continuum between their knowledge of the physical world and their knowledge of God. This latter knowledge was seen as the summit of the former, a summit which had to be sealed by the multiple paths of the causal connections at work in the sub-lunar world and the celestial spheres. And the sense of Being, which everywhere and always ruled their thought, was for them an atmosphere too habitual to be regarded as a surprising gift. At the same time, the natural intuition of existence was so strong in them that their proofs of God could take the form of the most conceptualized and the most rationalized scientific demonstrations, and be offered as a skillful unfolding of logical necessities, without losing the inner energy of that intuition. This logical machinery was surreptitiously enlivened by the deep-seated intuition of Being.

We are in quite a different position now. In order to reach a physical reality in its own enigmatic way and to conquer the world of phenomena, our science has become a kind of *Maya*—a *Maya* which succeeds and makes us masters of nature. But the sense of Being is absent from it. Thus when we come to experience the impact of Being upon our mind, it appears to us as a kind of intellectual revelation, and we become keenly aware both of its awakening and liberating power, and of the fact that it involves a knowledge separate from the sphere of knowledge peculiar to our science.

From *Approaches to God*, by Jacques Maritain. Translated from the French by Peter O'Reilly and reprinted with permission of the author and of the publisher, Harper & Bros., New York, 1954.

3. Heinrich Henel ("Literature and Science," *Proceedings of the Sixth Triennial Congress, International Federation for Modern Language and Liter-*

ature [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956]) sees three chief features in Goethe's alternative to what is now known as modern science—a dislike of manipulating nature, a wish to maintain a direct relationship between the total sensibility of the observer and the observed phenomenon, and a rejection of Bacon's demand to "put Nature to the question," which Goethe expressed by stating that Nature falls silent when put on the rack. His rejection of mathematical physics was based on a refusal to break reality down into a multitude of similar elements of which we have no direct experience, and which can be discovered only through a combination of intellectual analysis and experiments with complicated apparatus.

4. Hubert and Mauss state that magic, like technique, is primarily an art of doing things associated with a store of ideas whose motto is "Knowledge Is Power." The German word *Zauber*, and similar words in other languages, can be traced back to roots signifying "doing." When the magician reflects on his state, he recognizes that his magic power is foreign to him. Prospero is not the master of Ariel, except for a time and under limited conditions. After Ariel has been freed, Prospero knows that:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
And what strength I have's mine own;  
Which is most faint. . . .

Magic, they conclude, seeks immediate, limitless, efficacy, and direct creation; but it is absolute illusion, *maya*, as the Hindus called it.

From "Esquisse d'une théorie général de la magie," by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *L'Année sociologique*, 1902-3.