THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN THE WRITINGS OF
JOHN ADAMS, EDMUND BURKE AND G.W.F. HEGEL
ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to set forth the concept of order which appears in the writings of John Adams, Edmund Burke and G.W.F. Hegel on the French Revolution. Adams and Burke see the event as one of total disorder. The Revolution is not founded on a consensus among the French people as to the event's necessity. Rather, it is the result of an unrestrained struggle for power among a few aristocratic families and the French monarch. Moreover, the foundations of the new system of successive governments prove to be developed on tenuous ground. Burke believes that the disorder has been created by the proponents of the Revolution, and not discovered in the foundations of the previous system as the revolutionaries claim. The new political system has no opportunity for success since it is founded on an erroneous understanding of human nature. This error is then reflected in the creation of a faulty system of government. Hegel sees the Revolution in terms of its place in the process of world history. It is an epoch which arrives due to the momentum of human existence seen as the dialectical process. The manner in which it arrives (either evolution or revolution) is a matter which is determined by the recognition
and response which is exhibited by the community involved. By virtue of its having occurred at the time that it does, the event is necessarily a reflection of the superiority of the era that transcends the old order, while at the same time being representative of the decided inferiority of the era that is to follow it.

In this event, Adams and Burke perceive immediate disorder which has no apparent relationship to the restitution of order. Hegel, on the other hand, sees the disorder as leading necessarily to the establishment of order. For him, unlike his co-respondents, there is a connection between the concepts of order and disorder.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, Sheldon Wolin asserts that: "The history of political philosophy has been a dialogue on this theme . . . the attempt to render politics compatible with the requirements of order."\(^1\) In fact, he maintains that every political inquiry is to some degree concerned with the factors which facilitate or hinder the promotion of order.\(^2\) Thus, it would seem well within the bounds of traditional political theory to examine how certain political philosophers have responded to a particular instance of societal disorder. The political philosophers selected are: John Adams, Edmund Burke and Georg Hegel. The occasion for their response is the French Revolution. The basis of selection is the intersection of the lives of three thinkers with an event of momentous import. As representatives of different political traditions, it is to be expected that the three bring different perspectives to bear upon this


\(^2\) Ibid., p. 9.
event. Yet it would also appear that they share something of considerable importance: they all come to the event both in the capacity of political theorists and as men representative of particular societies which perceive a threat posed by the events taking place in France. For, as Harold Lasswell mentions: "In world perspective . . . the French Revolution did, signify that a new social formation had risen to greatest influence. The French Revolution, therefore, may be called a world revolution." 3 Thus, it would seem that the men in question share a "continuity of preoccupations" which Wolin feels constitutes the basis of all political theory.

The concept of order held by each of these philosophers, whether implicit or explicit, is the key to their respective analyses. Of necessity, their beliefs in regard to the relationship of the concepts of order and disorder must in large part determine the verdict which each renders on the French Revolution. In *Man and His Government: An Empirical Theory of Politics*, Carl Friedrich suggests the four categorical ways in which past thinkers have conceptualized order. 4 All three approaches share one common premise—all insist either implicitly or explicitly that strife and violence (disorder) is an undesirable attribute of any

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political system and must be eliminated. Friedrich then proceeds to set forth his own understanding of the order-disorder concept utilizing much from the categories of past thought but parting company on the question on the relative desirability of disorder for a political system. He sees political order as: "... the state of a political community in which its parts, rulers and ruled, are fairly systematically arranged, so as to reduce the use of force (coercion) and provide for the realization of its values and interests in terms of its prevailing beliefs."\(^5\) The point of departure is the question of whether order as opposed to the maintenance of particular political orders is best preserved by an attempt to eliminate or reduce elements of disorder in the political system. Friedrich believes that a political order must reflect the values, interests and beliefs of the community in question. Since the latter are in constant flux, a certain degree of disorder is desirable if it is seen as a signal to the political order that it is becoming less representative of community purposes—that it must make adjustments. Order is the goal and toward this end, particular instances of political order must be prepared to undergo change. Put more succinctly, he views order as a dynamic rather than a static concept. He concludes: "Reasoning about order, political theory asks the question in terms

of more or less order. Complete order and complete disorder are unreal limits between which political situations oscillate."

From their writings on the French Revolution, what then can be discerned about the assumptions of Adams, Burke and Hegel concerning the concept of order and how are these reflected in their response to this particular instance of the concept?

6. Ibid., p. 349.
CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN ADAMS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

John Adams and the French Revolution

The French Revolution had hardly begun when the attention of John Adams became focused on the event. In fact, news of the upheaval reached America in the first quarter of 1789, while Adams' written responses appeared in print in April of that year. According to Zoltan Haraszti, Adams' response to news of the events in France was the following: "In despair over the news of the French Revolution in the fall of 1789, Adams turned to Enrico Caterino Davila's Historie delle guerre civili di Francia."¹ Davila's work is basically a description of the civil wars which took place in France beginning in 1560 and ending with the Edict of Nantes in 1598. As Haraszti indicates: "It was not to be expected that Adams would long keep to himself all the wisdom which he had gathered for his explorations."² Thus, in April, 1790 Adams began a series of 32 papers which were published over a period of a year in The Gazette of the

² Ibid., p. 166.
United States, a Federalist semi-weekly published in New York. The purpose was to make a comparison between the civil wars and the French Revolution, with the intention of showing that like its predecessor the French Revolution was bound to fail unless it was based on the concept of balanced government and the recognition of the natural inequality of man and the absolute necessity for titles, forms and formalities (as means of symbolizing the need for distinction to be made between categories of people). The publication of these papers won him recognition as being the "most bitter critic of events in France." The French Revolution and the concept of equality were the "idols" of the day. Adams' vigorous attack on both and the perception on the part of his opponents that Adams himself was a monarchist resulted in considerable pressure being brought to bear upon his publisher, John Fenno, and the eventual cancellation of the series.

Our other major source of knowledge concerning Adams' view of the French Revolution is the comment which he penned in his personal copy of Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution by Mary Wollstonecraft. Taken in their totality, the notations are of considerable significance: "Adams made notes on more than

five hundred passages, jotting down in all some twelve thou-
sand words. They add up to his own version of the Revolu-
tion." Dissensus over the regressive or progressive nature 
of the revolution was to serve as one of the sources of the 
severe rupture rendered to his relationship with Thomas 
Jefferson: "The first time, that you and I differed in 
Opinion on any material Question; was after your Arrival 
from Europe; and that point was the French Revolution." 

John Adams on the French Revolution

John Adams discerns two levels of forces which could 
be labeled the causal factors at work in the pre-revolutionary 
era. He quite openly acknowledges that the situation in 
France is long overdue for change. In fact, change is not 
merely desirable, rather change is absolutely required:

Abuses in religion and government . . . are so nu-
erous and oppressive to the people that a reforma-
tion must take place or a decline. The armies of 
monks, soldiers, and courtiers were become so numer-
ous and costly that the labor of the rest was not 
enough to maintain them. Either reformation or de-
population must come.

Might it then be assumed that the revolution from Adams' per-
spective followed necessarily or, perhaps, naturally from the 

5. Ibid., p. 187.

6. Letter to Thomas Jefferson, July 13, 1813, The 
Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between 
Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams, ed. Lester J. 
Cappon, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North 

7. John Adams, as cited in Smith, John Adams, Vol. 2, 
p. 786.
aforementioned situation? Adams' response is quite clearly—no. For in writing to Benjamin Rush, Adams states:

I told him (Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, guillo­
tioned Girondist and friend of Adams') the French
nation were not capable of a free government, and
that they had no right or cause to engage in a rev­
olution. By this, I did not mean that a nation
has not a right to alter the government, to change
a dynasty or institute a new constitution in the
place of an old one, for no man is clearer in these
points than I am; but I know that the nation was
not disposed to a revolution and that it could never
be made a national act, as indeed it never was.8

The cause is then not to be found in societal conditions but
rather in the course of action used by four families (the
Rochefoucaulds, the Noailles, the LeMoines and the Orleans)
and their "satellites."9 According to Adams these families
had become involved in a power struggle with the ruling
Bourbon family. This power struggle results in what Adams
considers to be an obvious conclusion: "The rivalry of
Bourbons and Noailles produced the French Revolution, and a
similar Competition for Consideration and Influence, exists
and prevails in every Village in the World."10

A collection of individuals is responsible not only
for bringing the event about, but also for its destructive

8. Letter to Benjamin Rush, September 30, 1805, The
Spur to Fame: Dialogues of John Adams and Benjamin Rush,
1805-1813, eds. John Schutz and Douglass Adair (San Marino,

9. Ibid.

10. Letter to Thomas Jefferson, November 15, 1813,
perpetuation as well. Adams' conception of human nature and the human condition leads him to the conclusion that only disaster could result from this upheaval. The prevailing ideology in France contravened Adams' understanding of mankind by the connection which it established between the dispersal of education and knowledge and the growth of reason. The connection which the French revolutionaries establish between the two processes is characterized by the inevitability with which it occurs. Education leads to enlightenment. Enlightenment consists of perceiving the same questions and their solutions in the same or similar ways. Adams views this process differently. He firmly believes in the salutary effects of the dispersal of knowledge among the mass of the citizenry. Likewise, he is a believer in progress. Where he parts company with the revolutionaries is on the question of the necessary connection between education and enlightenment. Adams feels that the relationship is contingent: "There is no necessary connection between knowledge and virtue."¹¹ For Adams, the situation in France is quite clearly an instance in which "bad men" have a monopoly on the instruments of knowledge. The result is predictable from the character of those in whose behalf the instrument is employed. In France, disorder is inescapable.

Adams is offended by the definition given to man by the proponents of revolution in France: that of being a basically rational creature. The first step toward the restoration of sanity in the situation in France would be to perceive with a much greater degree of acuity, the true nature of man: "Acknowledging and boasting yourselves to be men, avow the feelings of men. The affectation of being exempted from human passions is inhuman. The grave pretension to such is solemn hypocrisy."  

The initiation of a new social order will not allow man's latent potential for rational attitudes and activity to flower for "... (men) must be compelled to agree. They never will from reason and free will." Neither ignoring the passion, nor attempting to eradicate it are to be considered as meaningful alternatives. The revolutionaries and France are headed for disaster because they refuse to: "Allow the truth that all men are ferocious monsters when their passions are unrestrained." The Revolution neither provides nor ignores restraint but in fact encourages and nurtures unrestraint. The French revolutionaries are guilty not merely of a crime of omission but that of commission as


well. Adams rates the latter variety as being on a more serious nature. Despite the assertion of the philosophes and the revolutionaries:

There is still the sport of passions and prejudices, ambition, avarice, intrigue, faction, caprice and gallantry as much as ever. Jealousy, envy and revenge govern with as absolute a sway as ever. Enthusiasm and superstition have lost but little of their power.  

One of the tragic aspects of this denial of the very existence of man's passionate state is that in overlooking its being, the new governing bodies were neglecting a potential source of strength for society. Passion could well be guided to counteract passion: "Selfish principles, love of glory are not absolutely and universally to be condemned. They are to be condemned when they do wrong but not when they do right."  

The misguided assertion of man's rationality has another significant and harmful effect on the French political order. (The notion of the revolutionaries appears to be that the discovery of what the natural law or order is and its institution constitutes an indistinguishable act. No artificial institution is needed as knowledge provides for its own institution.) Adams feels that the French revolutionaries neglect the necessary relationship which exists between natural and positive law. His conclusion is that in

15. Ibid., p. 218.
16. Ibid., p. 204.
neglecting the creation of a system of positive law, the leadership was exposing the whole system to man's dominant characteristic, from Adams' position this being passion and not reason. Nowhere is this more true than in France:

How was liberty secured by the Declaration of Rights? No more than their innocence and obedience by the Ten Commandments ... I would rather call the natural, civil and political rights of man the foundations, than the pillars (of all social happiness). If they are pillars they must stand upon a firm foundation. Is a Declaration then a foundation? No more than a heap of sand or a pool of water. They stand as firmly without a Declaration as with, if nothing more is done. Laws and guardians of laws must be made, and guardians to watch one another ... The question is who shall be the guardians of the law? And what shall secure its efficacy and energy?17

While seriously underestimating the role which passion plays in the affairs of men, the revolutionaries have let it proceed unchecked into all aspects of political and social life in revolutionary France. Adams' examination of events and not stubborn adherence to a priori judgments only served to confirm his earlier analysis. The regular use of the guillotine on not only "enemies" of the revolution but on those to whom the leadership had once fallen, but "roasting" of young women in the Place Dauphine, the "butchering" of priests on their church altars, the "national baths" administered to shackled aristocrats on sunken water craft and the "republican marriages" extended to couples by drowning or point blank cannon fire—these incidents seemed to have

17. Ibid., pp. 222-31.
the greatest effect on Adams. He was only too well aware that during revolutionary times:

> The most fiery spirits and flighty geniuses frequently obtain more influence than men of sense and judgment; and the weakest man may carry foolish measures in opposition to wise ones proposed by the ablest. France is in great danger from this quarter.\(^{18}\)

The question of the connection between education and knowledge, on the one hand, and a well constructed political order, on the other, ought to be approached on two levels. First, Adams felt that a governmental system such as the French profess to be realizing requires certain qualities on the part of its citizenry. Adams queries: "Is there an instance of a Roman Catholic monarchy of five and twenty millions at once converted into a free and rational people?"\(^{19}\) At another time, he questions whether history has provided instances of such a large number of "ignorant" people being "suddenly converted" into a condition capable of conducting a democratic republic? Thus, empirically there is a question of the adequate preparation of the French people for a form of government which requires their active and informed participation.

The French revolutionaries maintain that society is to be restructured in conformity with the demands of reason.


and knowledge. They feel that equal potential for the exercise of reason resides in all men. The goal is to nurture this reason in all men since all reasonable men must arrive at the same conclusion. The means is accomplished by providing all men with the same knowledge in similar environmental conditions. This draws Adams' ire: "Bad men increase in knowledge as fast as good men; and science, arts, taste, sense, and letters are employed for the purposes of injustice and tyranny as well as those of law and liberty; for corruption as well as virtue."\(^20\)

If the conscious restructuring of society by the proponents of the Revolution is not the true representation of a wise social policy, what is? He responds quite clearly:

> Patience, moderation, reflection, perseverance, firmness are the necessary qualities of republicans. . . . If the world grows wiser, it will grow more sensible of the emulation of the human heart and provide checks to it . . . . The passions can never be prevented, they can only be balanced.\(^21\)

If the French revolutionary effort was directed toward identifiable conceptual goals, one of those goals would have to be identified as that of "equality" or in Adams' words, "leveling." According to Zoltan Haraszti:

> Adams distrusted the philosophes from the beginning. Steeped as he was in English political thinking, with experience in the workings of government, their aspirations appeared to him fantastic exaggerations,

\(^20\) Adams, as cited in Smith, John Adams, Vol. 2, p. 800.

\(^21\) Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, pp. 197, 229.
their notions of limitless progress "a chimera," and the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity "a swindle." Equality, particularly, became his bete noire. Not content with a plain denial of the principle, he built up a whole theory of natural inequality.22

There is divine sanction for all manner and kinds of unequal status. Neither equality of persons nor of property is to be found in the nature of things. He asserts that those who pursue such a course, as was the case in France, are inviting disaster.23 Adams perceives that the equalitarian movement had been underway before what most people understood to be the commencement of the Revolution. The "aristocracy of wealth" had been "destroying" the "aristocracy of birth." The Revolution with whom most people were familiar merely carried on with this process. The "aristocracy of genius, talents, and merit" now found itself under attack.24 Those aristocrats whom the order most desperately needed were being removed from the political arena. Adams defines an aristocrat as "every man who can command or influence two votes; one besides his own."25 The essential point is that: "History was full of examples of efforts to destroy this or that


25. Ibid., p. 37.
aristocratic group; only to have them reappear in another group." 26

For Adams, "Inequalities of Mind and Body are so established by God Almighty in His constitution of Human Nature that no Art or policy can ever plain them down to a level." 27

What then is a true and accurate understanding of the concept of equality in human affairs? Adams responds by asserting that: "The only equality of man that is true was taught by Jesus: 'do as you would be done by.' The same Jesus taught 'render unto to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.'" 28. The only equality of which one is deserving then is the equal treatment which is due one by virtue of one's position or status in the natural order of things. Since there are various and varying positions there must of necessity be degrees of inequality between the various positions, determined minimally by one's portion of "genius," "talent" or "merit." Adams saw the French radicals as asserting that all men are born with equal powers and faculties. Thus, they deduce that all men have a right to equal portions of property, advantage and influence to develop


28. Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, p. 213.
their unrealized potential.  

One's birthright is usurped by inequality, based on artificial distinctions. He perceives that: "The envy and rancor of the multitude against the rich is universal and restrained only by fear and necessity. A beggar can never comprehend the reason why another should ride in a coach while he has no bread." Adams feels that the character of the human condition is such that the most one may hope for is incremental change. His writings on the French Revolution are replete with statements in support of the proposition that the more things change, the more they remain the same. The high point of his optimism in regard to the events in France is reflected in his statement that: "I hope improvements are making, but I wish to see the fruits of them before I depend too much upon them." This comment is certainly atypical, however. For in response to the assertion of the revolutionaries that they are more closely approximating the goal of liberty, he asserts: "Now they (the people) are to be bound by no (feudal) tenures and under no (ecclesiastical) restraints. But taxes are almost as bad as tenures and atheism is worse than even Catholicism,


30. Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, p. 205.

31. Ibid., p. 233.
if we judge by its effects." 32 As to their claim that equality for all and the eradication of all distinction within society was just around the corner, he pointed to the "scission, sophistry and party spirit" which he understood to be reaching new heights in the National Assembly, as evidence that the change was that of form and not of substance. 33 Finally, as to the applause which Mary Wollstonecraft extends to the new order for its achievement of an all-pervasive spirit of fraternity: "Does this weak woman expect that jealousy and envy, ambition and vanity will ever disappear? . . . . Will a nation all ever act for the happiness of the nation?" 34 He concludes that all that has been accomplished has been the substitution of one set of "parasites and advocates" (those of the mob) for those of another (those of the Court). 35 With apparent sadness he finds that:

We shall see in a few months the new French constitution which may last twelve months but probably not more than six. Robespierre and Marat with their Jacobin supporters I suspect will overthrow the fabric which Condorcet, Paine, and Brisset will erect. Then we shall see what they do in their turn." 36

32. Ibid., p. 194.
33. Ibid., p. 173.
34. Ibid., p. 194.
35. Ibid., p. 205.
If those propelling the French Revolution on its path toward disaster are in fact ignoring human nature and the human condition, they are likewise guilty of misunderstanding the nature of the political process. Adams feels that the new order's proponents have been neglectful of two related concepts of which a sound political order ought to take into account: (1) the separation of powers and (2) balance and equilibrium in government. As regards the legislative branch of government, Adams vigorously condemns the unicameral nature of the National Assembly. One of the justifications for the single house system as proposed by the French is that it served to introduce "simplicity" into the legislative process. Adams responds that:

> It is silly to be eternally harping upon simplicity in a form of government. The simplest of all possible governments is a despotism in one. Simplicity is not the summum bonum . . . . It is provoking to see a legislature, a sovereign in one house called refined theory. It is a savage theory. A barbarous theory. Indians, Negroes, Tartars, Hottentots, would have refined it more.37

He feels that their need be "two sieves that the flour may be fine."38 A single assembly would be dominated by "demagogues" since there would always be one party in a legislative body which will seek to ". . . form an alliance


38. Ibid., p. 211.
with the multitude out of doors." 39 The inevitable result is clear: "... upheavals and disorder—a succession of bloody contentions." 40 According to his set of values, another serious mistake is being made: the elective principle is to be the only criterion of selection—the same faction will thus dominate the National Assembly. 41 He is most clear as to why this system is nonsensical: "A representational government should be so constructed as to prevent hasty decisions; or the carrying into laws dangerous, impolitic measures which have been urged by popular declaimers, who are too apt to gain ascendancy in a numerous assembly." 42

The disposition of the monarch in the successive schemes of government is an object of great concern to Adams. At the time that he is writing, the position of the monarch has been retained; however, it is its relationship with the only other coordinate branch of government, the National Assembly, which provided such anguish for him. For Adams an independent executive is essential to a system of government which seeks to provide security for life, liberty and property. 43

39. Ibid., p. 209.
42. Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, p. 205.
43. Ibid., p. 211.
is being dealt one serious blow after another. He feels that the veto power granted to the monarch is not a sufficient tool to make meaningful the concept of the separation of powers. He states.

The absurdity consists in establishing an hereditary executive as a balance to a vast legislature in one National Assembly. You might as well constitute an army to determine every movement by a vote of an 100,000 men and give the general a veto upon each vote. A gladiator in a pit without arms to defend himself against an hundred lions . . . .

At least as important to the maintenance of his position is the inviolability of the individual who is administering the laws. Adams reacts with great hostility to the passage by the National Assembly of legislation which makes the executive liable to civil actions, criminal prosecutions and impeachment. In light of the separation of the national government into just two branches of government and the authority distributed to each and the susceptibility of the monarch to legal action, Adams feels that even the veto was of little importance.

A related conceptual problem with practical implications is that of the balance or imbalance, equilibrium or disequilibrium which exists in the political system. Under the latest scheme, the only element receiving even

44. Ibid., p. 273.
45. Ibid., p. 222.
nominal representation is the populace at large. Even this
group lacks definition. The hereditary aristocracy, the
clergy and the public interest (as represented by the mon-
arch) are virtually excluded from the evolving arrangements.
Again, he responds with an attack on the notion of
"simplicity" as a positive good for the political system:

There can be no . . . (political system) more sim-
ple than despotism. The triple complication, not
simplicity is to be sought for . . . the word
"simplicity" in the course of seven years had mur-
dered its millions and produced more horrors than
monarchy did in a century.46

The imbalance can be seen most clearly in the particular
form which the government takes (a unicameral legislature
which in turn dominates the only existent coordinate branch
of government—the executive). Yet its manifestations are
found elsewhere. "Consider that government is intended to
set bounds to passions which nature has not limited."47
He finds the government aiding and abetting passion not
setting its bounds. The same motion is applicable for all
times: "Power must be opposed to power, force to force,
strength to strength, interest to interest, as well as
reason to reason, eloquence to eloquence, and passion to
passion."48 Following this course of action will allow one

46. Ibid., p. 234.
47. Ibid., p. 173.
48. Ibid., p. 219.
to establish the system which is the best of all possible systems for it adequately takes into account the realities of man's situation. The situation in France is fast deteriorating because of the continual ignoring of this notion. The result is clear: "... when democracy gets the upper hand it seems to be conscious that its power will be short, and makes haste to glut its vengeance by a plentiful harvest of blood and cruelty, murder, massacre, and devastation. Hence, despotism." 49

In the instance of France, the monarch, the aristocracy and the populace at large are the constituent units upon which a balanced government ought to have been constructed. The one, last hope for France rests on the following sleight possibility: "Let the rich and the poor unite in the hands of mutual affection, be mutually sensible of each other's ignorance, weakness and error, and try to support a government which would insure justice for both." 50

If this last wistful hope is not realized, what then? Where and how is it all to end? Writing to Benjamin Rush in 1811, Adams states: "I saw through it, to the end of it, before it broke out, and was sure it could only result

49. Ibid., p. 177.

in a restoration of the Bourbons, or a military despotism, after deluging France and Europe in blood."\(^{51}\) Out of the utter collapse of the old system has come the breakdown of all the standards upon which that system was based. Adams sees "decorum, discipline, and subordination" and security of property as essential characteristics of any society, and yet at the same time he sees these as being totally ignored in the French system. (Adams believes that mankind finds confusion more intolerable than absolute government.)\(^{52}\)

In response to Mary Wollstonecraft's statement that: "The people have always been governed in their sentiments of men by the most popular anarchists . . . ." he responds: "This is always so till universal ruin, distress, and famine convince the people 'we have been all wrong, this will never do. There must be some power that can unite us, that knows more than we do.'"\(^{53}\) To what banner will the French flock, what will be the character of the leadership to which they will in all probability turn? In such a situation: "Nations will soon wish their books in ashes, seek for darkness and ignorance, superstition and fanaticism, as blessings and

\(^{51}\) Letter to Benjamin Rush, December 25, 1811, The Spur to Fame, eds. Schutz and Adair, p. 201.

\(^{52}\) Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, p. 232.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 192.
follow the standard of the first mad despot who, with the enthusiasm of another Mahomet, will endeavor to obtain them." The train of events set in motion by the French Revolution will produce an oscillation between the poles of tyranny and anarchy, or perhaps it would better be described as a natural progression from anarchy to tyranny. Adams' feeling is that the two are "equally" cruel and destructive.

Writing in 1813 to Thomas Jefferson, Adams is still in search of any sense which can be made out of the chain of events which was triggered in 1789: "When, Where? And how? is the present Chaos to be arranged into Order?"

Adams, the French Revolution and Order

It is obvious to Adams that the French Revolution represents disorder writ large. The important thing to realize is that for Adams, this particular disorder bears no relationship to the notion of progress. Rather, it proves to be a totally regressive development. That is, an increment of disorder might be viewed as the prod which


55. Adams, as cited in Haraszti, John Adams and the Prophets of Progress, p. 197.

is needed for the development of a sound political order. This proposition Adams appears to reject. The concepts of order and disorder are not considered as being reciprocal in nature. For Adams the change which is required in France could and should have been brought about within existing structure. The old French order contains within it the seed of its successor. This seed, however, remains in a condition of mere potentiality until such time as it receives the nourishment of widespread support for it's realization. The French Revolution is seen as disorder which of necessity develops into chaos at an ever expanding rate. In this instance disorder, the negative element, neither allows another element (positive) nor itself is capable of transcendence. Only some fortuitous circumstances could bring order to the situation. Adams sees no meaning (order) in the whole occurrence.

Because of his criticism of the fact that the French Revolution is not a "national act," that the "nation" is not disposed to it, one must come to the conclusion that order and consensus are connected concepts. That is, a vision of the future must be shared concurrently by a significant cross-section of the population. The populace would have to possess knowledge of their condition and lend its support to revolution as the appropriate instrument of redress.
if the revolution is to be justified in the name of order. For Adams order is to be "legitimate" in its conception as well as in its term of development. Legitimate birth requires the voluntary affirmation of a goodly portion of those who would be involved in effecting and in being affected by the process of its development. In discussing the composition of the legislative branch of a Republican government, he suggests that:

It should be in miniature an exact portrait of the people at large.

It should think, feel, reason and act like them. Or, in other words, equal interests among the people have equal interests in it.57

Instead, Adams perceives an extremely small minority acting in behalf of radical change. Their action is disorderly precisely because it has not been initially a matter of consensual agreement. Additionally, the motives of these people (the Rochefoucaulds, the Noailles, the LeMоines and the Orleans) are not for national redress but for personal "consideration" and "influence." Questions of right and justice must be filtered through mass perception (through the various constituent units of society) before revolution can legitimately be equated with order. Referral must precede upheaval.

57. The Selected Writings of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, p. 52.
Good order is based on an accurate understanding of man. This would seem to be true by definition since any order must be founded on its constituent units and their respective relationships with each other. If the French have proceeded in such a fashion, their emphasis would not be on the indiscriminate sundering of shackles and an open-ended policy of liberation. Instead, the effort ought to be expended in the selection of those restraints most attuned to the particular set of circumstances in France.

Secondly, an order steeped in wisdom would recognize that the Ultimate Orderer has made known to man a body of natural law. It is man's responsibility to translate this natural law into positive law for good order among men. To aspire to be ruled directly by natural law based on the asserted rationality of man can only result in disorder.

The essence of order is not to be constructed but rather is to evolve. A wise social policy is best reflected in the recognition that knowledge is garnered socially as well as individually, historically as well as contemporaneously. Good sense is common, collective, historical and prescriptive in nature. The French disregarded these factors. Additionally, Adams sees order as essentially complex and diverse in nature. Everyone is not a microcosm of the whole, rather the whole is the sum of its parts, the parts being of different shapes and sizes. The mania for simplicity and disorderly order has driven the French
revolutionaries to attempt to drive square pegs into round holes. The same compulsion which drives men to abandon "confusion" for "absolute government" compels men to reject the necessary nature played by subtle distinctions and complexities among men and attempt to paint men in one shade only.

Political order must always recognize distinctions. Order is order precisely because relationships are established between parts which have some distinctive quality. The secret is to select those distinctions which taken together make the most common sense and utilize these for the best of all political orders. While feigning ignorance of the essential nature of distinctions among men, the revolutionaries have merely established a system based on a different set of distinctions. For Adams, the previous political order is more reflective of the needs and characteristics of mankind. Disorder, of which the French Revolution is an instance, can result only in a change of form, never in one of substance. A change in the latter requires (1) accurate knowledge and (2) instruments and actions selected which best reflect such knowledge. The French Revolution fails to fulfill these criteria.

If the nature of man be marked by passion, then the principle upon which the political process ought to rest, should be that of balance and equilibrium. The particular
form which the government ought to take should be that based on the doctrine of the separation of powers. A belief in man's passionate condition and the desire to preserve and extend order would logically lead one to advocacy of balance, equilibrium, complexity and the "triple complication" (the separation of powers) as the means by which one ought to pursue the creation of order. Thus, Adams' perception of imbalance, disequilibrium simplicity and a fusion of powers lead him to the conclusion that the French scheme was one based on disorder.

On the one hand, Adams believes passion to be the characteristic which most distinguishes man. Yet, he also asserts that if faced with the choice between "confusion" or "absolute government," man will choose the latter. How can these two seemingly contradictory concepts be resolved? The answer appears to lie in the fact that the contradiction is more apparent than it is real. For passion if permitted to run its course in human affairs, would result initially in "anarchy" and ultimately in "tyranny." The crucial point which Adams asserts is that "confusion" is not related to "absolute government" as disorder is related to order. Both "confusion" and "absolute government" are instances of disorder. Neither are the two to be discovered at opposite poles with good order to be discovered as the median. Order is both above and beyond these situations. Order and
disorder are conceived as separate and distinct notions. The problem is precisely that in Adams' thinking the two are unrelated and disconnected, something which he himself recognizes all too clearly. As has been pointed out, he concludes his comments by posing a question: "When, Where? and How? Is the present Chaos to be arranged into Order?" Anxious and perplexed, he can only respond to his own query: "They had ignorantly and madly introduced the despotism of Old Anarck and Old Chaos; and must leave it to fate, fortune or providence to create order out of this confusion."  


CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN THE WRITINGS OF EDMUND BURKE ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Burke and the French Revolution

Edmund Burke's interest in the French Revolution can be traced to his concern that its onset represented a force which if not defeated would ultimately be "fatal" to the health and prosperity of all nations. Following the outbreak of the momentous event in France, Thomas Paine wrote enthusiastically to Burke of the events in that country. Because of Burke's positions on the Hastings Trial, his advocacy of certain reform measures in India and his consistent opposition to the arbitrary exercise of power, Paine felt that Burke would welcome this particular change across the channel. However, Burke's reaction was consistently to be characterized in the same fashion: unrelenting in its criticism and its hostility. Burke thought that he detected signs of democratic tendencies in English political life. In particular, he had been a witness to the Gordon Riots of 1780. He was anxious lest the Dissenters
(democrats) in England be influenced by the abolition of feudal and church rights in France.\(^1\)

His position with regard to the events in France provided the impetus for his eventual split with the Whig party and Charles Fox. Fox saw in the French Revolution an event parallel to Revolution in England in 1688. He viewed the situation in France as analogous to the struggle in England between the crown and Parliament. Burke's articulation of his own position as set forth in his *Reflections*, according to Cobban and Smith, transfigured him from a "discredited party politician" into a "leading figure on the European stage."\(^2\) Just a brief period of time elapsed before Burke became involved with the French émigrés who were residing in England. More specifically, he entered into close relationships with C. A. Calonne, formerly Comptroller-general and chief adviser to Louis XVI, and Artois, the younger brother of Louis XVI. The two French émigré leaders were hopeful that Burke might assist them in obtaining the support of the British government.\(^3\) Burke's reason for encouraging this relationship can be explained if one understands Burke's feeling that a war of self-defense against


\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. xiv.

\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. xvi.
France was inevitable \(^4\) and that much greater emphasis ought to be placed on the French émigrés as representatives of the French nation. Also, Burke advocated that "decisive" support for insurgent (anti-French revolutionary) elements ought to be extended. \(^5\) His belief in the inevitability of conflict with the French revolutionaries led him to propose a coalition government for Great Britain. His plan saw fruition in July, 1794 with the entrance of the Portland Whigs into the Pitt administration.

Burke's final major involvement with the revolution in France came about in 1795 with the writing of his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. By the end of that year, it had become clear to the European allies that France could withstand attempts both at invasion and counter-revolution. Pitt, among others, advocated a negotiated peace with the allies' objectives being clearly defined. Among the missing objectives from Burke's point of view was the notion of allied interest in the establishment of a particular form of government. \(^6\) His *Letters on a Regicide Peace* amounts to an advocacy of a much less restricted set of objectives, including restoration

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4. Ibid., p. xviii.


of monarchical (though not arbitrary) rule. In conclusion, Burke's advocacy on the issue of the French Revolution catapulted him onto the global stage as "... a European power in his own right" during his own lifetime.

**Burke on the French Revolution**

Quite obviously, one could go about categorizing Burke's writings on the French Revolution in a variety of different ways. The categories employed in this chapter will be those of procedure and substance, with the realization that the two are by no means mutually exclusive. That is, Burke exhibits great concern for the French Revolution because of the way in which the questions of preservation and innovation, progression and regression are confronted. Secondly, there is the matter of substance. How does Burke view the particular changes which were made in the various orders and institutions of France?

Upon first reading, Burke appears to express belief in the concept of the social contract as one of the bases of the good political order. Society exists by virtue of a "permanent" contract which is established between those living, those deceased and those yet to be born.

Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and the indivisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the
inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place.\textsuperscript{7}

Initially, society is the consequence of a voluntary act. Subsequently, however, its continuance depends on a permanent, standing covenant coexistent with society. The original contract is seen as "implied and expressed in the constitution" of the particular country in question.\textsuperscript{8} The contract transforms itself into the constitution. The constitution, in turn, takes the form of a particular scheme of government. Thus, in Burke's thinking, the emphasis is quite clearly not on the notion of "contract" but rather on that of the social form into which the former has evolved in a peculiar set of historical circumstances. This same point can be substantiated by taking seriously his assertion that no formal assent is required of each individual in each successive generation because: (1) all individuals are the recipients of benefits originating in society and (2) because there is a category of obligations whose origin can not be traced to voluntary. The relationships of man to man and man to God would be instances of obligations incurred prior to the exercise of one's own discretion. Burke feels that voluntary obligations have a relationship of dependency to such


prior forms of obligation. Once a society's constitution has been settled on, a particular compact (either tacit or expressed), the contract cannot be broken without either (1) the unanimous consent of all parties concerned or (2) a breachment of contract.10

What then is the point to be made in regard to Burke and the social contract? J. W. Gough asserts that in Burke, one finds "... contractual phraseology still serving as a means of expressing ideas which have really outgrown it." What Burke is most concerned with is not contractual theory but "historical solidarity." The reason which Gough suggests is really quite simple: "... Burke, we must remember, was addressing an audience accustomed to think in terms of the original contract."11

The question then arises as to just how Burke views the question of social solidarity in light of the events in revolutionary France. Burke views the obligations incumbent upon both parties (the King and the people) as having been violated by both parties. Burke asserts that if the people think lightly of the covenant, then so too shall the governor (in this instance, the King) and in the long run it is the


10. Ibid., p. 392.

people who will be most adversely affected.\textsuperscript{12} The monarch can in a certain limited sense, abstract him from his responsibilities. That is, the monarch can abdicate for himself. More importantly, however, the ruler can not abdicate in behalf of the monarchical form of government. The constitution upon which France is founded forbade this. Just as the constituent parts of the state are obliged to honor their traditional commitments to each other and to those who have an interest in societal arrangements, so too the whole state (in this instance, represented by Louis XVI) is bound to keep its faith with the constituent segments of the political community.\textsuperscript{13} Regardless of whoever came to rule or however he came to power, whether by law or force, the hereditary succession is either continued or adopted. Thus, even if there is not explicit covenant in the beginning, by prescription the French people come tacitly to covenant with monarchy.\textsuperscript{14} To the extent that he remains as representative of the monarchical principle, Louis XVI is bound as much to the French people as they are to the maintenance of the monarchy.

If one person can not violate the responsibilities derivative from the social system, the addition of numbers

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Burke's Politics, p. 392.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Burke, Reflections, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 25.
\end{itemize}
of people to one side can not legitimate that side's breach-
ment either. Rather, this only serves to augment the quan-
tity and the intensity of the guilt.\footnote{15} Thus, Burke perceives
breachment in the actions of those who wish to annul the old
tacit compact with monarchy as its cornerstone and establish
the majoritarian principle as its basis of governance. Burke
maintains that for the majoritarian principle to operate as
a matter of right: there must first be unanimous agreement
that the action of a majority of them shall be considered by
them and others as an act of the whole. Even if unanimity is
reached that the old basis of incorporation ought to be dis­
solved, each individual at that juncture has the right to
remain outside the body politic, without the necessity of
proceeding toward a new basis of social obligation. Though
the traditional has been scrapped, Burke fails to see in
France the assent either expressed or implied that unanimity
has been reached on majoritarian rule. He asserts, neither
"right nor utility" points in this direction.\footnote{16}

Under the category of procedure, the second area to
be examined is that of conservation and correction. Most
particularly, how are the two principles to proceed apace?
Burke insists that change in the political system must lend
itself to the following:

\footnote{15. \textit{Burke's Politics}, p. 392.}

\footnote{16. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 396-7.}
... (a) political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts, wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, molding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old or middleaged or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. 17

What place ought revolution to play in the process of attaining such "correspondence and symmetry?" Is there any "right to revolution?" What are the criteria to be utilized in determining whether the principles of revolution ought to be operative? Burke's feeling is that a state without the means for change is a state without the means for its own preservation. Two principles ought to be taken into consideration and correction. Change is to be confined to the "peccant" part only, the part which has produced the deviation. Even in that event, change is to be effected without decomposition of the whole order, civil and political. 18

The notion of inheritance is a concept which Burke feels must be taken seriously by those who advocate change in the political order. In speaking of inheritance, Burke employs an organic metaphor: "Upon that body and stock of inheritance (one should take) care not to inoculate any scion

alien to the nature of the original plant." If one adheres to this principle, one can ensure that the principles of "conservation," "transmission," and improvement will all have their respective niches in the schemata of the body politic. The concept of inheritance is ultimately significant because it acts to conserve, transmit and improve the "... estate peculiar to this (any particular) kingdom without any reference to any other more general or prior right" and because it provides the political order with the most solid foundation possible since "(the) constitution preserves a unity in so great a diversity of its parts." This procedural principle has the virtue of following the plan set forth by nature.

If "inheritance" is the operative criterion in any plan for improvement, then the French revolutionaries have forsaken this principle. With one stroke, they seek to reconstitute the political order with total disregard for both inherited forms and substance. According to Burke, the new French structure differs from the structures not only of its French predecessor but also from those of all other nations in that the latter's have been formed without systematic

19. Ibid., p. 35.
20. Ibid., p. 38.
22. Ibid., p. 37.
effort. Most states grew over an extended period of time, and by a "variety of accidents." They have been improved with greater or lesser degrees of success. They are not formed by reference to a regular plan, a unified design or a systematic constitution. Nor are the states referred to inclined toward one particular end. The French have radically departed from this practice with the predictable and necessary consequence—disaster: "Nothing in the Revolution, no, not a phrase or a gesture, not to the fashion of a hat or a shoe, was left to accident. All has been a matter of institution.

What are the assumptions that Burke makes about human nature and progress which are relevant in regard to this procedural question? Burke believes that the supply of right reason (mankind, whether as individuals or as groups) is exceedingly limited, indeed. (The most sensible course for society to follow is that provided by tradition.) For in regard to reason, he suggests reliance upon "... the general bank and capital of nations and of ages." In another statement on the same subject, Burke appears to go somewhat further:

... we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality, nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as

24. Ibid., p. 67.
Collective reason, a matrix which emerges from the intertwining and complementary nature of a collection of individual reasons over an extended period of time, is to be allotted first place. Burke believes that individual reason matures under the restraints imposed by collective opinion, and that the collective opinion, in turn, achieves maturation by its exposure to changing circumstances during the passage of time. Burke also maintains that there is a variety of reason peculiar to the political process: "Political reason is a computing principle: adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, morally and not metaphysically, or mathematically, true moral denominations." Yet, in the case of the new French regime(s) this understanding of the type of reason applicable for the political process is not in evidence for a "geometrical constitution" in which the nation no longer is to be divided into subdivisions with the appellation Normandy or Brittany but rather are to be known as Chequer No. 71. According to Burke, this would be an example of a reliance upon mathematics and not "moral denominations" as basis of computation upon which "political reason" was to

26. Ibid., p. 97.
27. Ibid., p. 71.
28. Ibid., p. 231.
draw. Time is a significant factor, for as Burke suggests: "Reform ought to require many years." Only the passage of time will allow for the processes of testing and adjustment. Finally, "The science of government is a matter of experience." A priori principles do not count for much in Burke's Framework. The litmus test occurs when principles are made operative or, perhaps, when operative principles are induced from experiential inference. Burke's most inclusive statement on the subject of political order and change states:

Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be only wrought by social means. There mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. . . . By a slow but well sustained progress the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill success of the first gives light to us in the second; and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series . . . . We compensate, we reconcile, we balance. We are enabled to unite into a consistent whole the various anomalies and contending principles that are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but one far superior, an excellence in composition.

In the French Revolution, much to his dismay, Burke discovers a political process which reflects the very opposite of what he would consider appropriate.

The point by now is obvious, the changes which have taken place in France following the inception of the

29. Ibid., p. 197.
30. Ibid., p. 70.
31. Ibid., pp. 197-8
Revolution in 1789 share very little if any common ground with Burkean notions of propriety. There appear to be a number of fundamental reasons for Burke's exclusion of revolution from the list of those practices which would legitimately fit in the category of "political process." First, there is the question of the source of impetus of change. The source of radical criticism is to be found (legitimately) only within the extent political order is in question. Not only is the source to be found within but the critic's motive is important—the critic must appear as a lover or at least as a friend. "We shall never be such fools as to call in an enemy to the substance of any system to remove its corruptions, to supply its defects, or to perfect its construction."32 In the case of France, reform has been initiated by those whom Burke would consider to be rightly motivated. In fact, the instructions to the delegates to the Estates General have been simply to reform the constitution under which France had been operating. Revolution has not been requested—it was simply a case of usurpation by those not "appropriately" concerned with France and her interests.33 Second, revolution (and certainly that which occurred in France) according to Burke fosters an attendant spirit which evidences a reliance upon a "... present

32. Ibid., p. 102.
33. Ibid., p. 145.
sense of convenience of bent of present inclination and absolute disdain for all that is old, established or settled." 34

In this case, personal disposition is not a legitimate motive, certainly not as the arbiter of one's decision. Thirdly, there is the question of the criteria to be employed. Burke asserts:

No government could stand a moment if it could be blown down with anything so loose and indefinite as an opinion of "misconduct." . . . The speculative line of demarcation where obedience ought to end and resistance must begin is faint, obscure, and not easily definable. It is not a single act, or a single event, which determines it. Governments must be abused and deranged, indeed, before it can be thought of; and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. 35

Burke admits that reform, not revolution, offers the solution since France possesses "in all, the foundations of a noble and venerable castle." 36 In the Burkean scheme is there, then, any "right to revolution?" Burke responds quite candidly that the question of the "cashiering of kings" (an instance of revolution) will always remain an "extraordinary question" to be answered "wholly out of law": "A question (like all other questions of state) of dispositions and of means and of probable consequences rather than of positive

34. Ibid., p. 28.

35. Ibid., pp. 31, 34.

36. Ibid., p. 40.
Finally, Burke contemplates the question of effects or consequences. The necessary effect of all "excessive change" is to dismember the extent order. The "chain" which symbolizes the order in question is broken and from that point on "No one generation could link with the other."  

What does Burke perceive to be the causal factors involved in the French Revolution? Burke insists that necessity was not at work in the guise of the revolution in France. Having admitted that indeed there were areas in which reform was required, Burke asserts that the old order had initiated the appropriate reforms. According to Burke, the nobility's surrender of its privileges, the king's relinquishing of his "right" to the power of taxation and the movement of the basis of government from one of absolute monarchy to one of "reciprocal control" would be representations of this occurrence. His ire is roused by those who focus on the (admitted) vices of the monarchy and the financial difficulties in which the successive French administrations have found themselves as significant causal factors. Likewise, the Roman Catholic faith, the laws of France, the

37. Ibid., p. 34.
38. Ibid., p. 108.
39. Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace, p. 44.
40. Burke, Reflections, p. 156.
41. Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace, p. 5.
prerogatives and privileges exercised by the nobility, and a quest for concretization of the rights of man all are suggested as possible causes by those who Burke considers to be unduly sympathetic to the events in France. Burke labels all of these as mere "pretexts." The cause was not to be found in these areas. For,

You would not curb the evil by resolving that there should be no more monarchs, nor ministers of state, nor of the gospel; no interpreters of law; no general officers; no public councils. You might change the names. The things in some shape must remain. A certain quantum of power must always exist in the community in some hands and under some appellation. Wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the causes of evil which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they act, and the transitory modes in which they appear. The very same vice assumes a new body. The spirit transmigrates, and, far from losing its principle of life by the change of appearance, it is renovated in its new organs with the fresh vigor of a juvenile activity. under color of abhorring the ill principles of antiquated parties, they are authorizing and feeding the same odious vices in different factions, and perhaps in worse.

Where then is the source of the problem to be located? The immediate cause can be discovered in the following event:

A silent revolution in the moral world preceded the political, and prepared it. The chain of subordination was broken in its most important links. It was no longer the great and the populace. Other interests were formed, other dependencies, other connections, other communications. The middle classes had swelled far beyond their former proportion. these classes became

42. Burke, Reflections, p. 162.
43. Ibid., p. 163.
the seat of all the active politics; and the preponderating weight to decide on them.\textsuperscript{44}

The middle classes have come to be the "locus" of both talent and impatience with the place in society which have been "prescribed" to them. Thus, the middle classes interpose themselves between the "great" and the populace at large, exercising considerable influence over the latter.\textsuperscript{45}

For this area of immediate causal responsibility, the monarch must also be held to account. Louis XVI proves incapable of responding to crisis. In fact, he "... pulled down the pillars which upheld his throne."\textsuperscript{46} The king has been distrustful of his own judgment and has relied excessively upon the advice proferred by his ministers. According to Burke, the court is perpetually a "field for caballers" while the public is the "theatre for montebanks and imposers." The "cure" for both ought to have been found in the discernment of the monarch—something which Louis XVI does not possess in ample enough supply.\textsuperscript{47} The advice which the monarch accepts from his advisers leads him into conflict with the higher orders to be found in the French system. Ultimately he turns to the lower orders (with which he is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Burke's \textit{Letters on a Regicide Peace}, pp. 126-7.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 127.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Burke's \textit{Letters on a Regicide Peace}, p. 125.
\end{itemize}
not sufficiently familiar) for support. The natural alliance of monarch and higher orders is severed. It has been upon this convergence of interests that the foundation of political order has been established. ⁴⁸

Yet to conceive of the above occurrences which are peculiar to France at a particular point in her history as being the sole causal factors is to, in Burke's words, be misguided, for it is taking seriously only "the shell and husk of history." For, in fact, the real causes of the events under consideration are universal and not peculiar in scope. Burke lists these as: pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy and ungoverned zeal. One has to progress no further than these tendencies in human nature to arrive at the source of the events which Burke seeks to examine.

Burke asserts that the bases of the new system in France are three in number: the concepts of regicide, Jacobinism and atheism are the ones to which Burke makes reference. ⁴⁹ He suggests that the notion of regicide means: "A fixed law of nature" which asserts that all government not democratic in intent is usurpation. Thus, all kings are usurpers and may be put to death along with their families and adherents. Jacobinism involves the following aspects:

⁴⁸ Edmund Burke's Selected Works, p. 461.
⁴⁹ Burke's Letters on a regicide Peace, p. 64.
(1) the organization of private men for the purpose of abolition of all pre-existing laws and institutions. (2) The confiscation and redistribution of property. (3) The massacring of those who choose to struggle for maintenance of the old system of law and institutions. The concept of atheism involves: (1) the failure by a state to recognize God as the moral governor of the world, (2) the obstruction of religious worship and (3) the abolition of the Christian religion.

Once one proceeds beyond the more fundamental principles, Burke insists that there appears a dual-faceted problem (1) the absence of even a minimal number of devices for restraint within the political order and (2) the absence of a pluralist social structure upon which the former might be founded, a source of restraint from without. Burke states that the tasks of establishing a government based either on restraint or liberty is not difficult. The task which is both challenging and deemed worthy of man's effort is "to temper together" the two elements in one "consistent" work.50 The French revolutionary regimes have seen fit to promote one at the expense of the other: liberty over restraint.51 One of the functions which government ought to perform is to act as a restraint upon the passions— as a control upon will and inclination.52 Liberty has become license since liberty

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 68.
actualized can only be secured by "equality of restraint." 53

Despite its faults, the old system has provided for a differentiated political order. Now all power has gravitated into the hands of the "multitude." In Burke's mind it is a contradiction to expect that the same element in society will provide for both the exercise of authority and at the same time provide for the regulation and control of this same power. 54 What now exists is a "tyranny of the majority." Burke's feeling is that unless strong divisions exist within the body politic, the oppression meted out under a government founded upon the majoritarian principle will be infinitely greater than that meted out under a monarchical system.

"... those who are subjected to wrong under multitudes are deprived of all external consolation. They seem deserted by mankind, overpowered by a conspiracy of their whole species." 55 One order finds that it has representation in the government, that order being the Third Estate. Burke favors a constitution formed around the three orders rather than around just one. Additionally, if the foundation is to be founded upon one order, the order in question is the wrong one to rely upon. 56 His conclusion about the state of the government then suggests that:

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55. *Burke, Reflections*, p. 144.
All the former correctives, whether of virtue or of weakness, which existed in the old monarchy, are gone. No single new corrective is to be found in the whole body of new institutions. How should such a thing be found there, when everything has been chosen with care and selection to forward all those ambitious designs and dispositions, not to control them? The whole is a body of ways and means for the supply of dominion without one heterogeneous particle in it.  

For Burke, this lack of "checks and balances" within the governmental structure can be best seen by an examination of the state of the National Assembly. The National Assembly, formerly the Estates General, is unbalanced in its composition. Burke insists that equal representation of each of the three orders is desirable. Instead, he insists the movement is toward initially the disproportionate and eventually the sole representation of the Third Estate. He perceives this tendency in the fact that the Third Estate received 600 representatives in the Estates General, that total being equal to that of the other two combined. Thus, a small desertion from either rank is sufficient to give determinant power to the Third Estate. In achieving dominance in that body, it is at the same time achieving dominance in the state. As Burke charges:

In your old states (Estates General) you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily composed; you had all that combination and all that

58. Burke, Reflections, p. 47.
opposition of interests; you had that action and counter-action which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers draws out of the harmony of the universe . . . . Through that diversity of members and interests, general liberty had as many securities as there were separate views in the several orders, whilst, by pressing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the separate parts would have been prevented from warping, and starting from their allotted places.  

The fact that the legislature is unicameral in nature would deprive it of "steadiness and consistency." The monarch has been reduced to "... a situation but one degree above the executioner, and in an office nearly of the same quality." Thus, the executive branch is no longer coordinate and coequal but is in fact virtually powerless. Finally, the parliaments have been abolished as autonomous judicial bodies. They are to be replaced by elected, temporary, local judges: "In them, it will be vain to look for any appearance of justice toward strangers, toward the obnoxious rich, toward the minority of routed parties, toward all those who in the election supported unsuccessful candidates." In fact, it is intended that the newly constituted judicial bodies are to obey all the rules, orders and instructions received from the National Assembly, including the exemption of the

59. Ibid., p. 40.
60. Ibid., p. 233.
61. Ibid., pp. 234-5.
62. Ibid., p. 243.
administrative bodies of the National Assembly from their jurisdiction.\(^{63}\)

If the form of representation is most unsatisfactory in Burke's eyes (only one order being adequately represented), he is also appalled at (1) the quality of the representatives themselves (the composition is top heavy with lawyers) and (2) the guidelines under which they operate (characterized by capriciousness and arbitrariness). The National Assembly:

... has no fundamental law, no strict convention, no respected usage to restrain it. Instead of finding themselves obliged to conform to a fixed constitution, they have a power to make a constitution which shall conform to their designs. Nothing in heaven or upon earth can serve as a control on them.\(^{64}\)

Aside from the National Assembly, the only other component of the political order which is of significance according to Burke's interpretation are the committees and clubs which exist in municipalities and districts. In fact, these municipal committees direct all affairs and appoint all magistrates. At the local as well as at the national level, the political power is wholly separated from the various forms of property. Neither the landed nor the moneyed interests possess influence in the public policy process.\(^\text{65}\)

The problem with such extensive political power being lodged

\(^{63}\). Ibid., pp. 244-5.

\(^{64}\). Ibid., p. 51.

\(^{65}\). Edmund Burke's Selected Works, pp. 451-2.
in these informal committees at the local level is that:
"... the tyranny is so near its object that it becomes
instantly acquainted with every act of every man." Burke
concludes his discussion on municipal power by asserting:
"In my opinion, there never was so strong a government inter-
nally as that of the French municipalities." 67

Yet another deficiency with this decentralized system
is that all of these units of government at the various lev-
eels are in varying states of disconnection from one another
and from the nominal center (the national government) of po-
itical life. In fact, Burke is dissatisfied because no one
man exists who wields the power (or authority) in the 1200
districts necessary to bring about their unification. 68 The
problem arises from Burke's perspective because each local-
ity can have as much or as little communication and connec-
tion with the center as it elects--it is simply a matter of
voluntarism. 69 This voluntarism is the sole source (and a
most unsatisfactory one) of coherence connection and subor-
dination. 70

Burke opposes a "levelled" societal structure for
essentially the same reason that he finds a political order

66. Ibid., p. 454.
67. Ibid., p. 455.
68. Ibid., p. 454.
69. Ibid.
70. Burke, Reflections, p. 213.
founded upon one group objectionable. The principle is all too easily discerned in the efforts of the successive revolutionary regimes in France. The Burkean perspective asserts that a natural aristocracy is not an interest separate from society's, but rather an integrant essential to that of society. In the course of human existence, diversities arise among mankind due to such "natural" circumstances as birth, education, profession, residence in town or city or the means of property acquisition. The natural order obliges the "artificers of statecraft":

... to dispose their citizens into such classes, and to place them in such situations in the state, as their peculiar habits might qualify them to fill, and to allot to them such appropriated privileges as might secure to them what their specific occasions required, and which might furnish to each description such force as might protect it in the conflict caused by the diversity of interests that must exist and must contend in all complex society.

It is to the proprietary class that Burke turns for the source of stability in society. He asserts that the "characteristic essence" of property is for it to be distributed unequally among men. The perpetuation of property ownership by the family unit is equated with the perpetuation of society. In fact, large proprietors are labeled as "the ballast in the vessel of the commonwealth." From the Burkean

71. Burke's Politics, p. 397.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 58.
perspective the National Assembly was acting in a myopic fashion in that: "If prescription be once shaken, no species of property is secure when it once becomes an object large enough to tempt the cupidity of indigent power." 75 He contends that it is to the property of the citizen "that the first and original faith of civil society is pledged." 76 Obviously, the National Assembly has not evidenced this spirit in its actions. The tragedy is that political power has been wholly separated from property in all its forms. Those who hold property possess not weight or consideration in the formulation of public property. 77

The "levelling" principle has served to enervate that class of Frenchmen that, because of their education, expertise, wealth were destined to provide leadership and stability. The wealth, the education and the expertise of this differentiated class could be traced to their ownership of property. Rendering these people ineffective, catapults upward those at the bottom of the old societal structure. According to Burke, those who rise to the top do so despite (or perhaps, better put, because of) their lack of the following: self-respect, shelter from "things low and sordid," "habituation to the censorial inspection of the public eye,"


a capacity to view public problems from the perspective of the "public interest," the leisure to read, reflect and converse with the learned, "habituation to command and to obey," and the virtues of diligence, order and regularity of conduct. Rather, "They (those who make policy in the French revolutionary regimes) load the edifice of society by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground." Difficulty will arise in the future because of the nature of the sowing that was then taking place: the numbers of unqualified people who have become politicized during this era has progressed geometrically. In fact, Burke complains specifically that the trouble would be traceable to the fact that in the National Assembly 750 people would serve two year terms. His feeling was that there would be a large turnover since he goes on to decry a political system that would allow 1500 people to become politicized in a period of four years. The effects of their politicization are irreversible: "Never can they, who, from the miserable servitude of the desk, have been raised to empire again submit to the bondage of a starving bureau, or the profit of copying music, or writing plaidoyers by the sheet." 

78. Burke's Politics, pp. 397-8.
80. Edmund Burke's Selected Works, p. 453.
The aforementioned attack on the institution of property was one of the more successful instruments for subverting another institutional bulwark of the old order—the church. Burke states that the old constitution rests on a foundation of an "indissoluble union" with the state and the church as the contractees. The concepts of church and state are "inseparable ideas." The confiscation of church lands is a vital principle of revolutionary politics since it is the only financial resource upon which the political power of the new system can be based. The attack on the church is also in evidence in the National Assembly's provision for an elective clergy. The key to its dysfunction is the attendant loss of clerical independence. There are to be no requirements as to qualifications. Burke feels that this is an action in preparation for the utter abolition of the clergy at a future date when the people have been sufficiently conditioned. The loss is immeasurable since in "Monastic institutions" one finds an important power for "the mechanism of politic benevolence." That is, in the church one finds (1) revenues utilized in a "public direction" and (2) men set apart dedicated to public purposes who

82. Burke, Reflections, p. 113.
83. Ibid., pp. 140-1.
84. Ibid., p. 170.
practice self-denial. Now this is to be eliminated—without, in Burke's eyes, a suitable replacement.

The family is ultimately the unit upon which the social order is reliant. In pyramidal fashion, the collection of family units composes the districts which in turn compositute the basis for the province which in turn are the building blocks of the state itself. He asserts that the leadership of the new order consciously is attempting to dismantle this level of society. He points to the practice of having five or six hundred women and men call upon the National Assembly for the purpose of requesting the death of their children and a corresponding practice of having children call upon the same body for the purpose of calling for the execution of their parents. The inspiration for this policy is to foster an attitude that one owes to the state primary if not absolute allegiance. Another troublesome practice encouraged by the Assembly is that of encouraging children to question their duties and obligations to their parents on the grounds that they are not founded on the notion of "social contract" and thus are not the result of free election. The new regulations promulgated by the Assembly regarding divorce also are a source of irritation to Burke.

85. Ibid., p. 182.
Divorce is to be granted on the request of either party and at a month's notice. Following this decree, Burke reports that the first three months of 1793 have seen the city of Paris authorize 1785 marriages and 562 divorces. This he labels an "encouragement to disorder" and "the total disconnection of social life." His conclusion on the new policies and practices regarding the family unit is quite startling, at least for the manner in which it is expressed:

With the Jacobins of France, vague intercourse is without reproach; marriage is reduced to the vilest concubinage; children are encouraged to cut the throats of their parents; mothers are taught that tenderness is not part of their party, that they ought to make no scruple to rake their bloody hands in the bowels of those who came from their own.

Finally, the occurrence of the Revolution and its particular character have only served to destroy all the instincts, prejudices and opinions which Frenchmen have formerly held. It is upon these instincts, prejudices and opinions that the French governmental system has been constructed. The negative motivation which has spurred the revolutionary movements has caused an enervation of the beliefs of those who might have tended to support the concept of order given a more positive frame of political reference. What then is to be the new connective substance which will

89. Ibid., p. 70.
link the society with the state? Who is to pick up the pieces brought on by the fracture to the body of French order? Somewhat prophetically, Burke predicts that ultimately "one general" would be destined to rise to power:

In the weakness of one kind of authority, and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction until some popular general, who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself . . . . But the moment in which that event shall happen, the person who really commands the army is your master—the master (that is little) of your kin, the master of your Assembly, the master of your whole republic.91

Burke, the French Revolution and Order

How does Burke's exposition relate to the related concepts of order and disorder? Ultimate order is most closely approximated by society. (Society, in turn, finds its linkage provided in the notion of a social organism. The classic dichotomy, or perhaps better stated, the classic dialogue which society perpetually conducts, between consent and obligation is for Burke not a meaningful one. There is no place for dialogue—not if order is to be perpetuated.) Order and disorder are not interdependent concepts best conceived of in terms of varying ratios. The character of their relationship is contingent—not necessary. The first step toward disorder occurs, as in France, when the notion of

91. Ibid., p. 258.
consent (virus) is introduced into the political system (body) founded on obligation. Obligations are of at least two varieties. First, there is a category of obligations such as those engaging man to man and man to God which pre-exist even particular social contracts established in a particular historical circumstance. The inclination of life is toward a "predisposed order of things." Second, once a society's constitution, compact or contract has been settled on, only the consent of all concerned can legally break with this agreement—regardless of the number of years one is removed from the original contractual arrangement. If one cannot legally select oneself out of the system, does Burke recognize a moral justification for breachment of contract? The answer is clearly in the negative, precisely because all have derived some degree of benefit (no matter how limited) from having co-existed with society. A social contract is forever—whether from a legal or a moral perspective. There is a social contract at all times and in all places—the question is not one of its existence or non-existence but rather one of its recognition (order) or non-recognition (disorder) by those involved in the political order. For Burke, the French revolutionaries (and in a somewhat less culpable fashion), the monarch has practiced conscious non-recognition to both categories of order: pre-existent and prescriptive. They have not discovered disorder, rather they have created it.
The question of contractual consent is to be avoided since it involves discretion and judgment, these being the very tools of disorder. In 1793, Burke could breathe a sigh of relief since history had been set in motion far into the past. Thus, the whole question of obligation could be neatly side-stepped even if it is determined that it ought to be engaged on the ground of prescription. The process of political and social life (characterized by evolving order) is intended to exclude from one's consciousness consideration of as many categories of questions as one is able. Judgment and discretion (associated with consent) are to be exercised only on matters of secondary importance. Primary issues are by virtue of their being fundamental to be excluded from the agenda of later generations. For later generations to raise them is at best an instance of impropriety and at worst an act of malevolence. In either case, the result is the same: disorder.

Burke's position on the question of the social contract is obviously suggestive of his position on the place of revolution in the political process. Reform is discriminate, revolution is indiscriminate. If reform is to be limited solely to the "peccant" part, it is not merely because this segment is the only one which needs alteration, but rather because the opportunity for disorder is always one step short of birth and thus by delimiting the scope of attempted change one insures a greater degree of progress
precisely by reducing the area of discretion within which human reason and passion operate.

Order is derived from distinction. Procedurally, order is derived by virtue of the composite of distinct parts which have congealed over a period in time. There is no strength in any one contribution but rather only in the composite. In that sense, the only factor required for order is the fabric woven of various strands of thread from the past. Despite the connections that have been established, the constituent strands must, according to Burke, absorb the strain of time singularly. Thus, for Burke, no more than one thread need ever be replaced at any one time, or upon any one complaint. The fabric can never dissolve, only the units of which it is composed. Despite his low estimation of the place of reason in man's decision making apparatus, Burke expresses the expectation that man will be able to make the appropriate distinction, that is, that he will address himself with precision to the exact source of the problem. However, it is not man's ability to reason that will lead him astray—it is his inclination and will which will endanger and overrule his knowledge. For his inclination is to be an architect. This is a skill needed only in time of disorder. If used at an inappropriate time, the skill will cause disorder. The latter was the case in France of 1789. What reason had dictated—what had been required were the skills of a craftsman, not those of an architect. The need was to
adjust, to "patch up," to make some additions and some deletions, not to build anew. Burke utilizes the organic metaphor in discussing the political order. His conclusion is that the body politic can not tolerate extensive changes in its ongoing structure beyond a certain limit difficult of discernment. So, too, the human organism can undergo only limited and selective alterations in its makeup.

At points, Burke stakes out a normative position with regard to the connection between the procedures permissible and the substantive need involved. That is, the substantive need can be of macrocosmic proportion, yet the procedure or method available to remedy the situation is available only from those found on a microcosmic table. The range being represented by increments of varying proportions, with the emphasis on the word increments.

Reason is reason precisely because it is a collective term. One man or one generation acting in an architectonic role is the epitomy of unreason. The result being predictable: disorder. Custom, "habituation," time and experience—these all assist in transfiguring the unreason of a movement, an individual or a generation into a composite order which will be reasonable and operative, hence, orderly. Experience is what best serves the establishment of reason in man's design. Speaking empirically, Burke concludes that the initial exercise of reason by an individual or a generation will only
result in the crudest approximation of that which will best function.

Integration of parts should take place when present is grafted onto past, in other words, the onus is on the most recent experience to prove or justify itself and the authority to reject lies with that which represents the past. The French revolutionaries reject this—one's "inheritance" represents the burden to be justified. The burdens of guilt and innocence are reversed. The revolutionary loves. Yet at best, it is love of a narrow focus: on a specific evil or problem. His love is not for the health of the system, but only for that which is within his myopic vision. His love is governed by an unquenchable passion not upon a spirit of proportion and perspective. The French revolutionaries were characterized by the love of a Judas Iscariot (a concern with a problem of limited proportions: the overthrow of the Roman regime in Judea) whereas when operating in the political process, what is required is the love of a Jesus Christ, that which forecloses as few possibilities as possible while aiming toward the ultimate reconciliation of all to all. In both instances, that of Judas and that of the revolutionaries in France, the result is predictable destruction.

Justification for disorder, in this instance the French Revolution, can only occur after the fact, if at all. That is, no one group or individual can "rightfully" make the determination as to where the line between obedience and
resistance ought to be drawn. Revolutions are, or they are not, they "succeed" or they do not succeed. Justification is determined by effects. Thus, the appropriate criteria are non-existent in pre-revolutionary times. In the case of the French Revolution Burke in making his after the fact determination concludes that the extent of the ensuing disorder makes any imprimatur of approval unthinkable.

Burke points to the existence of a program of significant reform program as already being effected by the old political order. Since man is meant to act in accord with the concept of "graduated response" and the old order had not as yet had the opportunity to obtain the response of those to whom the reforms were addressed the conclusion is inevitable--revolution is not required much less justified.

There are causes ($C^1$) and there are causes ($C^2$). $C^1$ represents that category which is proffered by the proponents of revolution and which in fact is operative in a limited sense. The weakness of the monarch, the financial difficulties of France and the growing disparity between numbers and power in the French middle class were real sources of disorder. More importantly, however, these in and of themselves would never have led to revolution if it were not for those perpetual sources of disorder which reside in mankind: pride, ambition, avarice . . . et al. Man's nature is governed by various sets and combinations of disorderly behavioral characteristics. For most men, it is the social
environment which determines whether these disorderly appetites will vie for control (primarily within the boundaries of one’s personal life) or whether the battlefield is to be extended into the social sphere where the confrontation will produce multiple offspring.

For Burke balance and proportion are key concepts totally ignored by those who participated in the French Revolution. Whether it be in regard to the principles upon which government is established (liberty and order), the separation of powers existent in one level of government (the National Assembly, the monarch, and the parliaments), the division of power between different levels of government (national, provincial, district and municipal) or the coexistence in a relatively stable ratio of social classes—the French Revolution’s effect has been a force for total imbalance and disproportion. The exercise of will and inclination in the political arena are to be discouraged. Protection is best provided by will countering will and inclination countering inclination. In France power has become resident exclusively in the concept of liberty, in the National Assembly, in governmental organs at the national and municipal levels (ignoring intervening gradations: provincial and district) and in the middle class. Pluralist notions have disappeared as the nature of the human condition is ignored. Uniformity is preferred over diversity.
Properties interests, the clergy, the aristocracy, and the nuclear family structure are irreplaceable in any plural French social order. Their absence will cause disorder precisely because such institutions are "natural" in the order of things. Their abolition is a cause of disorder, additionally disorder will occur because these institutions will struggle to reassert themselves, even if the form in which they appear is revised. It is nonsensical to vent one's wrath against an institution which must ultimately prevail. The sooner one comes to recognize and make the appropriate distinctions between those conditions which have necessary and contingent characters, the less disorder will be fostered.

Burke conceives of the political order in terms suggestive of the solar system. That is, there is order when there exists a relative balance between forces of a centrifugal and those of a centripetal nature. Disorder would prevail in the solar system if either force was predominant. In one instance, the planets would free themselves of the force emanating from the center and carom off toward the periphery of the universe. In the other instance, the planets would be drawn ever more inward forcing a collision course with the sun. In the case of the (French) political universe, the balance of gravitational forces has broken down. The initial effect of the Revolution is to cause all institutions to fly from the center—the centrifugal force
is dominant. At this point, there is a state of pluralism, if by that one is referring strictly to numbers. However, if one means to suggest a particular set of institutions and competition among relatively balanced units for the rewards which these institutions profer, pluralism is null and void. This first centrifugal wave is followed by the predominance of centrifugal forces: the obvious negation of multiple centers of competing and countervailing power. According to Burke, the necessary end of this process for the French political process calls for the rise to power of "one general" with his becoming "master" of all in the political order. Most notions of order and disorder would equate disorder with centrifugation and order with its converse. Burke asserts that the two extremes converge in one unavoidable result: disorder. Only a balance between the two can preserve a pluralist political order; hence, order itself.
CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN THE WRITINGS OF G.W.F. HEGEL ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

G.W.F. Hegel and the French Revolution

Though there exists some minor disagreement among the interpreters of Hegel as to the meaning of his response to the French Revolution, there appears to be no disagreement as to the centrality of the event for both his personal and intellectual life. Hegel was just under 19 when the Bastille fell and just under 45 years of age at the time of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. Europe was to experience only fleeting periods of peace during this time. The French Revolution and its aftermath thus dominated what one might fairly consider to be his "formative" years. Walter Kaufmann maintains that: "What happened to France during the quarter of a century from the Revolution to Waterloo was not just French history but also German history, and not just history but again and again a matter of life and limb."¹

Hegel was a student of theology at Tubingen when the upheaval in France burst forth in 1789. Along with his fellow students, Holderlin and Schelling, Hegel was considered

by his contemporaries to be one of the most zealous supporters of the course of events in France. ² By 1794, his unqualified enthusiasm became tinged with reservation, if not "disgust." The wars undertaken by France and the terror which prevailed under the impetus of Robespierre provided the impetus for his evolving perspective. ³ As one writer asserts: "Like others, Hegel experienced the wave of reaction, but in his own way and without changing his attitude to one of conservatism." ⁴

Notes on the Significance of the French Revolution for Philosophy, and Specifically The Phenomenology of Mind

An explanation is in order for the heavy reliance which is placed upon The Phenomenology of Mind in the attempt to discern Hegel's understanding of the French Revolution. The Phenomenology is an effort which if categorized is placed in the discipline of metaphysics. Hegel succinctly posits his understanding of the purpose of philosophical inquiry when he asserts that: "Philosophy is its age comprehended in thought." ⁵ And in another place he offers a somewhat


⁴. Ibid.

different perspective: "When the power of unification dis­
appears from the life of men and opposites have lost their living relation and reciprocity (Wechselwirkung) and gain independence, then the need for philosophy originates." 6

Never once does Hegel refer to the event in question here, certainly not in the section entitled "Absolute Freedom and Terror" which Jean Hyppolite insists is concerned directly with the Revolution. Hyppolite asserts that:

... in this work of his (The Phenomenology of Mind), which takes up all the themes of his earlier writings, Hegel undertakes to comprehend the process which led necessarily to the French Revolution and its consequences, which were no less necessary, but which were hidden from those engaged in it. 7

In an attempt to obtain more specific identification of the appropriate sections, one takes due notice of footnotes by Walter Kaufmann to a long paragraph found in Hegel's "Preface" to that work 8 and Baille's "Introduction" to a section of the work entitled "Spirit in Self-Estrangement--The Discipline of Culture" 9 and his footnote to the aforementioned section, "Absolute Freedom and Terror." 10 All of the

6. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
7. Ibid., p. 42.
10. Ibid., p. 599.
above mentioned state without qualification that in those respective portions of his work, Hegel's intention is to discuss the Revolution in France, even if he neglects to make his subject explicit.

G.W.F. Hegel on the French Revolution

Comprehension of the concept of "Absolute Spirit" and the three forms in which it manifests itself in the world are essential to an understanding of Hegel's position in regard to the French Revolution. "Absolute Spirit" is simultaneously and successively: consciousness, self-consciousness and reason. Thus, it is unity itself. Everything is identical with itself. "Consciousness" occurs when a subject becomes "aware" or "realizes" an object which is external to it, "of which it is conscious."11 The object is understood as having an independent impenetrable, alien existence.12 On the other hand, "self-consciousness" involves the "recognition" that the object is not external to itself but rather identical with itself. It sees itself in the object.13 Both of these conceptions must be labeled abstractions, since they do not square with reality: their own true nature. If one delved deeply enough, one would discover that there is a

12. Ibid., pp. 350-1.
13. Ibid., p. 351.
deeper truth which both ignore. Thus, does the third of the triad rear its head:

... Reason is the principle which while admitting the distinction sees also the underlying identity. It is the principle of the identity of opposites. The object is now both distinct from the subject and yet identical with it. ... It is identity in difference.\(^{14}\)

The relevance of the above must now be established. "Absolute Spirit" is the ideal, not forever fixed, but always in process. Yet though involved in change, it is never capable of being fulfilled. It is a measure, itself an object to be aspired to in the sense that it would be a much improved state of things, if the forms of this world would be related to the Form of the constantly evolving world which is the "ground of being." However, it is disparity which exists and disparity which man perceives. "Consciousness" represents this disparity. Historically speaking, Hegel thought that he identified this state of being in the period of European history which followed the fall of the Roman Empire: the infusion of the philosophy of Christianity into European culture, an age of "belief."\(^{15}\) The emphasis on absolute otherness and contradictory identity between the worlds of the sensible and the super-sensible could not be more evident. The movement of the eighteenth century known as The

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 360.

\(^{15}\) J. B. Baille, "Commentary" in Hegel, The Phenomenology, p. 508.
Enlightenment corresponds to the state of mind known as "self-consciousness." In this epoch, "... truth as well as immediateness are united. Both worlds are reconciled and heaven is transplanted to the earth below." 16 Substance and form, spirit and letter, ground of being and existence are joined in oneness. Yet if The Enlightenment is a state of being, it is likewise becoming and process as well. It is its latter aspect which is of interest to those concerned with the events in France. For:

The interest which was divided between it (Truth) and the other (concrete actuality), now falls entirely within it (The Enlightenment). ... .

The opposition has been lifted into the higher victorious element, where it manifests itself in a clarified form. 17

Thus, one can see that the state of self-consciousness must be superseded since far from being resolved, contradiction has only been lifted from a condition of externality to one of internality. It remains opposition none the less.

Discussing the same historical period in a different work, The Philosophy of History, Hegel suggests that the pre-revolutionary period was as follows:

The political condition of France at that time presents nothing but a confused mass of privileges altogether contravening thought and reason—an utterly irrational state of things, and one


17. Ibid., p. 591.
with which the greatest corruption of morals, of spirit was associated. . . . 18

The French Revolution emerges "as a prodigious effort of Reason to actualize itself in the world. . . . 19 It constitutes the third stage of the triad in which Absolute Spirit manifests itself. Thus, one proceeds into the Revolution with Hegel with the assumption that it will represent the fruition of the latent, unresolved contradiction or conflict which has been transferred to an internal position in its predecessor.

In his "Preface" to The Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel acknowledges this dawning of a new era:

It is surely not difficult to see that our time is a time of birth and transition to a new period. The spirit has broken with what was hitherto the world of its existence and imagination and is about to submerge all this in the past; it is at work giving itself a new form. To be sure, the spirit is never at rest but always engaged in ever progressing motion. 20

In its struggle to actualize itself, Reason becomes "Absolute Freedom." This state of being is conceived of an "undivided substance." The world of existence understands itself as "... concretely embodied universal will, the will of all


individuals as such ... what appears as one by the whole is at once and consciously the deed of every individual." 21

There exists no significant opposition to the emergence of this single, all-encompassing will because the previous system which had been organized upon the basis of division into separate spheres and distinct wholes now is "collapsed" into a single entity. As Robert Nisbet suggests: "The State becomes powerful not by virtue of what it takes from the individual but by virtue of what it takes from the spiritual and social associations which compete with for men's devotions." 22

The distinction between subject and object is erased. All social ranks and classes are "effaced and annulled." Hegel asserts:

... each individual consciousness arises out of the sphere assigned to it, finds no longer its inmost nature and function in this isolated area, but grasps itself as the notion of (universal) will, grasps all the various spheres as the essential expression of this will, and is in consequence only able to realize itself in a work which is a work of the whole. ... (It) has removed the barriers confining it; its purpose is the universal purpose, its language universal law, its work universal achievement. 23

Historically, this notion of "Absolute Freedom" would appear to parallel the prohibition of trade guilds, economic, charitable, literary, cultural and educational societies. The


bonds of paternal authority and marriage are weakened. An attempt is made to have an elective clergy. Church lands are confiscated. The educational and charitable functions of the churches are discontinued. Nisbet points out: "If men were to be made free and wise, there had to be an enforced obliteration of old memoirs and prejudices embedded in traditional associations and institutions."  

The negating element in this whole movement is clearly predominant at this point. It is represented by the use of violence as an instrument of set policy. For Hegel, the entire system was characterized by "mass injustice" and, as a result, since the government did not undertake reform, "The change was necessarily violent."  

The positive component in this becoming of spirit presents itself at this stage in a way which for Hegel augurs well for the future, even if it can not proceed beyond mere potentiality at this time. It is the first time, in history that the constitution of a state has been established in harmony with its conception of right. "... Man's existence now centres in his head, i.e. in thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality."  

24. Nisbet, The Quest for Community, pp. 159-60.  
26. Ibid.
The revolutionary regime in power can not, however, accomplish positive deeds which will serve to transfer the universal will to the realm of mankind. It obstructs positive movement because it "... lets nothing break away and assume the shape of a detached object standing over against it."\(^{27}\) Direct democracy is insisted upon over representative democracy: "For in the case where the self is merely represented and ideally presented (vorgestellt), there it is not actual: where it is by proxy, it is not."\(^{28}\) The revolutionaries do not allow mediate levels of order to exist. The new source of governance arises out of the collapse of the old order and the suborders of which it is composed. However, the recently established order does not allow for any redefinition of process of differentiation of itself to occur. The state and the people exist, but even this is not seen as a contravention of participation in absolute oneness. The two are conceived as being self-identical, inherently indivisible.

Unfortunately, "purely abstract philosophical principles" in the form of "freedom" and "virtue" now hold sway. This transpires during the "Reign of Terror" under Robespierre. Hegel's conclusion is that: "Universal freedom can thus produce neither a positive achievement nor a deed; there is

28. Ibid., p. 604.
left for it only negative action; it is merely the rage and fury of destruction." 29 What Hegel discerns is the following: while consciousness as manifested in the successive regimes of the revolutionary elements "... does not let itself attain the reality of organic articulation or differentiation, distinction into spheres is an inherent aspect of its very nature, as being subject to "process" as is all else. Thus, while it might be inclined differently, nevertheless, it "distinguishes itself all the while." 30 What Hegel seems to be saying, then, is that the growth of mediate groups is part of the nature of things; it is an organic process. The difference which exists between the differentiation which one finds in the new as opposed to the old order can be best seen in the following statement by Nisbet:

If man was to be put in full possession of natural faculties, he had to be made free of the associations that fettered him, and, equally important, placed in new associations that would nurture his merging rationality and goodness. The rational State, with its own new subdivisions, had to become man's chief area of membership. 31

Thus, in this new social system the process of differentiation develops of necessity—the necessity of the State to promote its singular action of what constitutes political order. In this earthly realm, then, there is always articulation and distinction taking place. The form of government

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., pp. 604-5.
worked out by the "Reign of Terror" has the following effect:

Now that it is done with destroying the organization of the actual world, and subsists in isolated singleness, this is its sole object . . . pure negation, moreover, of the individual as a factor existing within the universal. The sole and only work and deed accomplished by universal freedom is therefore death—a death that achieves nothing, embraces nothing within its grasp.  

True freedom or "liberty" degenerates into "license." Subjective notions of virtue based on personal disposition dominate the consciousness of the leadership producing government by terror. Eventually, government by disposition turns on those whom it at one time served: "It (the government) exercises its power without legal formalities, and the punishment it inflicts is equally simple—death." Again reference is made to the analysis of Nisbet:

Of all the subtle alchemies of thought performed by Rousseau and by the guiding spirits of the Revolution, the subtlest and the most potent was the conversion of absolute power into the illusion of mass freedom. What was new, and profoundly exciting, was the sense of achieving freedom through absolute identification with the will of the majority, a will expressed relentlessly and single-mindedly by the government.  

The mistake then is twofold. First, absolute freedom conceives of itself as the quintessential realization of the universal in the real, the concrete. The form which


it adopts is that of the various and varying governmental structures which reign during this period. The problem being that "absolute freedom" does not recognize its true nature—that it is not self-identical with universal spirit but rather, it is merely a "faction" which excludes other from sharing in the new order and thus as a "specific, determinate will." Thus, it is necessarily in opposition to the universal will. Secondly, "This unmediated encounter of the universal and the individual rests upon an abstraction which considers man only as a citizen and not as a bourgeois, the essentially private individual."  

In process, the consciousness of many individuals who by some combination of fanaticism and idealism had effected the rule of terror undergoes significant change: consciousness realizes that it misconstrues reality in conceiving of itself in "immediate unity" with universal will. It comes to know that universal will can not be understood as "... the immediate essence, not will as revolutionary government or anarchy struggling to establish an anarchical constitution." Consciousness can only know universal will as "pure knowledge" and itself as "a form which is known by it as form." The question is: has the process gone through a two step cycle—consciousness to self-consciousness and back

35. Hyppolite, Studies on Marx and Hegel, p. 54.
to consciousness again? Or does the process entail something else? As a result of such a disordered political condition, the "absolute necessity" of an "organized government" becomes obvious: "for all inclinations, all interests, reason itself revolted against this terribly consistent liberty." 37

As a result of this change in the state of consciousness, the organization of society into "spheres" takes place once more. "Shape and form" are once again introduced. Out of the fear of death which people knew as "their absolute lord and master," individuals "submit" to this process of distinction and differentiation. Each returns to a sphere in which his action is restricted and his talk is limited "but thereby to their substantial reality." 38 As W. T. Stace asserts:

... it is now evident that the one (subject) can not exist without the other (object). Consequently the object has at last to be recognized as a one which is in itself many, or, what is the same thing, as a universality or unity which of its own motion undergoes diremption into diversity. 39

This new condition returns to differentiation and distinction: "spheres," classes functional groups with the attendant changes in attitudes. Though this parallels the very system on which the old, collapsed order was founded, there is an important difference:


By "freedom" Hegel does not mean "license" or abstract freedom or "freedom under the law" or concrete freedom, it has become these and at the appropriate time passed beyond (or comprehended these forms). What he is referring to is "just law" or "rational freedom." Hegel's notion of rationality includes two senses of the term: "Material" and "formal." A materially rational law or institution means one which is based on or can be justified by some universal principle of reason. The principle, however, may be present implicitly rather than explicitly, i.e., it may be discovered after an examination of the law or institution concerned instead of being more or less obvious to every intelligent mind. Hence a relationship or arrangement will be formally rational when the inner or inherent rationality of it is easily apparent. In Hegel's opinion: "Custom or a charter granting particular privileges necessarily lacks the form of rationality even if it is substantially rational; only general statutes or Gesetze possess rational form." 41


The rise of Napoleon brings to mind Hegel's maxim that the closest approximation to the universal will become reality only in the following manner:

For the universal to pass into deed, it must gather itself into the single unity of individuality and put an individual consciousness in the forefront; for universal will is an actual concrete idol only in a self that is single and one.42

It would appear that Napoleon might well be the "individuality" that he was referring to from lines that he was later to pen in The Philosophy of History:

He knew how to rule . . . The avocats, idealogues, and abstract-principle men who ventured to show themselves he sent 'to the right about,' and the sway of mistrust was exchanged for that of respect and fear.43

Reason, the final step in the triad, has become; it is. The "Absolute Spirit" has manifested itself as political rationality, Napoleon being it arrived at maturation.

Hegel, The French Revolution and Order

One of the more significant statements attributed to Hegel concerning his philosophy of history reads:

... the insight to which philosophy should help us is that the actual world is as it ought to be. ... God rules the world: the content of his government, the execution of his plan, is world history, and its presupposition is that the ideal accomplishes itself, that only what accords with the idea has actuality. Before the pure light of this divine idea, which is no mere ideal, the semblance

that the world is a mad, foolish happening disapp­
ears. . . .44

When Hegel speaks thus, his intention is as follows: "the
actual world is as it ought to be" because "... the ideal
(perceived as process, as dialectic) accomplishes itself,
that only what accords with (the constantly developing con­
dition of) the idea has actuality." "Absolute spirit" repre­
sents absolute order. ("Absolute spirit" can not be perfectly
reflected in an existential form.) Reason realized (the
third of the three components of absolute spirit). On a
third level, there exist particular political orders which
might well represent disorder if the occasion arises when
as part of the dialectic (necessity), it confronts Reason as
negativity. The first conclusion then is that Order ("abso­
lute spirit") is, Reason (the highest order attainable in
concrete life) is becoming and many particular political
orders rise and fall in the process of helping to facilitate
or obstruct the actualization of Reason in existence.

The dialectical process defines the historical pro­
cess. It is in fact the means by which order realizes it­
self. One of the clearest explanations of Hegel's dialectical,
historical process is contained in "The Preface" to The
Phenomenology of Mind:

44. Hegel, as cited in Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinter­
pretation, p. 256.
The bud disappears as the blossom bursts forth, and one could say that the former is refuted by the latter. In the same way, the fruit declares the blossom to be a false existence of the plant, and the fruit supplants the blossom as the truth of the plant. These forms do not only differ, they also displace each other because they are incompatible. Their fluid nature, however, makes them, at the same time elements of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which one is as necessary as the other; and it is only this equal necessity that constitutes the life of the whole.\footnote{45. Hegel, as cited in Kaufmann, \textit{Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary}, p. 370.}

Not only does Order manifest itself ("... the actual world is as it ought to be") but what is more, Order can be characterized as dynamic ("their fluid nature"). Equally significant is that Hegel discerns Order as comprehending and growing from an infusion of disorder or negativity (the blossom refutes the bud). Indeed, Order is also conceived of as "organic unity."

Yet, if these comments facilitate an understanding of Hegel's concept of order, they do not address themselves specifically to the concept of order which emerges from his responses to the French Revolution. Writing in \textit{The Phenomenology}, Hegel equates the historical period known as The Enlightenment with the state of being known as "self-consciousness." In \textit{The Philosophy of History}, the same period of time is conceptualized as "pre-revolutionary." It in turn is characterized as "an utterly irrational state of things."

\footnote{45. Hegel, as cited in Kaufmann, \textit{Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary}, p. 370.}
As "irrational" element, this era of French history immediately preceding the Revolution must be considered to be a period when things are in disorder or out of order, on the one hand. On the other hand, this same period of time understood as the stage of "self-consciousness" (the second of three stages in the triad: consciousness, self-consciousness and Reason) in the dialectical process, though seen as disorder is recognized as contributing to the ultimate emergence of the emergence of order in its highest concrete form: Reason. Viewed in and of itself, this pre-revolutionary period constitutes a more reasonable facsimile of Order than its predecessor and a less reasonable facsimile than its successor.

The French Revolution represents the third (and final) stage in the attempt of Reason to actualize itself or viewed somewhat differently the attempt of the concrete political order of France to more perfectly reflect Order—both perspectives amounting to the same thing. Z. A. Pelczynski suggests that Reason or Rationality (the order to be realized) has the following meaning for Hegel: (1) "The concepts of reason are 'concrete' in the sense that they contain features derived from the knowledge of actual conduct or institution." 46 (2) Actualized concepts are not rational simply

because they are, rather they must be made manifest "formally" in "... that type of human organization which employs to the highest possible degree men's thinking faculties and calls predominantly for conscious decision and action" and "materially" in "... the differentiation of the public authority into branches, organs or powers." 47

Order is not understood to be made evident exclusively or even primarily in the world of form(s). Rather, the unity of spirit and form constitute Order. The French Revolution bears witness to the disparity between spirit and form:

"Through the bath of its Revolution, the French nation has been liberated from many institutions which the human spirit had outgrown like baby shoes and which therefore weighed on it ... as fetters devoid of spirit." 48 If those who represent the old forms reject the new spirit, then violence (an instance of disorder is a "necessary" part of the process. Kaufmann reminds one that for Hegel "necessary" means "... the negation of 'utterly arbitrary.'" 49

Hegel is careful to indicate that the first emergence of the new spirit will not bring the new Order into fulfillment. He cautions that:

47. Ibid., p. 115.


what is new here does not have perfect actuality any more than the new born child; and it is essential not to overlook this. The first emergence is only the immediacy of its Concept. Even as a building is not finished when its foundation has been laid, the attained Concept of the whole is not the whole itself. When we wish to see an oak—the strength of its trunk, the spread of its foliage—and the mass of its foliage—we are not satisfied when in its place we are shown an acorn.  

In this movement toward actualization, disorder arose because the time was not yet right for Reason to actualize itself. The state of enough "consciousnesses" was not yet in self-identity with what Rationality decreed for the concrete political order of France. Instead of attempting to manifest itself as Reason, it sought unity with "Absolute Spirit," a necessary "error" (the two terms not being contradictory) in the process of growth. Though it retained its seed of potentiality—order derived from thought, conscious, rational activity—nevertheless the prevailing political order represented by Robespierre and the various Committees attempted to eradicate (1) mediate (between the State and the citizen) groups and (2) the distinction between "citizen" and "bourgeois." In other words, the regime in power viewed the existence of suborders as somehow threatening to Order itself.

The attempt to articulate total order—singular, self-identical and undifferentiated—only leads to chaos. 

50. Ibid., p. 380.
Yet, as James Feibleman has suggested: "Perfect chaos has a uniformity about it that renders it perilously close to order. Total order and total disorder may prove to be the same thing."  

Government is conducted by "disposition" (Subjective notions of virtue) with no adherence to law and formality (instruments frequently utilized by political orders).

The result is death and destruction:

... But even as we contemplate history as this slaughter bench on which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed, our thoughts can not avoid the question for whom, for what final aim these monstrous sacrifices have been made.  

Out of this reign of terror emerges a new order. Even while the regime in power (a particular order has been attempting to obstruct the surfacing of Order, the organic process which comprehends the latter has been growing apace virtually oblivious to hindrances. Right Order instead of discovering itself in unity as undifferentiated oneness finds its true nature as identity in difference. "Self-consciousness" undergoes change, not regression to "consciousness" but progression to Reason. Suborders and differentiation of roles are facilitated as conducive to Order. Approximation, not identity is sought. "Absolute Order" conceived as absolute self-


52. Hegel, as cited in Kaufmann, Hegel: A reinterpretation, p. 251.
identity is recognized as "pure knowledge," ideal measure and aspiration.

The new suborders and conditions of differentiation differ from their predecessors in that they more perfectly reflect Hegel's conception of the Rational, previously mentioned. The forms are "refreshed" and "revived." The Accession of Napoleon to the position of leadership ensures the highest possible degree of actualization. Right Order is best represented if the seat of power and authority rest with a single individual (form) imbued with the appropriate spirit (the concept of Reason).

Z. A. Pelczynski articulates well Hegel's own conclusions about the French Revolution and its relationship to the concept when he says:

Its real importance . . . was that it brought to light the underlying plan and symmetry of the whole and taught men to act consciously and thoughtfully in politics. In other words, the Revolution did not proclaim completely new principles of human political existence; rather it made man aware of the ones which had already been implicit but not fully appreciated and of the necessity to guide actions by reference to them. The French Revolution did not so much attempt to revolutionize political life as rationalize it.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{53} Pelczynski, "An Introductory Essay" in Pelczynski, ed., Hegel's Political Writings, p. 36.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In an attempt to draw some conclusions, it is instructive to examine the manner in which Adams, Burke and Hegel respond to some of the same conceptual problems. One such problem revolves around the assessment of the causal factors which underlie the Revolution. Adams and Burke distinguish between two levels of causation. Both men agree that the social situation existing in France in the pre-revolutionary period was unhealthy in nature and that at the time of the revolution's inception, the needed reforms have not as yet been completed. This, then, is one level of causation unmet needs which are articulated by the revolutionaries themselves and which from Adams' and Burke's perspective are contributory in a limited sense. Yet, they perceive another, more fundamental, cause which they both perceive is inherent in human nature. Adams refers to this as the characteristic of "passion" or the destructive turn which man's need for distinction is wont to take. Adams insists that what one is observing in the French Revolution is a struggle for power between a few aristocratic families and the French monarch. Burke agrees with this analysis. The
pride, ambition and avarice of a few are bringing this destruction down upon the nation. Imbalance in the human personality spills over into the political system, effecting societal disorder.

Hegel’s analysis differs on the question of causality. He also perceives two levels of causality; however, his categorization varies from that of Adams and Burke. Hegel labels the historical period known as the Enlightenment as the pre-revolutionary epoch. As with any historical period, it is less than it is to become. By definition, it is out of order with what is to transcend it, or what is to "refute" it. The historical process must necessarily proceed according to the dialectical process. Thus, while there are recognizable political and sociological causes such as the obvious disparity which exists between the power exercised by the middle class and the percentage which that class represents in the total population, these are nevertheless only the instrument by which the fundamental cause—the dialectical process—comes to realize itself in history. The disparity which exists between form and spirit is the real cause of the revolution in France.

Adams and Burke both understand order to be a concept requiring change of an evolutionary nature. Adams believes this to be true because of his feeling that significant and positive change can only occur as a consequence of widespread public support. Not only must the people approve of the
proposed change, but their approval if it is to be meaningful is itself to be in correspondence with accurate knowledge of the situation. Mere approval, unsubstantiated in enlightened public attitudes, is a debasing and harmful exercise of "passion." A well founded political order then reflects the extent attitudes of a significant segment of the affected population. An enlightened minority might well attempt to effect changes, but its function is limited to that of public education. Action can only proceed after certain conditions are fulfilled. If the requisite steps are not taken, change may still occur but its weak foundation is likely to cause its immediate downfall. Only disorder can result.

Though in basic agreement with Adams, Burke has a slightly different emphasis. Order is achieved through evolution since the social contract is always in existence. Order equates itself with obligation. Disorder occurs when the search for consent as the underpinning of obligation is undertaken. For Burke custom, "prejudice" and "habituation" are integral parts of any healthy political order. Movement away from an order which has given proper consideration to such factors should proceed incrementally at most. Of equal importance, however, is Burke's assertion that it is the constituent units of society which must withstand the tests posed by the passage of time, and not society itself. Each component must be evaluated on an individual basis. In turn, change is to be carefully delimited to only those segments
of the whole which require it. Of course, there is the presumption that widespread simultaneous change which would bring into question the legitimacy of the order itself will rarely, if ever be necessary. Thus, reform or discriminate change is sufficient. Revolution or indiscriminate change is excessive.

The distinction between evolution and revolution is not as important for Hegel as it is for Adams and Burke. Either can be the means by which Order comes closer to self-realization. The question for Hegel is not whether evolution or revolution is to be the preferred means. Rather, the question to be asked is why one or the other is necessary. Hegel suggests that the more extreme alternative, revolution, occurs in instances in which individuals or groups in power elect to remain committed to old forms and reject the new spirit which could infuse such forms with meaning. The choice of evolution or revolution is then a contingent question, to be decided at the level of human interaction removed from that of ultimate causation.

All three theorists are concerned with the relationship of means to ends. Adams insists that one's means ought to reflect and be consistent with the nature of the order which is to result. Only in the event that there is widespread, basic agreement about the nature of the course to be followed will order result. Burke has the same understanding. If one's aim is to establish order, then one's means
must reflect the prejudices, customs and experience of the people whom the order is to affect. If one does violence to such values, then the congruity of means and ends will necessarily result in disorder. Hegel rejects the explanation which Adams and Burke offer. Depending on the particular historical situation, the process of disorder can be the means by which the old order is both refuted and transcended. Disorder in means, if and when it does occur, does result in the establishment of a political order more in harmony with Order itself.

All three—Adams, Burke and Hegel—are in agreement about certain aspects of the French Revolution seen as disorder. Adams warns of the disorder which occurs when government fails to translate natural law into positive law. Burke points to the same difficulty when he emphasizes the imbalance in France which exists between the notions of liberty and order. Hegel perceives disorder in what he labels government by "disposition" as distinct from government conducted according to written, codified law. Secondly, Adams condemns the attempt to eradicate all distinctions among men. He asserts that there are within men inherently different characteristics. Burke agrees. In addition, he suggests that since they are inherent in man, any attempt to eradicate such distinctions can only result in their reappearance in some other form. Perhaps, their reappearance will be accompanied by a greater degree of malevolence.
Hegel suggests that the attempt to void the distinction between an individual as a citizen as separate from a "bourgeois" is in error. Finally, Adams condemns a political system which ignores notions of the separation of powers, balance, equilibrium and complexity. Burke reflects the same attitude. He attacks the French for their lack of balance and proportion in their governmental system. According to Burke, the French political order ought to reflect the balance of social classes, as well as a separation of powers between the monarch, the Estates General and the parliaments. In addition, that system ought to institute a division of powers between the national, provincial, district and local levels of government. Hegel maintains that the effort to abolish all those groups and organizations which exist in a mediate relationship between the national government and the citizen is not an act calculated to facilitate the fruition of order.

These are serious indictments of the French Revolution. Yet, Adams and Burke part company with Hegel in their overall assessment of this event. Both men see no connection between the concept of disorder and that of order. Thus, both consider the French Revolution to be totally regressive in nature. Both believe that the only foreseeable consequence is absolute government, or as Burke labels it, "singularity." On a spectrum which represents disorder, confusion and absolute government serve as the two poles.
As they see it, the problem is to seek a different spectrum, that which represents order. Yet, the disconnection which exists between the two makes discovery of the desired path an uncertain proposition. Disorder in its final stage blossoms into absolute government. What has been a process of disorder characterized by dynamism, now becomes one characterized by stasis.

Hegel perceives the event in a different light. If each historical period has its predecessor, so too does it contain within itself the seed of its successor. Just as one historical period is qualitatively superior to its predecessor, so also is it qualitatively inferior to its successor. The dialectical process insures that while the French Revolution contains its aspects of disorder, nevertheless, it proceeds in the name of Order. Hegel, also, perceives development from confusion and chaos to singularity in the political order. Yet, the singularity represented by the accession of Napoleon is seen as a more perfect integration of Absolute Spirit with form than has previously existed. Reason (Order) is seen as the residence of power and authority in the person of a single individual. For Hegel, unlike Adams and Burke, the French Revolution is a step toward the institution of a more perfect political order.
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