NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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THE PARADOX OF CAMPANELLA

What we know today of Campanella, largely thanks to the work of Italian researchers (L. Firpo, R. Amerio, A. Corsaro, G. di Napoli, and others), is important for our understanding of the intellectual situation that arose after the decline of the Renaissance—that situation that is best perceived and expressed in *Hamlet*. Of course, any historico-cultural collision is unique; but the logic of its development may contain elements of repetition. In connection with Campanella's instructive spiritual experience, I shall try to touch on the somewhat broader problem that arises whenever a person who aims to change his society comes into conflict with the dominant institutional and ideological forces of that society, and yet thinks and acts within the limits set by these very forces.

The title of this article is borrowed from the book by A. Gorfunkel', which treats the "paradox of Campanella" more seriously than any other work in the Russian language.[1]

The point is that the thirty thousand pages written by Campanella appear to be by several different hands. Even in the *City of the Sun*, in his splendid descriptions of a rational social organisation, illuminated as they are by the reflected rays of the departed Renaissance, we find pronounced astrological, theological and totalitarian-bureaucratic features that offend the contemporary reader and have led some historians to speak of Cam-

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[1] A. Kh. Gorfunkel': *Tommaso Campanella*, Moscow, 1969.

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panella's "incoherence" or his "compromises," to explain that he was "the child of his time"—as if this sort of statement explained anything. As far as the great majority of Campanella's other works is concerned—and let us emphasize that he had the fully deserved reputation of one of the most enlightened and revolutionary minds of the 17th century—they are "a stumbling-block to his biographers."[2] Their very titles sound strange in the mouth of this Calabrian rebel, this freethinking prisoner of the Inquisition: *The Monarchy of the Messiah*, *A Political Dialogue against Lutherans, Calvinists and other Heretics*, *Discourses on Liberty and the happy Submission to Ecclesiastical Government*, *The philosophical Foundation of the true universal Religion, against Antichristianity and Machiavellianism*, *All Nations of the Earth shall remember the Lord and turn to Him*, and the like. Their contents display what appears at first sight to be an unnatural mixture of boldly innovatory and hopelessly reactionary opinions. In both cases, in his politico-ideological radicalism and in his politico-ideological obscurantism, Campanella followed his arguments to their most extreme conclusions, thanks to a rare clarity and coherence of mind, and thanks also to a preacher's fanaticism that was less rare. It would be hard to find anyone in Europe at that time who was more left-wing or more right-wing than this Dominican friar. Before baffling the researchers of a later age, Campanella provided plenty of puzzles for his friends and his enemies in his lifetime. His devoted followers heaped reproaches on him and sat down to produce refutations of their teacher's treatises, while the Inquisitors put him to the torture but provided him with pen and ink. They alternated between banning his works and trying to make use of them—evidently finding them as hard to assess as we do.

These facts have of course long been a subject of literary discussion. But in order to solve Campanella one must start by taking the problem seriously, and keep a firm grasp of it. Historians of thought often try to focus down on a blurred or double image; but it is sometimes more important to re-create the true nature of this spiritual and historical duality, and to demonstrate its non-fictitious, non-external, non-optical nature. If a riddle is placed immediately above its answer, no one bothers

[2] Op. cit., p. 53.

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with it; whereas a historical phenomenon is the more attractive, the better it is explained. In this situation, a good answer is not actually an answer at all, in the sense that it has to *reinforce* the feeling of mystery, of multidimensionality, of irreducibility of the phenomenon; has to make it open rather than closed, and rather transform a solution into a problem than the reverse.

Almost a hundred years ago, Campanella's first serious biographer Luigi Amabile produced his "theory of simulation," according to which all the orthodox Catholic or mystical elements in Campanella's writings and behaviour were the result of his hopeless situation as a prisoner, obliged to disguise his true opinions.[3] Romano Amerio rejects Amabile's interpretation and comments on the absurdity of claiming that Campanella, "while remaining an antichristian, spent his whole life pretending to be a Christian." This would mean "making of him someone who lived his whole life in opposition to his own ideas; a sort of corpse that had remained alive inside".[4] But even if the psychological "theory of simulation" was correct, it would not help us to understand Campanella's historical role by asserting that he lied constantly in his works in order to have the chance of speaking the truth from time to time. A. Kh. Gorfunkel', in particular, has shown that the Calabrian friar's treatises were widely read and took their place in the battle of ideas quite independently of any secret designs their author may have had, and that his contemporaries took his pro-Spanish and anti-reformationist pronouncements perfectly seriously—as they deserved —and were not concerned with how sincere he was being.

Yet he was sincere. The views that Amabile considered could only be explained by his theory of simulation are found in every one of his works, including his *Apologia for Galileo* and *City of the Sun*. He expressed them both before his trial by the Inquisition, and when he was a free man again at the end of his life. In him we have of course an extremely organic *system* of ideas, which changed and acquired increasing precision from one work to the next, but preserved some of the principles from

[3] L. Amabile: *Fra Tommaso Campanella, la sua congiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia*. Vol. I-III, Naples, 1882. Amabile's viewpoint is ingeniously supported by the Soviet writer A. E. Shtekli (*Campanella*, 3rd ed., Moscow, 1966).

[4] R. Amerio: *Campanella*, Brescia, 1944, p. 219-220.

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which it started. In particular, "the utopia of a universal monarchy is just as essential a part of Campanella's programme as the utopia of a communist social order. The *City of the Sun* does not stand opposed to the *Spanish Monarchy* or the *Monarchy of the Messiah* in Campanella's works."[5] Only a study of *all* Campanella's works and *all* his ideas ("reactionary" and "compromising" as well as "progressive") can supply us with a key to understanding the internal framework of Campanella's writings.[6] Although Amabile's theory itself is not supported by contemporary criticism, it is only a specific and eloquent instance of a wider and more stable critical method based on a precise distinction between, as it were, the "pluses" and the "minuses"—the regions where the thinker "keeps pace with the foremost ideas of his time," or is even "ahead of his time," showing "the foresight and ingenuity of a genius," and those in which his ideas are "historically transitory," showing him to be "a prisoner of his time." The expressions in quotation marks are not quotations but ever-ready clichés familiar to all of us; they may be expressed more elegantly, but this does not make them any better. It is not often that one can consider the "transitory" and "backward" elements as mere pretence—though in Campanella's case, the dramatic details of his biography are tempting in this respect—but, of course, these "prejudices," this "backwardness," are far from being definitive features of the author of *The City of the Sun* or of any other distinguished historical figure; they form no part of Campanella's timeless rôle as a philosopher.

For instance, V.P. Volgin, who was interested in Campanella (or rather in Campanella's Utopian socialism—an essential and characteristic distinction) saw in his philosophy "a combination of very advanced ideas for his time, ideas that reflected the new social order that had matured in the very heart of feudalism, the new, profane and rational world-picture, with ideas that were

[5] A. Kh. Gorfunkel', *op. cit.*, p. 206.

[6] This very modern approach is found in the critical writings of L. Firpo (*Ricerche campanelliane*, Firenze, 1947), A. Corsano (*Tommaso Campanella*, Bari, 1961), the Marxists A. Gorfunkel' and N. Badaloni (*Tommaso Campanella*, Milano, 1965), the Catholics R. Amerio and G. Di Napoli (*Tommaso Campanella, filosofo della restaurazione cattolica*, Padova, 1947). No matter how the unity of Campanella's ideology is *interpreted*, this conceptual unity is now universally recognised.

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backward, deriving from the traditions of the old, religious, mystical world-picture from which he could not free himself." This formulation puts everything in its place. "Campanella's contradictory philosophy is interesting as an example of a philosophy of a time of transition. But such a philosophy could not have a lasting influence. Of all Campanella's writings only *The City of the Sun* kept its importance for many years".[7] This approach, of course, leaves no room for any paradox that could occasion surprise. It implied that all one needed to do was abstract from Campanella's works whatever interested us and understand it. But the Calabrian philosopher's communistic ideas are precisely an aspect of "the philosophy of a time of transition," and outside this context they are meaningless. To understand them, we must take the whole structure of his thought, the whole Campanella, everything that was important for him (rather than for us), all or nothing.[8] By claiming that Campanella's only importance for us lies in his Utopian socialism, we act like the cunning Shylock—we have our pound of flesh, but we leave Campanella dead.

Let us admit that Campanella's communistic ideas, even when meticulously filtered free of any theocratic or astrological contaminants, were themselves out of date by the 18th or 19th century, and they contain nothing of contemporary interest or importance. They will assure their author of an honorable place in the pantheon but not in contemporary historical thought. We are obliged to call them "naive" and "primitive," betraying by these terms how strange and incomprehensible to our haughty retrospective gaze was this man, though he himself was not a whit more primitive than ourselves. As for those ideas whose retrograde nature was apparent even to some of his contemporaries, their appeal (or lack of it) is even more clearly confined to specialists in 17th-century philosophy, writing for one another.

[7] V. P. Volgin. "Campanella's Communist Utopia." In *Campanella. The City of the Sun*, Moscow, 1954, pp. 8-9.

[8] Further on I shall try to show that the mechanistic division of Campanella's work into two complexes of ideas unexpectedly coincides with the methodology of R. Amerio's or G. Di Napoli's interpretations—though both emphatically denied any contradictoriness or heterogeneity in Campanella's thought. The coincidence consists in the fact that both approaches deprive Campanella's work of its internal paradox, so that it ceases to be a *problem*.

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Taken as a whole Campanella's heritage can happily be relegated to the showcase of historico-philosophical curiosities.

Fortunately, it is not possibile to take Campanella's works and separate out a dozen pure ideas from another dozen impure ones: these theological, metaphysical, naturalistic, neo-Platonist, astrological, communistic, eschatological, socio-critical and catholic-apologetic ideas are not merely "combined" together—they nourish one another, they arise out of a single cast of thought. Perhaps the most interesting subject for analysis would be precisely this intertwining of ideas, the way that anachronistic and innovatory ideas provide each other with mutual support—so that an adequate understanding of *The City of the Sun* requires a study of the *Theology* (and vice versa). We, indeed, are inclined to think that we are dealing here with incompatible ideas, since history has since then created a sharp separation between them; but Campanella combined them according to the laws of another culture, another intellectual context, which it would be dangerous to judge by our standards.

When we read in the *Apology for Galileo* "If the truth is scandalous, it is better to suffer a scandal to take place than to cease the search for truth," we feel like shaking the bold prisoner's hand—and well he deserves it. Actually, this is a quotation from Gregory the Great, a Roman bishop of the 6th century and a great persecutor of secular knowledge... The *Apology* begins with the statement "I have given an answer to two great questions of our time: is it permitted to found a new philosophy, and is it permitted—is it right—to diminish the authority of the peripatetics and the pagan philosophers by introducing into Christian schools a new philosophy that conforms with the teaching of the Saints".[9] What confusion! Campanella should, of course, have contrasted the "new philosophy" with the "teaching of the Saints," but he obstinately explains that without the help of science, theology will not be able to draw Christians closer to the walls of the City of God.[10] In the Bible, God is made known through the Word; in nature, through experience. Even Aquinas was known to err in matters of physics,

[9] T. Campanella: *Apologia di Galileo*, a cura di L. Firpo. Torino, 1968, p. 140.

[10] Op. cit., p. 159-60. Further quotations are from pp. 145-7, 155, 157, 189, 153, 161, 167.

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for "without science, even a saint cannot judge aright." "Neither the holy Moses, nor the Lord Jesus, taught us of physiology or astronomy, but "God made man to judge of worldly things" (Eccl. I), "that our mind might perceive the invisible God through his creation" (Romans II); but they taught us of the holy life and of supernatural dogma, for the knowledge of which nature itself is not enough." This famous theory of Campanella's about the "two books" is very ambiguous. It assured the sovereignty of natural science and freedom of research, and consequently set limits to the total claims of theology; at the same time, and by the same internal logic, the theory of the "two books" deprived the conclusions of science, as we would say today, of power to provide a particular world view. Campanella wrote to Galileo "This problem is a metaphysical one, and I have already discussed it at length; from you, on the other hand, we await the solution of mathematical problems." Galileo discovered sun-spots; Campanella saw in them divine signs announcing the imminent end of the world. By following its path, natural science produces instrumental knowledge, which is from the start in agreement with sacred knowledge. Theology should not interfere with natural research; its business is not to forbid it, but to interpret it, to fit the boldest discoveries of experimental science into a theological context. "Any sect or religion that forbids its adherents to indulge in natural research must be suspected of falsity, for truth does not contradict truth... and the book of wisdom of the God of creation does not contradict the book of wisdom of the God of revelation." Campanella disagrees with Copernicus on many points, but he makes his case with "physical" arguments, *ex naturalibus argumenta*, while in the domain of "theological judgment" he has nothing with which to reproach either Copernicus or Galileo. For they are only solving "mathematical problems"; their hypotheses and observations do not touch on the plane of dogma. The fathers of the Church were not all in agreement on this question. If the Bible is not regarded as a handbook of astronomy, and if the relevant passages are not taken literally, then *different* "physical" structures of the world are possible, corresponding to the transcendental content of the Word.

Campanella defended Galileo, but it was no accident that Galileo was less than delighted at a defense from this quarter.

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The treatise strikes one with its combination of clear, positive scientific thought and an extremely confessional basis. The dogmatic authority of Aristotle is declined—not only because in science, experience is more indisputable than authority, but also because of the heretical nature of many of Aristotle's views, which led him to deny the immortality of the individual soul, life after death, providence and divine interference in the affairs of the universe. "Persistence in research does not make a man into a heretic," but it would appear that this provocative maxim does not extend to the Peripatetics and Averroists. "Those who forbid us to observe the changes in the heavens, wish that the day of the Lord should surprise us, like a thief in the night." Thus—and not for the first time in the history of philosophy—mysticism steps in to defend rationalism. Campanella goes to war against "all who, by their own whim (*ex proprio arbitratu*), prescribe laws and frontiers for philosophers, as if these laws and frontiers were laid down by Holy Writ; proclaiming that it is forbidden to hold opinions different from their own, and reducing the Scriptures to a single interpretation, subordinate to the opinion of this or that philosopher." Excellently said! In these words we have the whole Campanella. Or perhaps not quite the whole Campanella? He starts from the principle that different interpretations of the Bible are possible. And hence? "All opinions and interpretations are legitimate that do not contradict, directly or indirectly, other scriptural texts." This is a reservation to the "two books"; and it is not a loophole. It is more like a blind alley. Campanella defends physics from the Bible with the help of the Bible, striving towards a very broad understanding of the agreement between them. Truly a "child of his time," he supports his idea that research is not obliged to take account of biblical texts—by reference to the texts themselves. This is free-thinking within the system; it accords ill with Campanella's desire to be an orthodox Catholic, but it is the product of this desire.

It would be easy to regard Campanella's theological universalism as, so to speak, an "envelope," something that shackled him and blunted the edge of his radicalism. The really interesting thing is that just the opposite is true! Without his freely assumed Catholic chains, Campanella would not have found in himself the strength either to defend Galileo, or to "transform all the

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sciences according to Nature and Scripture, the two books of God," nor—above all—to believe in the imminent reform of society and to work for it. The logic of doctrine required him to reject many things—including epicureanism, machiavellism, pantheism, protestantism, averroism, telesianism, copernicanism and the idea of an infinite universe. Only the battle against all these advanced ideas provided the theoretical basis for Campanella's revolutionary effort, and without his retrogradeness he could never have produced his astonishing revolutionary utopia. This is the paradox of Campanella.

* * *

The most important event in Campanella's life and the most difficult to understand was his conversion to Catholicism, which took place between 1603 and 1606. This turning-away from the anti-Catholic orientation of the period of the Calabrian conspiracy, to the refutation of his previous heretical opinions in *Atheism defeated*, left its mark on the whole theoretical system of the mature Campanella, and on its central core—the eighteen books of the *Metaphysics* and the enormous *Theology*. In 1629 these works, filled with missionary zeal, finally brought Campanella not only freedom but rehabilitation. His books were taken off the Index, some of them were officially endorsed by Rome and the Sorbonne, and he himself was awarded the rank of *magister* in Roman Catholic divinity.

Most modern historians agree that this conversion actually took place, that there are essential and sometimes marked differences between the views of the young Campanella and the works written after the *City of the Sun*. But at the same time almost all specialists agree that there is a common element, even a sort of unity, between the two stages of Campanella's spiritual evolution. "Not one of the motives so dear to Campanella's youthful speculations was discarded; they were all summarized and re-animated in the light of his new, central intuition, which consisted in the identification of natural religion (*religio indita*) and the religion of revelation (*religio addita*) and in the acknowledgement of the rationality of Christianity".[11] This combination

[11] L. Firpo, *Ricerche...*, pp. 36-37. Cf. the comments of A. Jacobelli-Isoldi in the collection *Campanella e Vico* (Padova, 1969, p. 39). Moreover, Catholic

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of a clear denial of his original position with deep faithfulness to it is itself something of a riddle.

Of course, Campanella never found himself on the path of "recantation," and did not take it when he was in his Neapolitan prison—the path of "the conversion of the rebel into a faithful subject, of the natural philosopher into an orthodox theologian." Gorfunkel' is quite right on this point. Campanella was, more or less, a heterodox (what today one would call a left-wing) Catholic. But he was a Catholic; and after his "conversion" of 1604-1606, a deep and militant one. "I decided to found a new metaphysics, after I had abandoned God and then, in consequence of the torments I had endured, had been brought back to the path of salvation and of knowledge of divine things."[12]

What was the meaning of this very significant change of course? Why did it take place? L. Firpo says that after the complete failure of the plot and the trial and torture at the hands of the monks of Stilo, he found himself in utter isolation in the terrible "pit" of Castel Sant' Elmo, where he passed through a "profound crisis" and had to carry out an "excruciating analysis" of the reasons for the practical failure of his actions of reform. In sum, he arrived at a prophetic conviction of his "constructive mission in the bosom of the Roman Church," and at an explanation of his youthful failures as due to an incorrect understanding of his vocation.[13] The prediction of a "great change" was right, but the disposition of the stars and Divine Providence work through human beings, and they were

authors shift the centre of Campanella's interest into the field of theological problems, and find his system of thought neo-orthodox: "Having overcome the antithesis inherent in 15th-century thinking in this country, between the two opposed views, one of which devalued Catholic dogma in order to found a new philosophy, while the other denied the new philosophy in order to defend dogma, Campanella constructs a *third*, coherent and synthetic position, which does not expel Christian principles from the new philosophical consciousness, but includes them in it" (R. Amerio, *Campanella*, 1947, p. 29). A. Corsano objects to Amerio's attempts to smooth over the tense heterogeneity of Campanella's "political theology" (*Campanella*, 1944, pp. 36, 50-54 et seq.). A. Kh. Gorfunkel', for his part, while admitting the fact of "conversion" itself, lays great emphasis on the fact that even in his later works Campanella's themes are largely incompatible with "the official line of the Catholic church," and denies that Campanella was "the philosopher of the Counter-reformation" (op. cit., pp. 71-92).

[12] T. Campanella, *Metaphysica.* Pars I. Paris, 1638, p. 5.

[13] L. Firpo, *Ricerche...*, pp. 36-37, 184.

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not yet ready. The ideal organisation, able to unite men and to bring about the "mutatio magna," was the Catholic church. One must return to it. In A. Corsano's words, Campanella strove to establish the internal link between "the requirements of reform and institutional reality".[14] I believe that all these considerations contain much truth.

In the dungeons of Naples Campanella mastered certain things that a philosopher who wished to take action would find useful to know. For instance, "if you are in prison, you are obliged to be there." Or: "armed religion is unconquerable."[15] He did not submit; but he inevitably had to rethink his whole conception of the world, *as a man of action*. Only a man of contemplation can allow himself not to change his views, when he has suffered a defeat and is shut up in prison. I have in mind, of course, not only Campanella's own epic—which catalysed his thoughts on the Italian and European situation in which Catholic (and Protestant) reaction were triumphant. It is enough to read Campanella's very business-like arguments in favour of Roman theocracy as the only practical alternative to socio-political decadence in Italy, or his analogous arguments in favour of the Spanish empire as a "lesser evil."

The rational power of the "theory of conversion" consists in the fact that in Campanella's early period Catholic ideas were not the *dominant element*, although he had already composed the *Monarchy of the Christians* and was permeated by the call for "one flock and one shepherd": after 1606 he did not become a trivial Catholic, but tried to fit his utopian social projects, his elements of telesianism and his fight for intellectual freedom into a Catholic framework, having brought about a reconciliation between all these ideas on the one hand and theology and dogmatism on the other. This task was an infinitely and tragically contradictory one—a fact which R. Amerio and the other Catholic researchers are naturally not anxious to point out. But our polemic with them should not lead us to minimise the significance of the fact of "conversion," nor the dimensions of the *tragedy of thought* that flowed from it.

[14] A. Corsano, *Tommaso Campanella*, Milano - Messina, 1944, p. 86.

[15] Campanella, *Discorsi ai principi d'Italia*, Torino, 1945, p. 151. This is a paraphrase of Campanella's hated Machiavelli, who wrote "All armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have perished."

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I do not intend to deny the unity of the two stages of the Calabrian's evolution; I would prefer to understand what it consisted in, apart from the fact at all stages of his career Campanella both renewed old ideas and made new ideas seem old in an inspired manner.

Perhaps it is wrong to formulate the problem in these terms: that Campanella *either* became a conservative after his "conversion," *or* remained a rebel; that he was *either* an active member of the Counter-reformation, *or* its victim; *either* a theologian, *or* a natural philosopher, and so forth. Supposing he was both at the same time? Supposing his (to my mind) indisputable "correction" after the first version of the *City of the Sun*, his acceptance of the dogmatic and hierarchical system of Catholicism and his return to the Middle Ages, were not an abdication from the critical and social radicalism of his youth, but rather the only possible form in which he could preserve it? Campanella was a retrograde revolutionary, or, if one prefers, a revolutionary retrograde. I see no point in searching to find out which quality he possessed most. The important thing is the intellectual situation of the beginning of the 17th century, which roused Campanella to reconcile the fundamentally irreconcilable: the reasons for and the logic of this reconciliation are the essential feature.

R. Amerio finds in Campanella "a brilliant anticipation of the position that the Church has taken up in recent times." But here I am in agreement with A. Gorfunkel': to start out "not from the real history of the Catholic church in the 17th century, but from a comparison of the ideas of a thinker with the position that Catholic theology has come to occupy 300 years later, is a method of research that cannot give scientifically meaningful results."[16]

However, it is just as unproductive to put in the forefront of Campanella's work certain later scientific ideas that he anticipated, while explaining everything else in terms of "the historical limitations of Campanella's materialism" or of his "concessions to religion."[17] In the 16th and 17th centuries, it was *religion* that made concessions: it was not yet having concessions made to it. It would be about as meaningful to talk of the manufactur-

[16] R. Amerio, *Campanella*, 1947, p. 37. Cf. A Gorfunkel', op. cit., p. 90-91.
[17] See A Gorfunkel', *op. cit.*, p. 153, 162 and passim.

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ing processes of the time as a concession by industrial production to the artisan system... Religion, having undergone a process of secularisation in the Renaissance (and, in a certain sense, in Protestantism), was still, so to speak, the natural historical frame of mind; and among Campanella's contemporaries there were at most, in the whole world, some four or five who had almost freed themselves from it. At all events, it is strange to hear it said of a Dominican prophet, a man of a throughly confessional cast of mind, that he made concessions to religion. Concessions indeed—he lived in his religion! And he saw its purification and triumph in a Christian-communist world theocracy.

Nor is there any point in using the concepts of "materialism" and "idealism" instead of Aristotelianism, neo-Platonism, Averroism, Augustinism, naturalism and so forth. As is well known, materialism had not, by the beginning of the 17th century, come to form a conscious and coherent *system* of views; in this sense, it did not yet exist, and it is no accident that the concept of it is not met with until a hundred years later, in Toland. Consequently idealism did not exist either, since it can only exist in opposition to materialism. The philosophical reflections of the time did not know of this all-embracing polarisation of methods and ideas. The demarcations and the struggles of the time were along other lines; so that the conflict between Aristotelianism and anti-Aristotelianism, for instance, simply cannot be interpreted from the standpoint of this polarisation. It would be easy to object that there surely existed in the thought of that time something that *we* call idealism; and surely there were *in fact* "materialist tendencies," perhaps in some inconsistent form, say as pantheism. This is certainly so. But only to the same extent that the poems of Homer or Gothic sculpture contain "artistic realism." Of course, it is not just a matter of words. But when we lay a covering of present-day ideas over a system of thought that is qualitatively different, we have to ask ourselves, with some alarm, just what we have in mind when we explain Campanella and the 16th and early 17th centuries in terms of idealism, materialism, and utopian socialism, if not a retrospective translation of them into our own philosophical language or a desire to trace the genesis of 19th and 20th-century philosophy. The spiritual life of that time had its own structure, which can only be adequately reproduced in terms of adequate cate-

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gories, that is its own; related first of all to each other, and only then, if we want, to ourselves. One can, of course, call the visionary Campanella an immature materialist and a naive socialist; one can see in the writings of the Calabrian our infancy instead of his maturity. But "it is in all respects preferable to interpret these people from the point of view of the general interests and concerns of their own age, rather than to see in them somewhat odd 'forerunners' of the future".[18]

* * *

To write history without retrospection, without a silent dialogue with it, and abstracting oneself from contemporary interests and ideas, is impossible—and also pointless. So much is a truism. In the old days history was valued because it was "instructive"; so it is and always will be. But in order to be instructive, history does not have to be turned into a *pretext* for instruction, a parable, a masque in which the actors' masks conceal our own faces. The dialogue with history must not be replaced by the monologue of the historian. Just as the society of other people is useful for us if we are able to forget about ourselves, patiently penetrating into and observing a manner of thinking and feeling that is unlike ours, and learning to know our own selves better through this difference—so another age helps us to understand our own precisely because it is different and unlike ours. The present becomes concrete and definite through a historical consciousness that perceives the different concreteness of past times. People, in Anatole France's words, "were born, suffered and died"—and also wrote philosophical treatises and suffered imprisonment because of them—not in order to be "forerunners" or to provide us with material for comparisons. The good historian tries to let them live their own lives on the pages of his work. The *manner* in which he does it, however, reflects his *own* way of thinking; and a good, genuine and inevitable retrospection arises in the superimposition and the meeting of these to voices, the living one and the one that has died away, in their similarity through their dissimilarity.

[18] W. Bouwsma, *The Secularization of Society in the Seventeenth Century*, XIIIth International Congress of Historical Sciences, Moscow, 1970, p. 5.

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Campanella was right in a certain sense when he wrote: "The Church has no greater defender than I." However, an organisation that has a long evolution behind it, that is dogmatic and hierarchical, massive and charismatic, does not like uninvited defenders who take in all seriousness the principles that it pronounces, and who try to bring it into harmony with them. The Inquisition kept Campanella in prison for half his lifetime precisely for his Catholicism, which was too independent.

Of course, although the battle against the ideas of the Reformation and against heresy was one of Campanella's central activities, he could not be "the philosopher of the Counter-reformation" in the sense merely of a supporter of Catholic reaction. Campanella wanted to renew Catholicism in answer to the Reformation, and in answer to the defensive and inquisitorial reaction that followed the Council of Trent. He was on the extreme left wing of the Counter-reformation movement. If the idea of "left-wing counter-reformation" sounds strange (though no-one is troubled by the wide range of positions within the Reformation, from Münzer to Melanchthon), then we had better make use of a term often met with in contemporary historiography, namely "Catholic reformation."

For we are concerned here not with the politics of the papacy, the Index, the Congregation of the Holy Faith or the Society of Jesus, that is the official and repressive activities of the "church militant," filled with negatively-minded conservatism—although these activities were, of course, an element of major and even decisive importance for the whole process. For the process was still much broader, it contained within it many different movements for the renewal and purification of Catholicism, while in its most radical manifestations—beginning with Savonarola—it combined Christian mysticism and the need for social transformation, and took on both utopian and plebeian colours.[19] This was a reaction, *in the broadest sense of the word*, to the ideas, institutions and forms of life that had been produced, not only by the Reformation, but also by the Renais-

[10] H. Jedin, *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation?*, Lucerne, 1946, p. 32; M. Bendiscioli, *La riforma cattolica*, Roma, 1958, p. 155; M. Petrocchi, *La controriforma in Italia*, Roma, 1947, p. 188-255.

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sance, and at the same time a reaction to the collapse of Renaissance thought and the humanist myth, to the dark and disappointing side of Protestantism, and, finally, a reaction to the reaction of the Roman curia. It represented, above all, the hope of taking up the tragic challenge of history and of saving many of the values of the Renaissance (after reinterpreting them in the spirit of the Gospels, and returning to a deeper version of Catholicism). If we do not consider how complex was the backwash in the situation of Catholicism in 16th-17th-century Italy (and Europe), if we consider every strengthening of pietism as a concession to Catholic reaction in the narrow sense, we are in danger of understanding nothing of the works of Mersenne, Pascal, Tasso or El Greco.

And yet even this approach is insufficiently broad. In the spiritual life of the time, boundaries were drawn not only along confessional lines. W. Bouwsma, whom I have already quoted, recently gave a paper at the 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences in which he again showed convincingly that 17th-century secularization did *not* consist in a decline of piety (it was perfectly capable of coexisting with a religious attitude of mind), while the Counter-reformation, hostile to secular thought, was something immeasurably more complex than the ideology of the Church. Secularization consisted in "the principle of the autonomy of individual spheres of human interest, be it politics, economy or culture. For the men of the time, the essence of the matter was this: either it is legitimate to occupy oneself with the various affairs of this world in accordance with considerations drawn only from those ultimate human aims that the particular activity serves; or the activity has to be subordinate to some higher aim which it serves... Thus, secularization threatened the traditional view of society as a structural unit under the domination of an individual chief, and as a functional unit within which all activity must be subordinate to higher goals." Consequently the most general substrate of the "reaction, whose sources can be traced through the 16th century, even during the Renaissance," consisted in the reinstatement of "systematic thinking," which "insisted on the connection between all sides of human experience, with universal (and therefore abstract) truth at their centre. Thus, this approach not only renewed the sense of the priority of eternal truths, but—and most important

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of all—the certainty of their general applicability to the affairs of the world...".[20] The philosophical foundation of this reaction, which—as Bouwsma justly points out—was both a Catholic and a "Protestant Counter-reformation" (i.e. did not coincide at all with the politico-religious schism of Europe), was a return to the very rich mediaeval scholastic tradition—often in complex combinations with the latest achievements of philosophy, which could not be simply set aside. Neither of these two types of intellectual orientation is met with in pure form, and the religious tendency towards taking an abstract system of calculation as a starting-point could acquire a secular meaning—as for example in Hugo Grotius. Nevertheless it is not hard to name the best-known names in the new school of thought—Descartes, Galileo, Bacon, Gassendi, Hobbes, Locke. Some of the characteristic currents of thought that were hated by the Counter-reformation included the ideology of the *raison d'état*—which was then called Machiavellianism; epicureanism, which was an experimental and mathematical natural science and therefore opposed to metaphysical systems. In the political sphere an indicative episode was the clash between Venice and the papal theocracy in 1606-1607.

Let us now recall that Campanella was a sworn enemy of Machiavellianism and epicureanism; that he defended natural science while incorporating it into a theological and eschatological system, thus showing his alienation from the true spirit of science; that he roundly attacked Venice and spoke in favour of theocratic universalism...

Only on the broadest view of that age, where light and shadow are baroquely, fantastically and dramatically mingled: where the mystical, "counter-reformatory" spirit of the new universalism often takes on a coloring that is far from official or orthodox: only here can we find a place and an explanation for the strange monk of Stilo, who created the last metaphysical system of Catholic synthesis between the Universe and Mankind in the name of the coming brotherhood of the world.

On June 4-5, 1601, Campanella, with the help of his jailers, experimentally tested the theory of free will. "For forty hours I was stretched on a rack, with my arms turned outwards, and the ropes tore my flesh to the bone, and a sharp stake

[20] W. Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 10.

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devoured, bored into and tore my buttocks and drank my blood, to force me to pronounce before my judges a single word; but I did not choose to say it, thus proving that my will is free." It is terrible to read.[21]

There is a certain heroism here, and very evident torment; but it is under the cover of an understandable and—let me say the almost sacrilegious words—a superficial air of tragedy, that the true tragedy begins.

Campanella was in the thick of the century's innovations, he was drunk with its discoveries, he corresponded from prison with dozens of people who valued his writings, which had spread throughout all Europe. But he was astonishingly alone—not within the walls of his prison, but in his correspondence with his friends and patrons. In fact, he was a stranger to all his contemporaries and to all the ideological movements of his time, including those he himself defended. Descartes refused to read his books. Galileo, whom he had come to know in his youth at Padua and whom he loved dearly all his life, did not answer his letters. He called Paolo Sarpi a "false theologian"; he disagreed with the brothers Della Porta on questions of gnoseology, and disagreed also with Patrizi; he refuted "a certain Lucretian" (Bruno),

[21] T. Campanella, *Dio e la predestinazione*, vol. II; a cura di R. Amerio, Firenze, 1951, p. 208. Quoted from A. Gorfunkel, op. cit., p. 29. Even more terrible, to my mind, is the episode where this man, having suffered the rack and almost lost his reason (cf. R. Amerio, "Autobiografia medica di fra Tommaso Campanella," in *Campanella e Vico*, p. 14-16) and having managed to remain true to himself *to the end*—suffered a moment of weakness when he already had his newly-conferred and *almost* complete freedom, and was (with good reason) afraid of being re-arrested. Shortly after Galileo's trial (at which Campanella's intercession had been unable to help him—"he himself," explained the ambassador Nicolini, "has written something similar and forbidden," and has no business to defend anyone), Campanella sent a short and agitated note to a "dear friend and gentleman" of Tuscany, promising to write at greater length when his blood should have calmed down. On October 22, 1632, he sent the promised letter: "To tell you the truth, that evening when I wrote to you, I was seized with terror; for it was a question of severe persecution of the new philosophers, among whom I was includedd... I wrote to you briefly and almost in cipher, for I feared and fear now that the note might have been intercepted and used against me... Since it is forbidden to speak, and since I am an obedient son [of the church], I stopped my mouth [mozzai le parole] ... May your Lordship pardon me my cowardice, caused by my long sufferings and the slanders against me; you know that people do not seek the truth, but pleasure, and justify themselves by accusing us... Patience! God wishes us strength in patience, and we ourselves desire it". (Quoted in A. Firpo's preface to the *Apologia di Galileo*, p. 26.

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and he himself was refused by Grotius. Campanella violently attacked Epicureanism, and his French friends, such as Peyresc, took offence on Gassendi's account. He thundered against Lutheranism, and his German friends Tobia Adami and Christoph Bezold accompanied the editions of his works with polemical commentaries. He fought against the peripatetics, the Machiavellians, and the heretics, and men had reason to hate him in Venice, in the Netherlands, in Germany and even in his native Calabria (after he had advised an increase in taxation there). He changed from a pro-Spanish attitude to a pro-French one, and therefore he was bound to be hated first by the French and then by the Spaniards. The mighty of this world cherished him for his knowledge of astrology; and about the common people he composed a bitter sonnet: "That great and brightly-coloured beast, the common people... if anyone should teach them anything, it is by them that he will be killed." For the European intellectual elite, Campanella remained a fanatical peasant; and he, who was *in his own way* a great Catholic, became the greatest martyr of the Catholic Counter-reformation. Not Galileo, nor Montaigne, nor Descartes—not those men who most purely expressed the *newness* of the age—but he, fra Tommaso.

The City of the Sun has been preserved because Campanella suceeded in expressing the communist idea more clearly than some other writers. All the rest of his works soon passed into oblivion—and yet he cherished these dozens of treatises just as much as the *City of the Sun* and certainly did not think of them as just "the rest." All his immeasurable labour was in vain, for Campanella was shut up in his own prison, not merely that of the Inquisition. Not in a single field did he say anything truly new—he did not even catch up with the age he lived in. He was an "inconsistent" telesian, an "inconsistent" sensualist, he could not digest Copernicanism, and so on. And yet, Campanella was a genuinely great man, and the history of the 17th century would be incomplete without him. Why?

Campanella wrote "I dare not follow Patrizi in supposing space and bodies to be infinite." What are we to make of that "I dare not"? Had he dared, his natural philosophy would have fallen; and, consequently, his Catholicism would also have fallen—and his belief in the unification of the world. Everything would have fallen, if but a single premise were shifted. Every-

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thing was interconnected. And the basis of this interconnection was the desire for *direct, immediate and totally transforming social activity.* Here and now. "It is written: All the nations of the earth shall remember the Lord and turn to him. Consequently, *on earth*".[22]

This resounding "*on earth*" is the most important thing.

It puts Campanella's destiny among the best minds and ideas of his age. Imagine Hamlet knowing no doubts, imagine the student of Wittenberg following the instructions of his late father and calling on Fortinbras to help him. In other words, imagine a man who wishes to act in a totally changed situation, when a new mode of action has not yet been discovered, while the old one is no good, and when it is only possible to *act* by leaning on the old system of thought and the old organisation. Imagine the creator of the utopia of the *City of the Sun*, himself without the strength to see that it was a utopia, turning to another man with the words "The City of the Sun that I have represented—you must raise it so that it shines with an eternal and never-fading light." Who was the other man? This time, it was Cardinal Richelieu...

Previously, Campanella had addressed himself to the King of Spain. Among other things, he lamented the fact that there were not enough Spaniards to conquer the world, since Spanish women —either through religiousness or because of the climate—were infertile, and he advised the Spaniards to fertilise the women of other nations and thus to "hispanize" the human race. His *Discourses* of 1607-1608 strike one by their cynical pragmatism. For example, he suggests it would be a good idea in the Kingdom of Naples to sell the commutation of a death sentence to transportation to the colonies for a fixed fee, to all but heretics and rebels; true, the judges would then deliberately pass death sentences, but then justice has anyway always been for sale—let the proceeds thus fall not into the hands of the judges but into the Spanish treasury.[23]

Such was the suggestion of the accuser of the "machiavellians," whom he described as "those in whom lives perfidy, founded on self-love and unbelief in religion." Perfidy is evil,

[22] Quoted from A. Corsano, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[23] *Discorsi...* p. 127, 209-211 et seq.

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if it is used for personal and private ends. But it is natural, if it is carried out in the name of humanity.

Campanella thought of humanity, and rejected the *propria amor* of the Renaissance. He had preserved the pathos of the myth of man that characterized the Renaissance, but he exalted the community rather than the individual, and he saw the meaning of existence not in culture, but in social fellowship permeated with the highest Christian aims. He preserved the Renaissance's passion for novelty, but rejected its love of the wordly and the ancient. He transformed antidogmatism into a weapon for affirming the absolute.

It is impossible to imagine a mass movement following the "slogans" of the Renaissance. The victories of Renaissance thought were only of value to the individual; but the individual was powerless in the cataclysms of the new age. Campanella sought a solution in a return to mediaeval communality, and this fact alone divided him sharply from those who professed Montaigne-like scepticism and saw, like Hamlet, that they lived in an age of questions but no answers. For such people he was too fanatical and dangerous, while his all-too-practical intrigues and his world-wide projects were unacceptable and illusory.

On the other hand, in an age that saw the firm establishment of national governments and of economic stimuli to action, he was too much of an idealist—or, in plain words, a simpleton; in addressing himself to Richelieu he was quite unable to make a sober appreciation of the course of events, and he failed to see what was obvious to the most provincial French official, let alone to the clear mind of the Cardinal. What blindness! What folly! What a ridiculous figure is this old astrologer, predicting to the new-born Louis XIV that he is to be the founder of the City of the Sun, in the midst of such practical and sober Frenchmen. He had no wish to understand anything, for if he had, he would have been obliged to abandon the transformation of the world and of himself. Everything that he had created in his life would have perished.

He failed to see further than the end of his nose, because he fixed his gaze on the distance. He was not a fool, because politics is not simply "the art of the possible." "In prison I saw not a few prisoners who had over a long time become accustomed to their captivity, and who no longer desired to return to freedom,

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so base and slavish were their souls: they could no longer imagine that they might be otherwise than they were".[24] Campanella could imagine it: this is why he was not naive. On the scale of centuries, the sobriety of Richelieu and the "folly" of Campanella are very relative; two centuries later the absolutism that Richelieu built was to fall, and on its ruins the problems posed by Campanella would arise again, and so the dreamer would outlive the politician. True, on an even larger scale this too is wrong, for the juxtaposition itself loses its incontestable character. Politics and utopia each contain the other, and the distinction between them is a matter of proportion; history amuses itself from time to time by making them change places.

Campanella was a realist, he demanded the impossible... This famous phrase, in the spirit of the Delphic oracle, is truly apt, because it has both pathos and sarcasm, it is senseless and full of meaning, it denies itself and denies its own denial, it can be interpreted as a reckless call to revolt or as a bitter reflection, it alludes to an implacable logic, which, however, is only found in history with hind-sight; it suits cynics and fanatics—in short, it looks true.

Albert Einstein affirmed that the *construction* of reality is a valid concept not only in politics, and is the most *historical* privilege of mankind. In an article on Campanella's contemporary Kepler he wrote "It appears that the human mind must first freely construct forms, before their real existence is confirmed... knowledge cannot flower on bare empiricism. Such a flowering is only possible through a comparison of what is imagined and what is observed".[25] This is what happens in physics. It is even truer that history, that is the process by which people form themselves, is impossible without utopias, whose collision with "what is observed," with circumstances, results in a third element—not what the utopians imagined, nor what they found in the world—it gives a *movement* to history, through the dialectic of the subject and his circumstances. Life always lags behind consciousness, thus proving its primacy even more conclusively. There is no tragedy in what is inevitable. Tragedy appears together with freedom.

[24] T. Campanella, *Atheismus triumphatus*. Paris, 1634, p. 83. (Quoted from A. Gorfunkel', op. cit., p. 30).

[25] Albert Einstein, *Physics and Reality* (Russian ed.), Moscow, 1965, p. 109.

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Campanella saw in front of him the mass of history, which was moving in a different direction from that in which his ideals lay. One can act in various ways, adapting oneself to the historical reality of the present or creating one's own reality. To act means to simplify. "Folly" is a condition of action, in the sense that an excess of sober perspicacity, a consideration of all possible obstacles and consequences, a weighing-up of the best path to take, and the reflection that not all changes actually change anything and that history tries to return to the circles it has traced out—all this is doubtless far from foolish, but it gets in the way of action. I am, of course, merely paraphrasing in stolid prose Hamlet's famous soliloquy on the tragic antinomy of thought and action.[26] There are various ways of being the victim of this antinomy. Campanella had chosen his own, and it was probably no worse than the others.

Galileo did not answer Campanella's letters, for what could he reply to a correspondent who had eagerly and enthusiastically read *The Celestial Messenger*, and having become convinced of the multiplicity of worlds, announced to Galileo that all the planets "must be inhabited, as our Earth is." Campanella was concerned about the astronomical ideas and the forms of social life of the inhabitants of other planets. "Are they blessed, or in a state resembling ours?" What could the Tuscan mathematician reply to the author of the treatise "They shall remember and shall turn to Him," in which Campanella addressed himself, in succession, to God, the archangels and saints, the unclean Power ("An Epistle to the devils, that they should remember and should not hinder us from remembering,") to the "human race," and then, in descending order, to all Christians, to the prelates of the Roman church, to the monks, friars and clerks, to all Christian princes and republics, to the princes and republics of Italy, to the Catholics of Spain, to the King of France and the other Catholic monarchs of Europe individually, to the "transalpine philosophers and princes, particularly in Germany", to all Lutherans, and then to the Emperor of Abyssinia, the Grand Duke of Muscovy and all the utterly pagan sovereigns of

[26] Let me recall that Shakespeare was reflecting on this problem while writing *Hamlet* in 1600-1601; the play was published in 1603; Campanella wrote the first version of the *City of the Sun* in 1602, was condemned to life imprisonment in 1603 and began his "conversion" to Catholicism in 1604.

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the earth, including the Chinese Son of Heaven, the "Japanese and Siamese kings," right down to the pagans of North America and Australia. He conjured them all, with quotations from the Bible and from his astrological calculations, to unite themselves immediately in brotherhood in the bosom of the Catholic church.[27]

Galileo did not reply. But on the margin of one of his manuscripts we find the following note: "To Father Campanella. I prefer to find a single truth, though it be in insignificant things, than to discuss the greatest questions at length, without reaching any truth".

A fine answer. And a convincing one. In this comment we can see two types of thinking clearly parting company on the threshold of the new age: one directed towards the truth, the other towards the good. Science separates itself from utopia, the exact method from the humanitarian and axiological. Things that had been confounded in the awareness of all previous cultures, including the Renaissance, divide themselves into separate currents. It would be ridiculous to call Galileo a "scientist", yet his statement betrays the beginnings of the future dichotomy of thought. (I confess that I am here paying my tribute to the retrospection that I have just condemned; but if it was not so tempting, why should one have to beware of it?)

Galileo's answer is a death-dealing one; and yet it is no answer at all. The "greatest questions", dictated by the longing for such abstract things as a happy future for humanity, remain even when sober folk have understood that they have no answers. Science does not pose questions that have no answers. History's subject does pose them, and by this very act he begins to solve them.

Galileo recanted his theory of heliocentrism and the revolution of the Earth, and perhaps he was right—Brecht has treated this question well. For it was a truth of a sort that survives in any case, no matter how physicists behave under interrogation. But the truths of human existence need voluntary victims and blood, otherwise they cease to be truths. Though an exploit is a necessary, but far from sufficient, condition of the truth of one's social convictions. By his melancholy fate, Campanella came to prove both these facts.

[27] Fra' Tommaso Campanella, *Quod reminiscentur*. A cura di R. Amerio. Padova, 1939.

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Even so, "the moral qualities of an outstanding personality are perhaps more important for a particular generation, and for the whole course of history, than purely intellectual achievements".[28]

The Catholic God ought to consider that Campanella wished to act, and forgive the old father his historical sins on that account.

* * *

The paradoxical nature of a situation persists until the paradox is solved. When we attempt to give a rational explanation of a paradox while standing at a cultural and historical distance from it, we deprive it *ipso facto* of its paradoxical nature—true, we merely reason about it as strangers, and not as people who act in history and who come up against similar situations, and demand on each occasion a new and difficult recognition and solution of the problem. For Campanella himself the paradox of his own activity could not exist as such either, because to be aware of it as a phenomenon would mean depriving himself of the strength and faith he needed in order to act. On the other hand, this paradox could not have existed, of course, if the thinker himself had not perceived the problem that it expressed.

It appears that the historico-psychological mechanism of this sort of situation is such that the paradox lies in a sort of zone of demarcation between what is understood and what is not: the problem is discovered, but substituted. Campanella saw that the new philosophy, the social project of the City of the Sun, and Catholicism as it actually was, hindered each other. But he explained the real hostility between the ideas that he brought together by giving them a false interpretation and a distorted application. Therefore, in order to restore their "genuine" meaning (and this was the main problem *as he saw it*), he deformed them, and expounded the kinship between "real" Catholicism, experimental knowledge (in a suitably metaphysical interpretation), and the social perspective. Such people are apt, in all sincerity, to teach both sides; considering that they know what Galileo discovered and what Catholicism is, better than Galileo and the

[28] Albert Einstein, *op. cit.*, p. 116 (from the article on Curie).

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inquisitors themselves. It is not surprising that Campanella remained alone. The seventeenth-century collision between all universalism proceeding from the absolute, and all secular knowledge, was perceived by Campanella as a collision between divine synthetic truth as revealed to him, Campanella, and the outside world that had not *yet* accepted this truth, because it had gone astray and was divided. In reconciling the new age and the middle ages in his gigantic theoretical constructions, in taking failure for mere postponement, Campanella saved his integrity at the price of a paradox—so long as history allowed one to make *that sort* of mistake.

Even though since Campanella's day many great minds have continued to turn to Catholicism, even though the religious ideology is strong up until the present day and will long continue to be strong in its own diocese, as it were—it was just such people as Campanella who demonstrated the bankruptcy of Catholicism: not on the empirical plane, but on the plane of its mediaeval historical necessity, that is to say the plane on which Catholicism, up to the 16th century, fulfilled certain total functions which only it could fulfil. Christian universalism as an epoch, as an adequate mode of historical existence for the people of Western Europe, was ending, though fragments of it could enter into other ideological systems. From then on, Catholicism, if it wished to attract thinkers of the *new European* cast of thought, would be obliged to deform itself, to break up into various component parts, to take part in intellectual compromises, to form—in the heads of truly alive and contemporary Catholics—part of an amalgam such as not only the mediaeval theologians, but even the much more profound fathers of the church such as Augustine, would never have dreamed of.

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