THE ANGLO-SAXON MYTH AND
ARTISAN MENTALITY - 1780 - 1830

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The whole of this thesis is my own and original work.

Signed
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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the significance of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution as part of the 18th century artisan mind. The study is undertaken by applying social science concepts such as structure, paradigm and myth to examine the logic of popular ideas.

The myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution is first related to the general level of rationality or mentality. This is followed by two case study chapters which examine particular expressions of 'Anglo-Saxon' or gothic thought in detail. This involves a reassessment of the writing of Major John Cartwright, Thomas Bewick, William Cobbett, Sir William Jones, John Baxter, Thomas Evans, Thomas Spence and Grovenor Henson. The last chapter draws together the common elements in all these writers and supports the existence of 'gothic paradigm' by examples from other writers of the time.

It is argued that virtue, custom and natural law form part of a single paradigm of thought. It is further argued that these secular political concepts are embedded in a (Protestant) religious framework. A deeper substructure is also discovered and is formalised using social anthropological conceptions of myth. Consequently, while not a primitive or pre-literate society, the study of certain aspects of its political ideology suggests 18th century society is pre-Enlightened, pre or semi-industrial and pre (modern) capitalist in many of its habits of mind.
PREFACE

The requirements as to the scope and content of Ph.D. theses have been taken seriously.

Some new sources have been used. A new gloss has often been put on familiar material. Old arguments have been recast.

The discipline of history is undergoing the broadening of its framework. An attempt has been made to associate myself with this movement. In particular, I have tried to relate my topic to, and illuminate it by, methods and concepts used in the other social sciences.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning, since the marks are still evident, that the thesis began life as a topic in the history of political thought.
INTRODUCTION

Basically this thesis is concerned with the problem of rationality and rationalisation. In the 18th century context, it is not possible to think and write about these two historical processes without also giving some consideration to the 18th century movement of ideas known as Rationalism. From this movement, its propagandists and interpreters, the idea of the 18th century as the Age of Reason took root and spread to become the common image of the period in 20th Century historiography and society. Although there are now signs of a reassessment since I first put pen to paper on the topic, this image of reason and secularisation has helped to fashion the writings of numerous modern historians, regardless of political complexion. For example, it is found in the Marxist writings of Christopher Hill and the early writing of E.P. Thompson, no less than in John Osborne and other authors generally 'conservative' account of the ideas of Major John Cartwright. Whatever their ideological differences, both Osborne and Thompson praise Cartwright's efforts in prefiguring modern political organisation while dismissing that part of his ideology, and the Anglo-Saxon myth in particular, as belonging to a pre-industrial outmoded form of thinking.

More sense can be made of the thesis if I say something about its unfortunate history. It is part of what originally was a much bigger piece of work. The total work was submitted some time ago but was eventually not allowed to be examined because its length was well above the requirements for ANU theses. In this connection I would like to acknowledge my gratitude and debt to Campbell MacKnight who very kindly consented to read the full manuscript. The inordinate amount of time involved in the total process, explains why there is little reference to the most recent secondary and theoretical literature. While some of this literature may weaken the originality of the thesis, none of it makes me want to revise my opinions or methods.


** There is a brief definition of Rationalism below, Chapter One, p. 29

* A more detailed criticism, together with citations, is given in the text of the thesis.
Like Thompson, Christopher Hill is sensitive to the significance of this type of thought, although moreso post-Keith Thomas than before. It was through Hill's essay on "The Norman Yoke" that I first became aware of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon Constitution. In an impressive survey he traces the rhythms of the Anglo-Saxon myth from its obscure beginnings to its end as a rhetorical literary device in the 19th and 20th centuries. He interprets the myth in terms of an underlying property theme. The form the myth takes is explained by way of a "backward look" mentality that is characteristic of a pre-industrial society. Despite this, Hill's account, in common with other writers on the topic, reads as if he were dealing with people who had the same kind of mentality as himself. *

Yet at first I found Hill's explanation very convincing. Only later, when I came across the writings of J.G.A. Pocock, did my doubts start to crystallise. Although I still found Hill's property theme and his association of the backward look with a pre-industrial or agrarian society very interesting, it soon became clear an explanation of the myth in these terms was not sufficient. Even in the 17th century, and more so in the 18th, the Saxons were long since past and seemed to belong to a different kind of society. Given that the backward look was, perhaps, inevitable, why was it felt necessary to reach right back to the Saxons? Why not some alternative, closer, device or model?

Hill's analysis is much stronger on the 17th century and leaves room for a fuller account of the 18th century version of the myth. Acquaintance with J.G.A. Pocock's notion of a political language and his analysis of 17th century political ideas in terms of paradigms raised questions about writing the history of ideas in a different manner from that normally adopted by social historians and by historians of ideas in the American style. My background in political philosophy and ideas led me to be sympathetic to this more 'conceptual' approach; my background in social anthropology, besides leading me in the same direction also suggested certain paths to take regarding 'pre-industrial' societies and 'archaic' systems of belief. Yet as my studies lengthened I also began to appreciate the concerns of the historian.

* For the particular books I delved into, see the Bibliography p.xxxviii.
Formerly, questions of method and theory were discussed in some detail. But there is a brief summary in what shortly follows, and there is within the text a shift backwards and forwards between ideas and concepts taken from political theory, social anthropology and history. I have tried to apply a method but at the same time have paid close attention to historical particulars and individuals. Probably, in this truncated form, there is an over-indulgence in the thesis in discussing the variety of individual ideas. Explanation is, to a large extent, 'embedded' in the two 'case study' chapters rather than spelled out.

So the thesis is an attempt to bridge some gaps, or to use Gramsci's term to tighten a "suture" or rough stitching. And not merely between disciplines or areas but also between objects of study. Pocock, Goldmann and Foucault tend to play down the possibilities of popular ideas or ideology being amenable to conceptual analysis. But as Gramsci says,

studying the history and the logic of the various philosophers' philosophies is not enough ... attention should be drawn to the other parts of the history of philosophy; to the conceptions of the world held by the great masses to those of the most restricted ruling (or intellectual) groups, and finally to the links between these various cultural complexes and the philosophy of the philosophers. The philosophy of an age is not the philosophy of this or that philosopher, of this or that group of intellectuals, of this or that broad sections of popular masses. It is a ... combination of all these elements ...  

As I immersed myself in the literature produced by artisans and honorary artisans in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, it became clear that the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution contained a 'philosophy' of this sort and that it was connected to the more formal philosophy of, say, Locke or Machiavelli. The Anglo-Saxon myth is, I began to realise, a "conception of the world" in Gramsci's sense. As research progressed, what started out as an investigation and an analysis of a particular idea was eventually written up as a contribution to the history of a more general mentality or consciousness. This is done from a loosely structural point of view rather than from the event or situation that

is normally preferred by historians.  

When writing a history of "conceptions of the world", the problem soon arises of how to give a satisfactory account of a particular conception? What method should be adopted? Above all, a mentality is expressed in words, in language. My sensitivity to this problem became heightened through reading J.G.A. Pocock on the "ancient constitution" and on other commonwealth ideas. From there, I began to examine the question of method and language more generally through an examination of the ideas of Foucault, Althusser, George Boas, Harold Lasswell, Quentin Skinner, phenomenology, Kuhn, Lucien Goldmann and others. In order to aid the reader's understanding it may be useful to give a brief account of my conclusions. What I accepted, and what I rejected. It is also pertinent to add that I am aware that many of these theorists work within different epistemological frameworks, so I plead guilty to a certain amount of eclecticism. Having said this, I should perhaps add that I was and am still sufficiently influenced by Marx and other Marxists, particularly Gramsci and Lucien Goldman to attempt to relate ideas to their social and economic foundations.

First, I accept most of the criticisms made by Foucault, Althusser and Skinner against the traditional method in writing about ideas or ideologies. This is not the place to go through those arguments in detail.  

But their arguments involve the rejection of certain assumptions, or 'strategies' as Foucault calls them, that were and still are common in historiography and the history of ideas. Basically, the new method is founded in a metaphysic of difference while the old approach is rooted in the idea of sameness. Acceptance that ideas should be written about with the concept of difference in mind, involves the rejection of certain assumptions based on the 'sameness' principle. It rejects the notion of a tradition as a principle of investigation, since by definition ideas which are said to belong to a single tradition are of the same kind or type. Once ideas, or the writings of particular writers over a long period of time, are seen as part of a tradition, one way of validating that tradition is to trace them back to a common origin. Traditions have origins.


4. See again the Bibliography. In particular, see the arguments put forward by Louis Althusser, For Marx (Penguin edn. London 1969), Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge (London 1972) and The Order of Things (London 1970), and Quentin Skinner "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" in History and Theory, VIII, 1, 1969.
Consequently, too often disregarding differences in historical content, the history of ideas becomes the quest for a common origin. The notion of democracy in Paine is traced back to the idea of democracy in classical Greece. Often this exercise also involves a process known as 'essentialism'. The meaning of democracy in Paine is essentially the same as the meaning of democracy in the writings of Plato. Or, there is a socialist tradition where the seeds of socialism are found in Plato or, later, in the English Civil War. A genealogy or lineage is often constructed in the process. I have used the term 'seeds', since the metaphor which is used as a vehicle for carrying the 'traditions' intellectual baggage is organic or botanical. Ideas are planted, grow, ferment, spread, germinate and so forth. They have the same root. They are also said to pass from one writer to another, whereby one writer or author is said to 'influence' another. This lends itself to an author-centred approach when writing about ideas. Elements of the sameness metaphysic are found in the writings of Marxian historians such as Thompson and Hill as well as more 'bourgeois' historians.

The rejection of a writing strategy or approach based on sameness, tradition, origins, essentialism, influence, a botanical metaphor and authors involves its replacement by a new kind of method. In place of these concepts are put epistemological or ideological limits and silence, transformation, language or code instead of author, structure or paradigm, and some sense of the unconscious or 'sub-text', or as Foucault puts it "what was being said in what was said".

In order to establish difference, differences between set of ideas, it is necessary to break up a tradition of thought or even the writings of a particular writer. In Althusser's now well-known and controversial example, which is also used by Skinner, Marx's earlier writings are epistemologically distinct from his later writings. There is a break or a rupture in thought. A break or rupture is signalled by the absence of a term used in an earlier piece of writing. In Marx, it is the supposed absence in Capital of the concept of alienation found in his earlier writings. Or, it may be the transformation in meaning of a word used.

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5. Examples are in the writings previously cited. But see also Alexander Gray's The Socialist Tradition (London 1946) and E. Tuveson Millenium and Utopia (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949). More recent examples could be given.
in both earlier or later texts. The term 'revolution' may not have the same meaning in, say, Locke's Second Treatise as it does in Paine's Rights of Man, although Locke is supposed to have 'influenced' Paine. The 'limits' of thought or mentality of a text or 'language' is provided by its conceptual structure. The 'limits' or structure are indicated by 'silences'. For example, the notion of 'silence' helps to place the agrarian 'socialism' of Thomas Spence by making us aware of what was not in his mind in relation to the kind of ideology that was to come later. In Spence's writings, there is no critique of profit in the capitalist sense; there is also the absence of proposals for the nationalisation of industry. The method also includes studying political literature with an attempt at unravelling its language or code rather than examining the intentions of a particular author or text, or even tracing a single concept such as natural law or 'the people' across a number of texts or authors. In the words of one reviewer it is a form of analysis which "without obfuscating the divergent aims of different political writers, tries to establish the linguistic and conceptual system common to them." Probably, the earlier part of this quotation could not be applied to writers such as Foucault and Althusser who take linguistics as their starting point.

A more empirical approach is taken up by J.G.A. Pocock, who, I feel, has a greater sensitivity to social context and historical meaning than the two French writers. Rather than a statement's logical structure, Pocock is concerned with a statement's "concrete character as an historical phenomenon". Pocock acknowledges his debt to Thomas Kuhn who, as he says, "has accustomed readers to think of the history of science as essentially a history of discourse and of language."^{6}^{7}^{8}

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7. See also B.N. Colby "Ethnographic Semantics: a preliminary survey" in Current Anthropology, 7, February 1966, 3-32. Harold Lasswell, Nathan Leites and others, Language of Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1949) for discussions which concentrate on meaning in language rather than its 'grammatical' structure. Gramsci, Notebooks, 428, 450 also argues that Marxism ought to include a 'philology', a "method of scholarship which would ascertain the individuality of particular cultural expressions" linked with Marxian "laws of tendency". On the importance of philology see also John Allegro The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross (Abacus edn. 1973), 17, 19, 21. Allegro, however, associates philology with origins rather than structure.

Kuhn's explanation of scientific discovery can be transferred without much difficulty to the history of political thought. For Kuhn, progress in scientific thought is a question of paradigm shifts or breaks or ruptures. Both Pocock and Kuhn see paradigms as "linguistic structures", as clusters or webs of words and concepts. But scholars should "look empirically at language rather than immediately at theory", according to Pocock. In some respects in the thesis I have followed the structuralism of the Namier method in "minutely dissecting and 'disintegrating' material prior to reconstruction", although I have not taken over underlying assumptions about the primacy of politics and psychology. The earlier chapters are exercises in criticism and dissection, while the last chapter attempts reconstruction. Unfortunately this involves, in Felix Gilbert's words, "careful reading of a text from sentence to sentence, almost word to word" so that "the connections become evident to the reader ... by making him a participant in a detailed textbook study". This is necessary given the historical depth in language. Words like 'progress' and 'revolution' are problematical in this sense. Volney writes in a seemingly modern fashion about the "constant progress of societies" but then relates it to "an eternal circle of passions" whereby "experience is useless since salutary examples are often forgotten."9 This sort of thing is, as it were, an historical sub-text that is often at least half-hidden from the consciousness of the modern reader. The paradigm or structuralist method is also a method for revealing other sub-texts which are at least often only half-conscious in the minds of the historical participants themselves.

* * * *

Besides the term paradigm, I have used a number of fairly specialised words, the use of which is often ambiguous or a matter of controversy and are probably unfamiliar to many historians. Consequently, it will no doubt be of help to the reader if I briefly define my understanding of these terms. Some indication has already been given of how I understand and use the notion of a paradigm. But it is important to point out, given the concerns of 'orthodox' historians, that paradigms, besides being linguistic structures restrict or limit what Kuhn calls "the phenomenological field". The construction of a paradigm is not an attempt to explain the

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9. C.F. Volney, The Ruins or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires, (London, 1795), 77-8. Similarly, when John Cartwright says that he knows the "secret of revolutions", he is not referring to progress through revolutions but to the interminable "rise and fall of kingdoms". 
complete thought or works of an author or even a complete text, since neither author nor text is the object of study. Although he employs the term "discursive formations", the paradigm method, to use the words of Foucault, takes the statement as "the atom of discourse... the elementary unit". Discursive formations or linguistic paradigms are in fact "groups of statements."\textsuperscript{10} They are uncovered by looking for,

Relations between statements, (even if the author is unaware of them; even if the statements do not have the same author; even if the authors were unaware of each others existence), relations between groups of statements...\textsuperscript{11}

By looking at relations the student ends up with a linguistic or conceptual framework or structure, or as Pocock says, "an inherited and transmitted linguistic structure". According to Pocock the history of political thought, which I interpret in the widest sense of the term, can be written up as "the production, modification and transformation of paradigms". The writings of an author or an organisation, like political language itself, contain "a highly complex language, in which many paradigmatic structures exist simultaneously". In 18th century political thought, Pocock finds paradigms based on natural law, on virtue, on custom and tradition and so on. Lastly, paradigm is defined in the two senses used here. It is both a method, "a matrix for the history of political ideas", and "a theory of ... political language", a presentation of particular forms of political speech or expression.\textsuperscript{12}

A closely linked concept is the term 'moment' which is employed generally in the thesis. A 'moment' is defined as "a constituent or active principle in thought", or, as "one of the elements of a complex conceptual entity". The structure that I have constructed in the last chapter is such a moment in the general 'ideology' of the artisan mind.

A moment in thought implies that the writer adopts certain ideas or ways of thinking and rejects others. The 'Gothic moment' in the artisan mind involves certain assumptions about natural rights, custom, virtue and liberty and constitutionalism and about the development of society in general. Adopting a purely natural rights approach instead, involved a different

\textsuperscript{10} Michel Foucault, \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge}, (London, 1976) 6-7.

\textsuperscript{11} Foucault, \textit{Archaeology}, 119.

\textsuperscript{12} Pocock, \textit{Politics}, 21-22, 25, 28; see also his \textit{Machiavellian Moment}, (Princeton 1975), 84.
writing strategy, which is more deductive and rationalist. But the
constitutionalist argument involved talking about historical cycles,
about virtuous example and behaviour and other things. A moment, and
to some extent Pocock has here made it interchangeable with paradigm,
involves selection from the thoughts of a particular writer or set of
authors. His "Machiavellian Moment", he says, is a selective enterprise,
in the sense that it does not commit us to interpreting
the totality of his thought ... 'the Machiavellian
moment' entails less a history of Machiavelli than a
historical presentation of Machiavelli ... The test
of this method is its ability to narrate a process
actually taking place in the history of ideas... 13

It is this sort of "historical presentation", or something like it,
that I have adopted in my analysis of the ideas of John Baxter, John
Cartwright and other 18th century Radicals. But the point of entry, so
to speak, is the popular political idea in which the 'moment' is embedded.
This idea is the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, a political model,
similar in function but not structure to, say, the position that the Cuban
Revolution occupied a few years ago, or the Russian Revolution some years
before. These models are sometimes referred to as 'tropes', another term
that needs comment. Ideologies and myths, besides being statements about
the social structure or system, are also addressed to social problems, or
to use an 18th century turn of phrase, to "times that try men's souls".
Political models or tropes have been described as "maps of problematic
social reality." Attracting troubled minds, tropes "transform sentiments
into significance" and give mental satisfaction or comfort. They "size
up situations" or problems "name their structure and outstanding
ingredients, and name them in such a way that contains an attitude
towards them". Figures or tropes are "strategic answers or stylised
answers" to social problems or situations. The myth the Anglo-Saxon
constitution is a kind of symbolic yet concrete model of the experiences
and sentiments thrown up by social life: "a matching of ... symbolic
models against the states and processes of the wider world". 14

13. Pocock, Moment, 183.
14. On all this, see Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System" in
were a Radical and believed in the Anglo-Saxon myth you had the answer to certain current questions. Why was the Constitution corrupt? How did it become corrupt? It involved thinking about history as the history of liberty and corruption. It meant giving shape to certain sentiments, and adopting certain 'strategies' in political argument and writings. It meant writing about the present in terms of the past, and seeing the Constitution as a bundle of historical rights and as the creation of English history in particular - "the stylised answer".

These, then, are my more 'theoretical' concepts. The analysis also incorporates certain 'working' concepts taken from social anthropology and political philosophy. 'Form' and 'content' are used throughout as conceptual tools and they are used as they are in logic. Apart from these I use two groups of concepts which are, as it were, abstractions from the historical process. On the pre or 'proto' industrial side of things ideas are analysed in terms of the concepts of myth, millenarianism and 'return'. But the prevalent mode of modern thinking is analysed in terms of ideology, progress and utopia. The distinction between myth and ideology is crucial, although in the following chapters I have sometimes used the two terms interchangeably as often happens in common usage. Both terms are very ambiguous, and have been used in a variety of intellectual contexts.

Despite this, I have preferred to use the Marxian term ideology in preference to the Annales conception of mentalities since the latter is too vague. Ideology as a cognitive concept also needs to be distinguished from its use in political rhetoric. In the light of the earlier Althusser

15. See David Mitchell, An Introduction to Logic (2nd edn. London 1964), 12-16 and see also G.V. Plekhanov, The Materialist Conception of History, (London 1949 edn.), 45 for the importance of these concepts in studying the history of ideas/ideology. For a practical application see Joseph Levenson Confucian China and Its Modern Fate (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1959), 3 vols.

16. Traian Stoianovich, French Historical Method, (New York, 1976), 216. Stoianovich attempts to establish what he calls "the Annales paradigm". He is, I think, unsuccessful. At one point he writes of "the Annales School's horror of system and ... the journal's pragmatic and unphilosophical quality".
and other previous writers in political philosophy, ideology needs to be taken seriously as a subject for scientific or scholarly investigation, although since I first put pen to paper there are signs of a less dismissive attitude. The often put question of political philosophy concerning the truth or falseness of ideology is overlooked in favour of a question about levels of rationality and historical development. Ideology is a type of thought distinct from other types of thinking such as science and myth. But it is important to stress, given the literature pointing in the opposite direction, and what I want to say about the Anglo-Saxon myth and 18th century mentality in general, that there is a certain structural affinity between ideology and science. Previously writers have emphasised the functional affinity between myth and ideology, based on their value-laden nature. But as Foucault says, science is "localised within" ideology; while myth is 'localised' within magic, or perhaps it is the other way around.

In a different way, Gramsci perceived the connection between science and ideology when he argued "that every philosophy is a politics", and, to some extent vice versa. Put succinctly, pace de Quincey, the literature of knowledge becomes the literature of power. So, despite the useful distinctions between science, philosophy and ideology, ideology as cognition implies that it, too, is a form of knowledge and contains social 'theory' or 'epistemology'. Because of this, it is at least partially systematic, even if ideology is also part of "the history of common sense" and can assume "heterogeneous and bizarre combinations". Often, ideology is made more systematic through what Lucien Goldmann calls "representative figures" who produce "not merely the reflection of social reality but the particularly coherent expression of aspirations". It must be stressed that this form of ideology is especially not reducible to immediate social situations or interest and can contain half hidden understandings of how society works, of the political economy and so on. Ideology and myth both contain these systematic elements. In the debate over the systematic nature

One of the best attempts to correct this dismissive view is D.J. Manning (ed.) The Form of Ideology, (London, 1980). In the "preface" Oakshott now calls ideology "a specific form of discourse". And, as the editor concludes, ideology "is not an intellectual aberration. Man does not live by knowledge alone. Ideology is an autonomous display of the intellect no less capable of masterly exposition than any other man's creative powers. Philosophers would do well to give it serious consideration", 130. Earlier writers who have taken ideology seriously, apart from Marxists, are Clifford Geertz and Plamenatz (see Bibliography).
of popular (magical) ideas I have sided with E.P. Thompson and Hildred Geertz against Keith Thomas. But in popular ideas, systematic meanings tend to be immanent or embedded rather than explicit. There is an "ascending order of comprehensiveness" in ideologies and myths. This means that the student of ideas needs to explicate this comprehensiveness at the 'higher' levels, and this is what I try to do in the following chapters. There is, as Plamenatz says, an interaction "between 'political' and 'popular' ideology" and he stated at the time that it had "never been studied". To unravel and elicit this kind of interaction is the aim of this thesis. In both pragmatic and systematic ideology, "the two planes complement and mutually support each other". If Burke and Paine, or even John Baxter and Cobbett or Gravenor Henson, are seen as representative figures, their books need to be complemented by the pamphlets and memoirs of more obscure or even anonymous writers. So I interpret systematic and popular ideology as, say, the relationship between a pamphlet produced by the London Corresponding Society and Paine's Rights of Man. I also interpret it as the relationship between 'political' ideas and popular magical and religious belief.

Ideology is found in a more systematic form in the writings of what Lucien Goldmann calls "representative figures" and Antonio Gramsci, "organic intellectuals". Representative figures, according to Goldmann can create "a potential consciousness" out of "real consciousness". In other words the writings of Radical ideologues or representative figures such as Tom Paine, John Baxter and Gravenor Henson are meditations upon popular ideas; they think them through and state them perhaps more coherently or systematically than is usually found in political speeches or the records of meetings of political societies. "We have been accused", Leon Trotsky once said, "of creating the opinion of the masses. This is untrue, we only formulate it". "Organic intellectuals", although used by Gramsci to refer to intellectuals as such who often come from the middle classes,


has been used here, interchangeably, with the term representative figures. Gramsci's conception is not all that different from Goldmann's although it is less formalised.  

Another Gramscian term used in the thesis that is connected with the notion of ideology is hegemony. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, occurs when a group or class, "has for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group". A dominant group or class is able to ensure that "one concept of reality is diffused throughout society" affecting "all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations". But, "the version of the orthodoxy held by different social groups, will be different incorporating each group's specific perspective". The notions of political power, dominance and cultural diffusion are, then central to Gramsci's concept of hegemony. But the question is whether or not political and cultural dominance is ever complete. It is a question of working class independence. "The Country tradition of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke was in no sense hostile to the peerage; it saw hereditary status as a reinforcement of property independence". Although they did not want to abolish the peerage entirely, this was certainly not the view of many Radicals, even though it is possible to interpret their ideas as belonging to the Country or neo-Harringtonian tradition of political thought. At the bottom of this opposing version of Country ideology lies the social and economic experience, more, the whole cultural experience of the artisans and "the middling sort of people". So that although from time to time in the chapters which follow their ideas are discussed in terms of hegemony, perhaps more emphasis is given to their social descriptions as representations of a particular way of life or mode of production.


24. Pocock, Moment, 408.
The study of ideology, then, raises questions about cognition, about coherence or systematic thinking, about hegemony and about its relationship to other types of knowing. In this sense I present the Anglo-Saxon myth as part of the history of ideologies, but there is also a distinction between myth and ideology.

Certain correspondences have been made between ideology and myth. Yet, to grasp what follows it is important to realise that ideology as a form of modern secular thought, arose at a certain point in time. Despite Michael Walzer, 18th century politics and political thought was still largely anti-programmatic or 'unsystematic', or not free of Providential intervention. Only with the French Revolution is there the beginnings of a secular ideological mode of social thinking. Prior to this, the historical example used in much of 'political' discourse was simple and backward-looking and both these ideas are associated with a pre-Rationalist frame of mind. As a type of thinking ideology is closer to science than to myth or religion. Ideology is related to the rise of historical scholarship and is narrower in its concerns than myth. It is also associated with the idea of progress and breaks with the conceptions of time common to mythical thinking.

Underlying the analysis of the 'case study' chapters is a concept of progress that is historically sensitive and based on a close attention to the total ideological context. By the 18th century, the situation was, as referred to before for the term 'revolution', complex in that there were at least two ideas of progress in existence. In order to gain a clear conception it is necessary to distinguish between uses of the word progress. The first remained tied to immutable natural law and the charismatic founding of social institutions, to divine Providence in which history has a goal but not one set up by men. The second is an idea of progress which is secular and related to scientific, technical, intellectual and moral progress, and tied to an ideological mode of thought. Or, as E.J. Hobsbawm has written, to a progress "which can be specified


as process"; an idea which has been separated from the notion of Providence. Providential 'progress' discounts secular progress in favour of its spiritual form. This distinction is necessary even though by the 18th century a belief in Providence and a modern notion of progress could be held together in the same mind. In trying to be historically specific I am keen to look at the total structure of thought or avoid searching for 'germs' or 'seeds' in the more usual manner of writing about ideas. Consequently I have woven progress and ideology into a pattern that includes utopia. From this angle, it is important to distinguish between utopia and millenium. A failure to do so, as part of an effort to 'get at' Marxism, has marred some otherwise very interesting and stimulating writing in the history of ideas. As a broad statement, it seems to be true that "where the nineteenth century socialist could look to a future utopia" his "radical predecessor" in the '18th century' looked to a past "golden age". While I accept as important J.F.C. Harrison's distinction between pre-millenialist and post-millenialist ideas, and would strongly emphasise his warnings about "the secularisation of the millenium", I would not accept that for purposes of analysis it is not useful to distinguish between the religious and the secular as distinctive types of thinking. To say, as Harrison does, that Owenite millenialism and utopianism are the same thing is akin to saying that Owen's own religion and irreligion are the same thing. A utopia is secular and involves the idea of progress brought about by purely human endeavour. Even if I agree on the limitations of the dichotomy, history itself made the distinction in the long

27.
For a fuller discussion of these questions and some of the sources from which I have fashioned my own ideas, see James Fitzgerald "History as Progress: the revival of an idea" in Teaching History (New South Wales), Vol.4, Pt.3, December 1970, 14-23; J.B. Bury The Idea of Progress (London 1920), esp. pp.5, 11-12, 21, 73, 76; Sidney Pollard The Idea of Progress (Pelican edn. 1968), 16, 19, 24, 28, 80, 100-2 on Burke as an Enlightenment figure, a view which I do not accept. Stoianovich French Historical Method, 155, E.J. Hobsbawm "From Social History to the History of Society" in Essays in Social History (Oxford 1974), 17, M.W. Flinn and T.W. Smout (eds.)

28.
See for example, Tuveson Millenium and Utopia, xi-xii, 6-7, where Marx is an "intellectual descendant" of St. John the Divine, where progress and millenium are "only apparently divergent" and where there is no distinction between "sparodic observations" or "the germ of a concept" and ideological formations and transformations.
run, once the point of rupture had been made; but it is also necessary to get inside contemporary and "bizarre" combinations of thought and see how they are made up; to uncover contradictions. Otherwise there is a danger of historical nominalism, of taking words and meanings at their face value.  

The argument is that understanding will be advanced if the three concepts that I have attempted to elucidate are seen as a kind of ideational bloc which reflects a real long-term historical process. Opposed to these concepts of ideology, progress and utopia are the three concepts of myth, 'return' and millenarianism. In trying to fashion a useful concept of myth, there are similar problems to ideology. It is necessary to reject the sort of myth/reality distinction common to political language and ideology. Instead, I use a cognitive conception, based on its use in social anthropology. Leaning on Victor Turner's definition, I stress myth as a sacred narrative, as concerned with the distribution of power or legitimization and social order, with origins and charisma, with heroes and types, with nature and social differentiation. The association of myth with ritual and kinship is less invariable, although even these factors are not entirely absent in myths like the myth of the Anglo-Saxon Constitution. I have also borrowed some bits and pieces from Levi-Strauss. His critics, probably correctly, have attacked him for not allowing any intellectual space to discuss culture in terms of progress and change. But I have tried to see how he could be used by someone more historically-minded. It is helpful to show how 'universals' such as the culture/nature distinction were used in political rhetoric as a means of legitimation; to suggest why certain political arguments and symbols exercised an appeal to their audience. The trick is to show the relationship between these 'natural' forms and culture and history rather than reduce

For a discussion of the usefulness of the concepts of the religious and the secular, see the debate between Hildren Geertz, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic I", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 6, 1975; 71-90 and Keith Thomas, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vi, 1, 1975; 91-109, esp., 96, where Thomas defends the use of the concept of the "magico-religious". I am inclined to favour Thomas. For a distinction between utopia and the millenium, see Northrop Frye "Variations of Literary Utopias" in Utopias and Utopian Thought (ed.) Frank Manuel, 25-26; Harrison's early statement of his position is in "Millenialism and Social Reform in the Early 19th Century" in Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, 22, 1972, esp. 4-5; see also his The Second Coming, (London, 1979) esp. "Introduction" where Harrison similarly argues for a functionalist and nominalist interpretation and sees millenarianism as forward-looking as a result. He also repeats his argument concerning the religious and the secular (p.10).
history to the forms. The political and moral system turns "natural pairs" into hierarchical values by valuing them as plus or minus or good and bad. This valuing is a reflection of social and economic relationships. Later analysis also shows some acceptance of Levi-Strauss's characterisation of 'primitive' and mythical thinking as "a logic of concrete". Also, according to Levi-Strauss, the study of myth reveals a whole array of 'natural' or conceptual oppositions. If myth tells a story about social relations, about individuals and social status, it rests on "basic oppositions" of above/below, this world/other world and so on. Besides culture/nature, in the body of the thesis I have made use of the purity/pollution distinction. This gets politicised by relating it to ideas about rights and obligations. I have glossed on Mary Douglas's development of Levi-Strauss here. If "hygiene" is "an excellent route" to the understanding of religion, then so it is for the analysis of a mythicised 'politics'. The analogies are fairly obvious. Dirt or pollution is "essentially disorder ... dirt offends against order". Talk of "the body politic" or "bodily perfection" as a symbol for an ideal 'theocracy' is common in 'pre-industrial' political discourse. As she says "the whole universe" including the laws of nature, are deployed in "men's attempts to force one another into good citizenship". Contagion and pollution are used "in a dialogue of claims and counter-claims to status". 30

Another author I have drawn from is Mircea Eliade, who defines myth in terms of the three essential features "sacredness, origins and types". Eliade's conception is at once both wider and narrower than Levi-Strauss's and is more helpful in the analysis of the sort of mental configuration found in post-'primitive' societies. Mythical logic leads backwards to origins and origins are sacred since they are beyond human memory or "time out of mind". Myth is essentially tautologous and 'closed'. In the myth of the Anglo-Saxon Constitution, the myth of the origin of corruption is held to be true by virtue of the contemporary system of Old Corruption. The set of facts or phenomena that the myth needs to explain are instead, as

Henry Tudor says, used "as evidence for the truth of the myth". Since myth is also tied to nature and a pre-modern view of time, it is, a language of "new beginnings" of "decay" or a constant return to origins and so on. But I have rejected Tudor's criticism of Eliade as well as his interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon myth which leans too heavily on Christopher Hill, although Hill is more subtle. Neither is the distinction between foundation myth and eschatological myth of much use here, and it takes no account of the structured differences between myth and ideology. In myth, the process of legitimation can be summed up in the words "unity" and "type" Existing in societies with varying degrees of local and regional sentiment, myth tends to be an "integrating" force in a manner that ideology is not, although functionally it can play this role.

To gain transcendence and promote unity a ruler or king must be sanctioned by myth. In Indonesia, "an illegitimate ruler fosters only intrigue and disloyalty; the religious and moral writ ... is neglected, the network of harmonious relationships disintegrates, and turbulent anarchy reigns supreme". All social groups, "assemblies of functionaries, groupings of nobles ... gatherings of villages, and of course the great and undifferentiated throng of subjects and servants are at various times mentioned ... in some kind of relationship with the king". But the legitimate ruler transcends particular group interests. There is an "ideal conception" of the ruler. All this exactly parallels certain versions of the Anglo-Saxon myth in 18th century England.

In Indonesia the "causal relationship" between "the character of the king and his realm" is transmitted by means of a sacred text. This has been mentioned because it is often said that literacy itself is sufficient to do away with myth. In Indonesia, where literacy and illiteracy exist side-by-side, in 1971 P.J. Worsley witnessed the clan worship of a sacred babad or text. The babad, "was deposited permanently in one of the shrines of the household temple, where it was treated with great reverence and worshipped during ceremonies." The 18th century did not go as far as this but the attitude towards the Magna Carta and certain other venerable documents borders on "great reverence".


33. Worsley, Babad Bulelen, viii.
If, in both myth and ideology "one component is invariably found, the justification and location of authority", in myth authority is located in some moral type, that is, as in the Indonesian example, in an ideal conception of the ruler. The association of type and authority in myth occurs because it is the character of the ruler which contributes "to the establishment and maintenance of the harmony of the legitimate order", which is "viewed as part of his protective function towards his subjects". The good order of the polity is dependent upon the ruler's moral purity. He must not be greedy (luxury). He must "model himself upon the behaviour of noble people" (political saints or heroes). These noble people "sought no material advantage, pleasure or fame in what they did" (virtue, Spence). They "strove only to protect the religious and moral law" (natural law, common law). "Knowledge of the precepts" of this law "was the only reliable foundation" of orderly rule (gnosis, political knowledge). For, "from such knowledge flowed the discretion in the conduct of affairs which was so critical for the harmony and prosperity of the realm" (economic well-being). Through such knowledge and conduct the king could "remove the seven layers of darkness" which hid the light of goodness and threatened to overcome the world (darkness, catastrophe). As opposed to these virtues; "haughtiness because of one's parentage" or noble birth, or the "recklessness" associated with too much power "greed roused by wealth" and the "harshness" got from "heroic deeds in battle" or war-making, "venom" got from ability or ambition and over-indulgence of sexual pleasure, all go to make up the vices which contribute to moral and political pollution and so endanger the order and safety of the state and people. All these features, as well as the equivalents of the more positive features which I have put in parenthesis, find their parallels in the Anglo-Saxon myth. Likewise, there is an equivalence between 18th century Radical literature and the Indonesian sacred chronicle when it states that "the realm exists not only for the good of the monarch, but also for the sustenance of its population. The king was required to listen to their grievances."34

In short, and as another resemblance between the Indonesian myth and 18th century mentality, "no attempt is made to develop a rounded individual human personality". The 'patriot king' "is presented simply as the embodiment of a latent legitimating power and ... as the type of the ideal king". There are other features in common, too. Not only the ruler but all the actors in

34. Worsley, Babad Bulelen, 41, 44, 45.
the babad's narrative are "depicted as types". They are "abstract ... men who behave in a way wholly predictable within the logic of the image in which they have been formed ... they belong as ancestors". An ancestor acts as an exemplar or paradigm. As in the narrative of the Anglo-Saxon myth, in the babad or sacred text, "a period of good fortune, of harmony and contentment ... gives way to one of disaster and misfortune". Also, most importantly,

While the babad is aware of time as duration, as an enduring sequence of events ... it seems more concerned with the classification of periods of time which are classified by certain properties. ...The lack of interest in measuring the precise duration of the passage of time so that the relative position of one event with another is established ... has led ... to a situation in which criteria other than chronological criteria have determined the argument of what is ostensibly a chronological narrative.36

In other words, it is not a moral interpretation of history in itself that 'mythicises' history, so that modern 'Whig' or socialist history cannot be thought of in this light, it is rather how time is handled in such a way that events are disconnected and juxtaposed in an arbitrary fashion thereby squeezing out time from the notion of cause. Dates have no significance other than as markers in telling a story.37

Myths are anti-historical in that they deal with "perennial and ultimate features" in human existence. Yet they are a kind of "sacred history". They try to reveal a mystery, the mystery of existence and the social order, and they do so through a narrative which relates a sacred history. Engaging in mythical discourse gives the story-teller access to special or divine knowledge, what Turner calls "gnosis". Or, as Eliade puts it, "knowing the origin of an object ... is equivalent to acquiring magical power over it" and through this power objects "can be controlled or reproduced".38 The Radical political 'saints' of late 18th century England thought of their 'historical' knowledge as a kind of gnosis or privileged knowledge which

35. Worsley, Babad Bulelen, 50, 80.
36. Worsley, Babad Bulelen, 81.
38. Eliade, Myth and Reality, 15.
gave them the power to transform or transcend their existing situation and status. Time acquires meaning only "from its relation to the eternal" and history becomes meaningful "through subordination to eschatology". This has to be materially grounded. In the 18th century mercantile political economy "the cycles of circulation" of goods and services were still strongly related "by the yearly occurrences of the harvest". Each harvest was a return to a new beginning and subject to fortune, to natural forces, to God's will, to the cycle and law of nature, to customary observances or tradition and to virtuous behaviour. The secrets of these laws and practices could be found in their origin, in the principles of decay or corruption and renewal. What applied in the economy was also true in history and politics. The only way out of the "eternal cycle" was to re-constitute a republic which was, in Pocock's words, "a blend or balance of ... monarchy, aristocracy and democracy", and to have it coincide with the coming of the millenium.

It is also necessary to get up a working concept of millenarianism. In terms of the sort of typologies proposed by Hobsbawm and Peter Worsley it is helpful to put Southcottean millenarianism towards the religious end of a continuum and the Anglo-Saxon myth towards the 'secular' end. For, to quote Pocock again, "the English saint was not radically alienated from the secular order, but ... radically involved in it". Nevertheless, I agree with A C Haddon that millenarianism is essentially religious even if a form of religion that tries to "sanction political aspirations". E P Thompson's account which sees "radical politics" and "religious revivalism" at opposite poles is rejected since it suggests that people are constantly making 'epistemological' switches. Of more use, is P S Gilbert's distinction between "active and passive" millenarianism. The thesis also argues with Thompson's overall impression that the "radical culture" of the artisans

39. "The constitution", said Lord Hawkesbury, is "a body whose parts" are "as by nature liable to frequent disorders ... if a constitution is only through age impaired it must be called back to its first principles". Even if some new situation has come about "it can be woven into the very spirit" of the constitution. Charles, Lord Hawkesbury, Constitutional Maxims Extracted from a Discourse on the Establishment of a National and Constitutional Force, (London, 1757, reprinted by the London Corresponding Society, 1794), 2.

40. Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 77, 84, 104-5.
was as thoroughly secular and rationalised as it appeared to be. \(^{41}\)

Figures such as John Cartwright, whom Thompson sees as part of this rationalised and Radical culture are shown through a close reading to have all sorts of 'millenial' ideas floating around in their heads; so, too, the more plebeian 'secularists' such as Thomas Spence. Even at this late time, 'God's Englishman' must be set alongside Thompson's stress on the idea of a "free-born Englishman". In any event, apocalyptic always had a strong secular tinge. It is evident even among the earliest Christians. Passages from the 17th and 18th centuries which are used by Tuveson to support the secularisation of the millenium thesis are almost identical with earlier passages by Lactantius in the 4th century. But my contention is that in millenial thinking it is ultimately religious or mythical logic that structures political argument. \(^{42}\)

All this can be summarised and put in a slightly different way, in terms of an alternative trilogy of oppositions. Given the existing literature it is important to stress that ideology and myth belong to different intellectual structures or modes of thought. Ideology, it should be emphasised goes with science rather than myth so that an alternative formula is myth/magic/religion: ideology/science/secularism.

There is one other ambiguous word or concept that needs clarification or comment. From time to time in the thesis I have used the term 'mercantilism'. A practical way of showing what I mean by the concept is to refer quickly to the ideas of Tom Paine, since it illustrates my treatment or understanding of the ideas of other Radicals in the two 'empirical' chapters. Paine scholarship or historiography has, almost without exception, seen him as "one of the purest ideological spokesmen for the bourgeoisie" 41. But see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, (Pelican edn., 1968), 882 as well as some later work.

or a part of the socialist genealogy or tradition. In fact, from a mercantilist perspective, he is neither. He is neither a simple apologist for the free market and private property, nor does he adopt any plans for the socialisation of industry. His political language is neither exclusively Country nor particularly Court. His political economy is a language of trade, commerce and land: of mercantilism.

Pocock, too, sees these ideas and things at the centre of 18th century social thought but his manner of analysis and characterisation is somewhat different from mine, not least on questions of investment and the nature of trade. But, as he says, there is a shift from the idea of fortune to "commerce and finance" as categories of political analysis and rhetoric, and, if it was not revisionist to say so, a Marxist would see this as a mercantilist "rather than entrepreneurial" consciousness. Defining the concept in this way helps to 'specify' the post-medieval but pre-industrial period and avoids the problems involved in using, as Marxists do, the concept of the 'transitional'.

The difficulties go back to Marx's own writings and are compounded in recent Marxian scholars. In the former, I find difficulties with Marx's view that the mercantile system is a system of circulation rather than production; in the latter there are problems with their insistence that under capitalism production leads consumption. The implications of their analysis

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43. The quotation comes from Isaac Kramnick in his long introduction to Paine's Common Sense, (Pelican edn. 1976 orig. pub. 1776). Horst Inde in Essays in Honour of William Gallacher... (Berlin 1966) (eds.) P.M. Kemp Ashraf and Jack Mitchell gives a picture of Paine as a socialist. Other references are in my Bibliography.

44. See below, last chapter, esp. pp.270-1.

45. Pocock, Politics, 140.

46. In the history of ideas, despite the fact that, for example, he calls Locke "a mercantilist" (though in a different sense from the use here), a very interesting example of this approach is C.B. MacPherson in his The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford U.P. 1962) But he uses two boxes or categories called capitalist and medieval and anything in between gets labelled transitional.

is that from the 16th to the 18th centuries, mercantilist society was more modern than in fact it was. This seems to me to have further implications for the understanding of thought or mentality in that period, its degree of rationalisation or its 'pre-industrial' character. In terms of hegemony it is important to grasp the central role of the mercantile interest in the social relations of the time. Following from this, the understanding of the artisan mind, or large parts of it, is extended if it is looked at through the lens of trade, commerce and consumption rather than, say, the relationship of natural rights to capitalist development or looking for germs of socialist or capitalist thought which often implies an emphasis on production and investment. It was, at one stage, my intention to relate a mode of thinking to a full articulation of the notion of mercantile society but this has been omitted because of time and space. But it is implicit in what follows later that the 'native' theory of a representative figure like Gravenor Henson, although dressed up in a mythical garb of Anglo-Saxonism, is a better guide to understanding the late 18th century and the early years of the 19th century than either Marx or orthodox 'liberal' historians. 48

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If true, this assertion in itself justifies going through in some detail the ideas of people like Henson who is one of my 'representative figures' or 'organic intellectuals', whose ideas make up the two case study chapters. These figures, as suggested before, are representatives of collective ideas or consciousness and social groups, classes or movements. But the question remains, why choose these particular representatives? The general answer is that I found in the writings of these historical figures statements or 'testaments' which although not political theory in the more formal sense of the term, contained ideas that were more in the shape of principles or 'worked out' to a much greater extent than in reports of speeches in newspapers or in short pamphlets. There is, of course, an element of fortuity about the choice and I have gone where my

48. Critique or criticism arises from the assumption that consciousness is, at least in part, false and apparent rather than 'real'. Merely to interpret consciousness is to share in its illusions. Consequently, for Marx, the falsity of "native theory" is of more interest than its content. See Zygmunt Bauman Hermeneutics and Social Science (New York, 1978) 62, 64.
ideas and reading have led me. Selection is also involved; no doubt some
of the writers and writings could have been replaced by others.

But in the first case study chapter, extensive treatment is given
to Major John Cartwright because of his close ties to the artisan Radicals,
because of his stature as a Radical leader, as well the length of time he
was at the helm of Radical politics and because of his enormous output
as a writer and not least because of his supposed intellectual eccentricity
in being a firm believer in the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution.
The last reason that has been mentioned applies to all the Radical writers
who are chosen here as does the fact that nearly all of them have been
subject to critical interpretation; in Cartwright's case two Ph.D. theses
and a book. I have re-assessed that interpretation in the light of a
different approach or method outlined previously. Perhaps, Thomas
Bewick, the next Radical considered, is the oddest selection. Yet it is
not merely the case of falling in love with his engravings. He was active
with Thomas Spence, in the Radical leadership at Newcastle, and his long
memoir was used as something of an experiment since he expresses his
ideas at a pragmatic or practical level, and like Cartwright has been
praised as 'forward looking', for his Enlightenment mentality. His ideas
are steeped in 'Border' culture, and so provide the opportunity to trace
the relationship between social experience and beliefs and political ideas.
The fact that his ideas are expressed in memoirs, as it were, unself-
consciously is also a test of the popularity or spread of Gothic mentality.
William Cobbett's significance in the Radical movement are beyond doubt.
His History of the Protestant Reformation was still being published in the
20th century and has been interpreted as part of a medievalist rather than
a 'Saxonist' testament. Among other things, this book together with a
few more of Cobbett's writings provide the opportunity to show why it was
that language was so important in Radical political theory.

The last of the 'honorary' Radicals appearing in this chapter is
represented by the rather aristocratic figure of Sir William Jones and
by one of his writings only. His Principles of Government went through
a number of editions but more importantly excerpts from it appear time
and time again in the Radical journals of the period. It also contains
one of the earliest statements of the labour theory of value from a
purely workers' or artisans' viewpoint. Consequently, it provides the
opportunity to 'place' that theory in the light of contemporary mentality
and later developments in socialist ideology.
The second case study chapter starts with a lengthy study of John Baxter. He is chosen partly because he was an obvious Radical leader, being at one time chairman of the London Corresponding Society. He is also the author of a virtually unique History of England which although Baxter's own work is also the product of collective enterprise as his acknowledgements make clear. It is a treasure of Gothic or Anglo-Saxon intellectual archaeology. The next Radical leader I look at is Thomas Evans. Although on this occasion the sources are longish pamphlets they also contain a clear statement of principles and show how religious and mercantile Spencean political language could be. There is also an attempt to question Christopher Hill's judgement of Evans' as a secondary figure and his assumption that by this time 'Gothic' political assumptions were no more than a "rhetorical flourish". The next study of an organic intellectual, Thomas Spence himself, is also chosen in the light of the historiographical picture and because of the influence of Spence in the Radical movement and because of his alleged secularism and socialism, or his modernity. The last example, Henson, is another established artisan Radical leader. His History and Laws are challenging compositions for exegesis since they vie with Baxter's history, but also because of their late date of composition, their 'transitional' character and specifically again because of the expression of a nascent labour theory of value.

It should be emphasised that each of the representative figures I have referred to, with the exception of, perhaps, Bewick has been subject to a certain amount, in some cases a substantial amount, of historical criticism. So although I have rejected the (Marxian) method of critique for the contemporary ideology, I have embraced it when dealing with the historiography. I have felt it necessary to take the reader through the points at issue and often assert my position before proceeding with the analysis or exegesis. It is because of the historiographical literature that I have also taken the reader through a detailed structuralist 'decomposition of the text', a step by step journey through the author's text. No doubt this method will seem like heavy weather to some readers, and perhaps even boring, but I hope it will have some appeal to the 'specialist' who is fascinated by the warp and woof of Radical thought. Learning a language is tedious and this particular 'vulgar tongue', to use Vico's phrase, has been the subject of much mistaken identity in the past.
If the earlier chapters look at the parts of that language, its verbs, nouns, even its syntax, the last chapter is an examination of the total structure. It looks at the relationships or connections between the various parts; it outlines the language as paradigm. On the empirical side of things in this chapter I use a variety of sources to suggest a wider use of this type of thinking than is perhaps intimated by the case study chapters. The chapter contains, to some extent, a critique, but more a modification and supplementation of Pocock. There is an attempt to show that such terms as independence have a meaning beyond the confines of gentry culture, to qualify Pocock's understanding of patriotism and to stress the crucial role of certain words or concepts such as simplicity which go unmentioned in nearly all 18th century historiography. Also, I have tried to 'materialise' these concepts through relating them to a conception of 18th century society as to some extent a natural society and economy. In this endeavour, and in constructing the paradigm I have been aided by certain anthropological concepts which elicit Faucault's sub-text or "what was being said in what was said". None of this means leaving out cultural development or 'specificity'. In the tension between the text (virtue, natural law and so forth) and the sub-text (purity, culture/nature and so on), and in the discussion of the role of the state, there is an attempt in this chapter to place the paradigm within the context of 18th century English mercantile society. More will be said about particular aspects of the paradigm in the conclusion.

Possibly, it will aid understanding if I go over my questions and aims in point form. They are:

(i) Can a structuralist-linguistic-paradigm method alter our perceptions of 18th century mentality or a segment of it?

(ii) Specifically, how significant is the 'Anglo-Saxon'/Gothic style of thinking at this time. In what way is it significant?

(iii) Is this kind of thinking rational or irrational (as some historians have argued)?

Following on from this, my aims are:

(iv) To present a fuller and deeper account of the 18th century version of the Anglo-Saxon myth than has so far been attempted.
(v) To apply a newish method of writing about the history of ideas or ideology and see what the results are.

(vi) To reorientate and to supplement and complement the historiographical understanding of John Cartwright, Sir William Jones, Thomas Spence etc.

(vii) Through stressing the importance of the Anglo-Saxon myth in the writings of Cartwright, Henson etc. to establish the Gothic mode of thinking as an important and rational but anti-Rationalist type of thought.

(viii) *Pace* Gramsci, to take popular ideas seriously as a form of popular philosophy; to discover their 'epistemology' or theories about social and economic life and to see what they are made up of.

Finally, there is one important concern that ought to have come in or been made much more explicit than it is. That is the question of pre-destination. Despite the fact I have stressed the religious sub-structure of Gothic political language and have given weight to its deistical and millenarian underpinning, the question of pre-destination has not been given its proper place. There is a passing reference to the importance of pre-destination for understanding the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution in Christopher Hill's essay. It was only well after I completed the thesis when I was reading James Hogg's suggestive and illuminating psychological novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, that the real significance of pre-destination for 18th century thought struck me. The doctrine of pre-destination not only fashions "Whig" interpretations of history generally but underlies notions of political sainthood as a form of election and political knowledge as a type of infallible knowing. The constitution is not only English and mythical it is also a source of Protestant rationality.

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49. (Cresset Press (edn) Frome 1947 orig. pub. 1824) see esp. 112, 142, and Andre Gide's important Introduction.
CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BASIS OF POLITICAL IDEAS

This short sketch is really about the religion of reason and the reason in religion or myth. It is about the level and character of rationality in the late 18th to early 19th century. The aim is to try to relate artisan political ideas to artisan social beliefs and to their general level of mentality. My concern is less with the functions and disfunctions of 'archaic' belief than with structure in the sense of an analogical relationship between social and political beliefs and with hegemony and incidence. The bases for the discussion are the contributions of J H Plumb, E P Thompson, Keith Thomas and Hildred Geertz on the general level of rationality in the 18th century. Although it is stated with some ambiguity, Plumb contrasts the upper classes flight from reason and their turn to "the forces of occultism and credulity" in the 18th century with the mental culture of "the educated artisan, shop-keeper or skilled worker" which was marked by a "growing belief in the power of education and empiricism" and was "both diverse and more secular" than in earlier times. Similarly, E P Thompson praises a secular Radical culture of "skilled men, artisans and some outworkers" but also points to the fact that "the English working people" were not "wholly open to secular ideology" and says ideas and terms "were often employed in the early Radical movement" in a way that for some "had ... a fetishistic rather than a rational value". Also, the 'irrational' often came into conflict "within the same mind".1

Perhaps a definition of rationality, or at least rationalism, is still necessary. Rationalism in its pure form, allows that everything, including religion, is in principle open to doubt and reason. Causation in rationalism is seen as something natural and social and specific rather than extra-natural and generalised. In pre-rationalist thinking, in societies with natural economies and face-to-face relationships, there is an extra cause over and above natural and social ones, and disruption in one area is said to lead to disruption in other areas; "the disruption

of social, moral and physical planes may be interlinked". As ideology, this interconnectedness of causation expresses itself as the idea of fortune or misfortune; it is no more than the reflection of the comparatively undivided social relations of the natural economy. Fortune has a material and moral side to it. In 'pre-industrial' societies, "the first reaction to a misfortune is to identify its moral origin". The search for the cause of misfortune often led to custom since the breaking of custom was the first cause. Custom was suitably ambiguous, and misfortune was explained as the result of the breaking of some custom or other, including political customs summarised in the ideal of the constitution. The violation of custom led to divine, semi-divine or magical intervention.

Although he presents ample material to the contrary, Keith Thomas finally takes the view that by the 18th century, these sorts of archaic habits of thinking were nowhere near as important as they were in the 17th century. Overall, he paints the 18th century as the age of reason; his view is not really much at odds with the traditional view. For example, astrology was only popular until the late 17th century. About this time, "it rapidly declined in status". Yet if "the supernatural" as a type of explanation had declined by the late 18th and early 19th centuries, its influence was still strong. Everything that Thomas uses to paint a picture of 17th century mentality: Providence, ghosts, prayer, the Devil, wizards and witches, curses, astrology, fasting, fairy beliefs, magic and natural law beliefs were all prominent if perhaps not as prominent in the 18th century as they were a century before. In so far as they exist they are signs of a "natural economy", of alienated thought; they are cultural expressions of Marx's postulate that "magic is dominant when control of the environment is weak". Thomas plays this down, sees no coherent theory of magical explanation but only fragments at this time and in Weberian fashion separates ideas from their environment. Changes in mentality were dissociated from and preceded "changes in the economic and social structure". Magic declined before technical substitutes, technology, took its place. This view, the view of "fragmentary survivals" only by the 18th century, is challenged by Thompson in a later essay as it is implicitly in this


3. As against this, see Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, (London, 1971), 310, 384, 414, 538-9, 693, 695-6, 724, 756-7, 789, 797.
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Despite his denial, his tendency to oppose unsystematic popular magic to systematic upper and middle class religion is also attacked by Hildred Geertz. It is unnecessary to go through argument and counter-argument except to note Geertz's comment that Thomas equates "logical coherence with explicit intellectual formulation" and Thomas' side-swipe at French historians "schemes" of interpretation "which go far" beyond the ethnographic evidence. Here I am prepared to take a leaf out of Lucien Goldmann's book, and Pocock and Foucault, and to allow for the application of reason to evidence.

But first I need to establish the extent and 'lateness' of pre-rationalist and pre-ideological thinking; to establish its incidence. For this purpose there are a variety of primary and secondary literatures of which the bibliography gives some indication. Besides important older secondary sources such as W.C. Sydney's England and the English, I have read deeply into artisan memoirs and contemporary sources like Hone's Year Book, Southey's Letters from England and John Brand's Popular Antiquities. Among the artisan writers are Alexander Somerville, William Lovett, Thomas Holcroft, James Lackington, George Jacob Holyoake, Thomas Cooper, Samuel Bamford whose "mother's race ... bore the old Saxon name of Jobson", whose claims to lost family property stemmed from the time "when the Saxons wrested it from the Celts", Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Carter. In these writings, alongside attitudes which are plainly secular and rationalist, there are also often at least sneaking half-beliefs in myth, supernatural forces and the divine origin of society. Perhaps one of the best descriptions of this state of mind, comes from literature. George Eliot, an author noted for her attention to ethnographic detail, gives a vivid description of her artisan, Adam Bede's, response to an incident which occurred soon after his father died. There seems to be some association between Bede's feelings of guilt and his acceptance that supernatural forces were at work. George Eliot describes his general


5. She describes him as "at once penetrating and credulous. If a new building had fallen down and he had been told that this was a divine judgement, he would have said, 'May be but, the bearing o' the roof and walls wasn't right, else it wouldn't ha' come down'; yet he believed in dreams and prognostics, and to his dying day he told the story of the stroke and the willow wand", George Eliot, Adam Bede, (Airmont Classics edn., 1966), 45.

* See the Bibliography for the works that have been studied.
mental set as "that mental combination which is at once humble in the region of mystery and keen in the region of knowledge". There is, so to speak, a kind of lingering credulity which I believe is typical of artisan mentality for this period and is absent in only a few of the more deep-seated rationalists such as Francis Place. It accounts for the form political belief took.

This can be brought out more clearly through interpreting some material supplied by Samuel Bamford. One story he tells shows up the connection between the deterministic notion of Providence and the equally deterministic pre-suppositions of astrology which along with millenial determinism helped to structure political thinking so that it, too, was deterministic. According to Bamford, this pre-rationalist frame of mind was "prevalent" in 1817 but by 1848 was quickly departing. Although even then, pre-rationalism "retained its place". The connectedness of political, social and existential beliefs is suggested in Bamford's description of George Plant of Blackley, "a firm believer in ghosts, witches and hobgoblins" and a Radical. Plant was also interested in botany, herbs and astrology; Bamford hints at a possible connection between Plant's astrological interests and his politics. Plant had read Culpepper and Sibly. Plant, Bamford thinks, saw in Radical politics a "new political 'Heal-all'". There was, so to speak, an analogy between a gnostic knowledge of nature and political gnosis. By 1817, Ebenezer Sibly's most popular book, the one that contained the heaviest political content, reached a twelfth edition.  

The links in the chain are brought out clearly by Keith Thomas, "Even in the eighteenth century", Thomas says,  

most sections of the English economy were dependent upon the weather ... this ... gave astrological predictions their plausibility. To predict the weather was to predict the harvest; and to predict the harvest was to predict the discontent which would follow the food shortage, and the rebellion which might follow discontent ... in a society which was dependent upon the weather for its efficient functioning ... it was not possible for a weather forecast to remain simply a weather forecast ... it carried with it a chain of far-reaching consequences of a social and political character. The prognostications which the astrologers issued annually in their almanacks were therefore highly plausible.  

6. See Appendix [D] for an analysis of Sibly's work in these terms.  

Knowledge and reasoning were an expression of ignorance, and expression of Marx's postulate concerning the relationship between production, knowledge and the control of nature. If magic is a kind of functional knowledge about the natural and social environment, it is also an expression of ignorance about these orders. If artisan literature provides a sort of mental map that is a guide to a now lost and mysterious world, it also gives some indication of the limits of knowledge the map contains.8

Another artisan, Thomas Carter, a tailor, describes how, until he was nine, he knew nothing of any human or natural science. He describes in some detail his ignorance of natural forces and of geography. He had never heard of Asia. No one he asked could satisfactorily tell him where the Continent was: "whether it was in Europe, Africa or America". It is the gaps in knowledge, the ignorance of specific causes, that gives recourse to the search for a type of causation expressed as generalised origins. Cognition is mythical rather than ideological. This is true even of those bodies of discourse which present themselves as the respectable knowledge of the period.

To make that more than an assertion I want at least to give some indication of the shape that scientific or systematic knowledge had in the 18th century. Involving at least a heavy qualification of writers like A. Musson and E. Robinson, Arthur Donaldson and Keith Thomas my 'proof' of the co-existence and inter-penetration of 'magic' with scientific discourse and practice rests on the artisans' resort to astrology and herbalism for medical advice, on the lack of distinction between philosophy and science, as in "natural philosophy", on science's general lack of specificity, on its amateurism and exhibitionism, its manifestation as an object d'art and "public social badge for a gentleman". It is also characterised by its externality. Biology did not exist since "life did not exist : only living beings". The external and expository side of science is a sign of its incomplete rationalism. "All nature forms

8. For example, Bamford tells of how, on his first voyage, when his ship hit a storm, the waves "having the appearance of streams of fire, were breaking over the bows of the vessel and sweeping the deck. In a moment I was up to my knees, and I actually jumped thinking I should be burned", Samuel Bamford, Early Days, (London, 1849), 236.

one great fabric", weaved by the one God. Encyclopaedias were "as full of superstition as of rational science", including giants. Thomas Cooper in attendance at the astronomy lectures of Matthew Holden mentions Holden's use of "zodiacal constellations". Isaac Newton's prophetic literature was still widely read; Catherine Macaulay, Joseph Priestley and Thomas Paine, all put limits on the extent of the rationalistic probing. As Paine argued, it was "from the study of true theology that all our knowledge of science was derived". In England, Biblical criticism was slow to develop. The term "myth" was generally applied to only non-Christian beliefs.10

Biblical myth was treated as true but sacred history. Consequently, it helped structure and limit secular historical enquiry. The line between myth, politics and history was indistinct. Sacred, and secular history were used to extract moral and political lessons, and both types of discourse were premissed on the search for origins. To discover the origin of an institution was to explain and justify it or to account for collective misfortune. It provided a source of legitimation or illegitimation. This meant that political argument took on a strong mythical, that is religious, and 'historical' colouring. Not until the 19th century is there the kind of history, an historicism, "which cannot be fitted over natural laws". Natural law, and the 'Whig' history that partly rested on it, involved "the anti-historical assumption that political behaviour is the same at all times and places". Also, the 18th century like the century before, sustained a large "prophetic literature" with strong mythico-historical overtones. As with the previous century, political prophecy, in Keith Thomas's words, rested on the belief that "even the most revolutionary doings of contemporaries had been foreseen by usages of the past". Revolutionary actions were sanctioned by reference to similar actions by ancestors, and prophecies "provided a validating charter". "This had the effect of disguising any essentially revolutionary step by concealing it under the sanction of the past approval". As Thomas says (for the 17th century),

the prophecy was a divine one, indicating that rebellious activity was in accordance with God's will and therefore not a sin but a positive duty.
It gave ... moral justification to those engaged in the gambler's throw of rebellion ..."11

10. See Bibliography for references upon which these statements are made.
Clearly such a political formula had 'hegemonic' implications and set epistemic limits for political counter-arguments. It was psychologically more comforting, then, if, as in the discourse of political millenium, prophecy was divine suggesting that rebellion was sanctioned "by God's will" and was "not a sin but a positive duty". This also suggests, against Pocock, the conflation of custom and charisma as part of the same mental set. But I cannot agree with Thomas that the ancient prophesies, legend, and the Anglo-Saxon myth and other similar beliefs had "wilted away" by the 18th century. Gwyn Williams study of the myth of Madoc suggests otherwise, although Williams' interest lies in function and legitimation rather than form or structure. The myth of Madoc is produced by a political situation or event which is then reduced to economic interests, with very little concern for its mythic structure. I concentrate on a whole mental outlook which sees the present needs to be re-made in terms of the past and its paradigms, without ignoring the cultural expression. I speak here not merely of perceptions of historical experience but of habits or "strategems" of thought.

In part, the 18th century expressed its mythic or non-rational consciousness in terms of a religion of reason: deism. But the fact that it claimed reason for its own, makes deism no less mythical, no less a variety of mental fetishism, even though at least from Marx and Engels onwards deism is frequently seen as "but an easy way of getting rid of religion". Yet deism is another example of the limits of 18th century scepticism and enquiry. In the following chapters the importance of deistic assumptions can hardly be underestimated. It is therefore important to stress that the deistic God is not necessarily a God who is absent from the world of men; that he wound up the machine and everything moved without his aid or assistance. Deism stressed God's unity or oneness and his perfection. It saw him active in the world through "the means of divinely sanctioned natural laws, both moral and physical". Also, "the ordering of events constitutes a general providence"; the tendency was to deny special providence in the form of miracles and so on, but this was not invariable. God's natural law endowed men with reason, and the main religious injunction or obligation was to lead a moral or virtuous life. "Those who fulfill the moral law and live according to nature are 'saved'".

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12. For the points raised in this paragraph, see Gwyn A. Williams, "Welsh Indians and the First Welsh Radicalism", in History Workshop, No.1, Spring, 1976, 140-1, 144, 152.
Finally, other religious ideas and practices that go against these tenets are "at best indifferent political institutions and beliefs or errors to be condemned". Against Paine, not all deists rejected revelation or revealed religion; for some, parts of the Bible were "the republication of the law of nature". But reason and not the authority of the Church is the basis of interpretation.

In keeping with the 18th century concept of reason, Right Reason was at the same time empirical and rational. Because it operated through reason, deism was "the name given to a set of epistemological and metaphysical claims". Since reason was double-sided some deists used "a priori arguments, while others claimed that their conclusions were based wholly on empirical evidence". Paine's deism is one of the best examples of a priori principles. Since deism was the religion of nature and nature was unchangeable then genuine religion could be apprehended in these terms. Yet nature and religion were also in the world; they were things of experience. And experience meant variation; variation meant "error". For if "all reasoning men" had "the same religious views in any time or place" then history or experience contained "a history of religious error but not of religious evolution". Among the errors giving rise to religious diversity is "the transmission of false information". If, as it is argued here, deism provides the structure or analogy for the Anglo-Saxon myth then it is fairly obvious why many Radicals regarded political information or knowledge as so important. The aim was to dispel both religious and political error. But error was enshrined in tradition. So tradition must be attacked by reason; or at least some parts of it ought to be. Also, since tradition was the repository of history and was national and particular, the attention that deism gave to history tended to undermine the universalism of its reason.

There are other ways in which deism and its reading of history led to politics. Deism's principles, said the Cap of Liberty, "are apparent to the meanest capacity". As such, "it justified and sanctioned republican government and served as a counterweight to theories of divine right". The order of society was not sacrosanct since civil society was the product

14. Emerson, "Deism", 646.
of man's reason. The deists "held that political institutions had been invented at one bound by legislators, and religions by priests". Against this, primitive or deistical religion was "a civic function conducted by an assembly of citizens" and could "become equated with the priesthood of all believers and the rule of saints foretold in the millenium". Both the millenium and deism sought a return to a more primitive and purer origin. Ideally, then, there was one genuine law, one genuine religion and one genuine polity: "the affirmation of the principle of oneness in humanity". Even if a deist is not a Christian, "he will insist that he believes in one God". The "metaphysical pathos of the word one is very intense". Oneness was what was really real or genuine:

But in what sense was the One real? In the sense that it was the source of everything else, was timeless, incorporeal and a universal predicate.

... to find ... the One was to find there also the source of values.

In deism, error is equivalent to diversity, to culture. Error and culture are plural and are to be contrasted with nature: "error ... neglected Nature". Yet at certain historical moments, the plurality inherent in culture had been transcended; and could be again. The identification of religious with civil or political liberty and of virtue "in the civic sense" with salvation had been and could again be realised in the life of the nation. One God and one religion found its analogy in a unified polity without parties. Nature became identified with culture. In particular, the English constitution, became the universal measure of all things. Deism gave to politics a vocabulary built around the words of corruption, mystery, simplicity, reason and so on.

Hope of the millenium could be combined with deism since millenial catastrophe would destroy existing institutions and allow for a return to the original deistical religion. In keeping with the 'level of the rationality' objective, my aim is to deny the propositions of Christopher Hill and Keith Thomas that millenialism in the late 18th century was "a harmless hobby", or that prophecy was no more than a "survival". This

15. Cap of Liberty, No.5, 1819, 69; Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 512.
can be done through a reconsideration of the secondary literature and a re-evaluation of some of the millenial prophets. For example, Richard Brothers apparent shift from religion to politics is no more than a shift of emphasis; political corruption is an extension, not a break, not a secularisation, with individual or religious corruption. Just as the so-called "children of despair" and "revolutionary millenarianism" may have the same epistemic root, so the shift in popular support from Brothers to Joanna Southcott may be less dramatic than it at first seems. Southcottean millenialism is not as non-political, as Thompson and Clarke Garrett would have it, or as conservative as another author suggests. John Cartwright and other Radicals were eager in support of Britain against the French invasion threat, without giving up their radical political ideals. Joanna Southcott's attack on Paine, for example, attacked his religious writing, his denial of the Second Coming, his denial of the Devil and so forth. She got into strife with the Established Church and condemned bills of exchange and the system on which they hinged on the grounds of "reason, justice, equity and truth between man and man". Her patriotism has to be seen in the same light: as not especially conservative, given the patriotic ideal and Christian substructure through the belief in England as the elect nation. One writer has talked about the latency of millenarian belief in English culture of a "fairly widespread ... implicit Millenarianism" which given the right conditions could "force the conversion of implicit to explicit Millenarianism". It is important to distinguish empirical flows from the basic structures of thought and society. In this sense, millenarianism in the 1790s and early 1800s did not offer a novel interpretation of crisis. Its forms of explanation were traditional. The lack of any real distinction between the political and the religious can, perhaps, be illustrated by artisans like William Sharp who shifted quite easily from the Brothers' 'political' pole to the Southcottean 'religious' end. But it is important to point out that while I am arguing against millenarianism as part of an evolutionary model of class and political rationalisation, neither do I favour explanations couched in terms of "the partial independence of the religious factor.18

18. Clarke Garrett Respectable Folly (Baltimore 1975), 230 & 1-3, 9, 121, 168; on other points raised in this paragraph, see P.S. Gilbert "Joanna Southcott : the case of a conservative Millenarian Movement" in New Sociology, Sept., 1971, Vol.1, No.1; 30-1, 49; Thomas, Religion & Magic 172-3; Christopher Hill Puritanism & Revolution (London 1958), 322-3; Joanna Southcott An Answer to Thomas Paine's Third Part of the Age of Reason (London 1812) 2-3, 5-6, 61; Joanna Southcott "An Account of the Trials on the Bills of Exchange" in The Kingdom of Christ Is at Hand (London 1806) 3, 55 and see "The Long-Wished for Revolution also in Kingdom 1, 58 and other works listed in the Bibliography.
Identifying England as the elect nation was a way of giving English culture a universal value and of giving the millennial experience in English history a particular cultural stamp. Yet other deistical elements emphasised natural laws, the natural order of things. The other, half-hidden sub-theme is therefore the nature/culture theme that signifies its existence as myth. Millennial discourse is another example of the limits of the control of the productive forces over nature, of a natural or semi-natural economy. It needs, then, to be joined up with astrology as part of a "mental set". Both went in for "general predictions" for a theory of general causation related to three kinds of signs of the times - to "political developments", to "natural circumstances" and to the "temper of men" - all of which were linked together. The lack of control over nature, and the lack of corresponding social differentiation, is expressed as a lack of epistemic differentiation between politics and religion. Again, there is a body of opinion and scholarship that suggests otherwise or subordinates the religious to the political.\footnote{Christopher Hill, "The Political Sermons of John Preston" in Puritanism and Revolution, 263; M. Dorothy George, English Political Caricature: a Study of Opinion and Propaganda, (Oxford, 1959), Vol.1, 71, suggests that the mixture of religion and politics ended with the Sacheverell incident; Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, (London, 1790, Everyman edn., London 1910), 9-10; G.H. Sabine, A History of Political Thought, (3rd edn. London, 1963), 616-7; G.S. Veitch, The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform, (London 1965, orig. pub. 1916), 75; Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 399. According to Pocock, James Harrington "ended by subordinating spiritual experience to political", and he says that neo-Harringtonianism had a big part to play in the 18th century. I have given much more stress to millenarianism and deism in the 18th century than Pocock. Eric Foner has even argued for the influence of millenialist categories on Tom Paine's thought, "Tom Paine's Republic: Radical Ideology and Social Change" in The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism, (DeKalb, 1976), 206 and 203-4 for Radicalism generally. See also Clarke Garrett, Respectable Folly, (Baltimore, 1975), 13 and Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, (Cambridge, Mass. 1967), 89.} Yet, "even the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people could be cast in a religious mould". Rather, the following chapters show how the two were joined or undifferentiated. John Cartwright saw politics as "practical religion ... pre-eminently under the Christian dispensation". The partition between politics and religion could lead to the separation between private interests and the public benefit.
Even the nominally political act of getting elected to Parliament could be conceived as something basically religious.

Every man who enters into Parliament, with any personal view whatever and not wholly or exclusively for the service of his country must be deemed bona fida to have sold his soul; and also every man who joins any party to vote on all occasions for the purpose of promoting or supporting that party at all events, is perpetually guilty of the same act of selling his soul.  

King Alfred, said William Hone, looked not to "political sources" but to "the providence of God" to explain events. In the pamphlets of John Harrison, "a Sheffield razor-maker", religion, in the form of copious quotations from Revelations, morality and politics are all linked together in a general causal sequence. It is worth giving one example of the chain of reasoning. "John Bull" one of the "lower sort of people" without "liberal education" and unfamiliar with "the regular rules of composition" tells how "god gives the means to produce a certain end". To England, he gave the acorn. Explanation starts from nature and the super-natural. Acorns, "when planted ... become oaks ... and in the process of time become plank, knees, masts ... fit for building a ship". God has ordained the British navy and Britain as a "great maritime and commercial power" and a barrier to Napoleon. Napoleon was protected by God so that he could fulfill his purposes. This gives some indication of the appeal that Napoleon could have in Radical circles. He could be conceived as a political hero since he was the destroyer of feudal, autocratic and Catholic monarchies. God protects and sets limits to Napoleon's actions and powers but Napoleon also has a certain freedom of thought and action. But he can only use it to his cost if he goes against God's will. Napoleon has "escaped plots, assassinations, and poison miraculously". But when he blustered about "having ships, commerce and colonies", he spoke nonsense. He was "attempting what does not come within the purposes of God: Great Britain is fenced in by God's waves ... naval power is given to Britain". Lastly, there is the 'Jacobin' Thomas Hardy's

20. Nathaniel B. Halhed, "A Short Reply to Dr. Horne's Pamphlet" in Mr. Halhed's Speech in the House of Commons ... And a Short Account of Mr. Brother's Prophecies, (London, 1795), 13.

recommendation of "an excellent pamphlet ... recently published entitled Sacred Politicks". Quoting from it, he brings out the religious basis of the Radical shibboleths: "Unity" ye are all one in Jesus Christ ... Fraternity: all ye are bretheren ... Liberty: 'Christ hath made you free' ... Equality: There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian ... but Christ is all in all". He points to "the political character of Jesus Christ himself" who offended against and was seized by the "Church and State". The same words but hardly the concepts of the political rhetoric of the French Revolution.  

The ultimate aspect of rationality to be considered is literacy and its relationship to artisan mentality. In the secondary literature of R.K. Webb, Victor Neuberg, E.P. Thompson and others, there is little stress given to the 'irrational' in plebeian literature; but literacy in itself is not a sign of a more rationalistic outlook. To demonstrate this, I refer again the recollections of Lovett, Carter, Holcroft, Cooper and Bamford. * Chapbooks, were full of "traditional heroes", were "essentially English in their contents", and reproduced "an ancient tradition petrified in print". Important here is the figure of Robin Hood, mentioned in all the sources. Also important is "Ossian" mentioned by Bamford among others. MacPherson's quasi-mythical composition, he says, "gave me a glimpse of our most ancient lore, interested my feelings and absorbed my attention". Robin Hood's exploits always had a rural setting and could lend themselves to political interpretation. In general, the Anglo-Saxon myth can be seen as a kind of political enchantment analogous to the social enchantment generated by chapbook literature. 'Politics' was merely one part of the same mental universe. King Alfred, who also entered chapbook literature,

22. Thomas Hardy in Place Papers, B. Mus, Add. Mss, 27814.

23. Samuel Bamford, Early Days, (London, 1849), 40-1, 43, 94ff, 280-1. According to MacPherson, the Ossian poems "form a regular kind of history". Although "the general charge of forgery ... was unjustifiable", they were, it seems, part forgery and seem to have been composed from legend and oral history. James MacPherson, The Poems of Ossian, (London, 1796), 3 vols. It has been said that, "Ossian flowed like a tide over Europe ... it would be hard to overestimate their impact ... Ossian was widely thought to represent that early pure religion ... Ossian provides the only concrete example or illustration of the early simple and natural religion posited by the deists". B. Feldman & R. Richardson, The Rise of Modern Mythology, (Bloomington, 1972), 201-2.

* On the secondary and the primary literature, see the Bibliography, under the names of the authors mentioned.
and his band of Anglo-Saxons were not much more than a politicised version of Robin Hood and his merry men. I would also emphasise as strongly as possible Thomas Carter's observation that earlier reading was more important than is often realised "when it is considered that the human mind retains in mature years, much of the tastes and habits acquired in childhood".²⁴ Heroes and history, reason as origins and custom, this was the mental universe of the artisan; a mental world far removed from modern thinking about society and politics.

²⁴ Carter, Memoirs, 25, 27.
CHAPTER TWO

REPRESENTATIVE FIGURE 1: "HONORARY RADICAL JACKS"

There are habits of thinking peculiar to different conditions, and to find them out is truly the study of mankind.

Tom Paine

Vulgar traditions must have had public grounds of truth by virtue of which they came into being and were preserved by entire peoples over long periods of time. It will be another great labour of this Science to recover these grounds of truth - truth which, with the passage of years and the changes in languages and customs, has come down to us enveloped in falsehood.

This chapter considers the more Gothicist side of Radical ideology. They are the ideas of those who were either read or had close contact with artisan leaders. But why give all this time, space and thought to the Gothic mind, to the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Despite what Althusser says about the need to study customs and traditions, the structuralist version of Marxism has ignored culture to an extent not found in Marx's own writings. Culture and tradition are important because they are often mentally crystallised as style and, as E.J. Hobsbawm says, "style may be of more than superficial interest" since these are times when "it is the man, or rather the movement."

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The first writer I examine as a contributor or purveyor of the Gothic style or mentality is Major John Cartwright. This examination is undertaken with a number of questions in mind which have come out of the previous analysis or scholarship devoted to Cartwright's writings. The first question is whether or not Cartwright is a 'Lockeian' or a 'Machiavellian'; whether his writings are guided by natural law or structured by virtue. And what role does custom or constitutionalism play? Is there any shift, any ideological break, between the 1770s when he first put pen to paper and the 1820s when his last compositions were published? What sense, if any, is he a revolutionary? Is he a Jacobin? Is he a 'modern', an Enlightenment figure, or are his ideas backward-looking and even eccentric or irrational? What is the role of religion in his thinking? What is his class position or social background; how is he related to the artisans? How popular was his writing and ideas? And generally, how does he view the 'polity', that is the economy, politics and society of his time. Specifically, what does he understand by such words as republicanism, patriotism and property? Is Cartwright Court or Country? What was the conceptual structure that organised these political outlooks?

Major John Cartwright had read and used Hulme's Essay in his own popular publication Take Your Choice. But Cartwright's reading and usages were selective and critical. Take Your Choice, Cartwright's "most famous book" containing "the basis of most of his political philosophy", is said to have "much of its content ... derived directly from John Burgh".² Certainly Cartwright's pamphlet contains fairly copious comment from Burgh. The question of 'influence' is raised, but what follows shows how complicated any answer would be. When a writer is mentioned it is more the question of paradigms that needs to be kept in mind. For example, in a publication, published eight years later in 1784, not the 'commonwealthmen' Hulme and Burgh but Locke is the master "of the science of civil government". Another writing praises

Thomas More and his *Utopia*. Paine, too, is of some influence if only for his opposition to hereditary government. Cartwright was a republican of sorts, but "never wholehearted follower of Tom Paine". If he would not go even as far as Locke in his revolutionary beliefs, this must refer to Cartwright's practical politics; the problem of his intellectual relationship to Paine is still an unsettled question. At Horne Tooke's trial, he indicated that he seems to have read the *Rights of Man*; in 1819 he said he had not yet read the *Age of Reason* but intended to get a copy. On the personal level, Paine was "among his associates" even if "unlike Paine he distinguished America from France". But both are said to share Leveller antecedents so far as radical parliamentary democracy goes.  

Which, if based on natural rights theory, seems to bring Cartwright closer to Locke than to the neo-Harringtonian and commonwealth paradigm. According to one writer, "Cartwright's ideas were inspired by two main sources, the Bible and John Locke". For his biographer as the Anglo-Saxon myth took a grip on Cartwright's mind, "the references to Locke disappeared". But around 1820, the primacy of the constitution over parliament was still being validated by using Locke. His niece claimed that in one of his last literary efforts in 1823, his ideas were no different "from his first essay on the subject of politics in the year 1776". Often associated with Cartwright's supposedly Lockeian cast of mind is his incorporation into the Enlightenment which has the effect of stressing his rationalism. Yet Cartwright presented to the Society for Constitutional Information copies of Burgh's *Disquisitions* and Hulme's *Essay* as the two works which had most influenced his own writings; there is evidence Cartwright had read the latter by or in 1782. It has been said Granville Sharp won Cartwright over to the Anglo-Saxon myth.  

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Cartwright was himself an 'influence' in Radical circles and I merely mention two connections which seem worthy of further investigation or research. On 20 July 1820, according to his niece, he "again" met Thelwall "a kind friend". He had a number of friends and acquaintances including a quite close relationship with Thomas Wooler to whom Cartwright "opened his library". The relationship with Wooler and others takes on more significance if we try to assess the wider 'influence' of Cartwright's ideas. His English Constitution Produced and Illustrated "was privately printed and almost ignored in the journals of opinion". On the one hand, it is doubted whether many of the working classes read his writings, on the other hand it is said many of Cartwright's ideas were "at large" in the early 19th century. A number of the ideas were publicised in "that considerable section of the newspaper press which addressed itself to poor and politically uneducated Englishmen" among which "Wooler's Black Dwarf" is "the most conspicuous example". The problem with this is the Dwarf was not only the major vehicle for those, including Wooler, who were inspired by Cartwright's thinking, but also that Cartwright was an important contributor to the paper. Neither does every book fall into the same category of the English Constitution. The initial publication of the Declaration of Rights amounted to one thousand copies. In 1781 an additional 4,000 copies were printed, and there were three more editions of the work in 1782 and 1783.5

Having raised the question of readership and class, as an entry into the substance of John Cartwright's thought it is useful to now on to discuss his own class position and attitudes. To what extent is he an "organic intellectual"? Starting with social origins, Cartwright's ancestors fought on the side of Charles I in the Civil War and lost much of their landed property as a result. But his immediate family was well-connected, rubbing shoulders with archbishops and the like. His father's sister married a Whig aristocrat who is said to have had a great influence over John Cartwright. But as he put it, "mine was a Tory family" and

5. Osborne, Cartwright, 150, 161; Walvin, "Democratic Societies", 21.
"Popery was once its religion". One author has argued Cartwright's social position protected him from the prosecutions that befell other Radicals. In fact, the precise nature of Cartwright's social status is not all that clear. According to another authority, his father was "a landowner whose property had gradually diminished". Cartwright himself "had a poor formal education at Newark Grammar School and Heath Academy in Yorkshire". Veitch says he got "a measure of respect" from the authorities because he had "a stake in the country ... a small estate which appears to have maintained him in comfort if not in luxury". He is described by P.A. Brown as coming from "a family of small gentry in the Midlands", while another source refers to him buying "a large estate in Lincolnshire". Elsewhere, Cartwright is described as remaining "at heart a landed gentleman" who would "purchase land himself when he had the opportunity". His writings, it is said, "were coloured by partiality for agriculture as a way of life" while there was "a deepening prejudice against commercial interests" as he grew older. Many of Cartwright's fellow-reformers were "nostalgic gentry" who as a class were suffering a decline in living standards and social position. Certainly, the Anglo-Saxon myth and natural law have a strong agrarian flavour, although the question of commercial interest is more problematical. In 1788, he became an unsuccessful mill-owner; though he has been called "an improving landlord and a forward-looking millowner". John Cartwright's younger brother was, of course, Edmund Cartwright and John "certainly shared in Edmund's industrial adventures". 6

Edmund's experience of "labour violence", the "machine-smashing and factory burning" by handloom weavers fearful of "low wages and technological unemployment" is said to have led to the Major's "later denunciations of the Luddites" and presumably coloured

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his attitude to the working classes in general. On his Lincolnshire estate, he tried to form a sort of cartel with other woad-growers. One of its aims, in Cartwright's words, was "to keep our woad-labourers quiet without shifting from one master to another". It is now then necessary to turn to the question of Cartwright's attitudes to working class groups like the Luddites, as well as to the working classes in general.

There is some evidence from the working class themselves of reciprocal hostility between Cartwright and the workers. For one historian, he is "a troublesome colleague" who "was not a very welcome caller in the library of Francis Place". Place's rationalist turn of mind gave short shift to Anglo-Saxonism. This attitude would not have been shared by Gravenor Henson, although Henson had other reasons for looking askance at the Major despite the position he occupied in Radical politics. Henson gives a fairly detailed account of how Cartwright persuaded a jury into an unpopular decision over rights of patent. According to Henson, he was at the time generally very unpopular "on account of the severe, whimsical and tyrannical discipline he had established while commanding the Nottingham militia". Henson cites the Nottingham election of 1780 when Cartwright got only 149 votes because of the latter's "arbitrary notions of military discipline". Yet Cartwright had cordial relations with other working class Radicals, for example Thomas Hardy, with whom he is in correspondence in 1801. There is still in existence Cartwright's London Corresponding Society membership card countersigned by Hardy as secretary. Joseph Mitchell, the Radical agitator and "first self-appointed political missionary" maintained himself at one time through the sale of Cartwright's political pamphlets, received Cartwright's advice and purported to be his 'delegate'. There was in fact a certain harmony of belief and experience between the attitude of loss of a certain part of the gentry and that of, say, the Scottish weavers who "looked back on a supposed Golden Age" and to men like Cartwright "to gain lost

prestige". The 'lower classes' were closer to Cartwright than to Paine in that they believed their rights "were infringed rather than never existed". If there is a latent antagonism of interest between Cartwright and his artisan allies, there is also a certain common perspective. 8

Perhaps this comes out best in Samuel Bamford. For Bamford, the Radical movement needed to stick to the maxim of "our venerable political Father", Major Cartwright, and "'Hold fast by the laws'". He regards Cartwright as a sort of political hero, a figure worthy of veneration. Immediately after Bamford's trial and during his prison term, Cartwright made personal contact with Bamford, on one occasion sending Bamford some books on Spanish which, however, remained unused. Erroneously, Bamford sees Cartwright as a purely political reformer or saint. Using a moral-political language similar to Cartwright's he criticises him for not going far enough and seeking moral as well as political salvation. The "worthy old Major" did not go "to the root-end of radicalism"; he did not seek to purify personal corruption. 9

If Cartwright associated with the more plebeian reformers he was never really one of them. He was never really a true organic intellectual in the sense of coming from within the class he wanted to represent. He was at most what has been called an "'honorary Radical Jack" or "honorary artisan". The question of representativeness is, in fact, problematical. Cartwright was always held in high regard by the gentlemen reformers such as Fox and Wyvill, as his correspondence bears witness. He sent copies of his Aegis to cabinet ministers. As late as 1805 he was writing to a number of dukes and earls calling for another county meeting. Yet the response made him cynical and sick of "the old dull road of meetings of freeholders convened by the aristocracy". He was always ready


to attack the upper class monopoly of political power. He urged the Society for Constitutional Information to cast aside "with disdain all aristocratic reserves" and to meet the people face to face. His appeals to the middle classes were barely more successful, as shown by his lack of success at Westminster. He is said not to have shared Wyvill's "predilection for the gentry". By the early 1880s he placed no reliance in them at all. His confidence in the masses "was impressive in a person of his class and generation". Yet in 1815 he is arguing that the reformers "must for a season at least work for the most part by the middle classes" so that "the higher then ... will see the necessity". Cartwright's political object was not any particular class but the people as a whole.

Even so, towards the end of his career Cartwright made a particular effort to get close to the "labouring classes". Of his exertions on behalf of the Hampden Clubs it has been said it is difficult "to overstate the importance of Cartwright's evangelising tours of 1812, 1813 and 1815". Founded by a group of high Whig reformers in 1812, Cartwright was the only person to turn up at a meeting held in 1815. During the years 1816 to 1817 he was believed by the government to be the person most responsible for re-creating reform agitation among the lower orders. The membership of the Hampden Clubs consisted of "small manufacturers and artisans: cobblers, weavers, framesmiths, mechanics, cutlers, printers, hatters, drapers, cotton manufacturers" and so on. It may be true in the earlier parts of his career Cartwright "ignored the working classes" but it is a distortion to say that he "remained faithful to his class". His beliefs were far from an "irrelevance" to "working class ends".


11. Thompson, Working Class, 66ff, 698, 722-4; Miller, "John Cartwright" 709; Osborne, Cartwright, 59, 60-1, 102.
Cartwright's attitude towards working class activity and towards the working classes themselves as a social grouping is tinged with ambiguity, even where political and social violence is concerned. When the farm labourers rioted in Lincolnshire in 1791, he recommended the farmers arm themselves so that there would be "no bullying anyone out of the profits of his harvest". During the naval mutiny in 1797, he wrote to the government suggesting ways to bring back "the discontented sailors to their duty". In 1800, on hearing of an intended food riot in Sheffield, Cartwright found a party of the would-be rioters assembled in a barn, and, in the words of his niece, "he entered it alone, spent the whole night among them, reasoned them into calmness". So that "in the morning they returned peaceably to their famishing families". Peace and order, it would seem, are valued above everything else, even the momentary satisfying of starvation. Yet unlike the majority of middle class Radicals and Whigs, Cartwright did not panic in the face of working class violence. Neither did he turn on the working classes. Although the Luddites dealt some mortal blows at the reform movement, Cartwright took his campaign and ideas to those areas where Luddite activity was thickest. And if he condemned the violence of Luddism, there is the suggestion that he encouraged and knew of the plans of the Blanketeers. He failed to attend Peterloo, although scheduled to arrive, but appeared at a protest meeting in London. Cartwright, in fact, did not even keep his distance from the Luddites themselves. He tried to attend one of their trials in Manchester and was in close touch with political activists in the Luddite districts in an attempt to quell "the tempest of discontent", converting it into the "genuine patriotism" of radical political reform. He wanted to give to the "friends of reform of every description" a banner "under which they can rally". If he would comment on the riots in Lincolnshire that "one musket and bayonet in defence of peace and law, is a match for scores of scythes in the hands of men of conscious criminality", it also remains true he was not without sympathy on certain occasions when the working classes were acting violently in defence of their lives and political liberties.12

The political rights of the working classes were based on the natural equality of men, and on their fraternity. The Bible told us "all men are our brethren, and that we should do to others as we would others should do to us". Men were created "equally and freely" and these principles ought to be the basis of political action. Obviously, the statement that Cartwright "was never a social leveller or an egalitarian" needs some kind of qualification, as does reference to his "subtle anti-egalitarianism". The concept of equality has many sides to it, and it is misleading to say that unlike Cobbett "Cartwright's attention was riveted to the property taxes which fell upon the middle class". It is something of a parody to contrast John Cartwright's political radicalism with the more economic and social concerns of Cobbett. Despite his treatment of starving food-rioters it is inaccurate to accuse him of indifference towards unemployment and economic distress. "Personality" Cartwright wrote, "is the sole foundation of being represented" ... property "in land, goods or chattels", are merely "the laws of men"; but the "property" of liberty and representation and of being equal is "more sacred". He also emphasised that the poverty of the poor reformers would exclude them from a fair trial. Because of the effects on political and civil rights, poverty is a kind of national sin. Forget your Grand Tour, your visits to lakes and mountains, your journeys to see ruins and abbeys, he says. Travel instead "to see the actual condition of starving people". Go around the country and "you will discover in the mass of the middle and working classes, a very general sense of wrong and misery". But it is in the cause of poverty Cartwright differs from later reformers. Not the type of economic organisation but the state and the political system lie at the root of poverty and gross inequality. Political and moral corruption and degeneration breeds the social evil of poverty. There is, then, this agreement between Burke and Cartwright, and who is to say that in 1813 John Cartwright was wrong. Poverty had political and moral causes and could in consequence be remedied. Any "defects in the character of the lower classes" could by overcome by "enobling the depraved mind by paying it respect and teaching it to know its own value". As he put it, "your liberties can be safe in the hands of none but yourself". Political education rather than deference was needed.13

Once again, though, we must expect to find paradox and contradiction in thought and action which only logicians and dogmatists or puritans seek to exclude. The patronage-deference nexus was so much a part of social life in Cartwright's time it would be surprising to find him untouched by it. His niece describes his "acts of justice" carried out "with infinite labour and perseverance" on behalf of "the poor Irish, who came over at the fishing season, and who were frequently imposed upon and ill-treated by their employers". As well as being an instance of patronage, this is of course a further example of Cartwright's concern for the living and working conditions of the poor. In a similar vein, on his farm in Lincolnshire he established a school. Patronage of this sort would make the poor and ignorant look to their own best interests. While he also provided welfare facilities for his employees and the poor of the district, he urged that they become independent of the Poor Laws by forming friendly societies. At the same time, according to his niece, he did not expect the "lowest classes" to enter parliament in their own right since their "want of education" made them "unfit to associate with gentlemen". They would defer, she records him saying, "to persons of more consideration than themselves". Towards Cartwright "the greatest deference and respect were observable" from the working classes "whenever intercourse took place between them on the subject of politics". John Cartwright refers to the "deference and affection" he received. Yet in areas where patronage might be expected to come through most strongly, he drew back. In 1823, in a letter to Birkbeck he accepted the honour of membership of the London Mechanics Institute but added, since he was not himself an operative mechanic, "I shall not think myself entitled to have any voice in the framing of its laws, or any claim to partake in its management". Agreeing with Thomas Hodgskin and other Radicals who argued for an independent working class education he stated that these tasks "must remain exclusively in the hands of the operative alone" in order that the Institution would prosper. This was not only "an unusual sentiment for a middle class reformer to hold"; it also showed an insight into working class attitudes and consciousness which may of his contemporaries lacked.  

In his writings we find further expression of his politico-religious view of equality. Again equality is based on Christian fraternity. Christ knew the poor were "equally valuable in the eyes of God", were equal to the rich since "the poor were their brethren". Consequently, in order to balance things, if the law showed any bias, "it ought to favour the poor". Every man in the community ought to jointly partake "in the sovereign power". God has made men equal by nature and "liberty not dominion", not status or property, "is held by divine right". Yet in an early tract, in Take Your Choice!, he virtually suggests a property qualification is needed for the nation's representatives; neither the "farmer nor mechanic" are fit to make momentous decisions. The generality of the people can decide the broad principles, but the particulars are decided for them. The people have the liberty "to vote for gentlemen". Almost echoing Gravenor Henson's criticism, Cartwright says in the militia there should be "ample provision against too much equality" in its organisation. But that he knew the people were exploited by the crown and the aristocracy and their political and social institutions is clearly illustrated by the frontespiece of Take Your Choice! which displays an edifice similar to the propagandistic 'cartoon' of the Russian anarchists tiered 'cake' of the 19th century.15

Cartwright's view of the aristocracy was taken from the place it occupied in the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution. "Hereditary nobles", introduced by William the Bastard, formed the basis of corruption within the constitution. There were no hereditary legislators in the Anglo-Saxon parliament. But in one of his earliest publications, Cartwright expresses the 'Rousseauean' idea that the type of government needs to be related to the size of the community. In 18th century England there had to be a departure from the pure Alfredian form, from "strict natural justice". Provided there were tight democratic controls, there was room for a kind of aristocracy. If hereditary political rights were abolished, the reformed parliament would still, therefore, be a parliament of gentlemen. Cartwright regrets the aristocracy were deprived of their military position. Consequently, if riots now spring up "under the nose" of a peer as in the Priestley Riots and the Gordon Riots earlier, he is powerless to act. He has in mind here the role of the aristocracy as guardians of public order; and their independence from the crown. In their role as "civil magistrates", the "nobility and gentry" could keep a watch over the principles of the militia's foundation. What the gentry was and what

15. See the cover of George Woodcock's Anarchism, (Pelican edn. 1962).
it might be were two different things.  

Cartwright allowed a role in his political thinking for a virtuous aristocracy while at the same time wanting to extend the idea of the people to include the working classes, or at least all adult males who were sane. The virtuous representative would "do in the legislature for his constituents that which they, if present, and acting wisely, would do for themselves". Here, then, is another echo of Rousseau, the idea that the representative of the people would only act with virtue if he represented the real will of the people. To ensure his virtue there would be annual elections. The House of Commons "ought to be dependent on the PEOPLE, completely dependent; the very organ of their will". This being the principle "ordained by Alfred the best of all our kings except his present majesty". Annual parliaments "would be acceptable to 'a prince of genuine virtue and magnanimity'. But if a virtuous king also had a role to play in a truly democratic system, annual parliaments were only preferred if they were chosen upon the basis of equal representation. As he says, "there is nothing an associated nation cannot do, it can level the throne with earth and trample authority in the dust". Or, as he puts it elsewhere, if "the law be vox populi" it "makes it vox Dei". The people are obviously sovereign even if it is a mediated sovereignty, and to ensure this he makes other proposals to ensure that power is "truly delegated from the people". Among Cartwright's suggestions is that M.Ps receive "no higher emolument at most than reasonable wages from the constituents". Another suggestion is the reformed electoral districts should contain between 2500 and 2600 persons, while the only qualifications for suffrage ought to be "age and parochial residence" - which seems to give women the vote. "Exclusion from suffrage" is "a slave mark".  

Cartwright's and other Radicals' proposals for universal suffrage pertain to the rationality if not the rationalism of their thought. Annual

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17. Cartwright, Life,, Vol.II, 77; Cartwright, Abridgement, 13, 27; Internal Evidence, 50; Take Your Choice, 41, 76, 82, 84, 96; Aegis, 66.
parliaments do not seem so far-fetched if we ignore modern parliamentary elections and representation and their enormous costs. Cartwright and his fellow Radicals had in mind the ideal of the *amateur* parliamentarian. Politics, like the rest of life's activities, ought not to be a full-time occupation since it would lead to a loss of full perspective and independence. On this point some recent work or scholarship has questioned Pocock's interpretation of Cartwright's thought. The question becomes one of whether there are one or two major paradigms in Cartwright's political ideas or of which one is dominant. A third possibility is that there is a degree of coherence in his thinking suggestive of a single paradigm.

It has been strongly argued that although Cartwright used 'traditional' 18th century language, constitutionalist rhetoric and so forth, he transformed contemporary political theory into a radical mode of thought which "contained all the fundamental characteristics attributed to radicalism after the French Revolution". Cartwright's ideology is "not neo-Harringtonian", and the key element in this is his development of a concept of universal male suffrage which involved a fundamental departure away from a suffrage based on propertied independence. Cartwright and his Radical friends are said to have carried out a major transformation "of certain theological and rationalist concepts" while retaining "all the traditional styles of eighteenth century rhetoric". Partial support for this view comes from E.P. Thompson who argues that although Cartwright couched his arguments "in terms of precedent and tradition", he "believed in methods of agitation among 'members unlimited'". In the more sophisticated version, Cartwright's political language is not neo-Harringtonian since landed property ceases to be the basis of political rights. His interpretation of "Christian theology" is said to be fundamental to his concept of universal male suffrage. If he uses other languages or paradigms, "the terms of political rationalism, the ancient constitution and the classical theory of government", they were without real significance since Cartwright "transformed the meaning of all these political theories". He used "a traditional style of language to express totally new ideas". What, then, we are confronted with is not merely an argument that proposes Cartwright's political vocabulary is filled with Lockeian moments rather than neo-Harringtonian moments. Without apparently realising it the author suggests a reading or rendering of Cartwright's ideas in terms of a fundamental break between his language and 'traditional' political categories, and an essentialist view whereby
the old categories are a mere epiphenomenon.¹⁸

What does an analysis of Cartwright's writing suggest? In Take Your Choice! there is, as in all his writings, support for the argument that has just been presented. It is argued there, for example, that land tax as a basis of representation must be unjust since everyone pays purchase tax and yet there is no universal suffrage. Wealth in general cannot provide the measure of political rights either since "any sum laid down as a qualification is arbitrary". Voting should be universal since all Englishmen are rational beings"; reason is the sole measure. But although there is to be no property qualification Cartwright reminds us that propertied independence is vital for the people's representatives.¹⁹

If there is a break, it is neither clean nor clear cut. The matter needs further investigation with regard to Cartwright's views on property. In going on to consider this it is enlightening to put the argument concerning Cartwright's radical democratic sentiment and his ideological break alongside an interpretation mentioned earlier which stressed his gentry connections and his polemics against the land tax. To develop this latter argument a bit more, it is said Cartwright's proposals for political reform lose their impact once it is realised he did not visualise any change in the social order after the reforms had been carried out. Not only did he not want the poor to invade the property of the rich through social upheaval, but he was against all land-sharing and dividing schemes whether of the Spencean or Paineite kind. If these propositions are acceptable, they would of course dilute the radicalism of Cartwright's democratic theory and question the degree of novelty in his idea of universal suffrage. A yet third position argues he had a Lockeian theory of political rights that was also connected to Locke's labour theory of value. Consequently, Cartwright "belonged more to the Enlightenment and less to the Commonwealthmen". This idea will receive greater attention later but it is now given some consideration, along with the two other interpretations that have just


been elaborated.20 

Take the question of land tax and property first. On one occasion at least, Cartwright states taxation attacks men's property and if substantial or excessive endangers their position and their independence. Excessive taxation goes against the principles found in Magna Carta and the constitution. Property tax, he says elsewhere, is "obviously inconsistent with every principle of English liberty". Property tax is "subversive of ... native and hereditary rights" and "utterly irreconcilable to the spirit of a free constitution". That property is dear to Cartwright's heart is also shown in 1804 when he exhorts Englishmen to "preserve your property, defend your females, and drive the Frenchmen into the sea". He distinguishes between the "self-armed" 800,00 men in the militia who appear to be householders and "the supplementary" 400,000 men who seem to be non-householders.21 

There is, then, a genuine concern for the rights of 'property'. The question is what reasons, what assumptions and what interests lie behind this concern. Showing perhaps his gentry connections and suggesting, too, he has not dropped entirely 'neo-Harringtonian' assumptions, Cartwright argues that property tax would "vest in the Crown, the whole landed property in the realm". Yet property tax is not only evil because it undermines the independence of the landed gentlemen. As Lord Stanhope wrote to Cartwright, it is a corrupting influence because,

"it is evident that the tenant's property tax tends to compel the farmer to raise his corn and grain on the consumer; and has in its principle the same kind of objection to it as exists against those most impolitic and more permanent taxes on candles, soap, leather, coarse sugar, beer salt &c. The price of meat is affected ... as also the price of beer ... Taxes ... on the necessaries of life ... tend also to injure this nation's export trade ... The tenant's property tax ... tends to oppress the poor and middling classes ... The cause of all this is, that the householders &c have not in the constitution at present the right which they ought to have."

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20 Osborne, Cartwright, 43, 53-54, 60; Drinkwater-Lunn, "John Cartwright" 572.
Cartwright's own opinions corresponded closely with Lord Stanhope's views. Political remedies are sought for political causes and there is more than a touch of anachronism in saying Cartwright ought to be looking at social and economic causes when even more radical and artisan Radicals came up with the same answers and explanation. His questioning of property tax is certainly much more than a sign of his class position and interests. In confirmation of this, Cartwright's niece records her uncle found property tax less objectionable than other kinds of taxes because "it was not levied on the poor".

This kind of statement could be suggestive of a departure from 'commonwealth' assumptions. Usually, Cartwright's emphasis on personality rather than property is said to signal his break with pre-modern ideas. "Liberty is the end of the social compact, property mere useful means ... liberty is planted by God in the very nature of man". Part-reformers are guilty of "trafficking with the principles of the constitution, as with merchandise in which they had private property". Since suffrage is the birthright of Englishmen it cannot be bought or sold and it cannot be dependent upon a property qualification. Natural equality "excludes degrees of freedom" so that "personality is the sole foundation of the right to be represented". Clearly, there is evidence in Cartwright's writings to suggest he based political rights on personality rather than landed property.23

Whether this in itself is sufficient to prove a complete or fundamental break with 'Country' ideas is a different thing. The danger of centring on a single concept has been mentioned before. The extent to which Cartwright breaks away from the natural law assumptions of Locke and the Levellers is also doubtful. Neither can his interest in property tax be dismissed out of hand. His argument that a property qualification and landed property in particular is necessary to ensure the independence of the people's representatives against corruption by the crown also needs to be taken into account. And there is more. It is true Cartwright often spoke out against the invasion of the property of the rich by the poor, thereby suggesting land was of no consequence to political rights. No doubt he was, in the words of his niece, against Spence and his followers "who promulgated a wild system of an equal

23. Cartwright, Abridgement, 16; Internal Evidence, 52; Choice, 19, 22.
division of landed property". But, in keeping with many other Radicals, including the more plebeian sort, Cartwright, like Paine, saw a monopoly in the ownership of land. "Nobles vied with Ecclesiastics in monopolising the soil". There are ample references to "the present extreme inequality of property" which meant "tenants, tradesmen and others are dependent on the wealthy for bread and justice". They are therefore liable to corruption just as much as a pensioned member of parliament. So Cartwright was obviously in favour of a more equal distribution of property, further evidence of which is suggested by his constant use of Cato's Letters. It was a major theme of the Letters that a free republic was not possible without some redistribution of property. Cato desired "not so much a levelling of property as an agrarian law". Without it, taxation and the loss of political rights would reduce the people to dependence and corruption. And, to quote from Cartwright again, "those valuable members of the state by whose manual labours its very existence is preserved" needed some kind of real wealth in addition to their political birthright to avoid this state of affairs.

Conceptually, if not entirely politically, this brings Cartwright close to Paine and perhaps to Locke, although we must keep in mind again the "mixed minds" conception. There are problems to be overcome in locating a dominant Lockeian paradigm in Cartwright's thinking. If we go along with Pocock and see in Locke a defence of mercantile monied and moveable property against the landed interest there are particular ambiguities. While he was not against commerce, Cartwright had no love for the power of big money. There were limits to be put on capital accumulation if only because "an unbounded and unguarded liberty in commerce would soon degenerate into licentiousness of the worst kind". State regulation was necessary to avoid this situation. Trading companies were, after all, artificial and not natural creations and therefore could claim no special rights. There would, of course, be much more to bring in to show that Cartwright could not be fitted into any Lockeian straitjacket, but here all I have wanted to indicate is the difficulties with the economic side of the relationship.


* My emphasis.
Further knowledge of the modernity or otherwise of Cartwright's thought, as well as his relatedness to Locke and Paine, can be gleaned from an examination of his ideas about revolution and reform. To some extent this issue has already been dealt with in this chapter. What I wish to do now is to raise a different set of questions, those of a more conceptual nature. Cartwright considered himself as an ultra-radical reformer and distinguished himself from the revolutionaries, on the one hand, and the more faint-hearted and Whiggish Radicals on the other. The task is to show precisely what Cartwright meant by radical reform, and in so doing we will see that, conceptually speaking, his ideas are not all that removed from the revolutionary Tom Paine.

First consider the question of Cartwright's supposed Jacobinism. He was on more than one occasion called "Jacobinical". It was said of him, "if there is a revolution à la française in England, he will be its generalissimo". Without going quite as far as this some modern commentators number him among the foremost English Jacobins, even if he is usually seen as a moderate when placed beside figures like Paine and Spence. Against this, is the view of John Osborne and other historians who try to cast Cartwright in a more conservative mould. Cartwright, he says, "had no connection with the L.C.S.", the London Corresponding Society of course being construed by Thompson and others as a hotbed of English Jacobinism. Osborne plays down the role of the physical force Radicals and notions of rebellion and revolution in Radical ideology, while at the same time putting the blame on the Spenceans for the Spa Fields Riots in 1816. Without necessarily wanting to agree with the view of the "socialist historians" or of the "liberal and conservative historians", it is possible to detect a similar inconsistency or lack of logic in his view that the Tory government of the time were still in a panic over France and saw Jacobinism and revolutionary intention where, in fact, none existed. There is something in this thesis but it is hardly sufficient if only because it posits collective illusion on the part of the government and suggests an irrational and psychological account of causation. No doubt there was an element of the irrational, as well as the cynical, in the government of the time but there are other explanations available.

27. Thompson, Working Class, 725; Osborne, Cartwright, 32, 113, 114.
For what are probably different reasons I can, though, at least agree with the proposition that it is a distortion to label Cartwright and most other Radicals, even of the physical force variety, Jacobin. Robespierre was "that monster". In 1795 Cartwright was calling for "associations for our defence against banditti, cutthroats and Jacobins". There is also truth in the statement that his constitutionalism was "an antidote to Paine and Jacobin excess". Yet Cartwright's intellectual and political relationship to Paine is complex - if even Paine can be thought of as a Jacobin - and though he says he is "no advocate for Mr. Paine" his defence of Paine against Arthur Young has more to it than the intemperance of Young's language. But as if to prove the conservative point, there is Cartwright's dedication of England's Aegis to Fox in 1804. Like Fox, Cartwright had soon become disillusioned and advocated "Reform instead of Revolution". Initially the French Revolution was supported because it seemed to fit "British Whig political theory"; it was abandoned when it was realised Jacobin revolutionary practice and constitutionalist rhetoric no longer harmonised. Yet if in 1804 Cartwright was perhaps still seeing himself as a "true Whig" soon after this he was wanting to separate the Whigs from the Radicals. Also, prior to this Cartwright had been in frequent correspondence with Thomas Hardy, as he still was in 1801, and as seen before there is in existence a ticket showing Cartwright's, no doubt inactive, membership of the London Corresponding Society. Further, the constitutionalist movement which arose following the Pentridge rising showed "the policy of open constitutionalism was proving more revolutionary in its implications than the policy of conspiracy and insurrection". It taught universal suffrage and mass organisation and it taught the right of every citizen to bear arms which led to the manufacture of pikes in some areas. The Tory government, it seems had reason as well as panic on their side. 28

But whether all this amounts to Jacobinism, whether it takes Cartwright very far away from "Lockeian ambiguities" in relation to revolution and political action and organisation is another question. Cartwright's 'Machiavellian' rather than Jacobin belief in the militia and the right of every citizen to bear arms in defence of his home

against the intrusions of the state was behind the manufacture of pikes. It was essentially a belief in the right of self-defence and was bound up with other ideas such as patriotism. I leave to social historians the sifting of historical evidence to argue revolutionary idealism and to debate over the metaphysics of revolutionary intent. What concerns me here is the structure of thought or the conceptual associations and assumptions which suggest, first, that Cartwright could believe in only political revolution or reform and, second, that his conception of revolution and reform was pre-modern.

Looked at from this angle, English Jacobinism seems to be a strange pot-pourri or distortion of the French original. The "grass roots organisation" was not rationalistic and geometrical but harked back to "tythings", a "folkmooot" and so on. In 1820, there is the picture of Cartwright "clad in the uniform of the Nottinghamshire militia, complete with buttons having the cap of liberty engraved upon them" petitioning Queen Caroline on behalf of the "Artisans, Mechanics and Labouring Classes". The liberty tree and the cap of liberty are, for Thompson, always signs of French Jacobinism, but these symbols have a long English political tradition. It also appears that arguments from precedent and tradition, from "birthrights" were "already somewhat discounted on the Continent". But England, as Cartwright wrote to Hardy, did not have to follow the example of France since it had preserved certain constitutional rights which "deserve saving". These rights could be discovered in contemporary English law.

Yet the call to "stand fast to the laws" is less a conservative injunction than it is radical and reactionary. Most present-day law was corrupt; it is mainly the ancient laws that Cartwright referred to. To bring in the constitution is not so much an act of novelty and progress as a restoration and a return. It is a return to the "essentials of the constitution". This could appear conservative as it did during the 1821 trial when Cartwright argued he "did not conspire at Birmingham to overthrow the government but instead used his best efforts to restore and renovate the constitution". But once he got down to details, the fundamental radicalism of the laws and principles was clear. He usually

started off with the demand for universal suffrage and annual parliaments, but frequently went on to elaborate the "five parts" or "five elements". These were once inscribed by Cartwright on "several thousand medals" which showed them as "the genuine polity of England". They were,

Those principles of truth and morality on which the social order depends. A militia of all men capable of armsbearing. A Wittenagemot annually elected by the people for enacting laws. Grand and petit juries of the people fairly drawn for applying the laws. A magistry elected by the people for duly performing all executive duties.

This was England's "ancient polity", a balanced constitution which "maintained the prerogative". Lacking any ideas of utopia and progress to use as legitimation, lacking any idea of a progressive social revolution, the mind's eye turned to ideas of natural law, custom and virtue embodied in the traditional and 'concretized' figure of the patriot king. Also, contrary to Pocock, the tendency was for an English king as guardian of an English constitution to undermine the cosmopolitan and classical or Enlightenment elements in the idea of patriotism. An argument has been put by an American writer that Cartwright shifted away from his early monarchist beliefs. In fact, this is a fairly common interpretation based, I think, on importing 20th century meanings into 18th century use of the term 'republicanism'. One writer refers to Cartwright's "growing admiration for a presidential form of government" which he says he interprets from Cartwright's advice to the Spanish "to adopt the principle of an elective regent". The Major also asserted "that England was basically a republic" as well as striking "at kings in general", although it is added as an afterthought that "we cannot be sure he really wanted an end to kingship".

In fact, in Radical ideology the question is more complex than being simply for or against monarchy and wanting republican government on the 20th century model. If we look at Cartwright's beliefs and career

30 Cartwright, Aegis, 68; Cartwright, Life, I, 133, 284, II, 208; Osborne, Cartwright, 32, 132; Cartwright, Choice, vii.
31 Cartwright, Life, Vol.II, 244.
32 Osborne, Cartwright, 82, 157, 160.
we will see why this is. In 1789, when the King's recovery was declared he "caused an illumination in the village and my residence, gave roasted sheep, and ale and music, to the populace, and even drank the king's health". There were many such instances during his life. A member of the Society for Constitutional Information, Cartwright states he would not have remained in the Society if the members had shown they "were not friends of the king's government", but "no man in the society ever started such an idea". During the wars with the French, in 1807, his hope was that "in the hour of trial, the throne may be preserved to his Majesty, and the constitution to the people". In November 1809, the King entered the fiftieth year of his reign and Cartwright went to Windsor in the hope of presenting "a congratulatory address and a petition". During 1816, one of the toasts at a Hampden Club meeting was "the Constitution and the King". Surprisingly, perhaps, George III was a "patriot king" who was the "father of his people", although Cartwright warned that if the monarch failed to fulfill this role the people "must take care of themselves".

The same conditional support was expressed on more than one occasion. Above allegiance to the crown was loyalty to the "natural and fundamental laws of society" which it was the duty of the patriotic monarch to guard and protect. If the king had this guardianship, it was also the duty of the House of Commons to provide "a check upon the crown". Like Paine, Cartwright believed the King was often "misadvised by ministers". He refers to a song which exhorts, "a king who feels the common cause/ and fights for liberty and laws" is a legitimate king. If Cartwright was hardly a republican in the modern sense, his belief in monarchy was conditional on the traditions and needs of the people or nation. As he put it in 1795,

If the habits of the people and the circumstances of the time make it probable that abolishing royalty will produce more evil than good, it ought to remain, and be supported.

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Abolishing royalty in England at that time would be "an immoral act much as it would to impose royalty on the Swiss or the Americans". Seven years earlier he was congratulating the French for their "theoretic purity"

34. Cartwright, Commonwealth, xxxv.
in making "the presidency of a king" the people's choice, and later he was arguing against the death penalty for the King of France on the grounds that he doubted "the competency of human authority ... deliberately to punish with death". He was praising the French for adopting an elective monarchy on English lines in place of an absolutist one. In "great a degree" Anglo-Saxon kings "were always elective", hereditary monarchy being "unnatural". Any substantial veto power of the Anglo-Saxon king "cannot be proved". Alfred the Great was a republican prince or hero-king who had guarded and promoted annual parliaments and the representation of the common people in parliament. This apparent paradox or blurring of modern concepts is drawn even wider when Cartwright refers to America "where 22 kings are annually elected". The idea of a republican monarchy and a monarchical republic however strange to the modern mind was fully rational in terms of 18th century political logic.

There is a similar logic, or ambiguity and paradox, in the Whig-Radical notion of patriotism. Although the idea of a patriot had certain cosmopolitan connotations, the overall effect of using it as part of a political vocabulary is to undermine any "Jacobinical" tendencies and interpretations. Patriotism was often defined by the Radicals in contradistinction to Jacobinism. Francis Burdett said at a meeting held in 1825, for the purpose erecting a public monument to Cartwright, "his character was purely English, no tinsel, no glitter; all was solid and sterling worth". Had he been alive such words would have pleased Cartwright who believed "the name of the patriot" to be "the greatest of all earthly appellations, regal and imperial titles not excepted".

Perhaps not surprisingly, the ambiguities referred to have led again to opposing interpretations of the idea and of the man or his mind. On the one hand, Cartwright is accused of anti-Semitism and his views are associated with the "thoroughly xenophobic English working class". On the other hand, his conception of patriotism is founded in a religiously-based theory of natural rights "pursued with Enlightenment clarity and rational analysis". Free national constitutions are alleged to be inferior or secondary to a "universal constitution of Christianity" wherein the "nation is inferior to mankind". Despite the fact Cartwright and Paine found

35. Cartwright, Commonwealth, xxxvi; Cartwright, Life, I, 182-3; Abridgement, 24, 53.
themselves taking opposing positions over a possible French invasion in the early 1800s, Cartwright's ideas are said to be closer to Paine than to "old Whig patriotism". Appeals to a narrower sense of patriotism, in speeches and writings, are a question of expediency: "to rouse an audience", or for reasons of "practicality". The alteration of the title of one of Cartwright's works in order to direct it at a more specific group of people is said to be propagandistic. Again, then, there are rival interpretations.

Continuing with the second of these interpretations, it is first necessary to question any Enlightenment view of Cartwright's notion of patriotism given his belief in the Anglo-Saxon polity and his insistence that the constitution was most definitely English and not Scottish, Irish or anything else. It is well to recall that the publication referred to, Give Us Our Rights, was published two years before the more Gothicized Declaration and that Cartwright's belief in Anglo-Saxonism seems to have deepened as time passed by. Also, while "universal benevolence" was all to the good, "Providence commanded the application in the immediate area of one's existence". Practical effort and politics, linked with the paradigmatic effects of the Anglo-Saxon trope - rather than mere expediency - had the effect of undermining the universalism of Paineite-style patriotism. Where the nation and government adopted a policy of self-interest and was "oppressive externally or internally" a citizen was without a country to fight for; paradoxically, the policy has a patriotic effect since it is "injuries done to our country". As for Paine, in 1806 he was aligned with Napoleon and therefore an anti-patriot, though this can be construed in terms of political opposition.

That more than this is involved comes out in Cartwright's exchanges with the political cleric, Soame Jenyns. Jenyns emphasised the universalist nature of Christianity which implied Christians were citizens of the world. Whereas Christianity "commands us to love all mankind", patriotism demands that we "oppress all other countries to advance the imaginary prosperity of our own". It implies "oppression, mean partiality to our country, injustice and cruelty". Cartwright's reply is instructive. He defines "real patriotism" as "a principle of affection and duty to one's

country". While Jenyns crosses off patriotism from the list of Christian virtues, Cartwright refers to Paul and Christ who weep over the capital of their country. Using these sacred origins as a form of legitimation, as well as "the reason of the thing", Cartwright simultaneously undercuts and incorporates any cosmopolitan, humanist or Enlightenment elements found in other versions of the patriotic ethic. Sacred history and reason point to the conclusion "that our family, our parish, our country, are the immediate spheres in which by the limitation of our faculties and the boundaries of our powers, Providence has required us to perform in an especial manner the duties of a Christian". The passage that follows is not only a reinforcement of this very 'Burkeian' sentiment, it also questions any interpretation which stresses the commonwealth or neo-Machiavellian connotations supposedly ever-present when Cartwright puts down words as ambiguous as patriotism and virtue. "The honest ploughman", Cartwright writes, "who",

in his own family and within his own parish, contributes with a truly Christian heart, his mite towards the general sum of human happiness is ... a citizen of the world ... a citizen of his own country ... Although Pagan patriotism ... were grossly adulterated with error and vice, surely Christian patriotism animating the citizen to study and promote, not only the temporal welfare of his country, but true religion, the virtue and happiness of his countrymen both here and here-after, has a duty owing to God and his neighbour, and as contributing to the sum of human happiness, which totally excludes every wish to depress or injure other nations ... the writer has found ever the truest patriotism united with the truest Christianity; which as taught him to place little dependence on that public spirit which has not religion as its guide.

What is suggested here is a kind of internal duty, active but not aggressive against other peoples and nations because it incorporates Christian values and respects their rights and own patriotic feeling. Cartwright does from time to time express certain uncoordinated latent racial or cultural prejudices. But these are so hemmed in and constrained by contradiction that they seem to lack any real ideological effect. As he writes in his correspondence, "I have see Asiatics and persons of

38. Cartwright, Evidence, 6-7, 58-60.
mixed descent, with very agreeable complexions but my own experience in that way has not, I own, been sufficiently extensive to overcome my preference to European flesh and blood".  

Despite remarks like this, his attitude towards other races appears paternalist rather than racist or imperialist and nationalistic in any 19th century sense. If the true constitution is, in practice, English and Anglo-Saxon its principles are universal. Consequently his attitude towards civilisation is ambiguous. Early in his career, in 1768, Cartwright wrote a piece called Remarks on the Situation of the Aborigines of Newfoundland which contains a detailed description of the indians ecological relationships and material culture, and which brings these ambiguities to the fore. He "sought friendly intercourse with them", he writes, "in order to promote their civilisation, and render them ... useful subjects to his majesty". This, it is implied, would give them some protection against "reciprocal injuries and murders" which were mostly the fault of the Whites. The inhumanity of the English fishermen sinks far below the level of savages. He cites a number of examples including a "well-known" one of a pregnant indian woman attacked by the Whites who "ript open her womb" and cut off "the hand of the murdered woman, which they displayed ... as a trophy". In summer "a Red Indian ... may be compared to a beast of the chase". Compared to this, the behaviour of the indians cannot but be thought noble since,

> If they know not the arts that embellish life, and those sciences that dignify humanity, they are ignorant also of the long train of vices that corrupt the manners of civilised nations, and of the enormous crime that debase mankind.  

In the face of natural virtue, culture and civilisation has a certain negative value. This does not mean there ought to be a return to primitivism since because the indians lack the benefits of the arts and sciences "they can be little acquainted with the rational pleasure of reflection". Because they lack reflection and therefore political education,

their form of government must be imperfect. Also, defensive action "against the irruption of savages" is legitimate.

The idea of defence was at the heart of the Radical conception of patriotism. Britain had been the aggressor, Cartwright said, but "I will nevertheless use my sword against either Frenchman or American who shall invade this country". Even if a citizen of England for his pleasure or profit were to venture into land ruled by a despot, there were strict limits to what the mother country could do, and it should certainly not go to war in order to protect his property. But a defensive or patriotic war could take place on foreign soil, especially if it was waged against a despot such as Napoleon who denied other nations their rights and liberties. An extension of this was to some extent to internationalise defensive and patriotic wars of liberation. He supported aid to the Spanish patriots. Cartwright in fact had fairly strong connections with the national independence movements in Spain, Italy, Mexico and Greece. Wars of defence and national liberty were the only just wars; offensive, nationalistic and imperial wars were unlawful. Countries wrongfully claimed "the right to immense regions" but "all modern acquisitions have been made with an eye to aggrandisation and an increase in power, more than for ... satisfying wants and the reasonable desires of mankind". Or, as he put it elsewhere, there were two justifications for war, first, "defence of our own nation's freedom" and, second, "aiding in defence of any other nation whose liberty or property are invaded or violated". Empire or "a lust for foreign dominion" saps the foundation of a nation's greatness. Colonising is only permissible "for the benefit of an overflowing population" but then the colonists "carry with them the free polity of the Mother Country and ... found independent states". There is not, then, as one writer would have it, an inconsistency in Cartwright's refusal to fight against the Americans in the 1760s and his preparations in case of French invasion. His patriotism lacked the cosmopolitan impulse of Paine's, and the second war only could appeal to the patriotic spirit of Englishmen. It also follows, to reverse Rutt's praise of Cartwright at the 1825 meeting, that in conception and practice Cartwright was a patriot of England first and a citizen of the world second. "Would Englishmen", he declared, "understand the true principles of national defence, let them resort not only to the camp, but to the CONSTITUTION!" A proper grasp

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This 'pre-industrial' idea of patriotism defines itself not so much in relation to external affairs but as internal mode of political conduct. Much more than love and defence of country is involved. These are almost by-products of the fight against internal corruption in all its forms. Patriotism is, for example, a force for national unity, but underlying this notion is the principle that faction or party is a sin against a deistic unity. The patriot, "ought always to take the comprehensive view"; he will "always sacrifice to the public good". Patriotism, Cartwright said, opposed party. In keeping with the deistical foundations, there is also "real patriotism" and "genuine patriotism" which was opposed to "mock patriotism". To be a real or genuine patriot you had to be a democrat since only democracy would preserve political and economic independence. It is "true popular election which creates, which calls forth, which animates and preserves patriotism". Institutions, annual elections, are more than merely functional; as parts of the whole constitution and as preservers of its spirit, of which patriotism is an element, they are sacred.\footnote{Cartwright, \textit{Life}, Vol.I, 143, 278; Drinkwater-Lunn, "John Cartwright", 336.}

Institutions were the material basis of the constitution; ideas made up its spirit. Like patriotism, the idea of liberty was part of this spirit. Paradigmatically, if there is anything to notice in the Radical notion of liberty it is that it is not necessarily associated with the doctrine of \textit{laissez-faire} or free market economics and it is not associated with the essentially 19th century concept of secular progress. Generally speaking, it is a mistake to read these 19th century assumptions into the 18th century idea of liberty, just as it is a confusion to interpret the Radical and 18th century concept of political liberty as liberal in the 19th century sense because of its failure to direct itself to social and economic conditions and causes. The truth of these assertions is shown in further analysis.
Patriotism, Cartwright thinks, is dependent upon liberty in a number of ways. An unfree people will not defend their country. "A population who hate their rulers, for withholding from them the rights and liberties by which they are exposed to the curse of taxation without representation are but too well prepared for the purposes of the invader". Liberty was also necessary for 'internal' patriotism, that is to permit participation in national affairs "for public service and benefit". Not private, civil or economic liberty but political and "public liberty" were necessary and therefore "as dear" as patriotic duty. In turn, the idea and practice of freedom is dependent upon a people's militia. The "universality of arms" is "the very secret of good government of freedom and law". Where there was a people's militia under a freely elected parliament liberty would be secured since the people would not "destroy their own work, their own prosperity, their own happiness". Self-interest, if nothing else, would work against it.46

"The most important of all earthly objects, human liberty" is also "sole parent of national prosperity and human happiness". But "liberty is the end of the social compact, property mere useful means" for "liberty is planted by God in the very nature of man", while property is therefore merely culture. There is the mythological idea of a politico-religious or moral state determining the health of the economy. Also, because liberty is the natural gift of God it "cannot be taken away". Because of this, "no degree of acquiesence ... not even the concurrence of any number of succeeding generations can establish iniquity ... for no constitution could establish it without the power of revocation". Consequently, "no precedents could sanction, no length of time confirm" iniquity or despotic rule. Seemingly this is a total rejection of 'Burkeian' notions of time and custom, confirmation of which appears to come from an early piece by Cartwright. In 1775, before Paine published his two most famous tracts, Cartwright was vehemently denying political liberty could be considered "in the same light as an estate or a chattel". Tradition and custom, "grants and charters by custom and usage, and by municipal statutes" were only "rotten foundations". Liberty was not to be found "among mouldy parchments, or in the cobwebs of a casuist's brain"; it was "the immediate gift of God". Yet in his last writing, in The English Constitution Produced

46. Cartwright, Life, Vol.II, 21, 68; Cartwright, Abridgement, '13; Aegis, 53, 64.
and Illustrated, said to be Cartwright's "last will and testament to the nation" in which "the views expressed in it were carefully considered", he delves among the parchments and spins his webs with the best or worst of the casuists. The Norman Conquest and the subsequent aristocratic and ecclesiastic hegemony is made worse by the absence of written documents supporting customary Anglo-Saxon liberties. The fight for freedom was not so much a matter of progress as "an endeavour to recover the proper liberties of England". Ideal liberty was in the past; in the English past. As Lord Holland wrote to Cartwright, neither "the general principles, nor the practical enlargement" of freedom was to be sought in the Roman language which meant "a total disregard for legal and monkish Latin". The measure of the libertarian effects of any new law was by reference to the English constitution and to the Anglo-Saxon constitution in particular.47

Clarification of these themes and ideas can be furthered through an examination of the place of the Anglo-Saxon polity in Cartwright's total thought-pattern. This will be done again by starting from consideration of the historiographical interpretation. One of these interpretations is, I think, indicative of the difficulties encountered. Rightly, it is said Cartwright's message or ideology contained "an appeal to reason, Christian precept and the legendary democracy he believed once existed under King Alfred". But the latter are discounted since we are told Cartwright judged issues "according to the dictates of reason, morality and common sense; never in terms of inherited prejudices or traditional loyalties". Another commentator remarks that Cartwright and his fellow Radicals gave primacy to principle or natural law and "not simply, or even fundamentally, upon the myth of Anglo-Saxon democracy". At the same time "they pre-empted Burke's concept of the constitution as a culmination of historical process". It is reiterated that constitutionalist arguments are secondary or dependent upon Christian principles and the law of nature. There are apparently no problems with this view and the recognition that Cartwright strongly disputed Paine's assertion that there was no constitution. Again, there is the insistence that Cartwright is an Enlightenment thinker. A third scholar specifies the dependency relationship supposed to exist between principle and historical example. Historical example "never had more than an illustrative or teaching purpose". There is no "fundamental role ... assigned

47. Cartwright, Abridgement, 15-16; Cartwright, Life, I, 65; Osborne, Cartwright, 147-50.
to history in shaping radical thinking". In support there is reference to two of Cartwright's works, one a very early publication, American Independence, first put out in 1775. Missing in all this criticism or interpretation is any chronological and proper paradigmatic appreciation of the texts. The latter omission does not apply to Pocock who associates statements about the Anglo-Saxon myth with the millenial paradigm.

But to continue with the point about chronology, there are Cartwright's own words from a much later text to support the proposition that Gothicism had no fundamental role to play in Radical thinking. In Internal Evidence ... published in 1784 Cartwright states clearly and emphatically,

> our constitution can only be defined or ascertained by its principles; for in vain shall we attempt to fix its identity, by reference to the practice of this period or that; by talking of the revolution, the Norman or Saxon aeras, or any other epoch ancient or modern.

Nothing, it seems could be clearer. More surprisingly, given some of the things written about him, Cartwright reiterates this position, in even stronger terms, as late as 1795. The appendix to one of Arthur Young's works, he says, would,

> for the most part ... figure better among the antiquarian trash of the Gentleman's Magazine, than in political discourse in 1794. In that appendix he quotes, and perhaps refutes, The Peoples Barrier, respecting a representation of the Commons in the Saxon Parliaments. Had he turned to p29 of that work, he would have seen what sovereign contempt I took on such questions.

Even so, in the Barrier there is reference to Alfred as "that godlike prince", and the debate between Young and Cartwright is in itself interesting. By 1813, and in 1824, there is evidence of Cartwright's Gothicism 'conversion'. In An Abridgement of the Constitution, published in the last year of his life, Cartwright refers to his earlier writings "before" he "had attained a like knowledge and conviction of the Norman

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49. Cartwright, Aegis, 9.

imposition ... and usurpations, frauds and forgeries, of the feudal tyranny". Interestingly, in the light of other recent historiography, Cartwright's shift seems to coincide with the taking up of a more radical position in relation to the aristocracy. Also, some years before 1813, there is evidence that his "sovereign contempt" for "antiquarian trash" had changed to adulation. The Trident, published in 1802, is its embodiment. Lacking the evidence to support a more precise statement that might come out of more detailed research, it would, then, seem Cartwright's shift or break occurred somewhere between 1795 and 1802 and is probably linked with the increasing militarisation of the French Revolution and the growing external threat to England. 51

Yet there are problems with such tidy-mindedness, and the critical interpretations referred to before need to be countered more directly. There are first some general arguments to be put. Not the least of these is that Cartwright cannot always be taken at his word. Well before his shift or conversion, Anglo-Saxon assumptions and illustrations play a greater role in his thinking than he or his interpreters care to admit. Far more than Locke or Paine, historical illustration is, even in his earliest writings, used as a form of legitimation along with natural rights arguments. Another point is that too much attention has been paid to form and not enough to content. Even in one of the earliest publications, Take Your Choice, there is use of much Gothic material: there is reference to Blackstone's Commentaries, Hulme's Essay, annual parliaments and so on. If all this stuff has only a secondary role to play, it cannot be assumed its function in thought is negligible. Looking at the wider body of his work, to tease out a single paradigm is to assume a philosophical coherence which it does not have. A final point, is that the separation of rationalism and empiricism, or the separation of principle or natural rights from history and experience, is basically a mis-reading of 18th century epistemology.

The problems involved in reading the texts are substantial. Seemingly, two paradigm statements are involved in Cartwright's assertion that the subject of civil liberty in England is to be regarded in two lights. "First, in the abstract" through which it is to be decided "what sort of government would be most agreeable to the will of the Deity, and most beneficial to man"

in general. And second, "how to preserve what is most valuable in the constitution". That these are complementary rather than opposing paradigms, comes forth in a letter from Cartwright to Whitbread where he refers to "self-evident truths ... grown up with experience" and cemented by "a sense of moral and religious obligation". When Thomas Jefferson writes that the Americans were faced with a tabula rasa situation and could start from nature itself rather than "search into musty records" or "investigate ... a semi-barbarous ancestry", Cartwright replies by directing him to the local government institutions of "Saxon Alfred". Natural law alone is insufficient and imperfect. Natural law provides the basic unchanging structure of the constitution, while historical experience allows it to change according to new circumstances. It is again a question of content and form; both are necessary to the whole. To some extent, the content may be hidden or veiled but a leaf from "the sacred book of the Constitution, first composed in the Saxon tongue and the Saxon stile (sic)" is "imprinted on every English heart". It is not a question of abstract principles but of the rights of Englishmen and of an original constitution that was English. The constitutional leaf Cartwright examines is not so much the natural right of self-defence but the right of Englishmen to bear arms: a right at one and the same time natural and cultural. In this sense, natural law principles are also an inheritance. Rather like the nature/nurture debate in psychology, the question of principle versus experience clouds the issue. Socialisation is a process of natural endowment and learning and this is rather how Cartwright and many others in the 18th century saw politics, although often without an awareness of the kind of dichotomy implied here.  

It would seem if the historical process allows a place for change and adaptation that the Anglo-Saxon strategem does involve a Burkeian notion or paradigm of the constitution as a culmination of history. There is something in this; there is a sense in which the constitution is cumulative. Magna Carta, 1688 and so forth all add bits to the edifice of English liberty. But engaging in Gothic vocabulary and concepts also implies that the libertarian constitution is subject to erosion and decay.

with the passage of history. Statements such as "neither custom nor authority are to be regarded, when they tend to error or mischief", need to be understood in this light. "Should a crafty ruler", Cartwright says "embezzle the parchments, still provided the sword remain in the hands of the people, there will be no danger". What is the paradigmatic status of such statements? Because of its reference to the militia, is it neo-Machiavellian; or because of the reference to libertarian customs does it fit better with a 'Burkeian' paradigm? Cartwright's reply to Jefferson is a reference to Anglo-Saxon customs and traditions in local government. In Cartwright's political parable, the people regain their virtue by a return to "the old customs". His Abridgement opens with an epigraph from Paine stating England has no constitution and that the nation can constitute itself "with what power it pleases". Yet further and closer reading shows Cartwright describing a situation that exists in the present not in the past or as it ought to be in the future. The real or genuine constitution is something "anterior to Norman innovations". Only the "ancient constitution" is authentic. In relation to history and custom it was necessary to refer to reason (nature) and knowledge (experience). In common law, which is merely the reification of custom, "it is the duty of our judges to depart from defective precedent". Civil and political institutions should always conform to the "habits of the people". Custom, then, was not to be denied in favour of millenialism or natural law, it was to be regarded critically and selectively according to the ethic of liberty. This produces the effect of patchwork or bricolage.53

The reason for criticism and selection is that the constitution was hidden; "Norman policy and its feudal system long overlaid the Saxon institution". There were "customs of old ... which we should not hide". If there was room to improve on "Alfred's military principle", it was still necessary to keep to its "principle and spirit". There was a need to recusitate and return to the old customs such as the frank pledge. Writing to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Cartwright brushed aside objections to a return or re-institution of the frank pledge on the grounds of its anachronism and altered social context. Objections are "superficial, and without having foundation". Under the present "corruption of government" and "degeneracy of the people" there is no doubt "the same remedy will be

as efficacious now as when Alfred, Arthur, or even Moses ... first applied it"; and "all the notorious outrages and tumults of the late election ... are mere consequences of the disuse of frank pledge in Westminster". This amazing statement about a return to customary origins has a millenial aura. The birthrights of Englishmen were sacred and Anglo-Saxon democracy was "an original polity". The return was a millenial return and the origins were mythic. The trope or strategem of the Anglo-Saxon myth contains several paradigmatic moments and its logic is the logic of myth.

A moment closely associated with the idea of custom, and one that also legitimates through its original nature, is that of common law, and law in general. Like custom, upon which good law is based, laws need to be looked at critically. If founded on the constitution they are to be obeyed; if they are subversive of the constitution then disobedience and resistance is the duty of every citizen. The latter, radical, interpretation the artisans involved in the March of the Blanketeers gave to Cartwright's motto "hold fast by the laws". If the laws were being abused or corrupted by those in authority, it was necessary to rebel and disobey the law in order to defend genuine constitutional laws. The rulers would not be acting according to law but merely according to individual will and ambition. This was the crime of Napoleon. The idea of law in Radical vocabulary is not only problematical and ambiguous because of this paradox but also because it is used in the three senses of "the law of nature ... the common law and ... the constitution" which are sometimes differentiated and other times identified. The conceptual density involved in the word 'law' has led to persistent misinterpretation of Radical ideas, with the emphasis being placed on one sort of law rather than another; an emphasis that was pragmatic or strategic for the Radicals, not philosophic. The measure was whether or not a law was democratic but this did not put reason and nature above other sorts of law. "LAW TO BIND ALL MUST BE ASSENTED BY ALL", yet law was not merely the result of rational reflection but an inheritance handed down through generations and originating in "our Saxon ancestors". Good law, then, was essentially English law. Cartwright disliked Henry Dundas on the grounds that he was a Scot trained in Roman law. In keeping with this aversion and with democratic

sentiment Cartwright, and others like him, felt that a jury was the best upholder of English law and liberty. The attacks on the constitution through the state trials of Hardy and his fellow Radicals had been thwarted by "three immortal juries". Trial by jury was "the main spring and potent element of our simple and lucid Constitution", the defender of common laws and liberties. At his death Cartwright was working on a history of juries, on a treatise not of the principles of law but on the history of English law. 55

I stress this mode of speaking and thinking - Cartwright's resort to the model of the Anglo-Saxon polity, his use of assumptions from common law and custom, his 'empiricism' - since previous exegesis has emphasised the natural law and 'commonwealth' side of his mind. One strategem said to be supportive of a commonwealth interpretation is the use of the 'classical model'. The ideal polity is Greece or Rome, or if Anglo-Saxon Britain only because it enshrines certain principles already extracted from the two former models. That Cartwright drew on classical ideas, especially Grecian, is indisputable. In *The Trident* his temple shows a strong influence of classical style. The sports and games associated with temple ritual seem to be taken directly from the Aristotelian and Olympic ideal. Yet Cartwright's plan for a modern Greek constitution drew not on classical precedents but was "English through and through", although this statement is later qualified. Included are plans for a Witenagmot, trial by jury and so on. Writing in 1816, Cartwright made it plain why he took from the English example. Britain had "a climate favouring mental vigour, and an active industry that forms a prominent part of the national character". It also had "a government of all by all" which in the Greeks or Romans was "rather a divine speculation than to be hoped for among men". The true English constitution was "conspicuously superior to the best boasted states of antient Greece or Italy". The Romans did not understand free government. The Greeks were foolish in rejecting Christianity. It would seem fairly clear Cartwright did not see America as "a classical republic". Cartwright's niece tells us the Major had a copy of the American independence declaration framed and "hung up in his dining-room"; but the "magnificent American mirror" sparkled according to the extent to which it was polished with the principles of English rather than Athenian liberty.

55. Cartwright, Abridgement, 21, 34; Thompson, Working Class, 118; Cartwright, Aegis, 101; Cartwright, Life, Vol. II, 133; Osborne, Cartwright, 62, 1155-6; Cartwright, Commonwealth, "Advertisement".
Apart from free and equal representation, America was the land of trial by jury, individual liberty, "freedom of religion, freedom of property, and freedom of the press" on the English or Anglo-Saxon model. The latter rather than America itself realised the millenial dream. American democracy, despite being "a magnificent constellation" had "specks of darkness" which blotched its purity and perfection. 56

Yet criticism of the classical polity, and preference for English ideas and institutions, ought not to be taken as an absence of a commonwealth or 'Machiavellian' moment in Cartwright's mental make-up. Machiavelli and Harrington are often favourably cited and the corruption of the political system is a central problem. Parliament was "the sink of corruption", corruption being a seemingly cyclical process in which the two outstanding dates were 1066 and 1688. The origins of corruption were to be found in luxury, the 18th century being "this most voluptuous age" in Cartwright's eyes. If political corruption explains the existence of luxury, then luxury as a social habit or as the economic process of consumption feeds political corruption. There was nothing worse than "a mere man of fashion" addicted to "the frivolous occupations of fashionable life". As he explains, "the frothy syllabub of human life is a good ingredient among other sweets of the feast; but it is a very sorry food to subsist upon". Consequently, "the opinion of the unthinking fashionables ... is not worth regarding". They were creatures of unthinking passion and instinct, and "ease and luxury are contemptible in the good man when the country demands his labours". But luxury and corruption do not merely undermine secular virtue and patriotism; we are not merely dealing with a series of statements shaped by the 'commonwealth' paradigm. There is a double meaning and connection involved in that those who follow their passions and go in for luxury and corruption "expressly exclude themselves from the benefits of religion". 57

But if luxury and corruption had private and religious consequences, as historical processes they were described in neo-Machiavellian terms. Quoting from Machiavelli, in 1791 Cartwright passed a resolution at a meeting of the Friends of the People in favour of a balanced constitution of "king, lords and commons" or the one, the few and the many. Such a

balanced constitution was more in keeping with English traditions than the "pure republicanism" of Paine and his followers. If Cartwright ever did question the idea of a balanced or mixed government, it did not occur "until 1823" a year before his death. Throughout his writings there is sufficient evidence to support the idea that the 1791 statement, contrary to much critical commentary, was no aberration. Cartwright believed in both the separation (executive, legislature, judiciary) and the division (king, lords, commons) of powers with ultimate sovereignty in the hands of the people. His criticism of Horne Tooke was that the latter bent too far "in favour of the monarchical and aristocratical part". Against those critics who emphasise the modernity of Cartwright's concept of democracy I agree with Ian Christie that "the thinking ... even of Cartwright was coloured by concepts of 'constitutional balance' not necessarily identical with democracy in the modern sense". There is a lack of identity because democracy was seen as a perfect balance, a 'return' resulting from an 'historical' and cyclical process. This assumption Cartwright and his fellow Radicals had in mind when they spoke and wrote so repetitively about a "restoration" of constitutional vigour and the need to "destroy corruption". Rights had been "lost" and needed to be restored, not created anew. Because of this underlying idea of a cycle and a historical "return" the ideas of Cartwright, and others like him, are often criticised as "backward" and "backward-looking". But such criticism is misdirected in that it is critical of a whole historical mentality, of a metaphysical depth and determined mode of apprehension. Finally, Cartwright seems to derive "the principle of renovation" empirically from English history, although, virtue was moral and religious as well as political. Perhaps it is in the idea of the militia as a guard against "natural decay" and "perpetual decay" and as an agent of "periodical renovation" that Cartwright's Machiavellian moment comes through strongest.58

Yet even here, meaning is problematical and ambiguous. The militia was an important element in 18th century social structure, and it was the militia role in English rather than Italian history that Cartwright looked to. It is again informative to examine content as well as form. "Saxon ... manumission of a slave", Cartwright says, "was the gift of a SWORD and a SPEAR; how it sinks in comparison the Roman woollen cap". Alfred

institutionalised the right of "free arms-bearing" by founding "our free Saxon militia". Cartwright recognises the contemporary militia is far away from this original ideal, but although the 18th century militia is "in great degree composed of hired substitutes" he rejects Arthur Young's characterisation of them as "the dregs of the people". They were, after all, Englishmen. Through service in the militia "an English soldier" scorned hardship and learned manliness; he did not "tarry at home and rock the cradle". Militia service gave entitlements to liberty and political rights; it also made them something of a male prerogative. 59

Within the militia itself, the question of freedom and democratic rights is more cloudy. Unlike Gravenor Henson, Cartwright's niece praises his moderate discipline in the Nottingham militia. Condemning "bacchanalian officers", Cartwright wrote that "love and respect, mixed with awe" are the sort of sentiments officers ought to induce in their men. "Every worthy officer will be a friend and a father" to a good soldier. Paternalism seems to go hand-in-hand with hierarchy. Writing in England's Aegis, in 1804, Cartwright is of the opinion that a newly constituted militia ought "not altogether to overlook those gradations of society which are created by birth, station, knowledge and property". At the same time, any ranking should come from election by householder suffrage. According to Granville Sharp, who influenced the Major greatly on the militia question, among the losses since Anglo-Saxon times was the loss of the election of militia officers. 60

From all this there would seem to be support for Pocock's characterisation of the commonwealthman or citizen as English freeholders "with swords in their hands". As Cartwright himself puts it, unless a man "has arms in his own house ... he is not in a condition to perform his duties as a citizen". Private ownership of arms and real property were the foundations of the defence of "our liberty" our "purses" and "property". If arms were publicly supplied and owned, or if arms were privately owned without any real property, the people's liberties would be in danger. At least in the short term before the redistribution of property, householders should be given some primacy in the running of the militia. 61

The reason being the militia were the cornerstone of the constitution, the practical guarantee of the health of polity. Old Corruption was no more than "a military government under a mask". A free militia was contrasted to a standing army. Under a standing army "the state will perish" and "the people sink into perfect servitude", or, worse, into civil war. The Roman citizen never lifted a hand against his own country until "the honest militia men of Rome were changed into standing forces". Servitude and the consequent high taxation which are both a cause and a result of a standing army "disrupts the industry of the country". But a reformed militia, based on citizenship, would be an "invaluable service". A citizen militia again incorporates the amateur or anti-professional ideal where social and political perspectives are not narrowed and services are freely given. "Of all the human means for the prevention of war", Cartwright assures us, "a cheap preparedness for it, accompanied by a high martial spirit is best". A citizen militia, is a safeguard against "the cause of the national debt". A cheap and democratic form of military defence would mean cheap and democratic government. Reformation of the militia would lead to other constitutional reforms, and a political and economic millenium would dawn whereby

the reduction of taxes, and the altered scale of our expenses, the triumph of our manufactures over competition in every foreign market; agriculture improved to gardening; commerce and navigation extending their sphere, and awakening to a friendly intercourse, and to civilisation, the yet torpid nations; while the overflowings of wealth and of population would stimulate to new enterprise and beget new colonies, planting the principles of true liberty, and the arts of beneficent government, in the most distant regions of the earth; making England the friend of man, and man over the face of the globe the friend of England.  

It is easy to see why Cartwright saw the militia as "the first step" and "grand fundamental" in the formation of a free state. Liberty and patriotism both depended upon the militia: "it was crucial to the concept of a moral and patriotic community". The militia was, as it were, the material basis of patriotism and like patriotism it had the idea of

63. Cartwright, Aegis, 159.
defence rather than conquest or expansion behind it. On joining the militia the recruit had to swear an oath; the place of oath-taking was a field called "Patria". The oath mainly concerned the provision of arms. Militia arms were truly sacred since they could be neither bought nor sold, lent or borrowed nor even "seized by a creditor in payment of debt". To break the oath would lead to shame and exile since "they are for thy neighbour and thy country". A "defensive military system" was "in the very texture of the English Constitution". Disarmingly, besides being a part of English political tradition or custom, as well as relating to propertied independence and virtue, the militia principle being a personal defence of "laws and liberties" and life is also "a law of nature". The idea of (patriotic) defence, "the sacred name of DEFENCE" collapsed all these paradigms into a single logic. Yet if "the great end" of an armed militia was "to defend the nation against foreign attacks" without being "a danger to liberty", defence also included militia protection for "our foreign possessions".64

The other thing defence referred to was defence against internal disorder. The militia functioned "not only in repelling invasion, but in putting down rebellion or insurrection, or even ... ordinary tumult". One thing Cartwright had obviously in mind were the disturbances close to his own estate in Lincolnshire. There were, of course, other ends for the militia less to do with the defence of property and more aimed at classical goals. The militia and military spirit were to be incorporated into the public games associated with "Hieronauticon" or "school of national manners and public virtue".65

The idea of public virtue, a relatively secularised concept of virtue that is, has been held to be central to the neo-Machiavellian or 'Country' paradigm. The word 'virtue' was certainly a common one in Cartwright's political vocabulary. So was the sense just mentioned. Virtue was equally as important as liberty; without virtue there could be no liberty. America had liberty because it was virtuous; it had "virtuous liberty". Virtue, then, was a political attribute and another phrase,


"patriotic virtue" emphasises its public nature. The House of Commons in the English Civil War is adjudged to have acted virtuously until "it became independent of the people". Its members, it would seem, gave up "manly reasoning and virtuous reform" for something like "court delusions". Unlike Burke, Cartwright did not see virtue solely as the mental property of the aristocracy. He wrote of "the contemptible nonsense of family blood". Public virtue through "patriot services" in the aid of liberty is "true nobility". A virtuous parliament would consist of members of noble "CHARACTER", that is persons with "uncontaminated habits of life, virtuous connexions, approved integrity and a general zeal for service to the public". In this statement public and private virtue were related and combined. Private virtue had tangible origins in "the laws of God" but even public virtue in defence of freedom is "the evident duty of every moral man, and every christian". In one sense, virtue was merely a means to "the great end" of human existence "moral perfection". Though ignored, the word and idea of perfection had its own political and paradigmatic resonance. And without constitutional protections, such as annual parliaments, Cartwright reminds us, virtue will hardly flourish. 66

It is helpful to look further at the role of "the laws of God" or natural law in Cartwright's thinking. In doing so, it will also be useful to consider the related ideas of reason, country and nature/culture. In addition to the previous discussion of Cartwright's 'Lockeian principles', the last few pages or so, accepting the cautionary words they contain, can be taken as a rejection of a purely Lockeian interpretation, just as Cartwright's Lockeianisms or Court presuppositions compromise any purely Commonwealth exegesis. Seeing Cartwright as the purveyor of 'Lockeian' mentality is the most popular if not the most eloquent and sophisticated presentation. But statements to the effect that Cartwright "overthrew the whole basis of neo-Harrington thought" by "insisting that freedom was the inalienable gift of God" cannot be sustained. A less strong though not too dissimilar statement comes from another author who places Cartwright squarely within "the natural rights school", and consequently sees him as an "advocate of the a priori in politics". For another writer, "his

method was fundamentally Lockean" signifying his "Enlightenment approach". If for our original interpreter Cartwright's ideas had more similarities "with Enlightenment thinking" than with any Commonwealth tradition or constitutionalism, ultimately there is always a return to "his theological basis". This last statement reveals the problems involved in the concept of the Enlightenment, while the second writer reveals the difficulties inherent in the a priori principle. He finds the Major arguing on the level of "both precedent and principle", discovers his "principle was not abstract" but insists this does nothing to compromise Cartwright's natural law principles. Part of the solution or problem, as was shown above, is in the shift that took place in Cartwright's thinking; part is in the nature or shape of 18th century thought.

There is, as I have shown above and reinforce now, ample evidence to support the 'Lockeian' thesis, especially in the early works where there is relatively scant reference to the Anglo-Saxon example. Here he often, as later, spoke of "first principles on which all the rest depends". Such "principles of government" he wrote in 1823 "are eternal". We have "first to contemplate" a thing "abstractly so that we may discover the first principles". These first principles constitute "the law of Nature's God". Representation is "every man's natural right" which forms the basis of the English constitution. Yet in the same work in which this statement is made, in the early Internal Evidence, it is also argued that measures for parliamentary reform have to be "agreeable to the laws of nature, and the experience of mankind". The "statutes of Edward III" are brought in to legitimate the principle of annual parliaments, while the "unnecessary separation of practice from principle" is roundly condemned. In a later work, the initial insistence "not boroughs but men" ought to be the basic political unit is an argument for natural right against custom. Yet an appeal is made further on to historical experience, to the sentiments "of my countrymen", and to the constitution perceived as an historical entity. It has been argued that the constitution, for Cartwright, was merely derived from the Christian religion, the laws of nature and reason.

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67. Jowett, "Language", 120, 121, 123; Osborne, Cartwright, 63; Drinkwater Lunn, "John Cartwright", 52, 54, 104.

* Above, Introduction, 25.
In one of his last publications, *A Suggestion Submitted to the Lawgivers of Greece*, where a distinction is drawn between the law and the constitution, there is a clear identity made between natural law and the constitution. But here it is an identity rather than a cause and effect or substructure-superstructure relationship. Natural law is subsumed by the constitution as much as the constitution is subsumed by natural law. The principle that unites the constitution and natural law is the idea of a return to origins, although it is important to emphasise again that it is a return to culture (Anglo-Saxons) rather than nature (Indians). Otherwise, the shift to Saxonist vocabulary counts for nothing.\(^6\) Also, it is not so much a question of the primacy and generative value of "theological terminology" and "theological concepts" as of the mythological structure of thought. If there is to be found in Cartwright's thought both Lockeian capitalist and Machiavellian country moments, to say nothing of others, what is then to be said of a "representative figure" in terms of social interest or class and modes of production and thought?

Before we consider, in the first instance, only one part of this question it is interesting first to examine the abstract and the concrete sides or aspects of natural law. On the abstract side, on the shape of Radical reason, the lack of divergence between its rational and empirical features has already been commented on. Like others, Cartwright also stressed the impartiality and scientific character of Radical reason. Despite his often passionate millenial rhetoric, and his insistence that "no man is infallible either in politics or in any other science", there is a strong conviction that politics was a science reducible to the fundamental principles of natural law. God could not be accused of partiality or of party so that as long as you stuck to natural law principles you could claim right reason and scientific impartiality to the other sides' error: your light and their darkness.\(^6\)

On the concrete side of things, a connection rarely if ever made is between natural rights and the expression of pastoral and Georgic ideals. Several events in Cartwright's personal experience led him to

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form such associations. Pastoral romanticism could be used as a means for conveying the idea of England as the blessed country, of the place gifted with God's natural endowments. "Next to the sight of a mistress or friend after a long absence", Cartwright once wrote, "the richness, perfume, lively verdure and pleasing variety of the country are to the drooping soul of the sea-worn sailor, sources of the highest enjoyment". But just as the Anglo-Saxon polity was an improvement upon the rights of the noble savage in the state of nature, so English nature could be improved upon. But even here, as in politics, it was important not to violate nature's laws, to over-embellish. There was a Radical or Whig and Tory pastoral complementary to politics. Doing some landscape gardening at Kent, Cartwright kept to the rule of nature's "extreme simplicity" using as the centrepiece the "great store of grand oaks" he found there. The more overtly political implications of the pastoral come through in a poem in praise of Alfred where he writes of "maids, matrons, infants and rustics" who ought to "bleed no more". He also wrote similar things about the noble savage who stood somewhere in-between the pastoral and Georgic ideals.

Here, Cartwright's Newfoundland experience is significant. Not only is there an attempt to convey an impression of untamed idyll in life among virgin forests, animals and Indians, but the savage or simple life is seen as generating the similar sort of values found in the Georgic or agricultural life. In this latter respect, although Cartwright sold his farm in 1813, he spent most of his life as landowner and farmer and would often turn to these occupations when political controversy and life got too hot or too despairing. Horticultural produce and samples as well as ideas were exchanged in the correspondence between Cartwright and Horne Tooke. Apart from government and science, "perhaps the most learned, the best informed, and the most polished, will be found amongst those whose chief occupation is agriculture". Celebration of the qualities engendered by agrarian pursuits spilled over into the use of 'agricultural' metaphors for talking about politics. "Cultivating our gardens" always had political implications. If to botanists a weed was a plant in the wrong place then "weeds of conduct and conversation" are commonly no other than words done or spoken in the wrong place. The harvest will be a bad one since "the corn in the country has wanted sun"; but the "political harvest will be a good one". The term 'Country' then has a wider cultural significance as a form of political speech, while in association with the ideas of luxury and corruption the agrarian metaphor was used to express an anti-city feeling.
The silence or gap also noticeable is the absence of a mechanical metaphor, so fondly employed in much 19th century political polemic. Even the millennium was conceived as a return to a simple agrarian past. "We have now to fight", Cartwright declaimed, "not only for our fields and firesides, but those laws and liberties which made an Englishman's field an Eden, and his fireside an earthly heaven". To a large extent, the new heaven was a new earth in a very literal sense.  

Hardly mentioned by most Cartwright scholars, and if so usually given a secular emphasis, the idea of the millennium played an important and crucial role in his thinking. In general opinion has tended to discount and contrast "the religious tone" and "millenial temper" against Cartwright's rationalist frame of mind and turn of phrase. Perhaps too much credence has been given to F.D. Cartwright's remark that William Sharp's "frequent endeavours to convert Major Cartwright to a belief in his favourite prophet and prophetesses were fruitless". She is, of course, referring to Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott but the Major's failure to believe in current prophets takes nothing away from him attributing similar fabulous powers to Alfred the Great and other historical figures. There are merely different types of credulity within a basically similar structure of thought.  

It is precisely his millenial turn of mind, I think, that has led to fairly frequent comment on Cartwright's alleged irrationality. Once, in a letter to his wife, he refers to himself as "your Don Quixote". The figure of Don Quixote, and what he represented, was frequently in Cartwright's mind and on his lips as it was for many in the 18th century; Don Quixote being one of the most widely read books of the period. As he wrote in his most popular political tract, "no man in these days can labour for the benefit of mankind ... without being reckoned an enthusiast - perhaps a Quixote". This, dismissively, is how many contemporaries and modern commentators have seen him. Their attitudes to millenial fantasy have been similar since Don Quixote, among other things, is precisely a book about fantasy and the imagination. Yet not only does Cervantes show there is a certain method in Don Quixote's madness: "I am mad and will be mad until

thy return with an answer". He also has him voicing sentiments that Cartwright would no doubt have delighted in quoting at his enemies and detractors: "the rarity is to run mad without a cause, without the least constraint or necessity". Major Cartwright certainly had a cause just as he was constrained by certain conventions of thought. As one of his severest modern critics has said, he did not, like Burke, have a mystical or "blind reverence" for the past; and at a time when "many educated men" believed English liberty dated from Anglo-Saxon times, Cartwright's ideas "did not altogether seem ridiculous". If his beliefs were not rationalist, were not part of the movement known as rationalism, then they were certainly not irrational.72

Yet none of this belies a certain kind of mental fetishism found in millenial thinking, to which previous reference has been made. It is characteristic of his pre-utopian mode of thought that it lacked any real idea of a programme. Like Thomas Spence, he frequently slipped into speaking about his plan or programme, but in his moments of clarity admitted he had no "'plan' or project or proposition" and, in language similar to Spence, "called the public attention to the simple, clear and all-powerful principles of the Constitution". Political programmes, in the modern sense of the term, were hardly necessary given "the manifest sufficiency" of "political salvation". The "sacred constitution" was a matter of "divine revelation ... and the law of nature, no less divine". The political millenium depended not so much upon a secular programme and theory as it did upon the revealing hand of Providence. In 1819, Cartwright was writing on how "Providence" used "not invention, but restoration ... not original planning ... but ... repairing". At a previous time the Society for Constitutional Information was cast in the role of the agency of "that flood of light and truth which, under a benign Providence, is now sweeping from earth despotism in all its forms". Under such circumstances, severe limits are placed on human planning and endeavour.73 This is brought out even more clearly in the following passage in which we are informed that,

73. Osborne, Cartwright, 158; Cartwright, Life, 61, 171, 348-9; Jowett, "Language", 135.
the seeds of renovation had long been preparing France for a change; and referring all such secondary causes of events to their true original, the First Great Cause of all; HE it was that I considered as the true and proper author of a revolution in human affairs so beneficent ... Did I not sincerely rejoice in the French Revolution, I should not dare to call man my brother, nor God my heavenly father.

The French Revolution, Cartwright goes on, was "a glorious dispensation of Divine Providence to improve virtue". God was immanent in the world since he was "that Being whose providence is over men and nations". At the same time, human action and planning counted for something since "Providence, for bringing about its purposes in human affairs" operates not directly through God but indirectly "through human actions". In sum, then, the workings of Providence could be understood through revealed religion, through the Bible, history and so on, and revealed religion contained a doctrine of salvation. Two consequences followed from this. One was that "the doctrine of salvation" was democratic since "he who runs may read". God had placed salvation "within the reach of the poor and illiterate, who are required only to comprehend very plain things and act upon them". The second consequence was since Providence worked through human agency and institutions the path to salvation was declared both "in the English Constitution" and "in Christian Scripture". In this way, political and religious salvation were identified since they both had the same divine origins which gave the English constitution its sacred character. Reform was "the sacred cause of reform" in much more than a metaphorical sense. It was sacred in the sense that it was not something to be compromised with; it meant that reform was something outside the world of normal political exchange, and entered into the world of pure morality. "Radical reform", Cartwright said, "speaks from the souls of men, whereas moderate reform is spiritually cold and excites no emotion". Radical reform had religious underpinnings and legitimation, whereas moderate reform was no more than secular politics.

Placed side by side with other statements this identification between politics and religion seems strange and ambiguous. What is apparent is that, in the first instance, Cartwright wants to separate

74. Cartwright, Commonwealth, xv-xvi.

religion, that is to say religious sectarianism and institutions, from politics. One of William the Conqueror's great sins is that he was responsible for the corporate church, a church which strayed from the purely moral and simple order of the early church and involved itself in the affairs of the state. Jesus "was not a teacher of politics, of civil government"; he was a purely religious and moral leader. This statement stands in strange contrast to other statements from the same book but it makes more sense if it is viewed in the light of the historical role of the church and religious sectarianism. Cartwright himself seems to have been tolerant of Catholics, and even atheists, and deplored slogans such as "no Popery" entering into politics. Religion is private; only politics is public. It is in this 'functional' light that these statements must be understood.76

When it comes to ideas and principle things are different. Universal suffrage and political equality he finds "agreeable to the practice of both Christ and the Apostles". Political principles are "defined by the laws of God and nature". Or, as he put it elsewhere, "the political conduct of men and nations, to be correct, must be in conformity with that morality which hath its root in the existence of God". The true constitution is no more than "practical Christianity". Consequently, the refusal of parliament to hear the reformers' petitions is not only political tyranny but "a mockery of God and his laws ... the utmost impiety". Because of this rejection it was "the evident duty" not only of "every moral man" but of "every christian" to "use all the virtuous means in his power to correct such an evil". The line between private morality and public politics is, then, not so clearly drawn as it might seem. Cartwright explicitly disputes Soame Jenyns assertion "that christianity has nothing to do with 'civil government' and 'national policy'". He disputes Jenyns' separation of Christian principle from public life, since "the moral precepts of the gospel are equally a law to all men in all stations ... public as well as private". Such moral contradiction is against natural law "as revealed by the divine legislator". In the manner of mythical thinking, the political and the religious, the individual and the public or communal are merged and in fact political ideas get organised or

'structured' by religious categories. The Christian content, the "theological ideas" are important but perhaps more so again is the mythic substructure.

Of significance so far as content and form go is Cartwright's deism. He remarks how he prefers Locke's views on Christianity over those of Hume. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* ... is "the most satisfactory book of its kind I ever met with in my life". At one time he had a better opinion of Hume's writings; Hume "taught me many useful things". According to one scholar, Cartwright's religious opinions underwent "some change" between 1780 and 1787 when he ended up adopting Unitarianism. According to his niece, he sought truth in the Bible which he read regularly in "the revelations of the Almighty" and in reason. Deism and unitarianism no doubt led him to believe that God "is one" and that "his UNITY cannot ... be separated" and further that Jesus is "the chosen one". Oneness, it seems, rather than the one, the many and the few has the most strategic significance.

Because of deism and its central concept of unity the word party has a metaphysical depth totally lacking in its use as part of modern political discourse. Cartwright was critical of both Whigs and Tories in that they subordinated their political activity to a particular interest, and to expediency. Interest was associated with ambition since it was by nature sectional and self-seeking and was antipathetic to the wholeness and unity of patriotism and virtue. But ambition was not only associated with corruption and therefore a first cause of political and cyclical degeneration, it was also a sin. Party therefore was a sinful activity with historically momentous repercussions.

Unity or oneness had further connotations in terms of simplicity, while simplicity in turn was associated with nature and the super-natural. Underlying this association is the idea that if nature is simple then culture is complex. Man's creations are simple only when they accord with nature. Like the idea of nature and natural law the idea of simplicity through various mediations, represents a concrete reality. Two particular

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manifestations are dress and speech. Cartwright's own dress, like Cobbett's and many other Radicals, was not only old-fashioned but simple and anti-luxury. As the Major's niece described him, "his dress was peculiar, for in that he consulted convenience alone, and therefore, for many years had not varied the form of this clothes to suit the whims and fashions of the day". In London, heading a delegation of mostly working class delegates it was remarked how simple his dress was, including "a plain brown wig". An old school friend is virtuous since "everything about him, is in the true, plain, plentiful and comfortable style of an old-fashioned country gentleman". This country, pastoral and gentry connection is extended to include Cartwright's own efforts at land improvement described by Arthur Young as having "great simplicity". Speech also had the same value put upon it. His niece remarked on "the correctness and purity of his English", its "dignified simplicity". In 1776, before Paine, Cartwright was explaining how "a plainer and indeed coarser language is necessary for the unrefined, tho' sensible bulk of the people". In this he was following Christ who "pure and simple" spoke in "the sweet, plain and forcible language of nature". 79

Simple language went hand-in-hand with simple doctrines. "All systems founded in the laws of nature", Cartwright wrote, "being the work of the Deity are simple; that is ultimately resolvable into a few self-evident PRINCIPLES". God's will as part of nature was simple and therefore comprehensible to the dullest mind. What applied to religion also applied to "the POLITY" with "the fewness of its elementary principles, being in accordance with the simplicity of Nature as well as ... Science". And, as in religion, "the simpler the constitution, the sooner and better it will be understood". Measuring up best to this rule was "England's long hidden, long unknown constitution, a constitution supreme in simplicity and excellence". Militia defence had "the simplicity of nature". 80

Of course, simplicity had its opposite. Moderate or partial reform involved the politics of party and compromise. By its nature, "every mere palliative must be complex". Partial reform therefore recommends "a complex in place of a simple theory ... an imperfect in place of a perfect system". His advice to Bentham was to "avoid ... complexity in constitutions". Without realising that it would fall on deaf ears, he goes on to describe how

despite "many modern refinements" it is vital to return to and restore "the plain Saxon fabric of our constitution". The Normans had introduced "the complexity and confusion which ... have rendered our system an almost incomprehensible mystery". Complexity in politics is associated with mystery; with the ideological means used by the crown and the aristocracy to control and exploit the people. Once again Burke was merely stood on his head; there was no rupture or break. 

Unity and oneness was not only simple, it also possessed wholeness or integrity. In myth and religion integrity is usually talked about in relation to the idea of purity. The source or cause of impurity is excess; French revolutionary excesses were due to the lack of an "antient constitution" on the English model, to the lack of a model of purity. "All English liberty and good government flows from the clear and wholesome fountain of our Saxon Constitution", Cartwright wrote. "If the stream becomes obstructed or turbid with impurity" it is necessary to return to these origins. Corruption, which is implied in this statement, and excess need not, then, have Machiavellian roots. The mythico-religious dialectic of purity and pollution in which the individual human body is analogous to the collective political body or constitution is equally relevant. The ultimate cause of the "deep taint of impurity" and an "infected habitation" is the body's "passions". Only radical reform will drive out "infection" and restore "purity to the government and energy to the constitution". Moderate reform was "a mere palliative for a sick man, whose energies were departed". Genuine reform would ensure that "our purified Constitution shall emerge from the flames, with its ancient vigour and renovated lustre". Clearly ideas about renovation, restoration and return were loaded not only with time but also referred to bodily health. Equally, ideas about health, excess and corruption extended beyond the area of political analogy and politics into the social and personal areas. Rhetorically Cartwright asks, 

are not our prisons and our treatment of prisoners shocking and foolish? ... are we not suffering from the distress and idleness of the poor? ... do we not leave millions of acres uncultivated? Is not the metropolis and whole kingdom over-run with

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vagrants and beggars, notwithstanding
our astonishing provisions against want?
Is not every city, town and village crowded
with alehouses, those hotbeds of idleness
and vice?  

Apart from noticing the puritan and 'bourgeois' rather than
socialist elements in this, I would use it as support to disagree with
Samuel Bamford and some modern commentators that Cartwright did not go
beyond "political purification". I see with another author a very
definite bent towards "moral reformation" as well. The constitution or
commonwealth, which includes social and economic life, has become by the
1790s "the filthy receptacle of unclean things" giving forth a "temporary
dirt and stink". There is a widespread "corruption of the heart".
Obviously this is a language of morality perhaps even more fundamentally
than it is a language of politics, although there is a backwards and
forwards movement in thought. Just as there is an ideal moral purity
so there is a bodily purity and perfection and, by analogy, a political
perfection. Radical reform, or "the full and complete representation"
of the whole people added up to "a perfect institution" harmonious
with "the perfection of human reason". Constitutional government was not
only "co-eval with, erected upon, and regulated by, the spirit of the common
law of England", it was a "universal, simple, pure and perfect, plan of
religious reform". These words, taken from two different texts, are not
randomly chosen; as it were, they put in a nutshell the broad and underlying
assumptions of Radical vocabulary and 'epistemology'.

Perfection, though, was not easily attained. Whether bodily or
mental, it was a matter of effort and knowledge. It followed that if the
constitution was the source of knowledge and was hidden or overlaid by
Norman corruptions, then knowledge itself was hidden. It might be that the
constitution and God's providence consisted of a few essential and simple
principles, but they were not easy to get at. The rulers had a lot to
gain through shrouding the principles of political liberty in a veil of
mystery. The phrase "political education" had, then, much more to it than
the desire to propagate rhetoric and slogans about annual parliaments,
liberty and universal male suffrage. Political education was also a

83. Cartwright, Choice, xvi.
84. Drinkwater-Lunn, "John Cartwright", iv-v; Osborne, Cartwright, 94;
Cartwright, Commonwealth, ii-iv; Cartwright, Choice, 10, 16; Cartwright,
Evidence, 20.
a gnostic process involving the study of 'history' or myth as a means of individual and national salvation and freedom.

Freedom would return when "England's unknown constitution" was "once made known" and "England's lost polity once found". It was necessary to battle with reason against ignorance and conspiracy. The "well-known principles of the English constitution ... the plain maxims of the law of nature and the clearest doctrines of Christianity" are all "so simple and clear as to be understood by ... thousands of plain men". Yet these men, the common people, "know not that they are possessed of so useful a treasure". Political knowledge has to be revealed in much the same way as Ebenezer Sibly described the revelation of astrological knowledge.* Like astrology, political knowledge, the militia principle for example, is gained "by those who shall seek it". A political saint or virtuoso was someone versed in lore and tradition. "Were the English Constitution utterly lost and forgotten", Cartwright says, "a close attention to the principles of liberty to be collected from our law books, and other English writings would suffice for its recovery". True knowledge, therefore, was to be gained from the English historical and political experience and was found in the past rather than the present or the future. It was not new knowledge. Political knowledge had its limits and was not infinitely progressive. If there was an enlightenment, it was an enlightenment of "recovery" gained from a study of the English past. When, in 1814, Cartwright wrote of "the progress made, even in the countries of despotism in the fusion of political knowledge", it was exactly this kind of 'antiquarian' and 'racial' knowledge he had in mind. When he spoke of its diffusion and of "progress" in "the debased nations of Asia and Africa" and in training negroes "to habits and duties of citizens", it was just such an enlightenment he envisaged. 85

It was, so to speak, a mythic enlightenment. To emphasise still further the mythical elements in Cartwright's mind, some reference needs to be made to his penchant for symbolic expression. One scholar has noted "the visual appeal" of his works, although this is by no means peculiar to Cartwright. They were full of medals, seals and other paraphernalia as well as graphic representations of the principles of liberty or its corruption.

* See Appendix D.
His seal bore "the cap of liberty, bible, swords of freedom, dates of Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution, and the name of Alfred". The frontispiece of one work contained designs for copper medals of "the English polity"; the S.C.I. voted that another of his works be supplemented with various designs, "emblems and allegories" and slogans. Part of the reason behind this move is said to have been to make it "more appealing to the lower orders", to the semi-literate. The engraving was done by William Sharp. One of the most common symbols was the cap of liberty, whose origins Cartwright saw as English rather than French. It is perhaps surprising to find Cartwright writing to Burke in 1775 agreeing with him "in hanging Mr. Wilkes if he can be legally tucked up", while defending the cap of liberty on the presumed grounds that it was an English invention. So much did Cartwright associate the cap of liberty with patriotism or Englishness that he drew up a design for a regimental button with the cap on it. Another English symbol in constant use was the oak. Reform and liberty were often described and graphically illustrated through the use of this symbol. He would be content, Cartwright said, "to deposit the acorn in the ground, provided posterity might live under the branches of an oak". The significance of using this kind of agrarian symbol, was that nature had its laws and its limits. The outcome of planting an acorn, should it reach maturity, was known; the result was not open-ended.

Yet if the shape of his thinking was determined by some mythic metaphysic, we are still Marxist enough to want to 'materialise' it and see his ideas about the 'economic' structure as a reflection of a particular type of society. This is important in view of the fact, mentioned before, that Cartwright and most of his Radical contemporaries had no conception of economic problems. Cartwright, we are told, lacked any "comprehension of economic issues"; and had a "general non-involvement in economic problems". At the same time, there is some recognition that economic difficulties were "blamed upon the political system". Cartwright is held to be not only myopic but wrong to see political institutions at the root of "the large national debt and high taxes". Disregarding this question for the moment, what needs to be shown, and has already to some extent, is that Cartwright, in common with Obadiah Hulme and a host of other Radical pamphleteers, was very much concerned with economic issues.

through taking as a central problem in nearly all his writings the
taxation question. Like Paine he was not against taxation as such.
He was only against "unconstitutional taxation" which occurred when
"the few" had "the power of taxing the many", resulting in a large
public debt. But the ultimate cause of the high level of the
National Debt was war: "WAR has been the cause of all our debt".
Hugh debts were needed to pay for the cost of the standing army,
"which must be our ruin". Up to a point, it is equally valid to see
his love of the militia merely as a means of avoiding the nation's
economic ruin. It was a cheap form of defence, although again it needs
to be emphasised Cartwright was not so much concerned with limiting
the powers of the state as ensuring taxation was kept at reasonable
levels. Equally, economic conditions had an effect on "the morals
and habits" of the people and economic explanation was determined by
moral and political considerations. For this reason, general prosperity
was crucial and it was the state's role to promote this prosperity.
It could do this by not protecting but promoting trade. Again, trade
rather than manufacture was central to Cartwright's thinking and mental
horizons.87 To this end, the navy rather than the militia assumed
a crucial significance.

In order to establish this it is necessary to turn to a close
examination of Cartwright's strangest or most 'archaic' production,
The Trident. This work is usually dismissed as Cartwright's greatest
eccentricity and is only given a cursory glance by scholars. The
contents are barely mentioned and if referred to at all, The Trident
is seen as an example of his 'classical' turn of mind. Yet in reality
it is a celebration of Anglo-Saxon democracy and Englishness and brings
together in one piece, as it were, nearly all the themes and ideas
explored above. For these reasons, The Trident deserves close analysis,
reading and description.*

So what has been learned about Cartwright's thought in the
light of the questions posed at the start of this chapter? Some

87. Osborne, Cartwright, 70; John Cartwright, The Trident: or the
National Policy of Naval Celebration . . ., (London, 1802), 6,
208; Cartwright, Life, Vol.I, 287, 300, 305, 306; Vol.II,
190, 350;

* See Appendix A.
evidence has been given to suggest the extent of Cartwright's 'influence'. His class, position, if that is what it is, has been shown to be ambiguous to a certain extent. And he was less afraid of the violence of the working class than many who shared his social background; he was also not as condenscending. Yet he was no out-and-out egalitarian, French style. In this sense his thinking is pre-Revolutionary. His 'moderation' and 'archaism' comes out in his views on property and tax. His concern for law is Harringtonian or Country, but he is not against commerce, and not against taxes on real property because they do not fall on the poor or because they are not taxes on consumption. Yet political rights, and even more, representation are based on land (virtue Harrington, Machiavelli), but on personality, too (natural law, Locke). Also, land ought to be more equally divided. Cartwright, as I have said, saw himself as an ultra-Radical reformer, but not a Jacobin. He wanted manhood universal suffrage and annual parliaments, the grounds of which were founded in the English constitution and history. In this light his attitude towards the monarchy and republicanism has been shown to be equally complex. A country's form of government depended, to some extent, upon its historical experience, and for England he favoured an elective a constitutional monarchy based on the historical model of the Anglo-Saxons.

Out of this came his concept of a patriotism. Consequently, my analysis denies an Enlightenment universalist patriotism, in favour of an idea that is closer to Burke. Yet neither is it nationalism, in the 19th century sense. It is as much, as I have said, "an internal mode of political conduct" as anything else. Like liberty it is drawn from the lessons of English history. So, although there are 'Lockeian' natural law elements in Cartwright's thought, as I have shown in a chronological appreciation of the texts, the Gothic or "customs' side of Cartwright's view of liberty is both continuing and vital. There is custom and common law as well as natural rights, although there is also the 'Machiavellian' militia as an upholder of libertarian values and institutions. And on the last point, there is further Cartwright's criticism of luxury and corruption. Likewise there is virtue.
To understand how all these things connect up, I looked at the role of reason, at country and nature as concrete expressions of natural rights and at the role of religion or deism and millenarianism in Cartwright's thought. To take the last first, I have suggested that "Country" (and natural rights) should be looked at not only as a political concept but as a way of living. In country life, in the simple life, is found the sources of virtue and liberty. They are also to be found in destical, millenial religion. This provided radical reform with its divine inspiration and Providential blessing. Millenial deism also extolled the virtues of simplicity and oneness. A party, complex reform was, therefore, for Cartwright not only a political mistake or error but a political sin. And religious discourse is also about morality, about purity and pollution. Starting from the body through the mind and on to society and then the government, the Anglo-Saxon constitution is seen as a model of political purity. Ultimately then, Cartwright's political enlightenment is a religious or mythical enlightenment. This is reinforced in an appendix in my analysis of Cartwright's Trident in which heavy symbolisation or 'concrete' and allegorical thought is used as political argument. Yet all this has a material or "mercantilist' basis and the Trident is a celebration of the navy (light on taxes) as a protector of trade rather than manufacture. It is also a ritualistic celebration of Anglo-Saxon democracy.

The argument is, then, that interpretation of John Cartwright's thought or mind is advanced by looking not at one or two concepts that he uses but at all the concepts together. That is, to look at the wider structure or language. In one sense Cartwright is the embodiment of this language-structure or paradigm that is developed in the last chapter. The other writers chosen tend to emphasise or elaborate this or that aspect of the structure.

THOMAS BEWICK

The questioning or 'interrogation' of Thomas Bewick's Memoirs must therefore necessarily follow a similar pattern. But there is little in the way of critical historiography on Bewick. Yet, because of Marat's stay at Newcastle, by association, one interpretation sees Bewick as something of a revolutionary. Another aspect of
investigation will be Bewick's class or status position, especially his relationships with the gentry. Connected with both these things is his understanding of equality. For the first time, that is, I have posed the question of hegemony and the class nature of Gothic thinking. In this respect, close attention is given to Bewick's notion of independence. The Memoirs, as will be shown, are a good source for discovering the cultural foundations of Gothic mentality or Anglo-Saxonism. Included in this are questions about the role of cultural heroes, and the relationship between political belief, religion or myth and popular culture. Out of this come questions about political 'philosophy', about political rectitude and social life. Related to this, in turn, is Bewick's belief, like Cartwright, in the role of political knowledge. Lastly, I look briefly at Bewick's political economy.

At first glance it may seem odd to place Bewick alongside Cartwright, especially since Bewick's friend, Thomas Spence, is left to the next chapter. In terms of class origins, Spence and Bewick have a lot in common. But Spence had much greater contact with the more popular or 'lower' forms of political radicalism, and his ideas found a receptive audience among the "lower sort of people". Thomas Bewick's Radicalism, both in tone and content, was more moderate and more respectable. So, although he never came from the gentry classes, his ideas are closer to Cartwright's. In fact, he was even less radical than Major Cartwright. He rejected Cartwright's "unqualified scheme for universal suffrage". Despite this, emphasis is usually placed on Bewick as a supporter "of new ideas both technical and social"; that is, if his ideas are considered at all. Usually Bewick is considered as an engraver, as an object of artistic criticism. Yet his memoir is stuffed full, if on a pragmatic or 'practical' level, of the kind of ideas discussed in previous pages; they are open to the same kind of analysis. As with some other writers considered it is useful and informative to begin with a discussion of reading 'influences', friends and so on, although not in this case the question of circulation since he was not a political theorist or pamphleteer.
Bewick's connection with Thomas Spence has already been alluded to. It was a friendship of long standing; as early as 1776 he mentions "his friend Thomas Spence", and the friendship is said to have been "one of the most significant and dearest to Bewick to the end of his days". Bewick and Spence were both members of the same "Philosophical Society" at Newcastle from which Spence was expelled for breaking the Society's rules by publishing one of his lectures. Bewick did not oppose the expulsion and later had a physical fight with him. The quarrel did not last and Bewick thought of Spence as "sincere and honest". It has been said Spence's "general philosophical and political ideas" influenced Bewick "a great deal". The basis of this judgement is a number of books, pamphlets and tokens produced by Spence and known to have been in Bewick's possession. Yet Bewick refers to Spence's ideas as "mistaken" and clearly disagrees with Spence with regard to the control and ownership of land. There would seem to be some sort of 'philosophical' correspondence, and, leaving aside the question of influence, this will be brought out later.\(^8\) Another important influence and a source of Bewick's Enlightenment frame of mind is said to be the French revolutionary Jean Paul Marat. Marat lived in Newcastle, practising as a doctor, during the years 1770 to 1773. He became a member of some of the patriotic or reform societies in the area and an edition of his *Chains of Slavery* was published in 1775 and sold in Newcastle. It has been said Bewick's life-long defence of the French Revolution and his social and political ideas in general "show that he had deeply absorbed the ideas Marat propagated". Yet there is not a shred of evidence Bewick met Marat or read his book. Bewick's ideas seem to be an amalgam of English intellectual components combined with personal and cultural experience. One of these native intellectual components was derived from Thomson's *Seasons*, "one of the best-loved and most significant books of the 18th century" and "a lifelong favourite of Bewick's". Thomson's celebration of nature, liberty and Whiggish political philosophy and their interconnection would have appealed to Bewick's

intuition and helped shape his thoughts. In terms of agrarian sentiment and nostalgia, Cobbett "of whose Political Register" Bewick was "a faithful reader" is a similar sort of 'influence'.

Besides these two authors, the Memoir gives numerous examples of Bewick's reading. While at his master's house he read "the then new publication of 'Smollett's History of England'" and "for a long time afterwards" he "clearly remembered everything of note which it contained". At this time his reading was avid. Access was gained through Gilbert Gray's son William "a bookbinder of some repute" who often filled his workshop with "the works of the best authors". Also read around this time were "waggon loads of sermons". As he puts it, "I got myself into a labyrinth - bewildered with dogmas, creeds and opinions". During this period, books were his only companions over which he spent his "mornings and evenings, late and early". Perhaps worthy of mention in the light of Bewick's religious readings is the "political theologian" James Murray, author of Sermons for Asses; Murray was the only member of the Philosophical Society against Spence's expulsion. Another batch of reading worth mentioning is the natural histories, including "Gilbert White's History of Selbourne".

Men as well as books shaped Bewick's character and ideas. He describes one, Gilbert Gray, a bookbinder and formerly a shopman and bookbinder to Allan Ramsay poet and bookseller, as "the most valuable acquaintance and friend I ever met with". Gray seems to have made a mark on Bewick through the puritanism of his personal habits and thoughts. Gray was remarkable for his "detestation of vice, his industry and his temperance". He lived life according to the dictates of nature. Ignoring social conventions, he ate only when hungry, drank when thirsty, slept when tired and so on. According to Bewick, this "mode of life" enabled him to pursue a successful publishing career. Gray, besides training for a while as a priest, had had "a liberal education bestowed upon him" and "had read a great deal and reflected upon what he read". Bewick "lived in habits of intimacy with him

89. R. Watkinson, Thomas Bewick, 15, 18; Thomas Bewick, A Memoir of Thomas Bewick Written By Himself, (London and Newcastle, 1862), 110.

to the end of his life". Another friend was Nathaniel Bales, a surgeon, who, among other things was "eminent for his learning .. a tolerably good engraver and a good mechanic". Bales headed the committee "of Burgesses" who opposed the magistrates appropriation of the Town Moor or commons in Newcastle. There is also mention of George Gray, another son of Gilbert, and William's half-brother. Although "eminent as a fruit painter", he "dipped into almost every art and science". George was also remarkable for his "genuine simplicity of manners". Matthew Prior "one of the best mechanics in the kingdom" who gave evidence before a house of Commons committee also gets a mention. So does "Major Bainbridge a local patriot" and his friend the divine who was also a schoolteacher and small farmer. Not of least importance is his former master and eventual partner Ralph Beilby towards whom, in his memoir, Bewick has ambivalent feelings. In order to build up a proper picture of the collective nature of Bewick's thinking, a close study of all these men and books would be desirable. 91

They are certainly helpful in trying to draw a picture of Bewick's class position and his attitudes or consciousness of class. Ray Watkinson's summary of this position has a nice accuracy. Bewick's background, he writes, is of "solid yeoman independence, of moderate comfort won by constant hard work, of country skills and earnest education". His paternal grandfather was said to be a successful farmer; his maternal grandfather a schoolteacher. His father was a farmer who also employed "pitmen". Bewick's grandmother left him £20 for an apprentice fee. The connection between craft and country comes out in Bewick's uncle "Thomas Blackett, silversmith" who had been a foreman and his aunt who "being the widow of a freeman kept a cow upon the Town Moor". In later life as a wood engraver Bewick would have counted as a sort of "superior artisan". As a master engraver he employed a few men but engravers were below artists "Who ranked themselves as gentlemen" and "insisted that engravers wait upon them". They belonged to "a fairly independent trade", this independence perhaps being underlined by the lack of trade union activity among engravers.

91. Bewick, Memoir, 62-4, 68, 162-3; See also Bewick's own adoption of a strict diet and his reading of "Lewis Cornaro and other books which treated of temperance". He also "greatly valued the advice given in the "Spectator" which strongly recommended all people to have their days of absence". 69.
The membership of the "Swarley Club" which Bewick joined around 1790 consisted of "merchants or respectable tradesmen". As E.P. Thompson has pointed out many of them expressed hostility to "the gentry, capitalists and large farmers" while at the same time they were "intimidated", though perhaps deferential is a better description, by and to the aristocracy. Like Major Cartwright, Bewick's condemnation and disregard of the gentry was just as conditional, and his contacts with the upper classes seem to have been both friendly and profitable.  

He had quite a few particular grudges against the gentry. Forgetting the "exertions of their forefathers", the gentry, during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars had let the people down through their apathy. Nowadays "there is not virtue enough left in the country gentlemen", Bewick says. Many of the "lairds" and country gentlemen were "grossly ignorant and ... offensively proud". Their loss of virtue was associated with their dissipation and consequent loss of lands and houses or "halls". The gentlemen ought to remember they are "the natural guardians of public morals" while the "bold peasantry" are the sinews and strength of the country. But during the war, the gentry "whirled about in aristocratic pomposity" and "could not at these times drink anything but wine" while the "industrious labourer" was subjected to "great privations". Bewick had more respect for his own class origins, for the class below the aristocracy, the gentry and the lairds. Although often their intelligence was below labouring men because they were "exclusively occupied with the management of their farms", the farmers were mostly of "a kind and hospitable disposition, well-intentioned plain, plodding men". Bewick's judgement of the aristocracy is equally ambiguous. The game laws were the product of "feudal tyranny" and an "overbearing aristocracy". Yet the nobles "are or ought to be, the pride and glory of every civilised land". They were responsible for the general virtue of the people. Without them there would be a lapse into

barbarism. Using language similar to Burke, Bewick argues that improving landlords and aristocratic patronage generate the general moral health and economic well-being of the country. 93

Bewick believed in equality of opportunity, but he did not believe in any kind of natural or social equality. "Intellectual and reasoning powers" were "the gift of Providence". Yet effort and opportunity was needed for their cultivation. "Want of effort" is largely the reason for "the inequalities of rank and fortune of which the community is composed". But provision must be made for "the intelligent and the industrious". In order to "give every man a fair chance" the community has "an imperative duty" to provide "a rational and virtuous education". The virtuous, then, are those who have risen by their own industry and effort, not necessarily an hereditary aristocracy. At the same time, society is based on unequal reciprocity. Both "master and servant" have "reciprocal duties"; neither tyranny from the one nor disobedience from the other is acceptable. To ensure this, the relationship needed to be governed by equal and just laws. 94

All men of sound understanding, and who are capable of reflection, will clearly see that there is not and cannot be any such thing as equality. There must, and ever will be, high and low, rich and poor, and this inequality in civilised states, is necessary for the comfort and happiness of all. A cement is thus formed which binds together in union the strength, the beauty and the symmetry of the whole. In the freest state, man must not expect to have the unrestrained liberty of the savage, but must give up part of his freedom for the good of the whole; for liberty consists in this that every man may do as he pleases, provided he does nothing to injure his neighbour, or the community of which he is a member ... it is the will of Providence that it should be so. 95

93. Watkinson, Bewick, 16; Bewick, Memoir, 46-7, 211, 212.
94. Bewick, Memoir, 190-2.
95. Bewick, Memoir, 194.
Only by the most tortuous argument can this sort of essentially mythological reasoning be assimilated into a socialist tradition of thinking. Also, despite some prefiguring of J.S. Mill, the Chain of Being assumptions implicit in the quotation set it apart from 19th century liberalism. Neither is it symptomatic of an unmediated hegemony. Virtual representation is good enough for "the ignorant and the wicked". For this reason Major Cartwright's plan of universal manhood suffrage is rejected. Bewick's social position as a small master and householder comes to the fore when he proposes giving the vote to "householders of probity and honour" who "by industry and intelligence" are able to "maintain themselves respectably". These included fell-men or those who had rights to the common - to some form of landed property - thereby putting into perspective his other statement that "the poor are equally as wise as the rich". In terms of political doctrine, Bewick is close to Obadiah Hulme; in terms of paradigms his moralistic and 'classical' categories show that he is entirely 'traditional'.

Additional evidence that he was not merely deferential towards mainstream aristocratic and gentry social and political theory is found in his unwavering support for French Revolution, although personally Bewick was a pacifist. To be viewed in a similar light is his support for American Independence. Founded on "the liberties and the rights of man", America showed it was possible to stride towards national as well as individual perfection. Republican governments in France and America were a warning to the use of arbitrary power by kings.

Both countries, then, seem to be examples of "classical republics" and it is of interest to look for other examples to see how far Bewick used "neo-Machiavellian" categories in his social and political analysis. Using this paradigm focus, it is clear that virtue is a part of his vocabulary. Since they have "opulence and independence", landed gentlemen or freeholders ought to be "the patrons of every virtue in the people". Their wealth needed to be put to social use and not wasted in luxury. Individual and social virtue were connected. It was wrong that "a great proportion of mankind "'lives to eat - not eat to live'". In the Memoir.

96. Bewick, Memoir, 200-1.
Bewick continually praises a simple diet. He gives a very detailed account of the spartan life he led which, he says, "hardened the constitution". What would harden the bodily constitution would also have a beneficial effect on the political, social and moral constitution. Currently, "pampering and spoiling the appetites of children" led to a loss of physical and moral purity such that, especially among girls, "notions of fashion and gentility ... have taken deep root". Treated "like hot-house plants" girls have become "the nerveless outcasts of nature" and "unfit to become the mothers of Englishmen". Routs, balls and "midnight assemblies" should be replaced by the pursuits of horticulture, to allow them "to make use of their limbs". They needed "a plain diet, temperance and exercise". There is nothing eccentric in these anti-luxury sentiments of Bewick; they are found in Major Cartwright, in Wooler's Black Dwarf, and in a host of other Radical writers and publications. Radicalism was not merely a politics: it was a way of life. Another long passage worth quoting at length shows the extent to which thinking was structured by the commonplace assumptions of 'classical' language. "Well constituted governments", Bewick writes, if occasionally revised, and as often as necessary scrupulously amended, may be rendered as permanent as time. If wisely and virtuously administered they would be indestructible and incalculably contribute by their vigour to the mental and moral aggrandisement of man. It is a truth confirmed by universal history that the happiness or misery of a people entirely depend upon the principles of their government and the conduct of their rulers. When just and honourable intentions exist there is nothing to dread: but when only a semblance of these is put on ... Thence follows the degradation of man, and the consequent decay of states and nations.

If "governments ... are lost in considerations about their own private selfish concerns", or are blinded by false ambition", Bewick continues, then "the bulk of the people must be enlightened and amended". This basically classical language or analysis takes on a "neo-Harringtonian" complexion when it is applied to the English House of Commons, to corruption and "the compact confederacy of undeserving placemen and pensioners". Besides key words such as "virtue", "ambition", "decay" and

98. Bewick, Memoir, 112, 209-1, 211.
so on, there are other words and ideas which need equal emphasis. In the idea of constitution or polity that is "permanent in time", once again a millenarian moment is expressed along with a Machiavellian one. In the idea that politics determines the general mental and material state of the people or nation an essentially pre-industrial form of ideology is intimated. In the idea that the moral health of the rulers acts as the primary factor in historical causation, a mythico-religious mode of thought is being expressed. The question of the discreteness of paradigms arises with Bewick as with other Radical writers. The enlightenment of the people is a question of political knowledge and political saintliness, of the proper understanding of "Religion and Politics". The "wages of corruption" are not merely political since placemen and pensioners have "sinned themselves out of all shame". Purity and pollution are at issue as well as a lack of political and public duty. 100

Before going to to consider this, it is as well to remember that not only does Pocock give primacy to politics over religion in the structuring of much of 18th century thought, he also sees the idea of independence as an important aspect of Machiavelli's English face. Bewick's use of the idea of independence shows it was an acceptable notion only because it fitted with a certain social reality and because this reality existed or had existed; independence carried with it the notion of freedom from class control and paternalism and deference. Independence was connected with the enclosures and the use and ownership of land.

The "fell" or common close to Bewick's home containing nearly two thousand acres was divided up in 1812. "By this division the poor man was rooted out and various mechanics of the villages deprived of all benefit of it". Like the ancient constitution it had been "the poor man's heritage for ages past", and had now been lost. Formerly, "he kept a few sheep, or a Kyloe cow, perhaps a flock of geese, and mostly a stock of beehives". It was also a place of "wild beautiful scenery" where the movements of nature could be observed. Now, all was "swept away". Being a source of production, the commons was also a source of independence since,

Here and there on this common were to be seen a cottage, or rather hovel, of some labouring man, built at his own expense, and mostly with his own hands; and to this he always added a

100. Bewick, Memoir, 34-5.
garth and a garden, upon which great pains and labour were bestowed to make both productive... These various concerns excited the attention and industry of the hardy occupants which enabled them to prosper and made them despise ever being numbered with the parish poor. These men... might truly be called 'A bold peasantry, their country's pride' and to this day I think I see their broad shoulders and their hardy sun-burnt looks, which altogether bespoke the vigour of their constitutions... These cottagers... were of an honest and independent character, while at the same time they held the neighbouring gentry in great estimation and these in turn did not overlook them.

Here is a description of the mentality George Eliot painted in her characterisation of Adam Bede.* Independence and deference seem to go together; deference is a matter of exchange. It is conditional upon the gentry's discharge of its public duty. Independence of mind, based upon economic independence also suggested limits to social control and dominance. This independence would no doubt be reinforced by the values transmitted through the cottagers' reading material: "the Bible, local histories and old ballads". Their knowledge, although "limited" was not to be sneered at since one of their number "Will Bewick" had taught Thomas Bewick "knowledge of astronomy and of the magnitude of the universe".

Another "fell-side neighbour", Anthony Liddell was the living incarnation of the independence ideal. He "might be called the 'village Hampden'", and "the whole cast of his character was formed by the Bible which he read through and through". He treated with contempt acts of parliament that clashed with God's laws. He ignored the game laws. "He feared no man, he scorned to skulk or to do anything by stealth" and "the gaol had no terrors for him". Besides studying the Bible, "he was a great reader of history, especially those parts where wars and battles were described... he took the lead in discourses of this kind". His independence of action and mind meant "he treated all men as equals". Bewick goes on to describe other independently-minded "fell-side" characters, remarking that he "might swell the list of such characters" who compare favourably with "some of the unthinking great".\(^{102}\)

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* See above, Chapter One, 31.
Independence, then, including independence of mind, was closely associated with the ownership and use of landed property however small. "The late Duke of Northumberland" acted virtuously and "must have had an eye to raising the character of the peasantry when he granted small portions of land at a reasonable rate". There would be no need for the poor laws if "the lands commonly attached to townships had been continued ... and let in small portions to mechanics and labourers". By this means, "all men" would be "made sensible of the manly pleasure of being independent". Independence was also a matter of keeping out of debt and not accepting monetary gifts. Yet Bewick did not value thrift or saving or any kind of investment. He spent his money and "a small sum", he says, was "sufficient to make me independent".103

Without independence there could be no patriotism. Under Pitt's government, the country gentlemen, "lost their former independent character". For Bewick, as for Cartwright and others, patriotism was as much an internal as an external affair. Pitt put on "the mask of patriotism" and extended "the system of place and patronage". The gentry "fell into the vortex of corruption", and, like a part of the people in general, forgot "the exertions of their forefathers". Patriotism again is not cosmopolitan but associated with the liberty embedded in English history. This does not prevent it being associated with the Christian religion since anyone who neglects "the love of our country" fails to revere and adore "his Maker". Like Paine, Bewick dislikes Jews, in part from personal experience, but also probably because as cosmopolitans they have no country. Like other Radicals, Bewick believed that "all wars except defensive ones are detestable".104 Again, then, the idea of patriotism seems to provide the link between the paradigm based on virtue and a paradigm involving a return to libertarian customs. Again, the symbol of Alfred the Great provides the connection. Alfred is at once the supreme patriot and the virtuous leader, the origin of goodness. "We have felt the benefit of equal laws" Bewick says,

103. Bewick, Memoirs, 47-48, 103.
104. Bewick, Memoirs, 124-5, 177, 189.
Like Cartwright, Bewick wants monuments erected to those heroes of English liberty who displayed "virtue and patriotism". And "the first name fixed upon ought to be that of Alfred the Great". As a king, Alfred was "the wisest, the bravest and the best the world ever knew" who "laid the foundation of the liberties of his country". He is also associated with the millenial constitution since if kings followed the example of Alfred no conspiracy could upset their rule. Like him they needed to promote the arts and sciences and "enlighten the minds and ameliorate the conditions of mankind".  

Other patriots associated with Alfred were the heroes of the navy. Bewick describes the content and themes of prints, "so common when I was a boy to be seen in every farmhouse throughout the country". Sold at a cheap price, the prints, besides carrying portraits of "rebel lords", depicted naval scenes and "remarkable victories at sea". They had a "patriotic or rural tendency" and also contained portraits of "Admiral Haddock, Admiral Benbow and other admirals". History is mythicised through being understood by the categories of heroes or villains. But Bewick also understood the less romantic side of naval events. "By the valour of her seamen" Britain "reigned 'complete mistress of the deep' and the commerce of the world poured into her lap". 

Just as Britain had a naval tradition going back to Alfred the Great, so in Bewick's mind there were a set of social customs that went back at least as far and provided the basis for political liberty and independence. Things like home-brewing - "before the pernicious use of chemical compounds was known, or agricultural improvements had quickened the eyes of landlords and banished many small farmers" - wrestling, dancing, music were a sign of the free spirit of the English people. Old customs were a reminder that old

107. Bewick, Memoirs, 245-7, 179; Watkinson, Thomas Bewick, 16.
liberties were not dead and were usually associated with a rural existence.

Yet "the liberty of the poor peasant, the old houses, the green land" were dying. Bewick's thoughts and feelings were saturated with rural nostalgia. Yet again nature takes on a positive hue while culture is cast in a poor light and yet again there is a blending of the georgic and pastoral modes of country life. The nostalgia appears to have a basis in Bewick's own experience. From his descriptions, the pastoral idyll seems to have been very real in his boyhood days. But now, "the needy gentry care little about the beauty of the country" while formerly all around were "old oaks". In the Memoir he describes how he looks after sheep, milks the cows, does gardening and goes in for a spot of ornithology as well as being able to appreciate natural beauty. Practice and aesthetics go together; in fact Georgic practice made the pastoral eye sharper. When apprenticed, and forced to leave the countryside, he remarks "my heart was like to break ... to leave its beauties behind me". The "sole stimulant" for taking up wood-engraving was "the pleasure derived from imitating natural objects". The "summit" of his wishes was to retire to a cottage "surrounded with woods and wilds" and to fill up his leisure time with "gardening and fishing". Angling combined amusement with appreciation of nature's aesthetic and productive properties. Bewick proposed setting up Isaac Walton societies.

He recounts how when he was a boy in the 1760s there used to be a clause in every apprentice's indentures that he could not be made to eat salmon more than twice a week. Salmon in those days were plentiful. But they are now becoming scarce. "The filth of the manufactories is ... very injurious, as well as the refuse which is washed off the uncleaned streets of the large towns by heavy rains". Industrial production was already showing up the worst aspects of civilisation and culture. The epizoon feeding upon this system, the great Whore of Babylon, was for Bewick, as for Samuel Bamford, London. Sooner than have to stay in London, Bewick writes, he would "enlist for a soldier" or "go and herd sheep at five shillings a week". The artist or engraver ought "to have his dwelling in the country" and "should only occasionally visit the city or smokey town". Rural scenery, nature, was superior to anything man had produced. Nature is divine since

109. Watkinson, Thomas Bewick, 28; Bewick, Memoir, 32-3, 10-11, 51, 183, 344.
God is "the Author of Nature". Yet, as with Paine, Locke and others, culture could not be an entirely negative order. Despite primitive virtues, nobody wanted to go back to being a noble savage. And God had given man the propensity for culture. "It was the intention of the Omnipotence that men should live in a state of civilised society", Bewick says. 110

"Savages" were pagans. Not the least advantage civilised men had over the uncivilised was their form of religion. In one sense, in a deist sense, religion has "the same complexion and character in all nations". Yet, "Christianity in its purity is the most liberal and best religion in the world". Primitive religion was flawed, presumably by its lack of monotheism. Bewick probably classed the religion of non-literate peoples in with the sort of beliefs popular in his own time. There is a long reference to popular witchcraft beliefs in 17th century Newcastle. He also shows that such beliefs still had a strong currency at the time he was writing. These "prejudices" were "early rooted" and "not easily removed". Among "the worst" were the beliefs "in ghosts, boggles, apparations" and so forth. During Bewick's childhood they "wrought powerfully upon the fears of the great bulk of the people", and many were "not rooted out even at this day". Men, "both old and young" who faced almost "any danger" were "afraid of their own shadows" when it came to the activities of supernatural beings. The "pitmen" or miners employed by his father seem to have been deep believers in magical religion. There was also a cunning man or magician "a kind of village Caesar". Bewick himself was once frightened into believing he was being chased by the devil. The matter was taken so seriously that Bewick thought the person responsible "had been obliged to leave the village". Tales of ghosts and the like were probably told during the same "winter evenings" spent "listening to the traditionary tales and songs" which "particularly affected ... and greatly distressed". One that stuck in Bewick's memory was the beheading of the Earl of Derwentwater in 1715, a kind of Alfredian hero who was "venerated as a saint upon earth". Without knowing more details about the beliefs it is no wild conjecture to suggest not only were the two kinds of tales told in similar social and psychological situations, but that the structure of assumptions and beliefs underlying the tales were similar, and correspondingly similar too, to the Alfredian myth. 111

110. Bewick, Memoir, 223, 225, 102, 251, 256, 257.
111. Bewick, Memoir, 269, 270, 185-6, 23, 12.
The figure of the Devil acts as the bridge between popular religion and magic and the more respectable Christian religion. Bewick's father vented his anger on the poor unfortunate who terrorised Bewick with the Devil and Bewick senior pressed religion upon his son "in a way I did not forget". Bewick was brought up in the Church of England faith. Its clergy he found "the most learned of any" and in general they lived off "poor livings" which he says gave them an income "hardly better than the wages of mechanics". At the same time he preached religious toleration and abhorred sectarianism. He advocated Catholic emancipation in Ireland even though Catholicism was "bigotry and superstition". God "taught neither intolerance nor persecution", and "the "doctrines he laid down are plain pure and simple". They are all derived "from one and the same pure source".

This, of course, is a basic tenet of deism; Bewick was a Christian deist. He was a regular church attender and believed the Bible contained "sublime precepts". But although the Bible is "the first instrument of knowledge", portions of the scriptures are to be understood "allegorically" and it is necessary to have "other systems of morality". Although touched by the form of millenial belief, like Cartwright Bewick rejects "the reveries of Joanna Southcott, and the ravings of the ranters". Rejecting faith and passion in religion, Bewick asserts the primacy of reason. Since reason had been created by God, the application of reason directs thought towards "one God". Also, although reason allows for difference of opinion and therefore religious toleration, the direction of reason is away from religious division and complexity. "True religion", or natural religion, is "independent of human caprice". Religious error and complexity had crept in - "Pagans in India, Mohometans in Turkey" - because reason has been abandoned. "Systems of revenue and agrandisement", or religious institutions, have been set up and "interwoven deeply into all the various governments of different countries". Like his contemporaries, Bewick points to the institutional connection between religion and politics, while also asserting this connection led to the corruption of an original, pure and natural religion.

At the same time, religion and political regeneration are founded on a political solution which is, in turn, underpinned by religious principle.

112. Bewick, Memoir, 52-3, 100, 149, 155-56.
113. Watkinson, Thomas Bewick, 18; Bewick, Memoir, 269-7, 273-4.
The first step in reform means the people must learn to use their reason "the nobles gift bestowed on them by the Creator". Corruption, the concept or idea of corruption, is again at least as much a religious as a secular or Machiavellian idea since politicians through undermining "the purity of the constitution" had "sinned themselves out of all shame". The "highest character" a man could hope to attain was that of a "religious philosopher". If this was accomplished by every clergyman, who ought also to be non-sectarian, then every village church "would thus become a religious, a moral and patriotic little community". In effect, a millenial moment would arrive in which this "system of religious worship" and "system of education" would "stamp the character of the whole people". There would be regime of "purity and simplicity" set up "from government" in which the church would be disestablished. It would be an "excellent constitution" and "a renovated order of things". 114

Yet what needs emphasis is not so much the religious or Christian cast of Bewick's ideas about corruption and virtue, as the way in which his thinking in general is structured by elements common to all mythological thinking. A renovated order of things, was, of course, an order that looked to a model from the past and based itself on the original principles embodied in the model. Contemporary politicians needed to look back to "the exertions of their forefathers" and so on. Origins of this kind were both simple and pure. The connection between personal purity and social and political purity has already been suggested. Indebtedness destroyed independence and "makes all who do so become demoralised and dishonest". It is implicit that publicly it would leave them open to political corruption. The aim of life ought to be "to take every care that the soul shall return to the Being who gave it pure, unpolluted and spotless as possible". With this end in mind, engaging in political corruption is analogous to having dealings with prostitutes. 115

Bewick also used the mythic language of party and complexity and its opposite simplicity. Once again there is the close association between the pure and the simple. Purity of heart and virtue was a matter of following religious doctrine. According to Bewick, "the beauty and

simplicity of the doctrines ... are yet themselves perfect". This association Bewick carried through to his engraving techniques which he described as "simple and easy perfection". Typically, he castigates the laws and lawyers for being "so multifarious and complex". Only a few lawyers are "ornaments to their country". The laws as they stand ought to be "abolished at once". Bewick read history in terms of moral types, and lawyers fitted into the category of "knaves", the other two types being "fools" and "honest men". The apotheosis of the honest man, the embodiment of the principles of honesty and public service in politics was the patriot king. Using words that could have come straight from Indonesian myth, Bewick is emphatic that "the king (whose interests are the same as the people's) if freed from the advice of evil consellors" would "insist on having the constitution restored to its purity". 

Political knowledge is part of the same mythical complex. Founded in religious principle, it was open to every man. Despots since they keep the people in the dark are "confirmed enemies of knowledge". Mystery, ignorance or error is a "crime". All have a religious or moral connotation. Ignorance, or belief in the Devil, leads to "plague, pestilence and famine". This was central to millenial belief as was the idea that evidence to support the proposition could be found "in the bloody pages of history". If reason is the tool for cutting through the veils of ignorance and mystery, and is also the gift of God, it follows that reason is part of the same pattern of mythical thought. Reason was not merely a secular instrument for revealing truth, as it came to be in the 19th century, it was there to guide and control man's "bad passions and gross appetites" and prevent him from disfiguring the "image of God". Reason is integrally related to the concepts of luxury and corruption, for luxury would "overpower his reason". Again, proof of the principle is to be gained from studying the patterns or cycles of history in which "nation after nation" has been "hurled into oblivion " through living off wickedness and passion and transgressing God's natural laws. Reason, then, is pre-19th century or 'pre-industrial' in another sense. True or natural religion "is founded on the immutable principles of truth, reason", that is to say rationalist reason, and "common sense", that is to say practical or empirical reason. It is capable "of demonstration like the principles of mathematics", or logic, yet "is acquired by experience". There

is, then, no opposition between the categories of natural law and experience. 117

It remains to look quickly at Bewick's 'economic' ideas. Like other Radicals he pointed to taxation as the source of evil and exploitation. The political system of place and patronage or "this demi-oligarchy" was "the best organised system of exorting money that ever appeared in the world". Placemen "met together to tax-tax-tax ... to rob the people 'according to the law'". Consequently "arbitrary laws were enacted". This economic foundation accounts for the centrality given to the law in Radical ideology. Part and parcel of the legal and taxation process was the increased inequality in the distribution of landed property. Bewick recounts how he held that Spence's land plan might succeed in "some uninhabited country or island" but did not think it was right to "upset the present state of society by taking from the people what is their own". Property was sacred. The "honestly obtaining of it was a great stimulant to industry" and "kept all things in order and society in full health and vigour". 118 Like Burke, Bewick saw the role of the big landowners as especially important:

> Without their countenance, arts and sciences, and artisans, would languish, industry would be paralyzed and barbarism again rear its benumbed hands and stupid head ... gentlemen should endeavour to improve their lands ... Lord Ravensworth used to say there was nothing grateful but the earth. 119

Because the land, given by God, was particularly important and sacred it was crucial that the people should have access to it and its fruits. There were clear limits to aristocratic rights in this area. Cruel laws that denied to the poor "the fowls of the air" and the catching of fish, "the birthright of everyone", were nothing more than "feudal tyranny" and "overstretched distinctions". "Private interest" had supplanted "public good". The social contract, the exchange between the aristocracy and the artisan-peasantry had been dishonoured; the laws carried "the

118. Bewick, Memoir, 179, 72-74.
119. Bewick, Memoir, 212.
Landed property, was less a question of ownership than of trust. As Bewick puts it,

Property in every country should be held sacred, but it should also have its bounds; and, in my opinion it should be, in a certain degree, held in trust for the benefit of its owners and the good of society. To exercise the right of property beyond this is despotism, the offspring of misplaced aristocratic pride.

From the point of view of epistemology, Bewick is using Burkeian concepts; from the point of view of hegemony, he is turning them on their head. The right of property, narrowly defined, has its limits and must not be exercised to the detriment of other rights and properties such as liberty, security, independence and equal opportunity. With regard to paradigms, most of the discussion has ostensibly referred to the Country elements in Bewick's political language. Yet Lockeian moments are implied, too, if only in the references to reason and natural law. Both paradigms in fact are implicit in Bewick's practical concern with the effects of the enclosures. On the one hand, the question of natural rights is involved; on the other hand, there was the question of independence which the use and ownership of land gave. Paradigms or traditions of thought only have substance in so far as they relate to social structure or refer to a social problem.

In this section, then, I have been highly sceptical of Jean Paul Marat's supposed influence on Bewick. Instead I have built up a partial picture of his ideas by looking at who he knew and what he read. Family background, occupation and religious reading all play a part in the formation of his political ideas. His attitude towards the gentry and aristocracy is ambiguous. They had lost their virtue but they needed to regain it and spread it among the people. Society was a system of rights and duties but the gentry had failed to fulfil their obligations. Even so, the working classes had their duties, and while they should not be denied equality of opportunity, Bewick did not believe in any general form of social equality. He is a

120. Bewick, Memoir, 218-19.
121. Bewick, Memoir, 90
Radical not a socialist. Still there is the suggestion that more virtue is found among the working classes. For political virtue emanates from the simple life, from the avoidance of luxury in social and private life. Underlying political 'philosophy' are the mythological categories of purity and pollution.

In terms of hegemony, rather than meaning, the political philosophy is ambiguous. Like Adam Bede, Bewick's political ideas are a mixture of conditional deference and independence. Much more than Cartwright, and perhaps any other writer chosen, Bewick makes clear the concrete relationship between political independence and contact with the land. Independence as a value was also reinforced by immersion in popular culture. This culture being historical or mythical, being rooted in English historical experience is also patriotic. It is mythical since it sees history in terms of heroes and villains. Bewick's Memoirs also bring out the anti-industrialisation aspects of popular mentality. Another aspect of that culture or mentality is religion or magic. The Devil is the connecting link between magic and religion and politics. He is the source of impurity in public and private life. Against the corruption of time, Bewick like Cartwright, sees a solution in millenial deism, in a pure and simple millenialist polity that would stand for evermore. But this could only be brought about if (political) ignorance, fostered by the Devil, were overcome by a programme of political education. In his political economy, Bewick sees the taxation system as standing in the way of those plans, and he wants to put limits on the economic power of the aristocracy and restore the polity to its former 'balance'.

WILLIAM COBBETT

In the analysis of Cobbett, there is a different paradigmatic emphasis. In Bewick it was found that the idea of independence was most to the fore, although notions about virtue, custom, natural rights and so on were all discovered in the Memoirs. One particular Cobbett text is often seen as a repository of medievalism. But is it? What is the significance of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution in this text? What are the accompanying ideas or concepts? The
Strategic role of custom is fairly evident but does that separate Cobbett from other Radicals who turn more, so it seems, towards natural rights or virtue? There is also the question of the rather cloudy nature of Cobbett's religious opinions. Cobbett also raises, in a rather novel way, the question of the function of (political) knowledge and language in Radical ideology. The question of heroes, raised in the analysis of Bewick's Memoirs is developed in the interpretation of Cobbett's book.

One of William Cobbett's works, another political testament posing as an impartial history, concerns the social problem of Catholic emancipation. Cobbett's History of the Protestant 'Reformation' is interesting and instructive in that it brings out quite starkly how political oppositions can be expressed within the frame of conceptual identity. To some extent, this point can be seen to be implied in E.P. Thompson's statement that a medieval and social compact between the Church and the gentry and the labourers was used to uphold new social rights in the same way that the Anglo-Saxon myth was used to justify new political rights. Yet more than legitimacy and the functional role of beliefs are at issue. Identity or correspondence occurs within a mythic framework of thought. There is even in Cobbett's mind, at least residual belief that the monastic estates confiscated during the English Reformation had a divine curse laid on them. In Cobbett's 'history', all the usurpers come to a bad and preordained end.122

Apart from a few references to his Grammar, only the History is considered for analysis. It was a widely read book. At least four editions were published in America. For Britain, the British Museum Catalogue lists editions for the years 1824 (1824-6), 1827, 1829, 1844, 1868 and 1896. The Grammar was even more popular and republication continued into the early 20th century. Under investigation, the problem of popularity and influence is again encountered as a set of ambiguities. As against the city artisans, Cobbett is credited with drawing the rural stockingers and weavers "into the same dialogue". Generally speaking, Cobbett reflects the voice of his "own audience". The nature of that voice, of that

reflection, is, however, far from simple. The readership of, say, the Political Register as well as Cobbett's other publications, was immense. Thomas Carter, the tailor, relates how he often told his workmates "about the contents of the Political Register, as they were warm admirers of that clever man" (sic), suggesting an even wider circulation for Cobbett's ideas through oral communication. Yet the audience could be just as fickle in its attachments as Cobbett himself. At another shop, subscription to the Register was soon exchanged "for the 'Courier' which in a short time gave place to the 'Independent Whig'". Certainly a large section of his artisan audience would have been turned off by Cobbett's attacks on Blackstone and Foxe's millenial Book of Martyrs. There are similar problems encountered in Cobbett's ideological relationship with Paine. Paine's Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance was named as Cobbett's textbook. Yet the Rights of Man asserted that divine right doctrine was founded "in imitation of the Pope". In both instances of 'influence' and readership, it is at least equally important to look at categories of thought as it is to try to establish correspondence in political belief especially since in some important respects the correspondence is clearly lacking.

In his social origins, Cobbett shared a common background with the artisans. But as he rose in the world he clothed himself in the dress "of an old-fashioned gentleman farmer". E.P. Thompson describes him as "the 'free-born' Englishman incarnate", representing the "small producers" or "the little bourgeoisie" and championing the "values of sturdy individualism and independence". These

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123. Thompson, Working Class, 830-1, 834; Thomas Carter, Memoirs of a Working Man, (London, 1845), 90, 189; William Cobbett, A History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland ..., (London, 1824), 18, 171; Thomas Paine, Rights of Man, (London, 1791-2, Everyman edn. London, 1915), 46. For a critical assessment of Cobbett's History see G.C. Coulton, Medieval Village, Manor and Monastry (Cambridge, U.P., 1925), 415-418. Coulton's analysis is polemical. He is concerned to establish that Cobbett's book is mythical in the sense of being a distortion of the facts. Coulton notes that "on popular platforms, men of the most opposite religious views may be heard preaching Cobbett's gospel, that the Reformation was a revolt of the rich against the poor". Writing in 1925 he also notes that the "latest edition" (1896) "still sells".
social categories and ideas need to be examined critically in relation to the question of hegemony. If independence was a shibboleth in gentry ideology, it could also be used against them. The monasteries were "a prize for 'reformation gentry' to share among them". Sequestering monastic lands, the gentry "despoiled the working classes of their patrimony". Not having any access to these lands and their produce the working classes now suffered from greater inequality than in Catholic times when the pay of those of high rank was comparatively low. No doubt it was a return to this situation Cobbett had in mind when, like Paine, he argued that "we should lose more than we should gain by getting rid of our aristocracy".124

Cobbett says that since the Reformation the people have been divided into "masters and slaves", the slavery beginning when England lost the protection of the Pope. Whiggish liberty rhetoric is turned on its head but a pre-industrial idea of liberty is still being used. Poverty is not so much a product of social inequality as "the never-failing badge of slavery", while loss of liberty leads to the loss of virtue rather than any of the goods and benefits proclaimed by 19th century liberalism. Liberty while allowing "the rightful enjoyment" of property was itself a property provided by natural law. Ultimately, it was tied to access to land. It was part and parcel of the same ideological configuration that Cobbett perceived the new factory proletariat in the north "less as new-fangled men than as little producers who had lost their independence and rights" and that political rights functioned less to inhibit the activity of the state than to prevent the imposition of "taxes that ought not to be paid".125

Like fellow Radical, William Benbow, to whom the 1819 edition of the Grammar was dedicated, Cobbett believed the "robbery of the fruits of labour" occurred "mainly through taxation". In good Queen Mary's days taxes were imposed only for wars" and other really national purposes". They were, so to speak, patriotic taxes and therefore legitimate. Under the Catholic

124. Thompson, Working Class, 829; Cobbett, History, 33, 335.
monastic system, taxes were low and Cobbett sees that property, that is the transfer of land and revenue, was the basis of the Reformation. While not liking the new forms of industry, besides taxation the central object of analysis for Cobbett is land. Society originated where "proprietorship in land was acknowledged and maintained by law". Like the Conquest, the Reformation involved the illegal acquisition of land. Land was the basic unit of production: "from the land all the good things come". And "somebody must own the land", while "those who own the land must have the distribution of its revenues". But like Bewick, Cobbett believed the owners had a duty to live on the land. Exploitation from its revenues ought also to be limited since the revenue would be "chiefly distributed amongst them from whose labours they arise, and in such a way as to afford them good maintenance on easy terms". In this way "the community must be happy".126

The community was unhappy because the old agrarian values and equity had been lost. The monied interest had taken over. Initially the take-over occurred through the Reformation which "made Jews and papermoney makers the real owners of a large part of the estates of this kingdom". Then it was intensified by the Protestant William of Orange under whose reign "arose loans, funds, banks, bankers, banknotes and a NATIONAL DEBT". The "protestant NATIONAL DEBT" is associated with "knee-swelling and lung-destroying cotton factories" and "the whiskered standing army". Factories, in Cobbett's mind, do not betoken a new system but are a part of Old Corruption, just as much as the National Debt. The Debt had mortgaged "the whole of the country, all the lands, all the houses ... and even all the labour, to those who would lend money to the state". It produced "starvation in the midst of abundance". Worse, it broke with the deistical principle of unity. By dividing "into two classes, the

tax-payers and the tax-eaters", the "community was completely divided" such that the National Debt had a moral effect, besides producing high taxes. In this aspect of his political ideology, Cobbett is far less equivocal than Paine in his criticism of the monied interest. But apart from financing the National Debt, high taxation also supported the system of "places, commissions, sinecures, pensions". David Hume "forgets that 'a poor government makes rich people". Again, though, since Cobbett gives an important paternalist role to the state it is necessary to stress cheap and decentralised government against the more 19th century concept of small government.

Perhaps when I refer to state paternalism, I am drawing attention to the unintended consequences of Radical philosophy. Alternatively, it was not the state acting on behalf of the people so much as the people carrying out the functions of the state at the level of the local community. Certainly in so far as state paternalism implied a lessening or loss of independence, the Radicals would have rejected the idea. Cobbett did not see Church charity, or even state charity, in these terms since he considered charity as a right. The right was embedded in the idea of the church as a corporate body, and as corporate and private property it was, or ought to be, "independent of both aristocracy and the crown". Additionally, the Catholic monasteries had caused "a class of yeomen to exist, real yeomen, independent of the aristocracy". True independence, then, is landed independence. More cognitively significant, is the implicit distinction in Cobbett between independence and the more 19th century idea of self-help. He launches a strong attack on the Bishop of Winchester as vice-patron of the Hampshire Friendly Society. The aim of the society is to raise subscriptions among the poor "for their mutual relief and maintenance"; or in other words to induce the poor labourers to save out of their earnings the means of supporting themselves, in sickness or in old age, without coming

for relief to the poor rates!". It was the role of the state and church to provide social assistance; Catholic charity was preferable to Protestant self-help.\(^{128}\)

The question now to be put is whether Cobbett's use of the idea of independence is part of a neo-Machiavellian or neo-Harrington paradigm. Is it integrated or even associated with other concepts said to be typical of the paradigm? In his reference to the "whiskered standing army", there has already been a hint that he is in favour of a people's militia. The militia was, of course, the guardian of virtue. Formerly, England had been "the land of virtue and plenty". Alfred the Great had been "the ... most virtuous of men"; "the 'reformation' was not the work of virtue, but of fanaticism, of error, of ambition; of a love of plunder". This last quotation, with its deistical implications, raises the question whether Cobbett had a classical or Christian notion of virtue, although perhaps by this time it has been sufficiently shown the distinction is not all that important.\(^{129}\)

As with other Radical writers, the key area of discourse in which the 'neo-Harringtonian' assumptions merge into others is in his discussion or assertion of patriotism. Some expressions of Cobbett's patriotic sentiments are closer to 19th century nationalism. On the whole, though, since patriotism is also vitally a question of the internal politico-moral order and of defence, his use of the idea fits in better with an 18th century frame of mind. His chauvinism or nationalism comes out clearest in his lament at the loss of Calais. He contrasts "the day when glorious ALFRED expelled the Danes" with "Elizabeth's loss of Calais", presumably because Cobbett considers it vital to English defence. The loss was a Protestant loss. Elizabeth also fomented rebellions against Philip, thereby indulging in national aggression or promoting nationalism. But when Philip attacked England the people responded from "love of country", that is they acted patriotically. Cobbett explains Elizabeth's popularity in terms of her patriotic appeal. Despite the fact that she was "as great a tyrant as ever lived" and "the most cruel of women" whose "disgusting amours were notorious", she was also "the most popular sovereign that ever lived since the days of Alfred". The

\(^{128}\) Cobbett, History, 137, 318, 95, 77.
\(^{129}\) Cobbett, History, 50-2, 92, 133.
reason for this was that the people "saw nothing but her between them and subjection to foreigners ... the mastership of the Scotch and the French". The fact that Mary Stuart was a Catholic had nothing to do with her lack of popularity since most of her subjects were Catholics, too. It was Mary's foreign connections that mattered. Elizabeth stood for "independence", not "subjection to foreigners". 130

Cobbett's dislike of foreigners is less selective than Paine's yet the ideological consequences are the same. Foreign control has a tendency to subvert patriotism and undermine independence. The two things are related. Parliament had advised Mary not to marry a foreigner; but "how strangely our taste has changed". Soon after the Reformation the English found a monarch who started "the work of funding, and the making of national debts". Protestantism, then, causes anti-patriotic feelings and leads to the loss of independence. Cobbett makes light of the fact that the persons executed in Mary's reign "were chiefly of very infamous character, many foreigners," and "almost the whole residing in London". William III brought over "a Dutch army" and got rid of "the English guards". Not surprisingly, the Germans vie with the Dutch as objects for Cobbett's hatred. Catholicism was "the religion of England", Protestantism "that of part of Germany". Cobbett reminds his readers that he was sentenced to two year's imprisonment for writing against "the flogging of English local militia-men, in the heart of England, under a guard of German troops". The Scots get it in the neck as well. Apart from frequent attacks on David Hume, he charges "the usury or funding system" was the invention of Gilbert Burnet a "Protestant Bishop", a "Scotchman" and "a monstrously lying historian". Also, it is a reminder of the individual variation in Radical ideas that like Bewick, but unlike the artisan John Baxter, Cobbett had great sympathy for the Irish, "that devoted people". 131

Once again, it is easy to find in such statements, as many scholars have done, evidence to support arguments criticising Radical and popular prejudice and insularity. When Cobbett says that between Saxon times and the Reformation England was "the happiest and the greatest country ... that Europe had ever seen", it is also possible to find intimations of a sub-imperial theme. But really what Cobbett has in mind is the internal health and liberties of England, not so much her external

power relative to other nations - except perhaps in terms of commerce. What really matters in terms of patriotism is the constitution, the laws, liberties and customs of England. Perhaps because of his 'Tory' background Cobbett better than any other Radical brings out the conceptual harmony or similarity to Burke, although there is no fundamental difference between Cobbett and other 'Gothicist' Radicals. For Cobbett, as say for William Hone or Gravenor Henson, "love of country ... patriotism" is a thing of time. In part, it consists of "the admiration of and veneration for" ancient things, these cultural objects being a sign of the national genius or spirit. Among such ancient artifacts were, not any cosmopolitan liberties, but the old "liberties of England"; such things as "laws which regulate the descent and possession of property", as "trial by jury" and so on. Radical liberty was as much a corporate thing, a "patrimony", as anything of the Whig-Tory or Burkeanian variety. 131a

The jury system and so forth was a sort of property handed down from generation to generation. These "laws of England", these "sacred laws", were the gains of "the struggles of our forefathers" against "despotic ambition". That there is an identity in Cobbett's mind, as there is for other Radicals, between law and custom is plain from the examples he gives. The coronation was a customary form of election, "the ancient English custom of asking the people if they were willing to have and obey the King". Expressing a similar reverence for the passage of time, Cobbett also bemoans that at the Reformation "whole libraries, the getting of which had taken ages and ages ... were scattered abroad". Like John Cartwright and John Baxter, Cobbett joins political nostalgia with political antiquarianism. Like Bewick, he links the latter with social custom. After the Reformation, "this land of roast beef was changed, all of a sudden, into a land of dry-bread and oatmeal porridge". In part, Catholicism gains its legitimacy from its long lineage. It was "the ONLY CHRISTIAN religion in the world for fifteen hundred years after the death of Christ". Not only would Christ not have allowed a false creed to be held "all this while" but if we deny the validity of "the faith of our ancestors" we imply that "for twelve hundred years there were no true Christians in the world". For Cobbett, civil and constitutional rights were in part a matter of "traditionalism" or "the sanctity of custom". 132

131a Cobbett, History, 109, 328, 98, 327, 269.
If there is something of Burke, is there anything of Locke in Cobbett? Certainly, he thinks his History speaks with the sweet and unpolluted voices of nature and reason. Even through the Reformation excites "nothing that is not of a kind to fill us with horror and disgust", we "must keep ourselves cool; we must reason ourselves ourselves out of our ordinary impulses". Like Locke, Cobbett believes that "reason is the common gift of God to man". In a real sense, then, "TRUTH is immortal", and it can be seen how in this sense the constitution was said to have had a continuing existence even though it had been trampled underfoot by Norman tyranny. To put out the light of the constitution you had to put out the light of reason in men's hearts. And, "there always ... comes something to cause her to triumph over falsehood". Falsehood or error was founded in passion. So was faith. It was a Protestant lie that faith by itself was sufficient for salvation. In Radical hands, it is almost possible to speak of a faith or fetish of reason, while not denying that this fetish in the History is a moral one; to prove that before the Reformation England "was greater, more wealthy, more moral" and so on. Because of Henry VIII's role in the downfall of England, he wants to plunge a dagger "into the heart of the tyrant". Yet the rationality of "impartial" history and reason is fairly clear. His sources, he says, are "acts of parliament, and ... other sources, which everyone can refer to, and the correctness of which is beyond dispute". This, among other things, distinguishes the impartial histories, of which Cobbett's is an example, from other "so-called histories of England". Just as for many of his Radical friends these histories contained Catholic and High Church bias, so for Cobbett such histories were little more than Protestant, and especially Dissenter, propaganda. Only the content or political position is different, not the form of the argument. The bias of these histories is clear when it is known they are written by "modern romancers, called historians, everyone who has written for place, or pension". 133

If experience (Burke) and virtue (Machiavelli, Harrington) and reason (Locke) had a tendency to merge or unify, then it is necessary to look for the principle of unity. Beyond that, we must seek out other principles found in association and thereby attempt to discover the "deep structure" of the Gothicism mind or moment. For Cobbett, as for other Radicals, the

principle of unity is origins, and origins are associated with other principles typical of a mythic mode of thought. Custom or experience are associated either with natural or cultural origins, reason with natural origins (God) and virtue with cultural origins (Alfred). The Catholic church gains legitimacy not only from its great antiquity but also because it is the original church and religion.

To digress for a moment, and given the almost invariable connection made between Radicalism and Dissent, it is worth recording that Cobbett shared Thomas Bewick's creed of Church of England. If Cobbett did not affirm his Protestantism in the History, the reader could easily go away thinking Cobbett himself was a Catholic. He is writing the History since "a full third part of our fellow subjects are still Catholics" yet "excluded from civil rights". The irony is Catholic monarchs and the church, have been more mindful of civil rights. Magna Carta, he reminds us, was deposited in a monastery. In his desire to assert this he almost comes to the point of excluding the Bartholemew massacre and plays downs the numbers killed. Cobbett constantly reminds his readers Alfred the Great was a Catholic. He also allows the Dissenters although "wicked and outrageous", never persecuted the Catholics with the vigour and cruelty "that the Church of England had done". Yet especial venom is reserved for Dissenting historians. David Hume, for example, is one of the band of "the malignant Scotch historians in general". He was "a great fat fellow, fed in considerable part on public money" who "never had a family or a wife". 134

But, it is not Cobbett's liberal leanings in the direction of the Catholic religion or his own Protestantism that is cognitively significant. Cobbett makes the point that "the Catholic Church originated with Jesus himself". Also the Pope first blessed England with Christianity; before that the English or Saxons were pagans. Because they acknowledged the Pope "was king ALFRED, and all the long line of English Kings for 900 years degraded beings". Alfred is in a sense the first English king, the founder and saviour of English liberties. The jury system was "erected" by the Catholic Alfred who at the same time was "zealously engaged in the founding of monasteries". The Protestant church was established "backed by foreign bayonets ... here we see its origin". This was very different "from

the commencement of the Church of England", (the Catholic church). Typically, purity of origins is associated with economic plenty and moral health, with "ease and plenty and real freedom". Lines like these have led to Cobbett being labelled a "nostalgic romantic". He says "we want great alteration but we want nothing new". Lines like these suggest how inappropriate it is to label him also as "more reactionary than reformer". Like other Radicals he was both at once. The manner or mode of expression that allows both possibilities to be enunciated is perhaps more significant. 135

It is implicit that there is an association between origins and purity. The nature of a thing's origins determines its sacredness and therefore its degree of purity. As with Thomas Bewick, there is a connection between ideas and social practice. Cobbett tells us that in his household "no cards, no dice, no gaming, no senseless pastime of any description ever found a place". Personal or moral purity spills over into social and political purity and is absorbed into the language of luxury and corruption. Henry VIII died "with body swelled and bursting from luxury ... with a mind torn by contending passions". Gambling and so forth are, of course, products of the passions. Motivated by passion, that is greed, and therefore impure, the Reformation "impoverished and degraded the main body of the people". Luther, Calvin and company did not merely create a socially obnoxious religious movement, "every one of them was notorious for the most scandalous vices". Allowing the clergy to marry, created "an order for the procreation of dependants on the state". There is, then, at least as strong a connection to be made between corruption or luxury and origins and purity as there is between corruption and any neo-Machiavellian concept of virtue. 136

Other signs of a mythicised structure of thought are present. The nature and culture dialectic is manifested through the idea of excess; excess is the cause of impurity. The whole of the political language of virtue and reason expresses the notion of an excess of culture: luxury is nothing more than that. Over-educated, over-cultured "Scotch 'feelosofers'" prowled about the country lecturing to artisans and instructing them in the unnatural science "of preventing their wives from being mothers". Contrast this to

135. Cobbett, History, 24-5, 50, 53, 142; Thompson, Working Class, 831, 833; Osborne, Cartwright, 118.
"our Catholic forefathers" who did not "read newspapers" or "talk about debates" and had no taste "for 'mental enjoyment'". Cobbett mocks the Bishop of Winchester's grammar which leads Cobbett on to attack so-called learnedness and its association with "power, ease and luxury". It has been previously shown how Cobbett linked classical education with luxury or an excess of culture. 137

Impurity of origins leads not only to excess, it also leads to plurality, to a loss of unity and community. Against Protestantism, which is pluralist, "the scripture tells us that Christ's Church was to be one". One God means one church, therefore one belief or religion, therefore one head of church, one nation, one people and so on. Cobbett is against Unitarianism, yet he argues there is only one unified or true or pure religion. By definition, the others must be false, be based on error, on darkness, on passion. "The law", Cobbett writes, "should acknowledge and tolerate but one religion". The same principle applies to Biblical criticism and interpretation. Individual interpretation of the Bible, where every man is "his own interpreter" leads to pluralism. "If there could be one new religion ... why not a thousand". And then, how is it to be decided which one is true or correct. Error would prevail and so would evil since error is the source of evil. At the Reformation when error multiplied, "the community was completely divided". 138 Like other Radicals, Cobbett expresses the principle of unity or community through the idea of hospitality. "There is now", Cobbett says, "no hospitality in England".

Words have changed their meaning. We now give entertainment to those who entertain us in return. We entertain people because we like them personally; and very seldom because they stand in need of entertainment. An hospital, in those days meant a place of free entertainment; and not a place merely for the lame the sick and the blind, and the very sound of the words 'Old English Hospitality', ought to raise a blush to every Protestant cheek.

137. Cobbett, History, 90, 326; Grammar Letter xxiv.
139. Cobbett, History, 117.
True hospitality is, then, English and communitarian, a kind of personalised impersonalism, to be contrasted to the foreign and individualised or personal but anti-social entertainment. Hospitality also varies according to historical period or rather according to the character of the reigning monarch. Alfred's reign was remarkable for the extent of the hospitality which prevailed as well as for the degree of community spirit or national unity. All these things, of course, emanate from the moral character of the king or queen and Cobbett is no different from other Radicals in interpreting history mythologically as a matter of moral types. Henry VIII exhibited "beastly lust", that is adultery and incest, for Ann Boleyn. Cobbett sees this as a cause, perhaps the main cause, of the Reformation. Since he robbed the poor, Henry VIII is adjudged "worse than NERO"; he also "soaked the earth" with Protestant blood. Worse than William the Conqueror, Henry is "the ... most sanguinary tyrant that the world had ever beheld". The next most villainous historical personage is his daughter Elizabeth. Cobbett implies Elizabeth's "'virgin' propensity" led her to develop a preference for anal intercourse. She is accused of "the most hardened profligacy ... ever witnessed in a woman". The "racking and ripping-up Betsy" was "the worst woman that ever existed in England, or in the whole world". Under her the people were "reduced to beggary". Once again a causal connection is made between the moral character of the monarch and the moral health and economic prosperity of the people or nation. Important in this respect, too, are the king's close advisers. Sir Walter Raleigh is "that unprincipled minion". Other villains include Robespierre who is a tyrant, and Cromwell who is similarly judged although Cobbett passes over Cromwell in a fairly light-handed way. Algernon Sydney, the Radical patriot, is not a hero to Cobbett. The "Protestant and Catholic-hating Sydney ... conspired in open rebellion against the King". He deserved to be executed. The Gordon Riots are also condemned because of their anti-Catholicism. 140

This, as it were, is the dark side of historical personality. There are also a number of heroes or heroines to shed light. Queen Mary, Elizabeth's sister, "was one of the most virtuous of human beings". And "for every drop of blood that Mary shed, Elizabeth shed a pint". Mary restored the "ancient religion". Her virtue, as it were, enabled her to "pay the debts due by the crown", while she "largely remitted taxes at the same time". Other

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heroes include Thomas More who is praised for his "learning, integrity and piety". There is mention of Edward the Confessor but other than that he richly endowed an abbey nothing much is said about him. Alfred the real patriot king, embodies the tie or social contract that exists between king and people.141

For Cobbett's History is almost as much a part of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon polity as it is of the myth of a feudal idyll. His praise of Alfred the Great is at least as ecstatic as other Gothicist writers. "Perhaps ALFRED was the greatest man that ever lived", Cobbett says. Alfred, as a type, fulfills the dual role of founding hero and embodiment of the values associated with the myth. He was a king and a soldier, also a patriot. He is a model "of virtue, piety, wisdom, valour and patriotism" and possesses "every excellence without a single fault". In the course of ridding England of foreign invaders Alfred had "to resort to the habit of a herdsman". He was also a teacher to the people, through "his example" (empirical) and "by his precepts" (rational); he "promoted learning in all the sciences". Alfred also originated trial by jury, and Cobbett even turns to Blackstone as authority for the proposition that the Anglo-Saxon king founded the common law, the counties, the hundreds, the tythings and the courts of justice. In fact, Alfred performs feats beyond human endeavour and is the symbol of Englishness or national character. He was "the founder of those rights, liberties, and laws which made England what England has been, which gave her a character above that of other nations". He also gave her wealth and happiness "beyond all her neighbours". Consequently, and significantly, "if there be a name under heaven to which Englishmen ought to bow with reverence, approaching towards adoration, it is the name ALFRED". Under his mantle, "this maker of the English name", both Protestants and Catholics should unite.142 Alfred the Great is no longer a historical person but a figure of myth. Cobbett is dreaming the dream of an earthly paradise vouchsafed by a patriot king. In a passage resembling a similar piece by the artisan John Baxter and others Cobbett describes how,

It is related of ALFRED, that he made the people so honest, that he could hang bracelets up by the way-side, without danger of their being touched ... in the days of Alfred there were no paupers; no miserable creatures compelled to

141. Cobbett, History, 151, 156, 180, 51.
labour from month's end to month's end without seeing meat.

There is, then, no theft and no dire poverty: a state of perfection is being described; a paradise or perfection that is mythico-religious or founded in the moral precepts of honesty, virtue and so on, all the things that go to make up goodness or good character. The paradise or millenium is also drawn from the past, from the English past. There is no hint of an explanation or casual sequence in which social evils and their remedies give no place to character, to the deeds and misdeeds of semi-fabulous actors; in a sense individual good and evil are transcended in the later utopian thinking. There is also very little or nothing to suggest a 'cultureless' secular universal equality which is projected into a progressive future.

Generally, it has been shown that Cobbett's History is as much, if not more, Gothic or Anglo-Saxon as it is medievalist. Other aspects of the nature of this 'Gothicism' have also been intimated. Specifically, poverty is related to liberty and the loss of independence rather than economic inequality, as in the 19th century. It is also related to the role of the state, rather than the market, and to taxation and the loss of community. A community is a (deistical) unity, and involves a more equitable pattern of landholding. A communal landholding community gives personal independence and promotes virtue. And for a model, as we have seen for other writers Cobbett searches English history.

In doing this searching Cobbett displays his patriotism, but he also allows me to show some additional pieces of the mythological puzzle. The wealth of the community is related, by Cobbett in great detail, to moral character, to the doings of heroes and villains rather than impersonal causes. Their moral purity is at issue and that moral purity is related to the original source of a thing or person, to mythical origins. The analysis has, therefore, brought out some of the mythical substructure of Gothic politics. Yet, perhaps the most prevalent concept in the History is custom.

143. Cobbett, History, 121.
A theme running through the book is that freedom, if a natural right, is also to be found in the free customs of the people. Consequently this analysis of Cobbett has allowed me to bring out how, in an 'epistemological' sense, Radical political philosophy was in fact 'Burkean'. Also, if some of these free customs are hidden by the passage of time, and aristocratic political mystique, Radical political ideology needs to propagate political knowledge. It also needs a tool or medium by which to get the message across. This tool is language, and to reach the common man it must be direct and simple. This, then, is not merely the political basis of Cobbett's Grammar, it also leads back to the substructure of his religious beliefs, to the deistical values of simplicity and unity and ultimately to myth.

WILLIAM JONES

The reasons for picking Jones' pamphlet have been outlined in the Introduction. The questions asked of the text are the same paradigmatic ones as before, but again there is a shift of emphasis. The pamphlet, despite Jones' social background, brings us closer to the artisans in a number of senses. First of all, it was widely circulated in artisan literature. Second, it takes the form of a dialogue between a peasant or artisan and a scholar or gentleman. Third, it takes the trade club as its model of political democracy. Government or the state in general is, or ought to be, governed by the same principles as a trade club. Also, what historiographical interpretation there is again raises questions about natural right versus custom. Yet questions of virtue and independence are also raised. Jones' experience in India also provides the occasion to develop further the arguments made previously about patriotism. The pamphlet and analysis end with a statement, taken up and developed in the next chapter, on the rights of labour and the question of value. It announces the concerns of the artisans themselves.

The one final piece of writing to consider, is Sir William Jones' political tract, The Principles of Government in a Dialogue Between A Scholar and a Peasant, originally published in 1782. In part it has been chosen because it is a good example of
how the different intellectual and ideological strands of Lockeianism, Machiavellianism and traditionalism can be knitted together through a dialectic of myth to form a whole or unity. The result is not so much a series of contradictions, at least not at this level, as a mental outlook or cognitive set. Jones's Principles has also been selected because it nicely connects up with the ideas of the artisans themselves. The pamphlet certainly had a wide artisan audience. Originally "written by a Member of the Society for Constitutional Information" and "printed and distributed gratis" by the S.C.I., the Principles was continually reproduced, either in whole or in part, in the mass circulation artisan periodicals and pamphlets. The British Museum Catalogue lists editions for the years 1782, 1785, 1797, 1800 and 1818. There were also two editions of Jones' collected works in 1799 and 1807. If initial publication "attracted no attention" this is obviously not true of the pamphlet's subsequent history. Dean Shipley published an edition in 1783 substituting the words "gentlemen and farmer" (farmworker) for "Scholar and Peasant", thereby giving it more political immediacy. This subtitle appears in addition to the original sub-title in the 1799 edition of Jones's Works. The Dean was prosecuted and at first found guilty for his pains. The Society for Constitutional information celebrated the event with a publication of three thousand copies of Jones's tract. At a new trial Shipley was let off with the judge ruling the publication was "abstract, without any particular assertion about the King or his government". During the first trial, it was argued by the defence the content was "abstract" and "speculative" and it has been remarked by a modern interpreter that "armed resistance was urged in a theoretical context". In fact, the pamphlet used 'traditional' language to support revolutionary or at least radical reformist ideas and its implications are far from theoretical or speculative given the nature of its audience. Precisely because it used analogies familiar to an artisan audience and their experience it found its way into so many of their publications.

Jones, whose father had farming origins and was a member of the intelligentsia, held a very Whiggish view of the constitution in his early days. The American War of Independence and his friendship with John Cartwright changed all that. Jones, we are told, "soon advocated universal suffrage on the basis of Cartwright's denial of the relevance of property to constitutional rights". The fact of the matter, as we have seen for Cartwright and will see for Jones, was more complicated. He was a founding member of the Society for Constitutional Information and said Cartwright's Declaration of Rights deserved to be written "in letters of gold". According to one authority, "from about 1775" his politics were "neither Whig nor Tory but what after 1818 became known as radical". His affinities with Unitarian belief are also worth noting. The most important "intellectual influence" on Jones is said to have been Milton. 145

It would be a mistake, though, to equate Jones's Radicalism with any sort of Jacobinism, if by Jacobinism we accept Burke's interpretation of a political philosophy or ideology based purely on natural as opposed to traditional rights. Like many others, Jones gave enthusiastic support to the initial stages of the French Revolution. But like Richard Price, whose sermon he applauded, he related this event to the Glorious Revolution of 1688: both were moments in the struggle for liberty. This principle underpinned his attitude towards the Gordon Riots when, in 1780, he wrote a pamphlet in which he argued "every gentleman" should be armed in order to defend liberty. The question of the violent overthrow of government does not come into it. Later, in the Principles, he was urging the working classes to arm themselves as a deterrent to absolutist government. Armed resistance was not so much a question of tactics and strategy, as it is perhaps today, as it was a moral question and a traditional right. The meaning of political violence was quite different in the 18th century. In the first instance 'Lockeian' principle was involved, that is the notions

of trust and contract. To get these ideas across, Jones uses an analogy drawn directly from the artisans own experience. He uses the example of a trade club or friendly society. The club was first formed, that is had its origins, "by our own choice". A "master" or king or parliamentary representative, is chosen on a regular basis "by all the company present". But he does not make the laws to control the passions, to control "ill temper and misbehaviour" that would remain unchecked in the pre-club or natural society situation. "We have", the peasant says, "all agreed to a set of equal rules, which are signed by every newcomer" and which are written down. If someone were to try to set himself up as "perpetual master" and tried to alter the rules "at pleasure", through his will that is, "he would be expelled". On a theoretical level, at least, it can be defined with reasonable clarity that acts of violence are only legitimate if in defence and in defence of the constitution and liberty and emanating from the majority of the people.146

This much is clear from what follows. If the master called for military assistance and brought them into the neighbourhood, "we should resist if we could". If the military was used to "take money from your pockets", to extract high taxes, "we should submit, perhaps, at the time, but afterwards should try to apprehend the robbers ... we might kill them ... and if the King would not pardon us God would". More than a moral injunction, rebellion was almost a religious duty. If, instead of an absolute ruler or master "a few of the club", an oligarchy, were to dominate the rest the same course of action is advised. While defining rebellion in purely Lockeian terms, Jones is simultaneously using the supposedly 'Machiavellian' categories of the one, the few and the many. The "funds of the club", which must be taken as representing taxes, are entrusted to "young Spelman" a figure standing for a member of parliament versed in the laws. If he deceives the many, he too is removed. "Did it ever occur to you", the scholar asks the peasant, "that every state or nation was only a great club"? And like a club "the end of government is happiness, security and relief from want". Even Cobbett could not have struck a sweeter chord in artisan hearts. Also, the king does not make laws only "the whole nation

or people”. If there is disagreement "the opinion of the greatest number, as in our village clubs, must be taken to prevail". Problems of size, "if the society were so large that all could not meet in the same place", are overcome by the usual recourse to representation. Any resistance to the people's will is to be met with force and, if necessary, physical force. Each 'peasant' would keep "a strong firelock in the corner of his bed-room ... that would be legal as well as rational". The gentry ought to supply the people with arms. Jones does not see this as seditious since the aim is self-defence, the defence of constitutional rights. Jones also advises the people to drill with fixed bayonets "every morning", just as Samuel Bamford and his comrades were doing on the eve of Peterloo. In conception this did not amount to revolutionary or Jacobinical action. The people would only be acting for the defence of traditional rights; they were not creating new rights. The king or the aristocracy were the aggressors and were the rebels against the people. Whatever the practical outcome of these beliefs, they must be related to a 'traditional' social structure rather than one that is in the "making".147

That part of the tract is where a "Lockeian influence" is most discernible in Jones's mind. Yet the "natural right" of rebellion, or rather resistance, is also a "traditional right", founded on customs or culture as well as nature. Of interest here, leaving aside the question of social structure, is Jones's reading; although ultimately reading must be taken as part of the social structure. In one of his translations from the Greek classics Jones "bore in mind Sir Matthew Hale's summary of property laws among the Greeks, Romans and Hebrews, which prefaced the History of the Common Law". By 1771 Jones had read the first two volumes of Blackstone's Commentaries. In 1773, Jones described Blackstone as Lockeian reason "reduced in the admirable laws of this country". Recently emphasis has been given to the practical or constitutionalist rather than the natural rights side of Blackstone's thought. Common law is given precedence over the natural law elements in Blackstone's thinking. But what Jones's original statement points to is the unity or identity of the two strands. Stress has also been put on Jones's later shift away from Blackstone. Blackstone, Jones wrote, defined a law as "a rule prescribed by a superior power" but "I define it as 'the will of the whole community so far as it can be

147. Jones, Principles, 5, 6, 7.
collected with convenience". For my purposes it is emphasised that the political element or difference in this statement is more important than the cognitive.148

One way to bring this out more fully is to extend Peter Brown's perceptive comments on the differences in thought and practice between Jones and the Benthamites. Brown sees a fundamental difference between the ideas of Jones and Bentham. As he says,

Jones justified his political and legal views historically. He believed that the common law and early English constitutional development already endowed his fellow countrymen with democratic liberties. Jones and Wyvill hoped to save the ancient English Constitution from subsequent perversions, as fervently as the lawyers of 1640. Jones's approach was as historical as Burke's, the difference between them lying in their conclusions. Bentham differed from Jones and Burke in his repudiation of prescriptive authority. 149

Conceptually speaking, there is more involved than this last statement would suggest but the separation of Bentham the Radical and Jones the Radical and the identity between the Radical Jones and the conservative Whig Burke is important. The latter are associated "in their respect for historical tradition". Brown also hints at the conceptual gulf between 18th century 'liberalism' and the 19th century utilitarian variety. As he says, "Jones's political liberalism had been traditionalist, in the sense that he maintained that the liberties which he advocated were implicit in English common law". William Jones career in India also offers a practical example of how on the level of policy 18th century Radicalism or 'liberalism' differed from what followed in the 19th. This divergence of policy brings out nicely the opposition or break between 18th century patriotism of the Whig-Radical variety, and 19th century nationalism and its connections with utilitarianism. Jones's actions as judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta stand out in stark contrast against the later nationalistic policies of the utilitarians. Whereas Jones saw very little difference between Indian and European civilisation James Mill, for example, denied any comparison could be made between 18th century

149. Brown, Chathamites, 362.
Europe and classical Greece and "the welter of barbaric Hindu superstitions". In contrast to Jones's pioneering researches into Hindu literature and culture, Mill could find there not knowledge but only "'a great deal of what was frivolous'" and "'not a little of what was purely mischievous'". Under Mill and Macaulay, Jones's plan for the codification of Hindu and Moslem civil law was set aside for "a highly Anglicised Code of Civil Procedure". For Jones a renaissance of Sanskrit learning was connected with "an increasing degree of Indian autonomy"; for the utilitarians, "the revival of Hindu culture was treated as a positive evil". As Brown says, William Jones, like Burke, held to the principle that "India was to be governed in the interests of the native populations", whereas "the utilitarians believed that an authoritarian government and western educational precepts were in the interests of India". Respect for custom and tradition and love of your own country implied respect for the customs and traditions of other peoples. Had the British rulers of Empire stuck more firmly to this idea, its history would have been more humane and less bloody. 150

The ultimate guardian of these liberties of Britons and of other peoples under their protection was the king. "The king therefore ought to be a good man", that is a patriot king, "and the parliament to consist of men equally good", that is it should be a patriot parliament. "The King alone can do no harm", Jones says, "but who must judge the goodness of Parliament-men?". The answer is "all those whose property, freedom and lives may be affected by their laws", in other words the people. Here, then, with patriotism and the patriot king, is the underlying unity and diversity in Jones's thought. There is the mythical idea that kingship is in essence good and necessary and naturally allied with the people's interests. "If the king tried to become absolute ruler" or "if ministers assumed absolute power", that is if either "employed force against the nation", they must be overthrown. In doing this we, the people, are fighting "for the king ourselves", that is for a purer form of kingship. Historically the principles of liberty have been at war with the "principle of the feudal system", democracy with oligarchy, or the many with the few and the one. What Jones looked for was a return to origins to "the restoration of you all to the right of chusing law-makers". 151

The language of purity and origins and patriotism is also the language of corruption and hence of luxury and virtue and independence. There are 'Machiavellian' as well as 'Lockeian' elements in Jones's vocabulary. Apart from the gentry supplying arms to the people "some of my neighbours who have served in the militia will readily teach me" in the use of arms as indeed happened in Samuel Bamford's locality. Jones believed membership of a democratic militia was the right and the duty of every citizen. The militia was the guarantee against corruption and luxury. If the gentry by supplying arms to the people would "spare a little from their vices and luxury" they might "turn to some sense of honour and virtue". Honour and virtue are not, Burke-like, "conferred by patent or descried like heirlooms in great families"; they are "attained equally by the prince and the peasant". According to Brown, in 1779 Jones still held to the idea that property was a necessary condition for the realisation of virtue but "by 1782 he had adopted principles of universal suffrage". 

152 Yet the belief in universal suffrage was not necessarily incompatible with a belief in property and landed property in particular as a basis, if not for voting, then for independence. Without independence, votes could be bought universal suffrage or not. Anyone who did not have some kind of property was neither free nor independent. A free state was like "a club in the village" of which the peasant was a member. Yet there were limits to membership. The club, the peasant or farmworker says,

is an assembly of men, who meet after work every Saturday to be merry and happy for a few hours in the week ... we have a box, into which we contribute equally from our monthly or weekly savings, and out of which any members of the club are to be relieved in sickness or poverty; for the parish officers are so cruel and insolent, that it were better to starve than to apply to them for relief.

153

Unlike Cobbett, then, Jones sees the artisan clubs and societies as a source of independence rather than dependence. They are also a sort of state in miniature and a source of property. "A free state is only a more numerous and powerful club, and he is only a free man, who is a

152. Jones, Principles, 6, 7; Brown, Chathamites, 396-7, 367.
member of such a state". Independence, freedom and the right to vote are related to membership or having some kind of property claim on the state or in the club. "The chusers" of the representatives are "all who were not on the parish". As the peasant emphasises, "in our club, if a man asks relief of the overseer, he ceases to be one of us, because he must depend on the overseer". But the property, if not merely personality, need not be landed property. The peasant or artisan need only to own his own means of production and gain a return for his labour as the following conversation between the scholar and peasant shows:

Scholar: Have you a freehold in any county of forty shillings a year? Peasant: I have nothing in the world but my cattle, implements of husbandry, and household goods, together with my farm for which I pay a fixed rent to the squire. Scholar: Have you a vote in any city or borough? Peasant: I have no vote at all: but I am able by my honest labour to support my wife and four children and while I act honestly I may defy the laws.

This passage needs to be read with care. Ownership of the means of production is specified and production is connected with agriculture rather than industry. Labour is a source of independence and therefore connected with political rights; this meaning is more heavily involved than the later socialist conception of labour as the origin of value. It is a meaning very much in tune with beliefs held by the artisans themselves.*

The study of Jones ideas has shown a number of things which fit in yet lead on from the previous analysis of the ideas of other figures. Again, it has been shown that political violence, whatever is outcome, is seen in constitutionalist rather than revolutionary terms. Rebellion is a (Lockean) natural right but it is also a (Burkeian) traditional right. The emphasis on tradition and custom

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* In this chapter, not wanting to add to its Gallic length, I have left aside analysis of the "collective representations" of the Society for Constitutional Information.
led Jones to respect the customary rights of England's subject peoples. His historical patriotism led him to value Indian culture in a manner foreign to 19th century liberal nationalism. As with internal English liberties, protection of foreign customs was dependent upon the existence of a hero, upon a patriot king, or upon character or a 'type'.

Like Cartwright and the others, Jones, as has been seen, linked independence to property, to land use (Harrington), to household ownership, to ownership of tools and even to labour and personality (Locke). He gave Locke's theory of value a democratic twist, yet not one sufficient to break it free from the ideological and epistemological complex of virtue, custom and natural rights. Neither did it free labour's rights from their mythical or religious moorings.
CHAPTER THREE

REPRESENTATIVE FIGURE II: "ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS"

The vulgar tongues should be the most weighty witnesses concerning those ancient customs of the peoples that were in use at the time the language was formed.

Giambattista Vico

JOHN BAXTER

The chapter seeks to establish a linguistic, paradigmatic or conceptual correlation between the more 'middling' mentality and the political minds of the artisans. The general drift of previous historical criticism would not anticipate such a correlation since John Baxter, and other representative figures I will be looking at, have in the main been seen as revolutionary Jacobins. Their constitutionalism, if spotted, has usually been argued away or discounted.

The historiography is dealt with at the start of my analysis and in an appendix. Of Baxter's two publications, one appears to be 'Lockeian' while the other seems constitutionalist or 'Burkeian' or Charismatic (Pocock) or perhaps even Machiavellian, although the last is not usually noted. I have attempted to resolve this paradox and to interrogate Baxter's ideas along now familiar lines; that is using the same structure of political concepts and searching for the same religious or mythical substructure as in the previous chapter. But I also aim to bring out the individuality of Baxter's mind. And I try to show, in greater detail than previously, why it is that 18th century Radicalism chose the Anglo-Saxon rather than classical or more primitive (ancient Britons) models of democracy.
Not much is known about Baxter. Although he was for a time chairman of the London Corresponding Society in the 1790s, he is not as well-known as other leaders such as Thomas Hardy. The amount of biographical material available on Baxter is sparse. Baxter is one of those working class heroes who appears on the scene for a while, and then just disappears without trace into the historical night. He is a true 'organic intellectual' because he does not come to the working class or classes to lead them from outside. He deserves, then, something better than near-anonymity and condescension that historians have so far handed out. Usually, Baxter is portrayed as a believer in political violence: a physical force Radical, a man of deep revolutionary conviction.*

The historiography dealing with Baxter's actions, as well as the historiographical interpretation of his pamphlet and book has been critically dealt with elsewhere.** The following analysis of Baxter's writing is to be read in the light of that criticism. Before doing the analysis, it may be useful to present a fuller version of E.P. Thompson's criticism than was allowed for before. Basically, Thompson's understanding of Baxter's political ideas rests on the assumption that Baxter sees the true constitution as emanating from the primitive ancient Britons. Consequently, "Saxon precedent is almost indistinguishable from the state of nature, the noble savage or the original social compact". All English history was the history of the corruption of the constitution from that primitive origin. Also, using "industrious constitutional arguments" Baxter arrives "at the right of the people to defy the Constitution". This reading of Baxter

* For more details of Baxter's life see Appendix B, 'Biographical Notes'.

** See Appendix B.
is extremely 'Lockean'. Other aspects of Thompson's interpretation are similarly "essentialist". After the French Revolution, Anglo-Saxonisms or Gothic-style thinking became a sort of "black propaganda" for concealing what was really intended. Gothic language "became for many Jacobins", including Baxter, a covering for "almost any constitutional innovation for which a Saxon precedent could be vamped up". The real political language at this time was Paineite and it would seem Thompson in one sense sees him as a follower of Paine, even if unintentionally. In another sense, and seemingly in contradiction, even when constitutionalist rhetoric is "tricked out in Baxter's improbable Saxon terms" it has a conservative effect. Artisans like Baxter appear to be the victims of the ideological hegemony of the upper classes since the rhetoric,

 implied the absolute sanctity of certain conventions: respect for the institution of monarchy, for the hereditary principle, for the traditional rights of landowners and the Established Church, and for the representation not of human rights but of property rights.1

Apart from the outright misinterpretation involved there is the problematical nature of Radical attitudes towards the monarchy, the landowners, property and so on to be considered. It has been shown for less plebeian Radicals like Cartwright, Jones and Bewick ruling ideas could be given a democratic twist. Thompson himself hints as much and even goes on to see Baxter's association with extreme Radicalism as a sign of his revolutionary and violent intentions.*


* See Appendix B for general support of Thompson's thesis.
The argument that Baxter was something of a revolutionary rests, in part, on a certain interpretation of his political pamphlet, *Resistance to Oppression*. To examine the validity of this argument it is necessary to take a close look at the pamphlet. The first words, bring out the paradoxical nature of English Radicalism at this time. The sub-title refers to "the constitutional rights of Britons asserted", while the pamphlet itself starts with the cosmopolitan and Jacobin address of "citizens". Baxter writes of "this accursed War" which makes widows of wives and orphans of children. The war with the French has brought hardship to "the middling Tradesman" and unemployment to "the Manufacturer" (i.e. worker). The charity dished out by the wealthy to ameliorate the effects of the war on the condition of the poor, is given "as a bribe" for the protection of the rich and to quieten the poor's "present Clamours". The present low state of the people, and therefore of the nation, Baxter says, is due to a corrupt political system. The rule of the aristocracy is at the bottom of "this pressing Calamity, these growing evils". Enclosures and "the Infamous System of Monopoly", protected by parliament are responsible for the present dearness of provisions. So long as "the whole Power of the State is confided to Men of Landed Property" then partial reforms are a waste of time.

Baxter's analysis and condemnation of the existing system and situation is radical enough. But what of his remedies? The people, he suggests, have a right to resist the measures of the present government since it is undermining the foundation of the constitution: "in general ... any act which is totally subversive of the CONSTITUTION, is a just ground of Resistance". What, though, is the exact nature of the resistance that Baxter is recommending? Drawing on a series of historical examples, he argues it is not the case that "Resistance to a Government upon all occasions is rebellion; for in this country in particular, it is

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3. Resistance, 4-5.

* The distinction between resistance and revolution is more than a theoretical quibble. French resistance during the Second World War was hardly revolution, even though it was violent, and perhaps not even rebellion.
a Maxim essential to the Constitution and has been acted upon at various Times". Resistance is part of the English constitution and as a political right is manifested in substantive law. Lockeian political rhetoric saturates the supposedly Jacobin ideology of English Radicalism. For, "the Right to Resist Oppression", Baxter declares, is "recognised by Law"; that is by the 1688 Bill of Rights. If it is unlawful to take arms against the King, then the present King must be a usurper since he owes his throne to 1688. Despite his protestation, it does seem Baxter is advocating some kind of rebellion - a legal rebellion. It is a nice point for discussion whether or not such a thing is possible. But Baxter does not think things have reached the point of (armed) resistance. This kind of resistance should be only "the last resort of a much injured and suffering People". Yet the people "are not yet reduced to the awful necessity of opposing Force to Force". Instead,

there is a line of conduct which present circumstances demand you should pursue as the only effectual means of preventing this Country from being plunged into the horrors of a Civil War. Namely by Association to obtain a Redress of Grievances, not only in Political Societies, as the Friends of Liberty, the Corresponding or any other; but in Parish, Town and County Meetings.5

Baxter emphasises parish meetings are best able "to express the public mind" since they have the big advantage of "being recognised by the Law". This is all pretty orthodox stuff. The radical bit comes in when he argues the meetings would be legal even if they were opposed by the parish officers. Out of the meetings an alternative parliamentary system might be expected to develop in which those elected would be more in the nature of delegates than representatives. Also, Baxter urges the usual Radical programme of universal suffrage and annual parliaments by which means the people would break up the political and economic power of the landed monopoly. In this state of liberty, "Peace and Plenty will bless our Isle". The supposedly 'Jacobin' Baxter urges his readers not to be alarmed. "I respect the Laws and Constitution of my country", he says, "and when I speak of Resistance to Oppression, it is not to destroy

5. Resistance, 4-5.
them but to preserve them". Yet a slim pamphlet may be a poor guide to a man's political mentality. Baxter's political testament is his massive History of England.

Resistance to Oppression was published in 1795; A New and Impartial History of England was published in 1796. But it can be guessed much of the History was composed in 1794 when Baxter was in gaol with Hardy and the others awaiting trial. Baxter says his composition of the book was assisted "by several gentlemen, distinguished Friends to Liberty and Parliamentary Reform". John Horne Tooke, although never formally a member of the London Corresponding Society, has been considered its guiding intellectual light, and it is likely he exerted a big influence over Baxter's ideas. Tooke, a veteran of the Wilkes agitation, was a firm believer in the myth of the Saxon Constitution and this myth - the assumptions connected with it - pervades the pages of Baxter's book.

There is no mention of the myth in Baxter's Resistance to Oppression. Given the place of King Alfred in the myth, and Baxter's later disparagement of leaders when he was a member of the Society of the Friends of Liberty, it could be thought there was something of a shift in his ideas between the writing of the History and the publication of Resistance. Yet I have quoted or summarised enough of Baxter's pamphlet to show he still adhered to the constitutionalist ideology and that it is shot through with assumptions from the Saxon Constitution myth.

The tensions involved in constitutionalist ideas come out even more clearly in the History. He shows that although he is an admirer of the Quakers, he is not against political violence under any circumstances. Peace is desirable and a much-sought-after end in Baxter's political thinking, but it is not to be gained at all costs. He quotes a piece from Locke which says that in a state of nature "'every man has a right to defend himself'" and can never be "'deprived of public safety and private defence'". Using the title of his pamphlet, Baxter says this "doctrine of resistance to oppression" is "so strongly founded" in concrete nature and "in the great charter of England" that "no abstract

arguments can overturn it". Charles I had attempted to impose arbitrary
rule and had therefore broken the contract between king, parliament and
people. Both natural liberty and the laws of England had given the
people the right to rebel or resist. 8

Baxter also quotes from the Lockeian Bill of Rights of 1689, he
copies it out in full, a passage which provides that "subjects who are
protestants, may have arms for their defence". On the basis of their
right to natural liberty, Baxter supports the revolts of the Negro slaves
in Jamaica in 1760. Calling the French Revolution of 1789 "an event more
important in its consequences than anything ... found in history", and
seeing the revolutionaries as a "virtuous band of patriots", Baxter argues
that "the principles of despotism were too deep-rooted" in France "to
be cleansed by anything short of an entire change". By implication, he is
not recommending anything so drastic for England. This is also suggested
by the fact that he reserves his most enthusiastic support for the
American rebels. Their rebellion stemmed from their patriotism. They
"united professions of allegiance with the necessity of self-defence",
and their declaration of rights was based on the principles of life,
liberty and property "handed down from their ancestors, consonant with the
spirit of the British constitution". They had drawn their arguments from
"charters" based on the documents of British liberty. So, the colonists' war with the mother country was "a horrid ... civil war".

Baxter, then, supports political violence but, in the Anglo-
Saxon world, for purposes of rebellion rather than revolution.* Even here,
only as a last resort, and only when it is carried out by the people
in the true spirit of the principles of the British Constitution. Baxter
goes so far as to give some respect and legitimacy to the 18th century mob.
Through an involved bit of etymology, and though law, he traces the word
'mob' back to Saxon times where he says it was called 'mot' thereby being
associated with the Saxon word for parliament - "Wittenagmot". Yet
though he gives the mob and the people this respectability he recognises
they can be deceived and misled. In the popular uprisings against Henry
VIII they were misled by a prior disguised as a mechanic, called "captain
Cohler". Baxter seems to distinguish between the hired mob and the
popular mob but when he writes of the mob riots of 1768 which he says were
due to the "distress of the poor", he comments that "much mischief was done,

* See Appendix B.
and lives lost in different places", thus showing general disapproval. Similarly, he condemns the Gordon riots, referring to "these misguided people" and to "outrages". He takes up a position similar to the gentlemen of the Radical but constitutional Society for Constitutional Information when he seems to separate the mob from the people and joins the S.C.I. in saying that "if there had been the smallest courage among the people, or if they had been provided with fire-arms, this dreadful riot might have been suppressed in the beginning without calling in military force". In particular, Baxter deplores the destruction of Lord Mansfield's library, manuscripts and paintings. He shows the same skilled artisan's consciousness or love of fine things when he laments the firing of Dresden by the Austrians, remarking Dresden, "one of the most elegant towns of Europe" with "lofty and magnificent houses" was a place where "the most fashionable and wealthy class of people resided" and where "a number of artists carried on a variety of manufacturers".

It is clear Baxter is not at all eager to use political violence against either men or property. Baxter the supposed 'extremist' even shows a qualified but genuine support for the very moderate reforms of the Rockingham administration in 1782. They were based on sound principles, he says. In all, it can be concluded that John Baxter, like Major Cartwright and other leading Radicals, would have preferred, to use Baxter's own phrase, "a revolution in sentiment" to any political or social revolution, especially one brought about by violence.

His praise of the people, shows Baxter to be a true republican. But is he a republican in the more modern and Jacobinical sense of wanting to do away with the monarchy as well? At first sight it seems so. In his History, there is a plate which shows the execution of Louis XVI in all its gory detail. There is also Baxter's remark that it was "a stern observation of Milton" that the trappings of monarchy "were more than sufficient to defray the whole expense of a republic". On the face of it, the institution of monarchy underminded one of the central tenets of Radicalism "cheap government". A king meant a court, and a court meant luxury and corruption. Yet the absence of a king did not mean there was a republic. The period of the Commonwealth was not a "pure republic" but "an infamous military government, the worst of all tyrannies". The

political system of "military violence" is far worse, in Baxter's mind, than the existence of a monarchy. Yet there is some doubt whether the monarchy is a necessary component in the polity. The independence of Scotland was preserved despite the fact that Edward III kept the King of Scotland a prisoner for eleven years.

Apart from the expenses of court, the English monarchy also meant foreign influence - either Norman (French) or Germanic. A strong theme in the Saxon myth, is the post-Conquest kings' disdain for their own people and for their reliance on foreign parties. Richard II is said to have stated that he would rather rely, "nay even submit himself" to his cousin, the King of France, than "truckle to his own subjects". George II, "sacrificed the blood and treasure of Great Britain". In short, foreign kings meant foreign interests; foreign interests meant foreign wars, high taxes, and, worst of all, standing armies. Yet Baxter does not even blame George II entirely. "We do not so much blame the prince", he says, "as we should detest a succession of venal ministers". The king or queen is often the people's defence against the court and aristocracy. In Stephen's time, the nobles' castles "were become the receptacles of licensed robbers". Stephen restored peace. So, he was "received with the warmest demonstrations of loyalty by the people". Henry V is praised by Baxter for, at the beginning of his reign, wanting "to bury all party distinctions". Individual monarchs are fitted into Baxter's types of heroes and villains. The monarch as hero is fitted in to the political tradition of the patriot king; as villain, he becomes a despot. Richard II is "without virtue, without moral personality". Although William III is accused of setting up corruption as a system, of his wife Mary,"the nation ever retained highest respect for her memory".

A patriot king or queen performed his or her duties according to the principles of an elective or constitutional monarchy. When Richard II was deposed, Baxter says, parliament exercised the "right of election". This right he traces back to Saxon times; "according to the spirit of the constitution, succession to the throne was originally elective". After the Norman Conquest, succession to the crown became "either elective or hereditary or a mixture of both. But the people's support was always sought in order to give the contending claimants legitimacy. Even William the Bastard did not rule by the right of conquest but because he was "elected by the will of the people in general". William claimed to rule through the bequest of Edward the Confessor, "and he readily agreed to preserve to the English all the rights and liberties of the nation".
The election of a monarch was done, that is to say it ought to be
done, by either the people or their representatives and it was justified
by "ancient usage". Under the Saxons, both king and nobility were
elected for life by freeholders who assembled once a year. That
hereditary right was not the doctrine even after the conquest is confirmed,
in particular, by the wars between Stephen and Matilda. Through the
Revolution and the Bill of Rights, "the existence of a compact between
the king and the people was confirmed beyond all dispute, as well as
the right of the latter to dismiss even the highest officer in the
state if he should be found to abuse the trust reposed in him". The
monarchy, then, had its place in the English constitution. In the period
of the English Civil War, Baxter supports "the moderate presbyterians"
as against the rigid presbyterians for the former sought to "re-establish
both the king and parliament in their constitutional authority, privileges
and freedom". Baxter presents the old theory of the balance of powers
in which "the king is at the head of the executive authority; the
parliament make the laws, and are a check upon the royal prerogative".
But "all government is derived from the people and was originally chosen
for their good". Sovereignty is ultimately theirs - through parliament.
Parliament, though, cannot always be trusted to reflect the will of the
people. So Baxter favours the 1694 bill for triennial parliaments which
gave the king the power to dissolve parliaments every three years or
"sooner if he thought proper". Baxter retains royal power as the
guardian and symbol of the people's rights. Yet, of course, he is also
distrustful of the monarchy. He refers to the 1701 bill of succession
which restricted the right of the king to make war. War was an act of
will. Baxter revives the arguments of a previous time and contrasts the
king's will against the reason and custom of the people.\footnote{History, 70-1, 82, 206, 293, 311, 456, 463, 485, 552, 585, 748, 815.}

Since the Enlightenment and Burke and Paine, there is a
strong tendency to see reason and custom as dialectical opposites. In the
Saxon myth, reason and custom get interwoven. Gothic Radicalism does not
see the English constitution as the slow accretion of custom and experience
over time; neither does it argue there is no constitution and that custom
and experience do not count. The Gothicist Radicals use reason, somewhat
fetishistically, as a tool with which to examine the foundations of
custom. Reason is used to discover and separate the 'true' constitution
from the 'false'. Reason is the tool or gnosis. Reason is gnosis since history is a mystery. In this way, history becomes myth. According to Marcel Eliade, myth is a sacred history. "To relate a sacred history is equivalent to revealing a mystery". For John Baxter, and others like him, history is the history of sacred liberty. Reason separates periods of light or liberty from periods of darkness or despotism; it shows up who are villains and who are "culture heroes".

Why, though, use reason? Why not use faith as a means of gnosis? A first answer is that faith is uncritical. It accepts mystery on its face value and uses it as a basis of action. Just as in deism reason is used to discover error in religious history, so in civil history reason is used to find out political error. Ever since the Norman Conquest, English society was overlaid by religious and civil error, as well as by false reason. Baxter gives a neat summary of what the 'Gothicists' thought had been inherited from Norman culture when he says the "more homely and more sensible manners of the Saxons were exchanged for affectations of chivalry, and the subtleties of school philosophy, and the feudal ideas of civil government, and Roman sentiments in religion". The Norman system of government is not only despotic, it also originates corruption, the present curse of the English polity. Edward I, originated the system of corruption when he chose to get his will through parliament rather than use force. Corruption operates through "trickery". Trickery needs to be hidden. Corruption therefore gives rise to mystery; to the "scandalous practices in the mystery of corruption".

The mystery of corruption hid the "true" or real constitution as against the false one imposed by Norman kings. There is the constitution based on the monarch's coronation oath and "various compacts with the people"; and there is that constitution "established by force". This latter "is not the constitution of England", and, "nor can time, nor any trifling change ever make it so". The real constitution is always present, as it were, underneath the false one. More significantly, it is there for ever. It is both timeless and in time. The "ancient and glorious constitution" is to be found "would but Britons but read the history of this constitution". If they did they would discover "the radical rottenness and mischievous effects" of the present system of parliamentary representation. By reading history in the right way, by the application

of reason, Britons would find out the "established rules of the constitution". How else could a rule be understood except by reason? No matter how long a law had been on the statute book it could never become a law or custom in the true sense if, like the Scottish law that gave substance to the hereditary principle, it went against the people's democratic rights and did not embody reason. History was the history of reason as well as liberty.

In some measure, this accounts for the emphasis given in historiography to the Radicals' interest in political matters rather than economics. On the face of it, history for the Radicals was political and legal rather than economic. Law and law-making was a key feature for them. Through studying the laws you could get at the constitution. One example, Baxter gives is how Henry II demanded that Becket and his fellow bishops submit themselves to "the ancient laws of the kingdom" drawn up in a document known as the Constitution of Clarendon. "The ancient customs of the realm were reduced to writing". Read through the eyes of right reason, law was seen as codified custom. Baxter did not share Thomas Spence's contempt for statute law. Spence wanted to burn all the old legal documents. But the idea of law as codified custom, produced in Baxter and others like him, a strange a fetishistic reverence for the written word. When he condemns the excesses of the Reformation during Edward VI's time, he especially singles out the destruction of the books in the universities. Baxter also makes much of the fact that when Algernon Sidney, the patriotic hero, was arrested he had his papers seized. "The papers", he adds,

contained principles favourable to liberty, and such as the best men of all ages have been known to embrace; the origin of the social contract, the source of power derived from the consent of the people, the lawfulness of resisting tyrants and the preference of liberty to the government of a single person. 13

When Edward I beat the Scots, he "gave orders to destroy all the records which might preserve the memory of the independence of the kingdom". Here, is the Radical faith in the power of law, reason and public opinion through the use of the written word. This is why Baxter, along with many other Radicals, says "the freedom of the press is justly termed the palladium of English liberty".

Freedom of the press is also important because the press, as carrier of the written word, is the vehicle of reason. Yet not any old kind of reason will do. Especially, not that which displays the "subtleties of school philosophy". Rather, it is a reason simple and concrete. Neither is it the ahistorical and rational reason of Paine and the Jacobins. Again Baxter brings up the name of John Locke "whose Essays on the Human Understanding and Government and other works have immortalised his name". He takes from Locke the pre-modern dichotomy of empirical and rational reason. Reason is both a matter of experience and of principle. When Alfred founded the jury system, he was the embodiment of "the rational method". Freedom is a matter of "the common rights of mankind and the customs of the Anglo-Saxons"; from these "Englishmen must deduce their constitution and their liberties". Reason, then, gives a special kind of political knowledge. Baxter calls his History "impartial" and "new", common epithets of the time, since he feels he is writing history by means of a pure and uncorrupted reason. Yet what Baxter was really producing was a political and moral history, a people's sacred history. Reason was a faculty that nearly everyone possessed. Derived from nature, it was also simple. It was within the capacity of everyone to read history through reason. Yet here Baxter reveals an ambiguity that was and is common to many Radical leaders. Political knowledge is also gnosis, a knowledge possessed, at least for the moment, by only the few. Apart from "a few rational citizens ... the multitude are never affected by any rational principles of opposition and complaint". Of Queen Anne, though she had virtue in her private life, she did not understand "the art of government, and the political happiness of society, sciences understood by the very few".¹⁴

Rational principles of opposition and complaint meant knowledge of natural rights obtained through the use of reason. In the Radical version of the Gothic mind, natural rights were no more abstract than the conception of reason. In a deep epistemological sense, their notions of natural rights were much more Burkeian than Paineite or Jacobin. They opposed Burke's view that "the inheritable principle" was the spirit of the constitution, but they accepted his prismatic conception that "metaphysic rights", as Burke called them, are "like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium ... refracted from their straight line".

They would also have agreed that "the primitive rights of men undergo ... a variety of refractions and reflections", and that "the science of constructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught a priori". John Baxter accepted all this. For Radicals, the key natural right was liberty. On the title-page of Baxter's History, a piece of verse from the British poet James Thomson begins, "LIBERTY - 'Tis a substantial thing and not a word". When Baxter writes of John Ball leading the peasants against the aristocracy, he says they were inspired by "their equal right to liberty and to all the goods of nature". These doctrines are conformable to the "ideas of primitive equality" which are "engraven on the hearts of all men" and "were felt by the suffering people, among whom the following distich was common: 'When Adam delv'd and Eve span/Where then was the gentleman'". But although 'primitive' is a plus word in this sort of Radical rhetoric, it is plain Baxter feels that primitive or deculturised rights are imperfect and impractical. He faults the peasant rebels for not insisting "on a full restoration of the Saxon constitution".

From this, it is clear that the kind of political millenium opted for affects the structure of thought. This is why Thompson's point about Baxter's preference for the ancient Britons is more important than it seems. The ancient Britons, as a primitive people, are much closer to nature and natural right than the Saxons. Yet Baxter thinks the constitution of the ancient Britons was deficient and lacked the integrity of the Saxon's. The ancient Britons lost their purity when they were conquered by the Romans. This event showed they lacked military knowledge and this "exposed them to the Roman yoke". Again, Baxter's neo-Harringtonian beliefs come through. The Roman occupation is especially odious since it is a military occupation. Nothing corrupts a constitution more than a standing army. With their militaristic and aristocratic ways, the Romans "debauched the simplicity of the manners" of the Britons. This loss of original purity and degeneracy in the Briton's government meant the Saxon invasion was fully justified. The Briton's rulers went wrong when they hired Saxon (foreign) troops to overawe the people. The Saxons imposed their laws. These "gave much more freedom to the British" than the indigenous laws. The Saxons also destroyed the sort of feudalism the Romans had imposed upon the Britons for "when they conquered the

country they preserved their own liberty". Historical continuity, that is to say neo-feudalism, was broken since "the ancient inhabitants of England were completely eliminated by the Saxons". The importance of the Saxon Constitution as a political paradigm becomes tangible when Baxter shows that the worst time for political liberty is not so much the present, although things are bad enough, as the time of the Norman Conquest when the "Saxon laws and constitution were lain prostrate".

Natural rights, then, although founded on principle are also in history and are specific. They are to be found in the Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights; they are to be found in the utterances of great patriots and heroes, as well as in the Saxon Constitution. Apart from the freedom of the press, natural rights include freedom of speech, the freedom from arbitrary arrest and, not least, rights in property. As Baxter puts it, "the disposal of their own property is the inherent right of freemen; that there can be no property in that which another can, of right, take from them without their consent". At this point, Baxter indicates he has a view of equality much more moderate than that held by, say, Thomas Spence or Babeuf. We have already seen that Baxter rejected primitive social and economic equality as impractical. His view of equality has a religious basis and is to be got from the English historical experience. Apart from his enthusiasm for the democracy in Quaker religious organisation and ideas, Baxter also praises Puritanism or Dissent in general, remarking its tenets are "more calculated to support that equality which obtains in the state of nature". What this suggests is a belief in a spiritual or metaphysical equality. His reference to the Levellers contains no sympathetic comment. The American Declaration of Independence is called "a masterpiece in composition", and he reproduces it in full. The Declaration says men are "created equal", not that they remain equal; the only words in block capitals are "FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES". That Baxter was referring to the equality which man has as part of his personality and which needs expression as political rights rather than social equality is also suggested by his criticism of feudal society where "if a merchant or manufacturer rose by industry to a degree of opulence he found himself but more exposed to injuries, from the envy and avidity of nobles". The socially mobile were restricted by their loss of political rights. Baxter's view of equality is what has come to be called liberal, and is pre-socialistic. It is not easy to see how a proletarian ideology grew out of this kind of thing.

In fact, the Saxon Constitution was anything but completely egalitarian. The Saxons, Baxter says, elected a "regal dignity" for life. There were still "bishops, counts and judges" even though they were all elected. The Saxon or English Constitution, then, even in the Radical form, did show some respect for hierarchy but it is not quite true, as Thompson says, that representation was "not of human rights but of property rights". Property rights were represented only in so far as they formed part of human rights.  

So, the English Constitution was founded in a theory of human rights. Paradoxically, these human rights owed their existence to the English past. Rights had to be made concrete by showing they existed in a variety of institutional forms either in the past or in the present. An elective monarchy is one such institution. The jury system is another. A people's militia is yet another. The Constitution itself appears as a sort of patchwork built up over time. But it is less of a grand medieval edifice in the manner of Burke than it is a rambling Gothic ruin. Bits and pieces are intact; much of it is in sad decay. An important piece of patchwork or ruin already mentioned is the coronation oath. The oath had a deeply symbolic and an important practical meaning. The coronation oath of William the Bastard "was that administered to the Saxon kings and the laws which he swore to maintain are the Saxon laws". In great detail, Baxter describes how each monarch takes the same oath. The fact that William I, and many other Norman kings soon afterwards "threw off the mask and introduced that system of tyranny" is neither here nor there. The swearing of the oath by itself shows its moral force. There were also plenty of moments in English history to show the coronation oath had a practical force. For a time, its conditions were implemented during Henry III's reign. When both the King and the nobles went back on their word, anarchy resulted.

The laws were part of institutional practice. Even more, the real strength of the laws lay in the fact they were founded in custom. Custom and memory reinforced by the written word formed the bedrock of independence and liberty. Yet, like Major Cartwright, Baxter recognises something even stronger than these forces. Edward I's campaign against the Scots showed that the "power of the sword was, however, more effectual than any records". Without a people's militia, there could be no absolute guarantee of a free constitution. Nevertheless, folk memory was

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particularly strong in England because there were a number of documents of liberty that had had an important practical effect on political institutions. The Magna Carta was a document (or documents) firmly embedded in English political culture. Baxter argues that its provisions have been constantly affirmed during the course of English history; he sees it as one of the cornerstones of English liberty and the constitution. "It is completely subversive of the ridiculous doctrine that the king can do no wrong." It gave the commons "a voice in parliament"; it protected the rights of free men against both king and nobles. Baxter reproduces the Magna Carta in full, but much of it he interprets anachronistically and mythically as if its provisions related to the 18th century polity. Before the end of the medieval period "Magna Carta was established never to be disputed again". Yet Baxter's historical consciousness also comes into play. Basically, it is a feudal document. The Magna Carta does not provide for "a restoration of the Saxon laws".

Another document of liberty that had important institutional repercussions was the 1689 Bill of Rights. He appears to be less critical of this than of the Magna Carta. Perhaps because, among other things, the Bill of Rights refers to the right of the subject to petition the king, limits the king's power in relation to the laws, provides against keeping a standing army in time of peace, makes provisions for independent juries and frequent parliaments, and so on. Baxter also notes that the coronation oath was altered and "consisted in the following ...Will you ...govern the people ... according to the statutes of parliament ... and the laws and customs of the same ... maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel". Generally speaking, though, the Revolution was not a good thing. It saw William III turning corruption into a system. Now that parliament was strong enough to resist the open will of the king, the king was forced to work through and corrupt the independence of parliament in order to get his way. During the struggles with Charles I, parliament appears in Baxter's mind as a sort of collective patriotic hero. Not least because they attempted to secure the constitution through the Petition of Right. This document "contained a confirmation and explanation of the ancient constitution, not any infringement of the royal prerogative, or the acquisition of new liberties". It also confirmed the voice of the people as part of the constitution. 18

Baxter believed in a version of the 'Gothic balance'. He believed that government ought to be, "according to the fundamental laws of the kingdom" by "king, lords and commons". He was against the monarch's encroachments on the nobles and vice versa. But as a working class Radical, he gave greatest weight to the commons and was concerned that the relationship of the commons' representatives with the people did not involve "the prostitution of honour". One way of ensuring this was to have frequent elections. Annual elections were not only a feature of the Saxon system, they had been re-confirmed since. The barons' revolt of 1255 succeeded in obtaining annual parliaments. This "old law" is referred to again and again and Baxter sees it as one of "the first principles of the Constitution". Since the break-up of the feudal polity, dating from Henry VII's time, "the property of the commons increased in England". Taxation affected all the people's property. This alone made legitimate the Radical maxim that "what concerns all should be assented by all". 19

Baxter's thought is enmeshed in the thick undergrowth of 18th century constitutionalist rhetoric, artisan style. This manner of thinking is 'pre-Painite' and pre-Jacobin in more ways than one. Any gestures that Baxter, and other Radicals like him, make in the direction of cosmopolitanism are undermined by the Englishness embedded, so to speak, in this way of thinking and speaking. Above all, the Constitution and the liberty it gives are English and history has ensured that the love of liberty has become part of an Englishman's nature. "Nature", Baxter writes, "seemed to have inspired our forefathers with the love of freedom; an indication, one might think that freedom should be the peculiar blessing and great characteristic of this country". Liberty is joined with patriotism, and reached right down into the lower orders of society: "Great Britain is an island renowned ... for that patriotism and love of liberty which has distinguished even many of its poorer subjects". The general spread of patriotism and liberty among the British had a divine origin and was linked to material wealth: "God has poured his bounty upon this nation in such copious streams, that a small portion has reached the poor despite all that oppression could do to prevent it". Patriotism and the love of liberty were related to independence and therefore to the possession of property.

A number of modern commentators have associated 18th century notions of patriotism with nationalism, chauvinism and even racism. This is, as it were, the opposite end of cosmopolitanism. Tory versions of patriotism, especially, did contain some elements of chauvinism and so on. But 18th century meanings of patriotism are quite tortuous; and this is not the place to go into them all. 'Mock patriot' and 'false patriot' were, for example, terms of deep abuse and are connected with another involved set of meanings centering around the notion of virtue. All I want to show here is how Baxter's idea of patriotism is in harmony with a residual definition of patriotism set down by Huizinga some time ago and places Baxter within the tradition of 18th century 'mercantile' thought; away from both 19th century nationalism and Jacobin cosmopolitanism.

There is an association between the negative side of Baxter's view of liberty and his conception of patriotism. Resistance to oppression applied on an international scale as well as on the national level. The citizen had the obligation to defend his country in the same way he was obliged to defend the constitution. Baxter spoke of "the right of every nation ... to preserve its own neutrality". From this it can be surmised Baxter would have joined with Radicals like Major Cartwright and prepared against a French invasion rather than with that section of the London Corresponding Society who supported one. His feeling against invasion by a foreign power is so strong that he praises Queen Elizabeth when she threatened the inhabitants on the coast who "forsook their towns". Baxter even goes so far as to support her when she threatened to "execute martial law upon such cowards". Independence was a sign of the moral integrity of a nation as well as of the individual or a corporate body like parliament. Upon this was based what Baxter called "the law of nations". Baxter is against war with Spain because it was contrary to the law of nations and "neither just nor politic". It interfered with "the most valuable branch of English commerce". Yet commerce and alliance leads him to support what he sees as a just war. When, in 1739, the Spanish attacked the English merchants, Baxter complains the ministers "appeared ... timorous"; they disgraced "the honour of their country". For, "the right to trade on the seas" is "derived from God and nature". The subsequent peace struck at England's "vitals" - commerce. None of this makes Baxter a simple apologist for the British mercantile interest. He is not against the Dutch competing with the English and extending "their commerce" in India; he is also against

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English interference with Dutch ships, "through the intrigue of a foreign connection". Commercial patriotism was behind his objection to foreign influence on the British monarchy. Government ought to be by "natural subjects", by native persons. Since foreigners were seen in some sense as unnatural, royal marriages to foreigners were seen as a form of moral pollution. They were unpatriotic marriages.

Despite this, Baxter's patriotism does not turn into chauvinism. In the area in which a chauvinistic attitude is most likely to be expressed, against France, he is not any unconditional supporter of England. He defends historical and natural rights wherever they exist. He defends the people of Anjou against Henry II's claims and the invasions of English monarchs. The French people were committing "no other crime than that of defending their habitations". Simon de Montefort, though "a foreigner himself" upheld English liberties. Baxter also welcomes "the useful industry" of the Huguenots, as fellow artisans. He only attacks the French, when they attempt to undermine the independence of another country.

Given the anti-Scottish sentiment prominent in some Radical circles in the 18th century, it is also of interest to examine Baxter's attitude on this question. The North Briton labelled the "whole nation of Scots", and was unjust and inhuman. Baxter praises the Scottish for "their mountains and valour". Yet, when they invade England, in keeping with his patriotism, he turns against them. The Irish are not treated in exactly the same way. When Henry II, through "wanton ambition" invaded Ireland the result was the same as the Norman invasion of England: "the sufferings of the lower order among the Irish became great beyond description". The sin of the Irish seems to be that they embraced Catholicism. When in 1641 the Irish "papists" turned against the English colonists, they became "inhuman foes". Even the women practiced "every cruelty" and the children, too, "were prompted to essay their feeble blows on the carcasses or defenceless children of the English". The cruelty of the Irish, real or imagined, seems to have come about because in the past, "being treated like wild beasts, they became such". Baxter's general attitude is unfavourable. Speaking of Ireland in the 17th century Baxter calls it "a country uncivilised, uncultivated"...

Although against the general spirit of his patriotism, then, Baxter's attitude does sometimes get tainted by a kind of racialism. We have seen he supports Negro rebellions as being in conformity with their natural rights. His attitude towards the Red Indians shows some ambivalence. When they sold the land they did not mean to deprive
themselves of the rights of use "of hunting the wild deer, of using a branch of wood". This echoes Baxter's defence of forest and common rights in England. The Red Indians are defended against the English merchants, particularly the Ohio company which enjoyed "exclusive monopoly". But in the War of Independence, the position of the British army is made worse by the fact that Germans and Indians were employed against the settlers. The Indian auxiliaries "excited terror" and showed "indiscriminate barbarity". The vengeance of the patriotic settlers was therefore "severe yet just" even though it destroyed the Indians' means of subsistence. When they attack the English trade that Baxter sees as legitimate, he calls the Indians "barbarians" and "savages" and says they ought to "renounce all claims to the posts and forts possessed by the English who should be at liberty to erect as many more as they think fit". Even the army's action of taking hostages is "wise and resolute".

This last bit, especially, might seem to suggest aggressive nationalism and imperialism. But, for Baxter, the posts and forts are purely defensive. In India, apart from encouraging competition from the Dutch and others, it was necessary to "preserve our territorial possessions" but also "to secure the natives from injustice". The British parliament could not possibly represent countries "with whose soil, climates and produce; with whose wants and advantages they cannot be thoroughly acquainted". The racial element is usually suggestive and hidden rather than conscious or open. Patriotism is a cosmopolitan value but it is especially connected with the protection of English liberty and the origins of English liberty are Saxon. "The English", Baxter says, "inherited from their Saxon ancestors a stronger attachment to liberty than their neighbours on the Continent". But since the non-Saxon people in England are the aristocrats, the patriotic myth of the Saxon Constitution is, in Radical hands, also, if not more, a myth of class. The Saxon heroes are popular folk heroes.

In Baxter's hagiography there are heroes and heroes. Alfred the Great is seen as a truly semi-divine hero who stands near to God. Alfred was probably the only pure hero. He appears as the founding hero or originator common in the myths of pre-industrial societies. He, "established a regular militia". He was also the founder of the English monarchy. All subsequent monarchs were legally descended from Alfred through the

coronation oath which confirmed Saxon law. Alfred also instituted the jury system based on the hundreds. During his reign he "divided the kingdom into counties, which he subdivided into hundreds and the hundreds into tithings ... ten householders formed a tithing". The tything, upon which the organisation of the London Corresponding Society was based, was Alfred's great innovation. It was especially English: the Saxons in Germany had not had it. The tything, especially, but also the hundred, "served as the basis of English jurisprudence". The courts of the tythings and hundreds made the common law based on the people's customs. Alfred "collected and revised the ancient Saxon customs"; he was the codifier of common law. He was the great peace-maker who "restored tranquillity to England"; the great and divine saviour who established the political millenium. "The Danes ravaged the country"; "the Saxons robbed and murdered each other with impunity". But, "it pleased God to raise up a deliverer in the person of ALFRED THE GREAT".

There were other, lesser, heroes; and, of course, plenty of villains. An important one is Edward the Confessor. In the 17th century Edward is the great hero of the myth. There has been some puzzlement over why and how Alfred got to replace him. There are empirical reasons. Since Alfred established peace he was also able to establish the kind of general culture the Radicals wished to re-invent in the 18th century. As a scholar he encouraged education, including political education, and also encouraged "manufactures, promoted navigation and commerce". Against this, and against what made him so acceptable to the 17th century, the unworldliness of Edward, "the popular Saint-King", made him unacceptable. Baxter calls Edward's celibacy "frigidity", accuses him of not consummating his marriage to the Saxon queen and of being cruel towards his daughter. Edward, Baxter says, was educated in Normandy, introduced too many Normans into the English court, and showed "partiality towards the Normans". Edward brought England to the brink of civil war, and was "worthless", "weak" and "arbitrary". He originates majesty and mystery in the monarchy: he was the first English king who "pretended to cure" by touch "the king's evil". The Confessor's fanatical religiosity also made him something of a slave to the Catholic church. For the Saxon laws collected and reinforced during his reign, Baxter gives credit to Edward's rival, the noble Godwin. Edward in fact was a poor patriot who failed to live up to the "manliness" ethic.

Baxter's treatment of Edward was part of his general aim. Most history had been written by monks. Using the same categories, Baxter turned this history upside down. In many cases, heroes became villains and vice versa. The Earl of Leicester who rebelled against Henry III and "whose memory has been blackened", Baxter praises for his opposition to the Pope and for his attacks on the extension of the royal prerogative. Aristocrats could be great patriotic heroes. In both heroism and villainy personal moral character was important, aside from public actions, and was seen as influencing events and the moral state of the nation. Edward IV spent his life in "riot and debauchery" and never was the throne of England "disgraced by a greater monster". Baxter, despite his faith in the people, never deserts the belief in a deliverer or patriot king or great hero. This applies to figures in Baxter's own time as much as to the distant past. The Prince of Wales, who died in 1751, is described as "this excellent prince possessed of every amiable quality which could engage the affections of the people, disposed to assert the rights of mankind and in general warmly attached to the interest of Great Britain". Baxter's uncritical attitude towards Fox as a Radical hero is even more surprising. He does not even raise a mild critical comment on Fox's coalition with Lord North in 1783 even though many of Fox's former supporters, both Whig and Radical, saw it as betrayal. Some historical figures Baxter does indeed see as part-hero, part-villain. But he rarely moves outside these types as explanations of events.

Villainy is the mover in corruption. Corruption is a process of moral decay that necessitates the political millenium. Moral decay brought about by a semi-divine or semi-magical retribution is a strong theme in the myth. Cause is a transcendental affair. It operates as a kind of providential punishment. Harold loses the Battle of Hastings because he went against majority advice to defer it. Edward I dies while preparing for war against the Scottish patriots. Political villainy, that is the corruption of the constitution, always results in millenial disaster which leads to more widespread corruption on the legal, moral, and economic levels. Within this general pattern, there are a wide variety of empirical causes. Political ambition, an evil motive in Radical political vocabulary, leads to war; war raises taxes; taxes prove a burden on the people and they get corrupted. In Baxter's historical fables and parables the ends of such an immoral war are never achieved.

The famines of Edward II's time were brought about by "the wicked ambition of this king and his father to destroy the independence of Scotland". Interference with the law, especially attempts to widen the definition of treason, "has never failed to bring destruction on those who were concerned with it". Richard II lost his crown and life because he attempted to interfere with the treason laws. Disturbing the balance of the constitution also leads to disaster. "The sufferings of the people" during the reign of Richard II were the result of the immoral character of the king and because he "packed parliament of his own creatures". His love of luxury was also a cause. The National Debt is a source of deep corruption; "a gulph that swallows up the industry of the people", gives "an undue weight to the executive government" and "must inevitably prove the overthrow of the nation". The National Debt originated during the reign of William III, and, "a greater curse could not have been inflicted upon this country ... the corruption of morals which it has produced are evils of perhaps a still more extensive nature". This corruption of morals, necessarily produced a brood of usurers, brokers and stock-jobbers who preyed on the vitals of their country; and from this fruitful source, venality overspread the land; corruption ... was gradually formed into a system ... receiving the countenance of the whole legislature ... every individual began openly to buy and sell his interest in his country ... the sources of justice were ... grossly polluted by the partiality of party ... 24

At this point, Baxter's millenial tone is just as high as that of the 'wilder' Radicals like Thomas Evans. His condemnation of the political life and times of William III is total and almost 'hysterical'. England, only exchanged one tyrant for another. The people were divided into three parties ... The practice of bribing a majority in parliament had a pernicious effect upon the morals of all ranks of people ... Public virtue became the object of ridicule, the whole kingdom was overspread with immorality and corruption. ... All principle was gradually banished, talent lay uncultivated, and the land was deluged with a tide of profligacy .... William involved these kingdoms in connexions, wars and debts which ... must end in universal calamity and ... almost ... destroy ... and debauch the manners of the whole people. 25

George II's failure of duty led to neglect of the "internal police of the nation". So that, "the peculiar depravity of the times was visible even in the conduct of thieves and robbers, who now became more desperate and savage than ever they had appeared since mankind were civilised". Baxter's way out of this state of moral decay is simple and therefore millenial and pre-ideological: return to the people their lost rights, especially universal suffrage. The fact that Baxter appears to give his support to the deists rather than the millenarians in the English Civil War is a poor guide to his thought. Sometimes, as when he explains Henry VIII's lack of an heir being due to the fact that "the curse of being childless is the threatening contained in the Mosaic law against those who espouse their brother's widow", he passes beyond the mental state of lingering credulousness into the realm of superstition. A religious metaphysic gives the form, and sometimes the content, to his 'political' beliefs.

At first sight this statement seems a bit odd. Baxter is keen to separate religion from politics and to establish the primacy of political institutions over religious ones. One of the few things Baxter praises Henry II for is that he "fully established the superiority of the legislature above all spiritual canons". But this does not mean religion ought to be dependent upon the state. "Nothing can be more absurd than to establish religion by law". And "good government has nothing to do with theology; it ought only to distinguish between a good and bad citizen, by cherishing virtue and punishing vice". He recommends religious toleration. Each person ought to be left to "worship his creator according to the dictates of his conscience, without prohibition or limitation". But, commenting favourably on Quaker beliefs, Baxter also recommends "submission to the laws in all cases wherein conscience is not violated". This includes being involved in "any illicit trade". In this context, he specifically mentions smuggling as a social crime; he does not extract any romantic political meaning from this activity. Baxter particularly praises the Quaker "respect for order".

The subordinate role of religion in the institutional life of society does not mean its disappearance. He deplores William II's "irreligion" just as much as he denigrates Mahomet's "pretended revolutions". Even worse was the atheism rife in Charles II's time.

One of the bad things about an established religion is it attracts "the infidel and the worthless". Baxter is most against the forms of "monkish superstition" he associates with Roman Catholicism. Among the attractions of the Quakers are that they have no professional clergy, "reject the major and mystical part of Christian ritual", and do not get entangled in theological disputes since they "are very tender of quitting scripture terms for those of the schoolmen". It is "to Christ alone" the Quakers "give the total Word of God, and not the scriptures, although they highly esteem these sacred writings". Following Christ, they do everything "in a simple manner". The deistical beliefs of the Quakers show up "the primitive simplicity of the Christian religion" as well as its purity. This is how religion was in its origins.

Despite the fact Baxter wants to separate religion and politics at the level of institutions, there is a profound cognitive connection. The logic or form of religion spilled over into the logic of politics. There is a connection between the purity, simplicity and originality of religion and "the purity of parliament" and of the polity in general. Radical politics becomes sacred politics. The word "sacred" is common in Radical political vocabulary and is often used in an historical context with a religious content. Henry III was made to order "sentence of excommunication" against anyone "who should dare violate the sacred constitution". Although he despises most religious ritual, Baxter frequently invokes it when attempting to give legitimacy to his beliefs. When Henry swears to abide by the Magna Carta, the prelates and abbots who forced him into it symbolically "threw their tapers to the ground". They also threatened to excommunicate anyone who violated the fundamental laws and cursed "the soul of everyone who incurs this sentence" to "stink and corrupt in hell!" The people are given grace or sacredness. On one occasion, "the archbishops harangued the multitude on that celebrated maxim, 'the voice of the people is the voice of God'". History becomes a series of sacred acts: a sacred history. The most sacred act is foundation. Just as Jesus is the founder of the Christian religion, so Alfred is the founder of the English polity. This can be so since the society of the ancient Britons was totally destroyed by the Saxon invaders. Even from a founder like Brutus, who Baxter recognises as at least a semi-fabulous figure, he can get some political capital. After he got rid of the giants Brutus "divided the land among the people"; and he certainly sees Brutus, the founder of "Albion", as a sort of libertarian figure against the despotic giants.
As in all myth, the key relationship is between the present and the distant past, not the present and the recent past. When parliament gives an unlimited vote for credit, Baxter comments "our ancestors would have heard such a demand with hatred and rejected it with scorn". The custom of the people, "our ancestors", is at the bottom of legitimacy. No matter how often that custom is broken by the wilful acts of kings, there remains a thread of continuity hidden beneath the surface of historical events. Yet this does not mean time is progressive. There is not even any sense of a steady progressive moral degeneration, as Thompson argues. History is the history of (comparative) liberty or of periods of light and darkness, good and evil. Using another sense of progress, Baxter speaks, in seemingly Enlightenment terms, of "the progress of reason" and a "revolution in sentiment". But reason can only progress back towards, and as far as, the Saxon liberty. Progress has limits. Revolution can only revolve towards a new point of the spiral which resembles the antique past far more than it represents anything new.

Time gets squeezed out. Saxon kings and heroes seem to be determined less by lineage than by defence of the people's rights. Baxter's table of the kings and queens of England shows Henry II and other medieval monarchs as 'Saxons'. The Magna Carta is a charter which, in part, supports demands for present-day political rights. And the Saxon millenium is used in an even more evocative way to picture the dream of the ideal society. According to Baxter, the Saxon people were,

courteous to each other, sincere in their dealings, faithful to their word, and firm in their attachments. They were hospitable beyond all nations; and not only esteemed it dishonourable to deny admittance to a guest, but made it an object of punishment. Nor was their care limited to their own nation; they extended it to travellers who might pass through their own country, setting aside a portion of the public grain for their entertainment. Mild in the treatment of criminals, they forgot not the moderation and equity which attended on liberty. Their fierceness was corrected by humanity, and their generosity unfettered by the narrow boundary of exact justice. They neither indulged in a plurality of wives, nor prohibited their women to attend them to the field, to assist their councils and to be useful and active in the different occupations which employed them. Gallantry had not turned sex from business or made it an object of criminal voluptuousness. Vice in those simple and virtuous times had not lifted her head to triumph over innocence. Ambition had not intruded into the place of modesty, nor were the poor crushed under the proud oppression of the rich. A precarious justice was not bought from corrupted
tribunals of judges. The ignorance of crime was a firmer preservative to their manners, than to other nations the strictness of law and the knowledge of virtue ... Supreme power was vested in the community ... The extreme liberty of the people made them two or three days in assembling on ordinary occasions ... 27

Like all golden ages, Baxter's Saxon millenium reveals more of the values and situation of its contemporary expression than it does of history. Note, for example, in Baxter's picture, the silversmith's pride in the fraternalist values of the tramping system of the trade clubs, here seen as Saxon hospitality; the emphasis is on the law and political ambition; on the role of women. See, also, his celebration of the jury system. Also observe, despite Baxter's many disagreements with Burke, that he has a Burkeian notion of the Englishness of the constitution. When Baxter says "vice in those simple and virtuous times had not lifted her head to triumph over innocence", he is plainly not referring to any political or historical reality that ever existed. He is retracing the steps back to a political and historical Eden. But it is important to emphasise I am not saying that no kind of historical consciousness at all can be perceived in Baxter's History. Besides dates and facts, he also uses historical concepts. In several places, Baxter shows he has absorbed the "feudal revolution" of 17th century historiography brilliantly analysed by J.G.A. Pocock. 28 But what is glaringly missing is any satisfactory notion of cause. In Baxter's hands, history becomes a sort of patchwork of predestined psycho-drama. A part of early 18th century history is glossed over since it "cannot be very interesting, as it generally consists of proceedings in parliament". There are no battles; no great heroes. There is only a mental gap in the manner of bricolage.

The mind of John Baxter, and probably even the general mentality of the 18th century, has, in many respects, much more in common with the states of mind found in pre-industrial societies than it does with the 20th century. Support for this statement comes from the fairly elaborate and traditional symbols found in the History. 29, 30 *

* See Appendix C.
This in effect is what the language of luxury and corruption intimates, despite the fact that luxury and corruption were not merely ideas, not merely paradigmatic elements in a political language, but also material forces at work in 18th century English society. At the same time, study of the 'language' or code tells us something about the society in which the language was used. With this 'materialist' end in mind, it is finally worth analysing and describing the economic or, more accurately the political economic, aspect of John Baxter's mind. Some of the topics that follow have already been touched upon more lightly.

Baxter, like his brother Radicals, sees land as the significant form of property, and echoes the "general complaints against enclosures and oppressions from the gentry" and aristocracy. As a class, the aristocracy are not merely socially separate, they are also racially different. Unlike the people in general, they have no connection with the Saxon forefathers. The old Anglo-Saxon aristocracy "were deprived of their lands, which were divided among" William's "Norman followers" who "became if possible more oppressive than the king". The separation between the aristocracy and the king on the one hand and the people on the other seems to have been a Norman creation since "in all the laws and charters of the Norman kings, there is an inferior order mentioned". Baxter's and others' "new" and "impartial" history can also be seen in this light; Baxter sees himself writing a people's history, the people being everyone but the king, nobility and the clergy, and aristocratic Radical heroes such as the Duke of Gloucester. If the mechanism for social, political and economic change was "political education" conceived in a millenial or mythic framework of thought, equally important was the existence of uncorrupted popular but aristocratic and royal heroes. Later, socialism brought in organisation and programme as alternative mechanisms of social change.

At the same time, Radical class consciousness was more sophisticated than the simple idea of people versus the church and/or the king and the aristocracy. These classes were not the only ones to benefit from exploitation of the people. For example, Baxter constantly defends "the traders" against the nobility and the monarchy. As he sees it, "there is one great and eternal distinction arising from the nature of things" which cannot be changed, and that is "the distinction between the landed and trading interests". It seems, like Locke, Baxter sees "these clashing interests" as the motor force in society, as the crucial

form of class conflict, although the word he uses is, significantly, "rank". In countries where there is no substantial trading interest, where "the people have little trade", there "the landed gentry affect the pomp of princes" and suppress "the peasantry" who are in "the most abject want". The trading interest, then, which perhaps includes the merchants and manufacturers in the broadest sense, are the guardians of liberty. The trading interest needs "a fair and equal representation", and the state by adopting a "sound policy" should "make every rank happy". In the colonies, the behaviour of the merchants has contrasted favourably with those who own land there. The latter have forced up the price of land and engaged England in wars. But if "the true commerce" of "our merchants" had been "left to themselves" free "from exhorbitant taxes and imports" there would be "great advantages" for all and the "improved ... happiness of every rank in the state". Again, for this to happen the mercantile interest need independent representation, suggesting rights, for Baxter, are not only founded in landed property and that independence is not solely tied to the ownership of land, even if land is the ultimate factor of production. Yet the existing political system subordinated trade to land. In 1710, the Tories ousted the Whigs, and passed legislation which required an estate of £600 per year to represent a county in parliament. The aim of the Bill, he says, "was to exclude trading people from the House of Commons and to lodge the whole legislative power with the landholders". Another Bill, of 1696, was designed "to open the way for government contractors". As a rank, Baxter perceives the merchants have divisions, while at the same time recognising a certain common identity between some merchants and the landed interests. Nowadays, merchants wanting to enter parliament will borrow a landed qualification while "the mercantile one is seldom thought of". The political process has created a class of big merchants. Before the accession of foreign kings with their "continental connexions", government contracts and loans did not amount to much. Continental wars created "contracts for supplying prodigious armies" and have produced "immense fortunes to the contractors". The contracts were not open to free bids, going to "the cheapest offer" or "the lowest interest", but were given to the minister's friends. 32

There was one social group for whom Baxter felt not the slightest sympathy. Allied with government contracts was the national debt started in the reign of William III. This was "the greatest curse" that could be inflicted upon a country and led to the general "corruption of morals". It begat political corruption which "was gradually formed into a system" and led to a situation where "every individual began openly to buy and sell his interest in his country". It led to "the partiality of party" and to a situation where justice was "grossly polluted". Even more than Burke, Baxter rails against the harmful effects of "the monied interest". If by and large the Tories represented the landed classes, the monied interest "which prevailed in most of the corporations" were represented by "a great majority of Whigs". It was not private and entrepreneurial capital that was significant and pernicious, but mercantile or corporate. The spread of paper money increased the capital of the big corporations to such an extent that it gave them the power to "endanger the liberties of the nation". Their extensive fortunes enabled them to exert undue influence over the election of members of parliament. Baxter gives considerable space to the South Sea Bubble incident which he argues brings out the close connections between political corruption and financial capital. It shows, "the secret and corrupt influence which great commercial companies have over parliament and the administration". At the time of the South Sea scheme, "luxury, profligacy and vice increased to a shocking degree" and led to "the growth of atheism, profaneness and immorality". In the language of the moral economy paper capital is, as Pocock hints, a form of unreality; it produces an alienated phantasy world in which vice predominates. Baxter is a "bullionist"; for him paper money is not real money. "The fraudulent and pernicious practice of stock-jobbing" has "diverted the genius of the people from industry", from a life of substance. 33

Some forms of property, then, were phantastical, as it were the product of an excess of culture, a form of property too far removed or alienated from nature to provide a basis for representation. If landed property holders ought not to have a monopoly over political rights and representation, then Baxter's ideas are sufficiently coloured by neo-Harringtonian thinking for him to believe land was a substantive form of property that guaranteed independence from the crown and the

executive power. Before the forty shilling Act was passed, when there were a mass of small landholders, democracy was guaranteed since "every freeholder had a vote for a knight of the shire". Luxury began when "the gentry acquired a power of breaking the entails and of alienating their estates". As the primary source of production, land is not a thing to buy and sell and is a guarantee of political independence: once again there is agreement with Burke, even if on the question of distribution Baxter would violently oppose Burke. At the same time, Baxter held to the sanctity of property in general, although here, it would seem, in the wider 'Lockeian' sense. Property was enshrined in the principles of the constitution. As he puts it, "the disposal of their own property is the inherent right of freemen: that there can be no property in that which another can, of right, take from them without their consent". Natural rights, that is political liberty and suffrage, were forms of property that could not be alienated. The arguments of Thompson and similar critics are therefore misconceived. Human rights are not subordinated to property rights but are in a sense identifiable or integral; independence based on the people's right to a share in landed wealth is a warranty that they will not be violated. The notion of the Gothic balance was not only used for political analysis; it was also used to describe an ideal state of the distribution of the property, especially landed property. Although, this did not mean property obtained through trade and industry was altogether discounted.54

In fact, as an object of Radical political economy, trade and commerce were given as much attention as land. Using words that might just as well have come from Samuel Bamford or a number of other artisan writers, Baxter describes how Britain "is a great commercial nation". Naturally so, since she is blessed with "convenient ports ... a temperate climate ... and ... fertile soil". The commodities which underpin this commercial greatness are corn, coal and wool. Britain is a "commercial state", and this commerce is regulated by a body of law. But, like other law, commercial law is complex and owes too much to "the Latin tongue" and is "an unintelligible jargon" of professionals. "Simple cases" ought to be conducted by "the parties themselves". The law also protects monopolies. The monopoly system Baxter sees as stemming from the time of Elizabeth. She granted patents for monopolies as reward for service. But the patents were "sold to others who were therefore enabled

to raise commodities to what price they pleased, and who put invincible restraints upon all commerce and industry and emulation in the arts". Because they lead to high prices, monopolies fetter "every species of domestic industry". In Charles I's time, "monopolies were revived" and "tonnage and poundage continued to be levied by royal authority alone". Monopolies thus gave undue power and influence to the crown. In Baxter's mind, as in many others, the monopoly position of the chartered companies was linked to the system of corruption and was therefore inimicable to liberty. In 1693, Baxter writes, "merchants, clothiers and other dealers" presented addresses for the dissolution of the East India Company. Among other things, the Company's action had led to "the oppression of the people and the ruin of trade". In 1695, the East India Company bribed members of parliament with £90,000 in order to obtain their seal. Linked to the monied interest and the national debt, Baxter believed efforts must be made "towards diminishing the capital of the several trading companies". This last statement gives us a feel for the texture of John Baxter's economic thinking. If his ideas have little to do with socialism, then they are not easily absorbed into any laissez-faire or free market paradigm either. He does not seem to think that capital accumulation is in itself a good thing. He does not like "exorbitant profit" and implies a fair profit or a just price. If he supports free trade, he also supports the setting up of the Bank of England with certain monopoly powers. He does not believe in limited liability for financial debt. And his support for the market and free trade is less ideological than it may first appear. His advocacy of free trade does not extend so far as to allow it to hurt the interests of the artisans. Baxter describes how in May 1765, the journeymen silk weavers assembled in Moorfields to complain about "the free use of French and other foreign silks". He adds, with apparent approval, that "a bill was afterwards passed, laying an additional duty on the importation of all wrought silks and velvets". At the heart of the artisan opposition to taxation, there was something of a paradox.

Just as Radical political concepts do not break out of a 'mercantile' framework of thought, so Baxter's economic concepts are developed in opposition but nevertheless within this framework. The quarrel with Burke was over the level and use of taxes, not over the role of tax as a central economic, political and even moral mechanism. While

for Burke government expenditure was a motor of production and a means of redistributing income, for Baxter it was central to the exploitation of the artisan and of the people in general. Foreign wars, the national debt and the system of influence all produced a level of taxation well above what was necessary for the good government of the country. Through increasing taxation, to pay for the national debt parliament "was begging the nation", and undermining "the independence of the people". Economic measures had social and political repercussions. A proposed excise tax on tobacco "would produce an additional swarm of excise men ... who would swallow up part of the revenue, and multiply the dependants on the crown in such a manner as to enable it still further to influence elections". Consequently, since the problem was one of politics, of the state, economic and social questions were subsumed by the political. "That taxation and representation were inseperably united; that God had joined them, and that no British parliament could put them asunder ...' it is an eternal law of God". High taxation was a sort of political sin that demanded political salvation. Not unconnected with this is the fact that, through war, taxes upon commodities fell heaviest "upon the poor labourers and manufacturers".  

Research into John Baxter's ideas was done before anything was very set in my mind, but it remains to say a little about his reading in so far as we have indications of it. As an authority for the Brutus myth, Baxter cites Geoffrey of Monmouth suggesting perhaps the 'archaic' beliefs of this author had not declined as much as Keith Thomas would have us believe. Of similar authenticity and mentality, probably, is the late medieval historian Jean Froissart whom Baxter also uses as an authority. A passage from David Hume is inserted as support for the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution. There is mention of the works of Lord Rochester "so gross that they cannot be named without giving offence to the modest ear". In contrast, Baxter writes a longish and favourable discourse on Bunyan, suggesting a fairly close familiarity with his works. Significantly, Joseph Addison's "noble work" on "the defence of the Christian religion" also gets a mention. There is a reference to John Milton, and it would not be surprising if Baxter had read at least some of his writings. This sketch is at most a starting point. But, if nothing else, shows the mentality of John Baxter was far from modern.  

36. Baxter, History, 684, 767, 815; on Burke, see Reflections, footnote 25, for his views on tax, property and class.  
Despite the fact, then, that Baxter's *History* comes from the pen of an artisan, it has been shown that it is governed or structured by the same set of concepts found in the writings of more intellectual, and presumably therefore sophisticated figures such as John Cartwright and Sir William Jones. And Baxter, as we saw, is no more revolutionary and just as constitutionalist as these gentlemen. There is also no paradigm break between the *History* and the *Resistance* just as there is none between Cartwright's earlier and later writings. Both have been shown to contain the same set of concepts. As a pointer to the last chapter it is worth enumerating these concepts. I found in Baxter, an admiration for an elective monarchy or a patriotic king, rather than a republic on the French model. The *History* is a narrative of the doings heroes and villains, particularly monarchs. An elective or constitutional monarchy is also sensitive to the balance of powers and avoids excess. History is divided up into periods of light or reason and periods of passion or darkness. Church and King historians had drawn the veil of mystery and corruption over history. Reason was the weapon to be used to cast corruption aside. Reason was a tool for understanding libertarian documents, laws and customs. Reason was also a key unlocking the hidden secrets of natural rights. Yet this did not mean that Baxter is one of Pocock's "Lockean primitivists". Like others, it has been shown that Baxter's thinking shifts backwards and forwards between culture and nature. Saxon culture, intimating Baxter's mercantilist and artisan mentality, is preferred to either ancient Briton's primitivism or classical refinement or luxury. Natural rights, as for Burke, are transformed through the English experience into historical rights. Britain is the elect nation. Consequently, attention was drawn to Baxter's patriotism, but also to the role of corruption and to the militia, and to his use of virtue - to the more 'Machiavellian' elements in his thought. Yet keeping with Pocock's terms, strands of charismatic millenialism and deism are also woven into the fabric of his mind. On the individual level, his preference for Presbytarians and Quakers and his qualified dislike of the Irish was also noted.

Overall, then, a whole structure of concepts is revealed, similar to those found in Cartwright's more voluminous writings.
Like Cartwright his class consciousness is smoothed down by his sense of community and English patriotism. The monied interest is reviled because it lives off taxes and has been brought into existence by a sort of excess of culture. But there is no general attack on property, least of all the property of a reformed gentry and aristocracy. Yet it has been indicated that Baxter's thought is not feudal or 'transitional'. Trade and commerce are natural to Britain as an island nation. They are the gifts of God. Lastly, I gave some idea of Baxter's reading, of his knowledge of mythological histories.

THOMAS EVANS

Thomas Evans, and the representative figures that follow present a greater challenge for the mode of analysis I have adopted. He came later, has been seen as a minor figure and is usually perceived as a socialist, as one of the first of the moderns. So it would be expected that there would be little or nothing on custom, patriotism, on the defence of private property, on millenialism, and perhaps on natural rights or an historical constitution, and certainly nothing on Alfred's free born Saxons or Providence. Harrington or Machiavelli should have faded away, and Burke should be nowhere. The analysis that follows is an attempt to see if these 'silences' do in fact exist.

The chances are that Baxter knew Evans. Early mention of Evans occurs when, on November 20, 1795, he is a member of the executive committee of the London Corresponding Society which co-operates with a delegation from Baxter's Friends of Liberty in organising a conference against a Bill before parliament. Since Thomas Evans is hardly more well-known than John Baxter, it is useful to give a certain amount of biographical detail.*

It is known that Evans' Christian Policy was advertised through handbills, the most effective way of reaching the mass public,

* See Appendix B.
as containing the essence and most simplified and accessible version of Spencean political philosophy. Robert Southey "derived his knowledge of Spenceanism from Evans' 'Christian Policy'"; as well as from Spence's account of his own trial. Southey thought well of some aspects of Spence's ideas; T.R. Malthus also gained his knowledge of Spenceanism from Evans. Unlike Southey, Malthus is critical of the Spencean Philanthropists' ideas on grounds that the national income would be eaten up by Evans' allowances for the expenses of government, that there is no compensation given to holders of the national debt and that the real income of the state is overestimated. The net result, according to Malthus, is the division of rents under Evans' scheme is hardly more "than is sometimes given to individuals from the poor rates". Whatever, the accuracy of Evans' figures there is also the question of his 'influence'. For Thompson, "Evans' agrarian socialism was more rational and seminal than Bentham's Felicific Calculus"; for Hill, Evans and Spence 'look forward to theories of socialism'. This view, the view from the methodological perspective of traditions and rationalism, is shared by Henry Collins. How well it holds up in the light of Evans' religion and from the theoretical perspectives of paradigmatic and ideological break is another question. 38

One of the ways through which Evans is absorbed into the socialist tradition is through his alleged Jacobinism and revolutionary tendencies, even though Thompson calls him "the mild Thomas Evans". His reputation as a revolutionary stems from his connections with the United Englishmen and United Irishmen. According to one historian, he was only "slightly involved" with these groups; for another he was involved "on the fringe" of these "insurrectionary" bodies. For yet another, Evans "wanted to establish a republic by means of a revolution", and through

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the United Englishmen "he was promoting a real revolutionary society". While with the Spenceans, it was reported by a government spy that Evans asserted reform was a farce and did not go far enough since "a revolution was necessary"; the Society as a whole "promoted atheism". It does seem possible that at one stage Evans was committed to violence, although again it is necessary to make sense of any attraction to violence through pointing to the ambiguities involved in the idea of revolution. One view has it that Evans was committed to violence during the last days of the London Corresponding Society but changed his view when involved with the Spenceans. But even as a member of the London Corresponding Society and the United Englishmen, Evans did not favour, as the United Irishmen did, getting French help to defeat the government. For Evans, as for many other Radicals, the French rulers had turned themselves into a military despotism. He put forward the idea that the Corresponding Society ought to offer its services to prevent a French invasion, even suggesting that members should join the conservative Volunteers, and being accused of treacherous association with the government. This idea of the patriotic defence of your own country or nation comes out in the oath taken by the new members of the United Englishmen. The oath of the "True Britons" asked them "to defend my country should necessity require". A member should be prepared to learn the use of arms "in order that equal rights should be established and defended". There is, that is, the 'Lockeian' idea that the government were the real rebels since they had trampled on traditional rights. The current French government had done the same thing. As he put it later, "the Gallic Revolution/Pretended Restitution. But where's their distribution/On the Agrarian Plan", and as a member of the Spenceans he took care not to get involved with the plans of Thistlewood and others of "the revolutionary wing". Initially, then, Evans was only attracted to physical force in relation to a defence of country and lost rights. In form the revolution was a return; in content it was a right based on the idea of an "excess" or abuse of power by the king or oligarchy, not on the exploitation of the workers by a capitalist class. Also, rather than being something brought about by force, the revolution was a revolution in sentiment effected by the diffusion of religiously inspired political knowledge, rather than any kind
of secular political ideology. As Robert Wedderburn put it, not force but argument "recommended by the Author of Christianity". The Spenceans were ready to encounter the landlords "in the field of disputation". As Evans himself puts it, the Radicals of 1798 incurred "much unjust odium and persecution as reformers, 'jacobins and levellers'". But their ideas were more traditional than this hostile labelling would suggest.

In an Address to the Irish, in 1798, Evans, as secretary of the London Corresponding Society warned that the voice of God was heard in "historic experience". The will of God was found in the charters of liberty. In this written form "these laws" were "preserved ... to this day through many changes and vicissitudes". They make up "a CONSTITUTION ... the only one England ever had" ... "the glorious constitution of OLD ENGLAND ... of third saviour of the world - ALFRED". If the latter part sounds like millenarian talk, it also signifies a dimension of political vocabulary that takes the notion of custom as its reference point. Like custom itself, Alfred's constitution was second nature to Englishmen and "could never be forgotten". It was an "inheritance" which "the thinking people of England" had been tricked out of by the landlords. Yet through their historical struggles a part, a "very small part" of the constitution had been "recaptured ... from the conquest". Evans gives the idea of custom a 'materialist' twist when he writes that the enclosures, as well as the loss of political liberties, had cut the people off from "the inheritance of their fathers". Evans' writing, then, offers another example of how the idea of custom could be used in a non-hegemonic fashion.

A concept, associated with custom and also used in a non-hegemonic fashion, is patriotism. Evans' view of patriotism, in the light of his attitude towards a possible French invasion, was closer to Bewick and Cartwright than to Paine. This does not mean he accepted the chauvinistic idea rampant among some sections of the upper classes. There is in Evans mind the notion that patriotism was a principle of internal politics and associated with liberty. When Thomas Evans said "patriotism cannot be crushed in England", precisely this kind of sentiment was expressed. In


40. Rudkin, Spence, 98, Evans, Christian Policy, 9, 12, 18, 29,
Christian Policy, "the purest patriotic motives", referred to internal and external patriotism. The men who were prosecuted with him were "men of intellect and ardent patriotism". Here he is probably pointing to the patriotism of internal liberty, but the other kind is also in his mind. The aim of his pamphlet,

Being a clear and concise examination into the causes that have produced the impending, unavoidable National Bankruptcy; And the Effects that must ensue, unless overtied by the Adoption of this real and Desirable Remedy, which would elevate These Realms into a Pitch of Greatness hitherto unattained by any nation that ever existed.

Looking at political affairs on the Continent, Evans concludes that "all the present enlightenment of mankind emanates from this small spot, this England, as from a divinity". He opposes Britain's interference in the affairs of the Continent and says the army should be brought back and only used for defensive purposes. Equally, he did not want "a foreigner" on the English throne.

Linked with the idea of patriotism was the notion of a patriot king. At first sight, it looks as though Evans wants a republic on the French model. Christianity was based on "the broadest republican principles". Moses commanded "the establishment of a commonwealth and a republic". But the king has a place in the republic, since "the thing wanted by both the king and the people is a constitution". Without a constitution the monarchy was in danger of being captured by the aristocratic interest. The Court party really represented a section of the ruling oligarchy and was "merely pretending to support the crown". The expenses of the Court are small when "compared with the exaction of the landlords"; they are "but a drop in the ocean". The crown and the people have real interests in common, and in association should do to the landlords "exactly what they have done by the crown".

Evans comparative lack of interest in the luxury of the court is not symptomatic of the absence of 'Machiavellian' moments in his

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41. Thompson, Working Class, 188; Place Papers, 27815; Evans, Christian Policy, iii.
42. Evans, Christian Policy, sub-title.
43. Evans, Christian Policy, 7, 8.
44. Evans, Christian Policy, 8, 22, 25, 29, 33.
thinking. By implication, a patriot king is a virtuous king. When he acts with the people for constitutional reform his virtue is most apparent. Like other Radicals, though, Evans' idea of virtue is as much, if not more, Christian as Machiavellian. He quotes St. Justin's words to the effect that "he that is virtuous is a Christian". Yet from one angle, the whole basis of Evans' political philosophy is predicated on the idea of landed independence, although once again it is clear the ideal of landed independence has a 'real' as well as an ideological origin. The loss of land leads to a loss of political and social rights. "I have ... witnessed", Evans says,

the effect of enclosure after enclosure, and tax after tax, expelling the cottager from gleaning the open fields, from the right of his common, from his cottage, his hovel once his own; robbing him of his little store, his pig, his fowls, his fuel; thereby reducing him to a pauper, a slave. 45

Among other things to notice in this passage is the implied differentiation of labour. If land provided the basis of the ideal of the amateur in aristocratic consciousness, it did the same for the consciousness of the artisan, yet from within a radically different frame of experience so far as political attitudes were concerned. 46 The same could be said for the common usage of the idea of natural law. Like many other Radicals, Thomas Evans derived his ideas about land-sharing from natural law and rights at least as much as he did from the concept of virtue: 'Locke' is present too. As he puts it, "the territory of a nation is the people's farm provided for them by their Creator". Government rested on a contract between the rulers and the people whereby the former were obliged to provide for the people's natural rights of life, liberty and property. Or,

All governments ... are but a committee or agency to do the business of the nation; and their paramount duty is ... to remove the obstacles to, and provide the means for, the exercise of the people's industry; to insure to them the means of being well-fed, well-clothed, well-lodged and well-defended; they are the people's servants appointed to that end, and in proportion to their fulfillment of those duties will they be approved or condemned,

45. Evans, Christian Policy, 17.
46. Evans, Christian Policy, 9.
supported or detested; but if on the contrary they assume to do what they please, to be the people's masters, to neglect their welfare, to dissipate their property, impoverish them, take their substance by force, render them miserable ... such government is ... a band of conspirators and robbers, a scourge to the human race, a thousand times worse than the plague.  

The social groups Evans had in the front of his mind as the recipients of basic rights were not so much Locke's men of property and substance as those who were struggling to attain and keep the basic provisions of life. That natural rights rhetoric is somehow the mental property of the bourgeoisie is a parody of reality. Since the origin of the current English government was conquest, it followed the people's rights were not protected under the contemporary political system.

Custom, virtue and natural rights instead of being paradigmatically distinct tended to be drawn together in association by a trope, by the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Evans also places heavy emphasis on the millenial language incorporated into the myth. There had already been "three great eras from which to date the liberty of the world, that of Moses, that of the Christian and that of Alfred", although now "a new one has arrived". Since Evans is pro-Hebrew, he rejects any classical model as the ideal form of polity. America, "the only remaining barrier" against despotism, is less classical than Alfredian and English. There is a danger of conquest by the forces of despotism but this can be avoided by a redistribution of landed property, "as in the days of Alfred". King Alfred was at once a millenial saviour and originator and founder. He was not only "the very saviour of the liberties of the world", but also,

Alfred the Great, Alfred the Good, whose name will never be forgotten while that of Moses shall remain, not because he was king of England and subdued the Danes; but because he was a philosopher, a philanthropist, and lawgiver, who guided by justice, again established in this island the agrarian commonwealth, rooting out that enemy of mankind - paganism; by destroying  

47. Evans, Christian Policy, 20.
49. Evans, Christian Policy, 8, 13, 14, 33.
feudality in the soil ... and dividing the land among the people, assigning to every ten families a certain portion of inheritance for ever. 50

Thomas Evans provides one of the most dramatic illustrations to support a modification of the view of Spenceans as a bunch of secularists and he offers an example of how if political radicalism and religious millenarianism are two opposing political strategies they still share certain cognitive similarities. The millenial element is very strong. A political act, land reform, was no more and no less than "the revealed will of God" or, "the divine laws" that were "promulgated through the interposition of Moses". Alfred's political millenium, "the most virtuous and happy state of society the world has ever experienced" was based on the principle of the "Mosaic diffusion of the natural property of the nation". 51 One passage, shrill in its millenial tone, which combines ideas about a patriot king and a hidden constitution with class antagonism towards landlords, would seem to give some support to the secularisation of the millenium thesis. "Landlords", Evans writes,

the remains of paganism, supersede the power of the Divinity - his laws - his commands. While they deny the majesty of the throne in the support of this inheritance with them, for they make the king and his family their pensioners at so much a year, as though they were only agents for the execution of their abominable mandates; and for the needy, the widow and fatherless, they build prisons and call them workhouses; by which to dispose of their victims of misery and oppression. But the sacred records declare, that such establishments shall not endure in peace, and the awful visitations arising therefrom in our own days are evidence, that till we put away the abomination of desolation, paganism; and return to a just administration of that property which is equally the natural right of all, abolishing lordship in the soil, the earth will be filled with violence, will continue to be deluged with blood. Christian policy would make this world a paradise, the prevailing pagan system constitutes it a hell: both are now fairly and truly before you, reader, choose for yourself. The time has come that something must be done. 52.

50. Evans, Christian Policy, 11-12.
51. Evans, Christian Policy, 8, 12.
52. Evans, Christian Policy, 15.
The millenial tone, style of speech, concepts and so on are also evident in another passage. Here, in his own mind, Evans makes a distinction between the political and the religious and takes the secularisation of the millenium even further. It is again worth quoting at some length. If the policy of the founders of Christianity is adhered to, he emphasises, the people

will enjoy a millenium indeed; not that spiritual millenium expected by dreamers and fanatics, but a political millenium founded in natural justice, is more a political than a spiritual institution: the spiritual part being introduced as an auxiliary to effect the establishment of the political .. Christianity such as I have described it, (a system of policy by participation of the right in the gifts of nature) would produce that brotherhood and harmony in the world, so emphatically described by the simile of the lion laying down with the lamb, as kings would be harmless and people innocent.53

Significantly, the examples Evans gives of putting these principles into action, are the Christian sects of the Moravians and the Quakers. Despite Evans' emphasis on the political side of the millenium, his language is saturated with religious ideas, with biblical allusions, with mythic presuppositions and so forth. Only if we go in for historical nominalism, if for example we say Methodism can be absorbed into a socialist tradition, can this sort of thing be seen as part of the socialist genealogy. Neither, pertinent to what has just been written, is it especially secular. To use Weber's categories, millenialism was always a form of this-worldly religion; it always had a strong secular tinge. In his emphasis on the secular side, Evans is no more remarkable than some of his 17th century forerunners. The millenium, though, was not merely a heaven on earth: it was a right here in God's blessed Isle, in England. Joining together patriotism and millenarianism, he declares,

England ... that country that has till now been the champion of freedom, the polar star of liberty; what could it not do? Let the government of England proclaim Christian freedom to

53. Evans, Christian Policy, 11.
* See above, Chapter Two, 22.
the world, the rights of mankind to all nations, and who shall tarnish its glory ... would this be a great and good work? All those that allow there is a God, and that he has revealed his will to mankind, cannot deny that it would be to do his will upon earth as it is done in heaven ... An act of this magnitude by our government, this, would harmonize all the Christian world - paralyze tyranny - destroy persecution, and place the majesty of these realms, in so commanding a situation, that it would even overlook the new Roman republic ... 54

If, for the sake of argument, there is a shift in content in the proclamation of a political rather than a religious millenium, the formal substructure of thought remains unchanged. A correspondent who wrote to Robert Wedderburn in 1817 was not far off the mark when he compared Wedderburn's or Spence's political millenium with Joanna Southcott's religious millenium. Perceptively, he remarks how Wedderburn's outpourings are "like the sermons of Joanna Southcote, (sic) continually offering to our imaginations the promised Shiloh that is to provide so much happiness, but when or how, or by what means is entirely left out of the question". Wedderburn's or Evans' politics, then, was very much a 'politics' in the pre-industrial sense. And its oppositions were of a political rather than a conceptual nature. As the judge points out in Wedderburn's account of his own trial, it was not the sentiments expressed but rather the tone in which they were delivered that led to his prosecution. If they had been delivered "in a cautious, decent guarded manner" and not "addressed to the lower orders", the prosecution would never have been tolerated. 55

In what additional senses was Evans' thinking structured by a 'religious', if not specifically Christian, metaphysic? One aspect is his use of the word "paganism". For Evans, paganism was the source of impurity in the world. Landlords were "the remains of paganism". As opposed to those who have merely been stigmatised with "the apppellations

54. Evans, Christian Policy, 35.
of infidels, jacobins and atheists", and who are really "the only true Christians", all despots and the supporters of despots are pagans. They are the real atheists since they believe in or worship profane power; in their origins and in their "total disregard and denial" of God's will they are the source of profanity and pollution. Again there is the idea that origins determine purity and sacredness. "Courts, kings, and lords, and landlords, and slaves, and oppression and war, and priests and ignorance" are all "pagan in their origin". All these forces and institutions are breeding grounds of professionalism and corruption. The "founders of Christianity" were truly founders of the world" and the millenial 'policy' was "the policy of the first Christians". Alfred's constitution was the same thing. Politics, the political struggle, was no more than a search for a return, for "its re-attainment", for its "restoration". There was nothing novel or new on the horizon. In Evans' mind, time was a cyclical struggle between the two opposing principles of liberty (purity) and despotism (sin, pollution). These are basic factors at work in 'historical' causation.56

It follows that enlightenment comes not so much from reason itself as from a contemplation and knowledge of those events and artefacts in history that are signs or representations of purity and virtue. At bottom this is what the phrases "political education" and "enlightenment" mean. So, too, the uncritical attitude towards the written word as found in certain "documents of liberty", the written word being the concrete expression of liberty. This is what is meant by the fetishism of liberty. 'Reason' was in fact a form of unreason. For example, since Alfred's constitution "was a written one", it "could never be forgotten". Nevertheless, it was also hidden or veiled in aristocratic mystery or complexity and, like God's divine Providence, was in need of interpretation, if not revelation, by a band of political virtuosos or saints. Thomas Evans' position as librarian of the Spencean society is probably indicative of this attitude. "Ignorance", especially ignorance of the constitution, is "that magic spell" through which paganism binds nations, although it "is fast dissolving before the bright rays of knowledge". But ignorance is not ignorance of the laws of progress, of a secular and open-ended future; it is ignorance of the cyclical laws of history or nations, of the Gothic balance, of the laws of God. The categories of light and darkness are also basically religious where darkness refers

56. Evans, Christian Policy, 11, 14, 15, 22.
more to the forces of evil and corruption than to a lack of secular knowledge. 57

It remains to analyse Evans' political economy. Given some interpretations of his ideas, it is necessary to bear certain things in mind. He puts heavy emphasis on the land problem and in more than one place writes that all the troubles of the times are due to "the land monopolists". His emphasis, in other words, is said to be economic rather than political; land reform rather than political rights is the central object of analysis. Yet, in some respects, his 'economic' discourse is unexceptional. "The causes of all the evils" are the national debt and taxation; they have "put the empire in jeopardy". The abolition of the national debt and taxation would not only "produce a written constitution", it "would establish for ever the fame and glory of the government". At least in part, the causes of the present evils are the monied interest, an over-burdened state and the lack of constitutional reform. In this much there is very little disagreement between Evans and, say, John Cartwright or other writers of a similar ilk. At most, it would seem, it is the mechanism - economic rather than political - or the means rather than the ends where any difference lies. This tends to be borne out by further analysis. Evans, for example, does not go much on monopolies. Yet the corn trade is "this productive monopoly" suggesting no deep-rooted ideological opposition to monopoly or to its internal logic. And besides land, there were additional forms of property Evans wanted to 'nationalise'. As with other believers in the Anglo-Saxon myth, it is also likely he stood "for state intervention in the market against laissez faire". More to the point, given the social and economic structure of the period, the item was hardly likely to be high on his political or ideological agenda. But it is certain the state had an important role to play in society; it is also certain that, like others, Evans did not focus his attention on productive relations. The problem was how to "promote consumption". Quoting the ditty "for forms of government let fools contest", he implies the answer is economic rather than political. 58

This does not mean Evans ought to be taken at his face value,

57. Evans, Christian Policy, 14, 32.
58. Evans, Christian Policy, 23, 28, 29ff, 4, viii; Hill, "Yoke" 120.
that is understood in a modern sense, any more than should his statements about property be interpreted in the light of modern preoccupations. The way to increase and shift consumption, he says, is not a different form of government but through the return of property "into the hands of the people". Not government but "property, and property alone ... gives power and influence, and wherever people are deprived of it they are slaves". Not universal suffrage but property gives people their liberty and independence. "The government", he says, "should secure property to every individual: this is clearly demonstrated by France and America" since "America cannot be conquered" because "every man's house was his own to fight for". When reading these words what needs to be kept in mind is not only the wide rather than the narrow conception of property but also the mythic underpinnings of his thought. There is a difference between "natural property" and other 'cultural' types of property. Evans looked for no more than an "agrarian commonwealth". This is what attracted Robert Southey. Unlike many of his contemporaries although he vilifies them Southey does not totally despise the Spenceans since their scheme "is that the soil belongs to the state and that individuals should rent their land ... from their parishes". They permit, he adds, "every kind of private property except in land". Private property in general was, Evans says, in a sense sacred; subjects had a right to rebel against governments who "dissipate their property".

Regardless of differences over the ways and means of reforming society, then, Evans' central concern with land as the original source of wealth was not fundamentally at variance with the opinions of other Radicals. Land was original in two senses. Land was original in that it was the first or primary force of production and consumption. It was also original in the sense that it emanated from God who was "the proprietor of the earth". He gave to the people "a possession in land for ever"; the land is "the People's Farm". From this premiss it followed land differed from other forms of property because it was sacred. Rights in land were therefore natural rights as was political liberty upon which the re-possessions of the land also depended. The people would only be free when they had regained the land. To effect this Evans called for "a national partnership, beginning with the

60. Evans, Christian Policy, 8, 14.
parishes". Taking statements of this kind as a key to Evans' thinking, not only socialist historiography has put him among the founders of socialism. Yet close reading shows the idea of a national partnership has some surprising elements in it. "A national partnership of territory, allotted by nature to the people", involves

dividing profits as rents among all the people, like the profits of a trading company to all the partners; or the dividends of the interest of money lent, like the subscribers to the national debt; or the dividends of the East India company, which are on this principle... 61

Dividing "the rent or produce of the land" was better than dividing the land itself into small plots. This idea of land 'nationalisation' or municipalisation makes Evans a suitable candidate for inclusion in the socialist hagiography. That he has more than a few blemishes or shortcomings is plain from the analogies he uses. The idea of a partnership and analogies taken from trading companies and joint-stock companies are scattered throughout his writing. A modern day socialist would hardly dare use such examples. For Evans, writing in 1816, in a completely different mental, social and economic environment the ideological reverberations were faint. Under the pre-factory system, trade and manufacture was largely carried on through "purely personal business ownership through private firms and partnerships". Until 1825, joint stock companies were, strictly speaking, illegal "except by means of separate private Acts of Parliament". Only in Queen Victoria's first year of reign was "a tentative step" taken towards "more general recognition of the joint stock system". Limited liability in Evans' day was non-existent; and so on. What also follows is that neither can Evans be absorbed into any middle class or 'bourgeois' tradition in the way Paine sometimes is. It follows too from the fact that not only did "the principles and policy of the first Christians" demand that "real or permanent property be held in common" as in a "partnership" or "a joint-stock company" but the 18th century church also held their "lands and buildings" in common and "not of individuals". If anything, Evans held to a kind of religious corporatism, or at most co-operation or co-ownership. Real property was not only the land and the buildings that stood upon it but also grain, clothing production and the mines. In short, all the articles of consumption closely connected with subsistence and with agrarian rather

than industrial production. 62

Since the aristocracy have sequestered landed property it follows the biggest sinners are the aristocracy. They are singled out for special attention. "Landlords ... and landlords only are the oppressors of the people", although it seems later this statement is modified. The landlord is "a robber ... a monopoliser of the earth" who "dispossesses his brothers" and "seizes on the gift of the common Father". Blame for the disorders that have disturbed English society during the last fifty years is given to "the accumulation of about three hundred families, who have engrossed nearly all the land and houses of the three kingdoms". Unable to spend this wealth rationally, the aristocracy have promoted wars "to extend the system of funding". While in obvious political disagreement with Burke, Evans shares his concern regarding the structure of consumption and the key role the aristocracy play in this. At times, though, the mercantile interest are associated with the aristocracy's social and economic sins. The monarchy opened the political system by including people with "property from industry" to balance the influence of the crown against that "of the feudal lords". Evans seems to be referring to the merchant interest; and in the long term the move does not seem to have paid off. For it is "the avarice of our landholders and merchants", not manufacturers, who have suffered from the recent wars, who are condemned. Evans also seems to separate the aristocracy from "gentlemen and freeholders" or gentry. 63

Given this vilification, it is surprising to find Evans thinks his millenium can come about and abolition of the national debt and taxation "would not disturb the relative classes". As he quotes, "orders and degrees jar not with liberty but well consist". The aristocracy have a clear role: "let them retain their rank, and be put in their proper place under the crown and be paid for their services". The monarchy is also safe since "the head of state would be preserved in the proper place and order". Under the new agrarian commonwealth, the nobility and the monarchy are to get sums out of the public revenue. The crown gets £20 million; the nobility and the clergy £5 millions each and there is a sum of £20 million set aside for compensation as well

63. Evans, Christian Policy, 18, 22, 27, 29, 33, on Burke, see 159, footnote.
as other expenses. The generosity of this provision can be gauged from the fact that the "balance remaining" to be divided among the people amounts to £75 million. The other balance that remains is obviously the political or Gothic balance or constitution.

This table is reprinted in a pamphlet called Christian Policy in Full Practice Among the People of Harmony, published in 1818 where he develops further some of his ideas on political economy. In this piece, there is hardly any reference to the Alfredian myth, but given the dates of publication and composition, and given what was said about John Baxter's publications, there is no reason to suppose any radical break with the ideas expressed in the 'previous' work, in his Salvation pamphlet. At the time when Evans wrote, Harmony was a town in Pennsylvania inhabited by a Lutheran sect who had emigrated from Germany after splitting off from the main body of Lutherans. They held their land and goods in common and Evans feels they provide a good example of how Spencean principles can be put into practice. He takes his information from two writers who had published accounts of their visits and sojourns to Harmony.

'Natural' or agrarian economies have different levels of development and it is clear, despite the small population, that the agrarian commonwealth prevailing among the people of Harmony is of the complex variety. By 1811, the population was eight hundred persons. Their constitution was "grounded on Acts iv, 32", which read, "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught to the things he possessed was his own, BUT THEY HAD ALL THINGS IN COMMON". In the case of Harmony, this went far beyond ownership of the land and seems to have included the whole of the means of production and consumption. There was an inn, a huge barn, an oil-mill, a blue-dyers shop, a tannery, a saw-mill, a store-house, a brewery, stables, a fulling-mill, a hemp-mill, a grist-mill, a warehouse, a winery and, of course, a church or "meeting house". The Harmonites also owned a wool-carding machine and six spinning jennies, and "in the weaving house sixteen looms were at work, besides several warpers and winders". In the "spinning house" were "two roving billies and six spinning jennies" operated by young girls who sang church music as they

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64. Evans, Christian Policy, 25, 29, 33.
performed their tasks. Also mentioned is "the soap and candle-works; the dye-works; the turners, carpenters and machine-makers". A "Labyrinth" or "elegant flower garden" and a "Botanic Garden" get mentioned, suggesting that not only should nature be used but also appreciated and studied. The scope and complexity of the economy is further revealed in the list of occupations. The Harmony community's "operative members" are made up of:

- one hundred farmers, three shepherds, ten masons,
- three stone-cutters, three brick-makers, ten carpenters, two sawyers, ten smiths, two waggon-makers,
- three turners, two nailors, seven coopers, three rope-makers, ten shoe-makers, two saddlers, three tanners, seven tailors, one soap-boiler, one brewer, four distillers, one gardener, two grist-millers,
- two oil-millers, one butcher, six joiners, six dyers, dressers, shearers, &c, one fuller, two hatters, two potters, two warpers, seventeen weavers,
- two carders, eight spinners, one rover, one minister of religion, one schoolmaster, one doctor, one store-keeper with two assistants, and one tavern keeper with one assistant.

Clearly, the political millennium with its hatters, is very far from being a return to a primitive past where only the simplest of occupations and the minimum of culture prevails. If still in some sense a 'natural economy' it is of mercantile complexity. Myth only uses the past to recreate the present and the simple is only opposed to aristocratic complexity and their "excess" of culture. This gives milleniums and millenial ideas their rationality, and even their appeal. In a sense, they merely purify existing society. "The Harmonites", we are told, know nothing "of balls, masquerades, and expensive dissipation - of horse-racing, cock-fighting, and every species of gaming, 'swearing, lying and debauchery'". The "simple and devout" people of Harmony are ignorant of these activities "in which the 'higher orders' of Europe are so thoroughly skilled". The Harmonites approach something like moral perfection; they live "securely and abundantly, without jails, workhouses, or courts of law".

65. Thomas Evans, Christian Policy in Full Practice among the People of Harmony..., (London, 1818), 2, 3, 5.
66. Evans, Harmony, 8.
67. Evans, Harmony, 8, 12.
The key to this is the common ownership of land and its division into "joint stock-farms in which all are equal partners of the benefits produced by their own labour". There is "common exertion and common right in the benefits of nature." In detail, this means,

The town is subdivided into lots of a quarter of an acre each, and every family has its own house and lot, with a couple of milch cows, and as many hogs and poultry as they choose to keep. The rest of their provisions, and their clothing, is furnished by the Society; in return their labour falls into the common stock. Hence every family is, in effect, independent within itself, as far as domestic arrangements are concerned; and they are all united at the same time, in a body, the joint effect of whose is irresistible.

This passage needs to be studied with great care. First, with regard to the question of hegemony it is important to note independence is far removed from its aristocratic and gentry ideal and is related to the common ownership but private use of land. There is a domestic or private economy and there is a public economy. Something vaguely like an idealised version of the Bolshevik's N.E.P. - also the product of a semi-industrial society - but with different ideological underpinnings. The family, as an illustration of the latter point, far from being a bourgeois blot upon society is given Christian-mythic pride of place. Another aspect that needs to be interpreted with care are Evans' statements concerning labour's share of the product. He develops the few cursory remarks made in his earlier pamphlet. Under the regime of the Harmonites, "industry" gets "the just possession of the fruits of its own labour". He has, then, something like a labour theory of value, although it would be a mistake to label it "socialist". Once again we are in the realm of "germs" and "traces", and it is dangerous and misleading to centre too much attention on a single concept or idea without placing it in relation to other ideas and statements with which it appears, that is without seeing it as part of a paradigm - some sort of totality. Initially, Evans labour theory of value, if it deserves to be credited with that title, has to be seen in relation to the ideas

68. Evans, Harmony, 13.
69. Evans, Harmony, 8.
70. Evans, Harmony, 8, note.
mentioned above, to a particular idea of independence, of property, of
the family and so on. Also, the property to which it is related is either
landed property or property with an agrarian origin or dependence. And
what robs "industry" of the fruits of its labour is not profit but tax;
taxation is the source of exploitation. This is the only possible
reading in the light of his statements in the earlier tract. The
significance of the 'silences' must also be grasped. Apart from the
omission of any discussion of profits, there is nothing on the factory
system as a problem, on industrial capital, on a class of entrepreneurs -
Malthus is only an apologist for the landholders - on surplus value in
relation to production.

Connected with some of the points just made is the question of
Evans' 'materialism'. One of Evan's travellers reports that the basis
of the Harmony Society "is religion". The principles which bind the
Society together, he says, are "LOVE TO GOD; GOODWILL TOWARDS MEN; PURITY
OF LIFE; AND A COMMUNITY OF GOODS". Evans comments that he is "palpably
in error". The Harmonites purity and perfection are based on their "mode
of holding ... property". Their "morality, happiness, and religious
devotion ... arise altogether from the ease with which their wants are
supplied from their common farm". What Evans is referring to is the
mechanism of social change and the basis of social institutions. In this
sense he is a kind of materialist, yet it is a mistake to then go on to
point to his modernity and his secular frame of mind since his categories
of thought, are fundamentally mythico-religious and 'pre-industrial'.

This comes out even more clearly in his "Spence's Plan or
Agrarian Fellowship", attached as a sort of appendix to the Harmony
pamphlet. Evans begins by reaffirming that a plan of agrarian fellowship
would leave "the established forms or administration of a country"
undisturbed "either in church or state, provided it be Christian". But
in the next sentence he declares "all permanent property ... held by
feudal tenure" should be transformed into "the common farm of the
people". Included are "the whole territory of land, waters, houses,
mines, fisheries, canals, bridges". This list is not too different, in
its exclusion of moveable property, from land plans of Henry George who
wrote in the late 19th century and who was more liberal than socialist.
There are other resemblances, too. Evans reasserts his belief that
landholding should be run by small communities on the parish model and
have the status of "a body corporate". What George seems to have taken
from the Spenceans is the idea that the land be let privately "on leases".
Each leaseholder is "allowed to let to tenants at will". Generously, for the nobility, "present occupiers" would have "preference where they choose to retain possession". In return for leasing the property from the state, the leaseholders would pay a rent. Although Evans says taxes would be abolished, and this seems to be true so far as direct taxes on commodities go, it is clear the rent is no more than a property tax in disguise, and it will fall only on land, not on other forms of property. There is to be a written constitution which among other things will contain provisions for making secure "persons and properties". It is also clear the expenses of the state will not be small. A fair amount of the surplus got from the rents will go towards administering public property and to "national affairs", that is "individuals should be awarded salaries or pensions according to their rank ... and support of their quality, like the dignitaries of the church". In addition there are to be "parish charges" for repairs to the buildings and so forth and there would be social welfare payments to the poor. Monies are also needed for courts, universities, schools, judges, clergy, the army, the navy and so on and so on. It could almost be said civil society dissolves into the state rather than the other way around and this puts Evans closer to Burke than to any kinds of 19th century liberalism.  

Another aspect more consciously expressed in "Spence's Plan" is Evans' deism. There is, he says, "one universal church of God". This, "the love of the Deity" was revealed to the world "first through the laws of Moses" and then through "the gospel". Deism, the principle of "one God", one church, one community and so on is pitted against "the gates of hell or the pagan system". Private property in land is part of the latter since it is a form of individualism or plurality. Agrarian fellowship or holding the land in common is a form of one-ness or unity since what is communal is not fragmented or individual, it is not partible. Agrarian fellowship is also Providential since it is "the express will of God as declared in the Scriptures". Unlike the present pagan system it is "original" and not "polluted". Intermingled with all this 'religious' talk, is a language of "luxury", vice and so forth. "Harrington and Spence" appear side by side with references to Moses and Adam.  

71. Evans, "Spence's Plan of Agrarian Fellowship" in Harmony, 14.
72. Evans, Harmony, 15-16.
Before I leave Evans, it is perhaps worth trying to reinforce an argument made earlier. In the "Plan", Evans draws attention to the "excessive labour" of the working classes, low wages and the hardships resulting from the Combination Laws. But again, it is not a class of employers who are responsible. Taxation and the national debt, the fact that the working classes "pay away their last farthing in taxes", is to blame. 73

Yet again we have found less of a Frenchified revolutionary and more of the English constitutionalist, in terms of political ideas. The constitution is an inheritance handed down from Alfred's Saxons. Glimpses have been found in Evans and perhaps they are more than that, of how the notions of custom and patriotism could be turned against the ruling classes, could be anti-hegemonic. In the two publications examined, the millenial concept or theme is perhaps the strongest. Yet is has been shown that the millenium is a strictly English affair brought about by a patriot king. Heroes and villains abound in Evans' writing.

A strong theme in both pamphlets is land redistribution. Evans arguments on redistribution, as we saw, rest on natural rights, but also on virtue and custom. His 'problematic' is still the pattern of land ownership, luxury and taxation. Yet his criticism of the gentry is qualified and he wants a reformed aristocracy rather than having it done away with altogether. The reformed society is also to be carried out by a benevolent state with a wide-ranging social welfare policy. His analysis generally is still more 'political' than 'economic'. Further, it has been shown that the analysis of political society is underpinned by a 'religious' metaphysic of purity and pollution and by a mythological language of a golden Saxon past, of origins and revelation.

THOMAS SPENCE

Thomas Spence would seem to be an odd choice to include in a thesis that is ostensibly about the myth of the Anglo-Saxon

73. Evans, Harmony, 16.
constitution. He barely mentions it, and a number of writers have also drawn attention to his secular cast of mind. So the questions put to Spence are similar to those asked of Evans. Is he a modern; is his thought secular; is his analysis 'economic'; is he a socialist? Is he modern in his thought rather than Gothic? What role, if any, do the 'mercantilist' concepts of virtue, natural rights, custom and so on play in his thinking? What role, if any, do the mythological concepts of purity/pollution, culture/nature, origins and so on play in his thought?

Although there are obvious differences in the ideas of Evans and Spence, not least in Spence's rejection of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, similarities are more significant and many opaque or elliptical expressions in Evans are given greater clarity in Spence's more prolific writing. Even though Spence rejected the Anglo-Saxon myth, it is pertinent to paraphrase Pocock's comment on Paine and say that the manner of Spence's rejection is paradoxical in that some kind of 'acceptance', some common mode of discourse and thought is also involved. Related to this question is the general drift of scholarly comment and criticism on Spence; his alleged modernity, his allegiance to this or that interest or social group. Evaluation of the historiographical literature will bring out the effects of my methodology. Unlike the other writers or ideologues so far considered, there is in what follows no attempt at a really close analysis and reading of Spence's writings.

Given these intentions and concerns, little needs to be said concerning Spence's background or biography. Spence is somewhat better known than the other figures appearing in this chapter and has been the subject of Olive Rudkin's biographically-based work, as well as receiving attention in histories of this or that aspect of Radicalism. Despite the fact that he has vaguely lower "middling" origins, Spence's own later work experience establishes his artisan credentials. Regarding an audience, 'his writings were not intended for scholars' or for any others from a 'refined' social background. His own reading, however, gives the appearance of being fairly wide-ranging.74

74. On Spence's background, personality and ideas, apart from Olive Rudkin, see e.g. E.P. Thompson, Working Class, Cole and Postgate, Common People and Place Papers for contemporary views of Spence.
The significance of what Spence read and thought is best understood in the light of historiographical interpretation. For Christopher Hill, "Spence's view of the origin of property ... has a strong affinity to the Norman Yoke", although it is through his idea "of the parish as a unit of self-government" that his debt to the tradition is strongest. The most careful Marxian commentary on Spence comes from P.M. Kemp-Ashraf and it is worth considering her arguments in some detail. She plainly states that Spence "uses the word 'rent' in the sense of 'profit'". Since Spence wrote during the beginnings of industrial capitalism he is best seen as a transitional figure. While following in the footsteps of the 17th century Radicals, he also departs from their ways and manners of thinking. Crucially for Spence, land is "the means of industry", meaning agrarian capitalism, while he is said to speak more often of labourers than of tenants. Not only does he abhor exploitation through the ownership of land; he also hates "commercial avarice generally". Consequently, "the intention is to make the sources of wealth, as well as all primary subsistence, common property ... unlike most land reformers". She alleges, "Spence's scheme confiscated all industrial establishments and their major equipment". For support, she leans on Spence's statement that the mines "and many other great Concerns" could be "enjoyed in Partnership". He is also said to have been even more modern than this in his ideas. Large-scale industry was to become "public property" and "if not managed by the Parish as a whole, to be run by 'corporations' of workers collectively". Land collectivism encompassed "these large industries intimately associated with land tenure but already long-established on capitalist lines". From this "there is not a great step to the concept of workers' ownership of the means of production". Had Spence been able to foresee "the further results of the industrial revolution" he would have developed these ideas more fully. Regarding Spence's ship allegory in Description of Spensonia, we are told that "the ship is not only an allegory for the general partnership in land" but since it takes the place of nature is "a model for any enterprise involving a more complex division of labour". Spence, moreover, "was not opposed to the division of labour". And the "dividend" paid out of rent income "stresses the conception of the parish as a joint stock corporation which was a common enough idea in later workers' co-operatives". We are informed that "private property is abolished" and that Spence showed "no desire to restore the old peasantry". To a large extent he turned his back on the 17th century Radicals and "gave the land question a new content". Unlike the Levellers,
he did not attack feudalism but rural capitalism; his critique was against "mixed government or the bourgeois republic". Consequently he has a relatively modern perception of social class. Using Spence's statement that "all Riches come from Society, I mean the Labouring Part of it", he gets credited with a labour theory of value in which only the working class "is socially creative". Spence alone, among the British Radicals, grasped "the economic basis of society" in "its full significance"; although he "did not define capitalism nor see its existence with the clarity of the next generation". There is also Spence the political revolutionary. He was opposed to the idea that reform "could be realised through any of the recognised constitutional procedures". He is said to have "vacillated between the idea of a revolutionary elite ... and the spontaneous uprising of the people". He is an egalitarian and a 'leveller', although, strangely, he is said to have had "more regard for the Republicans - Milton, Harrington, Sidney, Vane". Spence's "appearance" is to be connected not only with "the problems of the age" but also "our own". Another writer, Olive Rudkin, sees Spence as following "French fashions" in "drawing up constitutions"; his Spensonia aimed at "greater definiteness and exactitude" in his political thinking. She also sees logical connections between the ideas of Spence and Robert Owen; the latter 'develops' Spence's doctrines. For another writer, it was through the publication of Evans and Spence that "the French Revolution was finally 'naturalised' and anglicised"; at this time English Radical ideology "acquires ... a certain universalism from French example". In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels label Spence a communist in company with other English communists or socialists such as Owen and Thompson. This view is repeated by Patricia Hollis. "For the Spenceans", she says, "property was theft ... private property was the enemy and land nationalisation the remedy". Spenceanism gets "woven into the Cobbett historiography of land stolen by feudal lords", although the followers of Spence were basically, ahistorical and did not discuss "how the system originated". In place of a critical Radicalism that "described the poor as poor because the Government exploited them as consumers" the Spenceans attributed poverty to the fact that "the poor ... as producers had been dispossessed of the land"; while the land plans of Spence were "more nearly communitarian". Another author finds in Spence an "anti-capitalist bias" and fearful of "the spread of commercial relations into rural society". On religion, Christopher Hill discovers Spence's "secularisation" of
"Winstanley's demand for a heaven on earth".  

The general drift of critical commentary on Spence is clear; it is not a case of attacking straw men. The first task is to produce a counter-argument. My initial assertion or proposition is that if he is against "commercial avarice" he is certainly not against commercial relations as such. He is not so much against private profit but rather against commercial greed or an 'excess' on the grounds of a Christian-inspired ethics, not because of any economic theory. Exploitation is related to land ownership, not to the ownership of industry which he plans to leave virtually untouched. Regarding the land itself, the idea of a partnership is ambiguous as it must be at this state of economic development; the idea is drawn from business as much from anywhere else. Even the collective partnership in land does not seem to extend beyond the parish; this tends to make it 'corporative' rather than communistic. Any suggestion of the large-scale nationalisation of industry and workers' control is pure anachronism and speculation. All the quotations that Kemp-Ashraf uses to back up these claims are taken from later writers. Her reference to "small independent producers and little capitalists" is more to the point. Perhaps even more than the labourer it is these sorts of people that Spence had in mind in his plans; in most instances the labourer would become transformed into one of these types. An alternative interpretation of Spence's ship allegory tends to confirm these propositions. The ship itself is only land. In Spence's description there is nothing comparable to it in terms of fixed assets so it does not provide a model for any enterprise. Also, the organisation of labour on board certainly does not posit "a classless society of working people". As Kemp-Ashraf herself puts it, the dividend paid by the parish is only a way of "partially" levelling income differences. And, as she perceptively writes, in contrast to most other commentators, "to call Spence a land nationaliser assumes too much". In keeping with this is his limited

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criticism of "rural capitalism". He got no further than a critique of mercantile capital, and even here great care is needed in exegesis. Spence's statement that "All Riches come from Society, I mean the Labouring Part", definitely does not refer to a proletariat; or, come to that, even exclusively to artisans, journeymen and so on. A farmer or an entrepreneur might equally belong to "the Labouring Part". Spence did not go along with Locke in agreeing that the labourer was "an extension of the proprietor's person". But, on the whole, his theory of value, such as it is, was much closer to Locke's conceptual framework and experience than it was, say, to Marx's. He is much more a critic of mercantile 'capitalism' and its political system of Old Corruption than of modern capitalism. From this angle, he can neither represent "a consciously working class point of view" nor reject the new "liberalism" if only because, as Kemp-Ashraf says, his ideas were "often expressed as condemnation of the old order". The vocabulary of "reason, enlightenment and independence" can hardly be construed purely in terms of the separation of the working class from all other classes, as an expression of freedom from the obligations that went with a low social status. If this is involved in the ideal of independence, there is usually much more at issue not least the relationship to 'property'. More acceptable, is Kemp-Ashraf's suggestion that Spence took as a model for independence or "self-government and economic planning" the "well-attested experience of the common people in organising their numerous clubs and benefit societies". It was at this level the working classes expressed themselves, but if Spence is to be given credit for "first bringing the labourer onto the scene as an active class-conscious political force", it must still be asked against whom or what class antagonism it was directed. It was against the aristocracy and rich merchant; not against the small industrialist. Similarly, if it is true that Spence considered "the form of government less important than property relations", it still needs to be heavily qualified. At one point, Kemp-Ashraf says she wants to "connect his appearance with the problems of his age and sometimes with our own". Both these exercises are valid but it has been my argument that the former have been miscast, that the contemporary problems which Spence faced have been miscast. In part this has been because the problems of the present have interfered with interpretations of the past. Spence's "appearance" or ideas are relevant to the present time, but not in the way imagined. To understand their proper connection it is vital to start from the principle of difference rather than a metaphysic of sameness.*

This metaphysic does not seem to have interfered with the historical sensitivity of P.A. Brown who again has perceptive things to say on the subject, if only in a very general way. He assigns to Spence "something near to socialistic doctrine" on the grounds that national prosperity depended upon the poor "who do all the work, while the rich enjoy all the benefit". But as he recognises, this was far removed from what came later. "There is", he writes, "a gulf, wide and deep, between such hazy views and the doctrine which the theoretical Socialists of the early nineteenth century adopted from Ricardo". There was no attack on property by the reformers of Spence's generation and Spence himself "deliberately rejected more general schemes of socialisation, arguing that they involved rigid equalisation". The Radicals of this time centred their criticism on "high prices, rents and taxes" and had no "general theory" either "cause or cure". Reform was not related to the social and economic structure or environment but "lies through politics" - even for Spence. The break occurs with Charles Hall and the Ricardian socialists and Lovett and Bronterre O'Brien, who had read Rousseau, Robespierre and Babeuf, and are of a different cast of mind, stressing economic reforms, the labour theory of value and class antagonism between "the worker and his masters". Another way of putting this is to say it is a shift in focus from the state to civil society reflecting the very real change that had taken place in the balance of classes and economic development. The most that could be claimed for Spence as part of this shift, for Spence the 'socialist', is to see him as some kind of co-operator. If Jones took the trade club as his political model, Spence and Evans took the benefit societies as their economic model. According to Olive Rudkin, the parishes were to operate as a "federated group of benefit societies whose directors were to be elected from and by shareholders". While this is close to the ideals and practice of the co-operative movement, it might also go some way to explaining why Spence was reluctant to make many inroads into industrial property. Another reason, though, is that Spence saw private industrial property as moveable property and therefore as something socially fluid. It is on this question, as well as on industry in general that Spence's thought is to be distinguished from Robert Owen's ideas. It is the significance of property in land that Patricia Hollis seems to miss. Property in general was not theft because it was only agrarian private property that was to be 'nationalised'. Also, to take the argument further, it is necessary to specify what Spence and others meant by land nationalisation. It was to be based on the parish. And the parish was to own the land as a partnership or joint-stock company through which the parishioners
would receive a dividend from the rents or taxes paid by the users of the land. This is a far cry from modern socialist schemes of land nationalisation. If there is a communitarian element in Spence it is based on parish government and trade club and friendly society organisation. There are similar problems in placing Spenceanism in relation to the 1830s model rather than in relation to the older 1819 paradigm. First, Spenceanism was part of the '1819' scene. Second, Spence's own model was, to a large extent of the '1819' type. Third, if Spence's explanation related the theft of land to origin and to history it was not an explanation of the Anglo-Saxon myth type. Fourth, both Spence and '1819' saw land as a source of exploitation; both saw taxation as a form of exploitation. Fifth, Spence did not, as a later Spencean Allen Davenport did, explain taxation in terms of a labour theory of value pertaining to land ownership and capital. Sixth, the '1819' ideology, drawing as it did on trade club traditions, was not purely individualistic yet at the same time Spence's thinking contained elements of individualism. And, to deal with criticism from another source, neither do we find any deep-seated anti-industrial or anti-capitalist feeling or fear of the spread of commercial relations into the countryside. Despite his agrarian bias, Spence is not a primitivist. Neither is he a modern; as has been said of his trying to ape the new French Constitution, he is copying a scheme "which he does not understand"; he is observing it through the darkened glass of English political conceptions. Not all of the historiographical points raised have been countered or answered; for example, those dealing with Spence's attitude towards revolutionary violence and his religious beliefs. These and others will be raised again in examining parts of Spence's ideas and language. So far only counter-propositions and hypothesis had been advanced. Evidence and illustration are also needed.

A recent writer finds Locke at the core of Spence's beliefs. Showing again how Locke could be made to turn intellectual somersaults to suit the whims of his audience, Spence is said to have "invoked Locke's theories of property to justify the end of the existing property structure". Unless there is an attempt to elicit contradictions, this is perhaps suggestive again that the Locke versus Harrington paradigms

break down at the level of popular ideology. There is evidence that Spence had read both writers. At his trial Spence cited a very long piece from Harrington's own defence at his trial, and one writer puts Spence's land bias down to "the influence of Harrington and the Physiocrats"; Harrington was "the one writer who had a real influence on Spence". Spence's publication, Pig's Meat, is said to contain more extracts from Harrington's writings, from Oceana and Political Aphorisms, than from any other author. Spence himself called Harrington's writings "a valuable collection of general political principles, or fundamental truths in government". Yet the 'influence' or relationship is complex. Spence's belief in the ballot box, in a property qualification for voters, in paid members of parliament, in the 'Gothic' balance between competing social forces are all put down to Spence's reading of Harrington. At the same time, it is argued "the trend of Harrington's thought was political" while Spence's was "economic". 77

But there is evidence which suggests Spence was also thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Locke and somehow managed to merge or blend the two writers' political thinking into some sort of coherent whole. Ironically, he not only sold Burke's publications from his stall but when arrested Spence had in his pocket "a book of extracts from Locke". He once said, "Locke's Essay on Government and many other eminent works as well as the Bible have contributed to strengthen my confidence in this my Millenial Form of Government". The sting is in the tail of this remark. Both Locke and God, Spence says, and by God he means the Book of Revelation, prove men have natural rights which cannot be taken away from them. Added, then, to Harrington and Locke is Spence's deep reading of the Bible, something we know he did from early childhood. With the exception of the Revelation which he "had studied", it appears his reading was of the Old Testament writers. His ideas were certainly inspired by Biblical prophecy, Moses being the favourite. His belief that land originated in common was also traced back to this source. He also used the reports of travellers who had been among the Eskimos and the Red Indians to validate and illustrate his arguments. Robinson Crusoe, was an obvious influence as well. This back to natural origins,

or 'primitivism' was no doubt reinforced in Spence's mind by the books and pamphlets of writers like Paine and Volney. The latter seems to have been a particular favourite. Selections from Volney appear in Pig's Meat and in Spence's Letter to Ralph Hodge. His first prosecution occurred because he was selling Paine's pamphlets, although Spence always claimed he formed his ideas and coined the phrase "rights of man" long before reading Paine. 78

All this is but a part of Spence's reading, and Volney and Paine have been mentioned in particular since they point to Spence's basically anti-historical frame of mind even though we know he read a number of historical works. The monopoly in land, Spence says, cannot be justified by historical tradition or customary right" "this right ancestors are not supposed to have over posterity". Natural rights are what count. Yet it is not a purely logical argument he goes in for. There is also a clear indication he is speaking of rights which have been usurped in the dim and distant past. The people needed to take possession of their "long lost rights". Civilisation "is founded on conquest" and conquest gives rise to private property in land. On more than one occasion he specifically mentions "William the Bastardite" and refers to "a Banditti". Yet there is no sense in which Spence appropriated the Anglo-Saxon myth as a whole and it is true he "never spoke of Saxon liberties like Major Cartwright ... or Thomas Evans". Like Paine, he rejects the positive side of the Gothic mind. Like John Baxter, Spence sees the Saxons as the illegitimate conquerors of the ancient Britons but unlike Baxter he does not then go on to point to the degeneration of the Britons' polity or describe in glowing terms the laws enacted by Alfred. More significantly, the Saxons and the Spartans' polity, among others, are rejected as models since they operated a system of petty-freeholding. Rents or taxes from commonly-held land hold the answer to the present troubles. The division of land into small privately-owned plots is ineffectual since presumably the land can be bought and sold and some of the little plots will be turned into big holdings. At the same time Spence accepts other Gothic conventions of argument such as that the system of Old Corruption established itself as a system at the time of

the 1688 Revolution. 79

In fact, Spence's general political language or vocabulary, like Paine's, is replete with mercantilist assumptions. It also contains the assumptions or ideas characteristic of a mythical mode of expression. In harmony with a society where industry and economic relations were dependent on the natural or agrarian cycle, Spence organises his thinking around the dialectic which exists between culture and nature. As with other Radical writers, these categories are plastic - as they are in pre-literate myth. He is no unmitigated 'primitivist'. Yet, like others, much in his writing favours nature over culture and the country over the city, although this does not make Spence's ideas anti-capitalist or anti-commercial. "The Savages in Greenland, America and the Cape of Good Hope" are better off than most men are under civilisation. Culture and civilisation were bad, or rather imperfect, since "in proportion, as the comforts of life encreased by Man's Labour and ingenuity, so did the rapacity of Men encrease to rob each other". This leads Spence on to a criticism of luxury and the aristocracy. "All from Noah to Abraham were Architects of Nobility, that is of powerful Impiety, Confusion ... Warfare, Hunting". His millenial polity, "Spensonia", is agrarian rather than urban. He refers to the "beauty of the countryside" and it has "the air of a garden". Spensonia is a series of "gardens and orchards". In the same work, Spence argues for racial equality and the rights of the American Indians. But while the Indian had "his native independence" he also "sighed for the domestic happiness of a civilised life". Again, there is ambivalence towards civilisation; again it can only be resolved or explained by resorting to the 'Machiavellian' or mercantilist idea of excess. "Reading", he says, "promotes refinement and sensibility, and Taste for Elegance in Clothes, Furniture and Every Department in Life". Reading, then, produced a desire for the Georgian "good life"; there is no simple antithesis between, say, aesthetic Radicals and epicurean Whigs or Tories. And given the desires that reading created, "Trade, Manufactures, and the Arts must needs be greatly encouraged" for "all Nations ... have naturally a taste and strong desire for foreign productions and luxuries". 80


Paradoxically, even luxuries had to be natural; they had to conform to the rules of natural beauty; they had to have a certain simplicity about them. The correspondence between the natural and the simple appears yet again. An interesting illustration of this comes in the form of a fragment from Henry Fielding's *Amelia*, in praise of innocence, which Spence quotes in the *Giant Killer*. Innocence, a Christian virtue, is said to be close to purity; it is also close to simplicity. In religious or mythical terms, all these values are brought together and related to nature in the fable of the Garden of Eden to which Spence often referred. Above all, the Garden of Eden myth is about innocence, simplicity and purity and their association with nature. Spence modelled his "Spensonia" on Eden which, like the former, was a "millenium on earth", a "system of simplicity". Since Spensonia was also a system of government, it followed, millenial-like, that government and its mechanism should be ordered by the principle of simplicity. There would, he wrote, be "one simple tax": a land tax. What is also noticeable is the association of simplicity with unity or one-ness. An illustration from Spence's simplified alphabet reads "the Lord our God is one God". The sentiments of one-ness and simplicity connected together religion, politics and language. The aristocracy, aristocratic complexity, dated from Ham, the son of Noah, and he was also responsible for "the confusion of languages". It was said in a review of Olive Rudkin's book on Spence, in 1927, that Spence's land reform and his ideas on spelling reform and language were "very diverse" measures. In fact, they were all of a piece. Language, religion and politics all had to conform to the laws of nature. The law of nature was not merely a logical device but rooted in the everyday world of experience. "While I was in the wood ... agathering of nuts", he writes,

81. Spence, Giant Killer, No.2 5; No. 1, August 6 1814, 3; Times Literary Supplement, June 9 1927.
this wood is not common. It belongs to the Duke of Portland. Oh! my service to the Duke of Portland, said I. Nature knows no more of him than of me. Therefore as in Nature's store-house the rule is 'First come, first served', so the Duke of Portland must look sharp if he wants any nuts.  

The question to put, in the light of historiographical interpretation, is does Spence, like Volney, have a relatively secular idea of nature. There is also the further question of the character and significance of his religious attitudes in general. Some indication of this has already been given. In his early days Spence attended the meetings of a religious sect known as the Glassites. They "hold the theory of the community of goods" in which "everyone was to consider that all he had in his possession was liable to the calls of the poor of their church". Belonging to the Dissenting tradition, their religious practice was highly ritualised. At one time the Spence family was also a part of the congregation of John Murray whose Sermons for Asses was one of Spence's favourite texts.

His plan, he said, would bring "political salvation" or "the millenium". The Revelation and the words of the prophets "figuratively" described the coming of the millenium and therefore the scriptures had to be contemplated or interpreted to discover how a "New Heaven or New Earth" would arise. One interpretation was that God had given the land to mankind "in common", and that this would be returned when the millenium arrived. Acting the part of the political saint, Spence declared that "the Millenium" would arise "from my poor Cranium". Spence emphasises, though, that he does not "in the old-fashioned manner attempt to preach and pray the World into Justice and tenderheartedness". Instead, he seeks "good laws and Constitutions". These can only be achieved by "rational Creatures" using God's help. It has rightly been pointed out how Benbow's National Holiday echoes Spence's "millenarian tone". There are certain 'forward-looking' or utopian elements in Spence's thinking. But unlike later, more socialistic, ideas there is no notion of a programme or strategy, to say nothing of the fact that his ideal society is sanctioned by God's will. His belief in the immediacy of his 'plans'

82. Cited in Rudkin, Spence, 44.
83. A. W. Waters, Political Works, 1; Rudkin, Spence, 21-22; Thompson, Working Class, 39.
is strikingly millenial. The public mind would be suitably prepared "by reading my little Tracts". The "New Republic" would "instantaneously arise in full vigour". It was the same as God saying "let there be light and it shall be so"; the people had only to say "let the land be ours" and it would be so. This quotation also points to another sense in which the formal characteristics of Spence's thinking differed paradigmatically from what came later, or had been earlier in France. His 'enlightenment' was not the unaided reason of the human mind but "the glorious light of Revelation spread more universally".

Similarly, his views of the family suggest a pre-socialist and perhaps a pre-modern frame of mind. The family has an important role to play in production and is a sacred institution. The Spensonian Commonwealth "encourages filial piety". In Spence's millenium there is little adultery or promiscuity. Significantly, rights in land use are passed from father to son. Spence's only measure to foreshadow later developments in this area is his proposal for easier divorce. But the main point to notice is that rights and laws in general, the total constitution that is, are divine. Rights such as "Equality, Liberty, Safety and Property, natural and acquired" are "sacred rights" in the literal sense.

Property rights were, of course, not to the fore in later Left-wing thinking neither were they associated with the more radical elements in the French Revolution or Jacobinism. But if the simple equation between violence and Jacobinism is made, then there are signs that Spence at one time leaned towards the violent overthrow of government. In The End of Oppression he calls for the people "to take immediate possession of the whole of Landed Property". One of his publications refers to the "French Constitution". Yet too much cannot be read into this. Soon after the Oppression pamphlet, Spence issued his Recantation in which he played down his suggestions of violence. In any event, the inspiration for his ideas on "Insurrection", once "the Government violates the rights of the people" can be seen in Locke just as his millenium draws its inspiration from Harrington and Thomas More rather than from any French example. He


85. Kemp-Ashraf, "Selected Writings", 305.
wants "no massacre, no warhoop for an ignorant Rabble". His revolution is to be brought about by "the irresistible force of Reason". Like John Baxter, and many other Radicals, Spence "only contemplates civil war as a last resort". Or, as one of his contemporaries wrote, Spence's ideas and plans were formed and in some cases published "before the French Revolution". Consequently, "it is not true", as it is often alleged, that Spence took his doctrines "from the theorists of that time". 86

Spence is also a patriot in both meanings of the word. He does not believe in any universal ownership of land; land is to be held on a national basis. The principle of defence and non-interference is also proposed. The "Spensonian Commonwealth" does not interfere with the government of other nations and it "does not suffer other nations to interfere in its own". All the English colonies would be declared independent states but still get "the protection the Mother Country can afford". Insisting that he is not a Jacobin, Spence points out that the Jacobins have "no Country, they arose like a Mob". For Spence, as for other Radicals, England is the chosen country. 87

The degeneration of the French Revolution into Bonapartism had tended to suggest that the type of government did not matter much as far as virtue and justice went. "What does it signify whether the Form of a Government be Monarchical or Republican while Estates can be acquired", Spence argued. "Private property in land" was the source of corruption. But if Spence broke with other Radicals who looked to land-sharing on a petty-bourgeois basis as the answer to the world's problems, it cannot be argued he gave no weight to traditional constitutionalist arguments and solutions. Laws and a constitution were needed to maintain the balance of a good society. The two "Guardian Angels" of the Spensonian constitution were "Voting by Ballot" and "The Universal Use of Arms". Neither did Spence believe in cheap government as an ideological precept. Implementation of his plans would lead to "the National Government to provide for, next the Provincial, and Lastly the Parochial, before anything could be divided". He is also preoccupied with the National Debt. His 'problematic' is the existence of high taxes out of which pensions and the whole system

87. Spence, Constitution of Spensonia, 90, 109; Spence, Giant Killer, No.7, 14.
of corruption and state power is supported.  

Tax is still central. "My Commonwealth", Spence writes, is "supported by one simple Tax which is the Land Tax". Things such as "stamps and duties" go against "the kind intentions of the deity". With "one simple tax", the government "would have no occasion to raise any Revenue Trade", and there would be no customs offices. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that taxation, land and consumption remain central to an understanding of Spence's thinking. He insists he makes no claim against property in the form of cattle, merchandise and the like. "For we have nothing to do with anything but the land", he says. "Not only personal and hereditary Lordship", which gives political rights or dominance, must be destroyed - and this was all that some Radicals wanted - but also "the cause of them, which is Private Property in Land", which gives economic rights or dominance. The latter is "the Pillar that supports the Temple of the Aristocracy". Yet Spence's paradigm break, if it is that, is minor rather than major. Suggesting that we are still within the realm of some sense of natural economy, his argument runs that private property in land is wrong. The accumulation of land by some, by the few rather than the many, means others are deprived of the fruits of nature and thereby of the means of subsistence. Private ownership of land threatens the right to life. Since life is the gift of God private ownership of land is more than a political misdemeanour, it is a sin. In any event, in a natural economy the produce of the land depends upon "the fruitful seasons" and these are sent by "God-Almighty". And giving subsistence, land also provides the basis for independence: there is further evidence of 'Harringtonian' or are they 'Lockeian' elements in Spence's mentality. Rights in land give independence and therefore are also the source of political personality. This is brought out through an event which happens in Crusonia. The idyll is disrupted because of population pressure which creates a shortage of land. Independence is threatened and political society replaces the previous natural society. Government is necessary "to keep the Peace, and to determine what people might call their own", that is to fix their property rights. As mentioned before, rights in land use could be passed on from father to son. In return Spence believes high rents should be charged by the parish to farmers. This would prevent large farms and monopoly in land. He seems to believe in free competition among the farmers as a safeguard against the exploitation of consumers

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88. Waters, Political Works, 40; Spence, A Letter to Ralph Hodge from His Cousin Thomas Bull, (1795).
through high prices. But it is not very helpful to read any ideological commitment to the free market principle in this. Similarly, any nods he makes in the direction of a labour theory of value must be treated with caution. Attacking Paine's *Agrarian Justice*, he argues that "the labouring classes first produces provision, and then the demand of their families creates a market for them". They create consumption: "consumption created by the mouths, and backs, of the poor despised multitude". Tax and consumption rather than profits and production are the main targets. Honest profit and capital, or what might be called natural profit and capital, are legitimate. Spence is, typically, against "the traffic in Stocks" but for "honest Trade and Manufactures"; but against "the Monopoly of foreign Trade" and "monopolizing Companies". There should be free competition in foreign trade both within and between countries.  

The exact nature of Spence's views on land, capital, government and culture are brought out nicely in an exchange of views between Spence and Charles Hall, also often described as an early English socialist. Spence, writing in 1807, points out how, under Hall's scheme,  

> the great Farms would be broke down into small allotments ... You seem to be sliding into the system of Sir Thomas More's 'Utopia' wherein he makes every kind of property the property of the nation and the People obliged to work under gang-masters ... a state of Barbarism and Slavery ... Would you have us all become Goths and Vandals and give up every elegant comfort of life. But we may rest contented that this may never be without another universal Deluge ...  

Once again, Spence is rejecting 'primitivism'. He is also simultaneously rejecting the division of land into small private plots and the take-over of all forms of capital and property by the state. Hall replies that he wants "to go back a good way towards our natural state" and only wants to keep "the coarser arts" and "certain sciences". Unlike Spence, Hall believes property in land should be equal. Under Spence's plans, "farms are let by auction for the highest Rent they will bring". Given he does not want to interfere with personal or industrial wealth this implies the more efficient and wealthy farmer would get richer. Hall sees this and argues that Spence's land plans are not as  

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89. Waters, Political Works, 40; Spence, The Real Rights of Man, (Newcastle, 1775, reprinted 1795, 1796), 297-307; Spence, *Crusonia*, 305.  
radical as they at first seem. We must go back to primitive equality, "we must return as being the most natural and simple" ...

Your plan seems to me too complicated ... you mean to establish an equality as to the real property ... You leave all personal property untouched and consequently, if my suspicions are just, the landed property is only partially divided.91

The validity of this criticism, when compared with previous historiographical interpretation, can be gauged by a close look at Spence's general views on class and society. In that Spence has a class enemy, it is the aristocracy. Added to them are the other 'classes' or ranks connected with the system of Old Corruption and living off aristocratic exploitation. Like Evans and other Radicals, Spence is happy to keep the monarchy, if in a different form from the reigning Georgian monarchy. "We know that Kings existed in Sparta for many centuries in company with Iron Money and small divisions of Lands". So, "let not Royalty despair". And the "Revolution" will spare the aristocracy and gentry "their Lives, and also their Money, Plate, Jewels, Furniture, Apparel, Cattle and moveable Effects of Every Kind", and even extends to those things directly connected with land. The aristocracy can keep its "corn and cattle" and will still be "the richest part of the community". But they could no longer collect their rents. The landlords compared themselves "to manufacturers" but while this kind of profit was legitimate, rents were not.92 As Spence saw it there were "four classes", so-called, who would be "thrown out of employ" by his "Constitution". They were,

First, Landlords and Stockholders, who subsist luxuriously on Revenues ... and are called Quality and Gentry ... Secondly, Lawyers, Attorneys &c who subsist almost entirely by conveying Landed Property ... Thirdly, Gentleman's Servants. Lastly, Soldiers and Sailors, employed in War.93

There is no bourgeoisie in sight. Neither is there anything in the form of class consciousness or a conception of equality that is recognisably

91. Rudkin, Spence, cited 132-34.
92. Waters, Political Works, 47, 54; Rudkin, Spence, 39.
socialist. The "General Forces of the Commonwealth", for example, "are to be composed of the whole people" but similar to Cartwright's proposals, there is to be a "difference of ranks". Yet opportunity is equal. In Crusonia, there are "all Degrees of People" but "you may frequently hear a fond Mother carressing her Darling Boy and crying he will be an Admiral, General, Senator or any great Officer she pleases and yet none will contradict it ... if his Merit be sufficient". Spence's concept of liberty, like his concept of equality, also seems to be pre-socialist. Liberty is not so much something positive, or the means to self-fulfillment, it is "that power which belongs to a Man of doing everything that does not hurt another", defined by the maxim "'do not to another what you would not wish done unto yourself'". Similarly, he does not go beyond the idea of the "people" as a vehicle of liberation and the reorganisation of English society. It would be an act of anachronism to stick the label 'liberal' on all this, as well as being a mis-reading of the ideological context. Leftwards, the most that can be claimed for his beliefs is a sort of vague pre-industrial or agrarian socialism. Despite his attack upon Hall, Spence wanted to go backwards - he wanted a return and a restoration. Like other Radicals of his generation, he wanted a return to a 'neo-Harringtonian' position of a land-based independence. "No little masters to be seen now", in 1795 that is, "no medium; but very great and very little; very rich and very poor". Before the enclosures, "when you had your cow, and your sheep, and your geese, &c. you had then little occasion for money"; that is "you had little rent, and little taxes to pay, you could speak like an honest man what you thought without losing your situation". To regain this lost independence and liberty Spence pleads for "a repossession of our former common". Probably nothing could be more anachronistic than to describe this situation as a form of land nationalisation and to attach socialist connotations to it. 94

The point, then, was not to turn proletarians into communists, but to turn them back into petty 'capitalists'. This comes out clearly in Spence's allegory about a ship. Aboard the ship, even the ordinary seamen are petty capitalists. They are sort of sub-contractors who rent "a portion of Stowage Room for their goods". Turned into independent men, sailors would "become quite another set of people than they are at present". From a "desperate careless and reprobate character ..." 94

94. Spence, Crusonia, in Kemp-Ashraf, 305, 324; Waters, Political Works, 96.
they would become provident and sober ... in short Citizen". There would still be ranks. Those who sail in the ship elect "one fit to be captain, another to be a mate, another a carpenter &c". Each is to get his reward "according to station and agreement". The 'rent'or "net profit of the voyage" is "shared equally among you all without respect to any office". But each person receives "the wages of his station". Spence also obviously does not think in terms of a shared austerity since he tells us in dishing out the net profit or rent "they shared very considerable dividends". Again, though, the idea of co-operation, the co-operative movement that is, comes to mind more than any suggestion of an ideological defence of capitalism, despite the fact he wants to reward effort and promote free trade. But there are always limitations. His general 'philosophy' is perhaps summed up in his "Crusonian Creed". It reads, "All Men to Land, may lay an equal Claim/But Goods, and Gold, unequal Portions frame,/The first because all Men on Land must live;/The Second's the reward industry ought to give". In Spence's ideal society "trade is perfectly free". Yet in Spensonia, although free trade "has been established" the Spensonians have satisfied their wants and do not go "scrambling and fighting" after foreign trade in the manner of an expansionist Empire. Of equal interest, in this light, is the fact that Spence, unlike other Radicals, supports the "Old Culture" against the Protestant rulers who "are always preaching up Temperance, Labour, Patience and Submission". A careful reading will find no Protestant ethic, no unmitigated defence of free trade and the market principle, but equally no defence of the socialisation of private property, only a 'symptomatic' use of the labour theory of value, no concept of class consciousness or equality that can be called socialist and yet no unalloyed pro-agrarianism. What can be found are a set of assumptions and concepts that can be called mercantilist.95

Lastly, then, and perhaps even moreso than with the other writers this 'case study' has attempted to put Spence back in his intellectual and ideological context by emphasising the old fashioned or archaic elements in his thinking. Through an examination of his reading both Locke and Harrington are suggested

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95. Waters, Political Works, 54, 82-3 (Description of Spensonia).
as important influences in shaping his thought, and even, perhaps Burke. But so is the Bible. So, though I have found a problematic concerned with land and commerce and natural law and excess, Spence's religious background and a mythological substructure of culture/nature is crucial in understanding his mind. And, as I hope I have made clear, all these things stand in the way of seeing him as any kind of socialist. Millenialism, including England as the chosen spot, tax and the reluctance to interfere with the private ownership of industrial property have all been shown to undermine attempts to see Spence as one of the first socialists. But then it was also shown that there is a 'silence' or absence of concepts that could relate his views to modern liberal ideology. He is simply not a modern in any of these senses.

GRAVENOR HENSON

The last organic intellectual or representative figure, whose ideas are worth close analysis, is Gravenor Henson. Historical writing on Henson has been concerned with the question of whether or not he was a Luddite. When his ideas have been considered, it has been mostly with this question in mind. Either his ideas are radical and Luddite, pace Thompson and others, or they are 'liberal' in that they foreshadow collective bargaining as in Church and Chapman and Thomis. Again, my interest is in paradigms rather than politics. What follows is another 'interrogation' or questioning of Henson's two main books or texts in terms of virtue, natural law, custom, and mythological concepts of origin, heroes etc. and the nature of his political economy and his religious ideas.

Henson left prison at the same time as Thomas Evans and was earlier said to be connected with Luddism, a movement that in some areas arose "out of a crisis between paternalism", that is mercantilism, "and laissez faire". There is not sufficient space to do full justice to Henson's ideas, or to go into his biography and background or to raise the question of his involvement with Luddism. His artisan credentials are well-established and his connection with Luddism unresolved or
a matter of controversy. The thing to note, for present purposes, is that Lockeian precept would allow constitutionalism to incorporate the right of violent resistance to the established order in defence of the people's liberties and customs. Luddism was a movement that sought its legitimacy in the past; a constant harking back to the past is also a feature of Gravenor Henson's writings. General Ludd's Triumph called for "full-fashioned work at the old fashioned price ... established by Custom and Law". Ludd did not threaten "the honest man's life and Estate".  

On the face of it, Henson's writings would seem to belong to a later period when the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution had become the mental property of the middle class and assumed a different historical role. A Few Remarks on the State of the Laws, an investigation into labour law written with George White, a clerk at the House of Commons, at times sounds a modern or a least 1830s style 'socialist' note. Yet much in this book refers back to the time of Elizabeth to buttress arguments the authors put forward. In Henson's other book, The Civil, Political and Mechanical History of the Framework Knitters, a labour theory of value is not so evident and although there is in both works a vein of class consciousness similar to, say, Cobbett's, many statements in the History could have been taken from the political pamphlets of the latter part of the 18th century or the early 1800s. Although first published in 1831, there is an earlier manuscript draft dated 1829 and as Stanley Chapman says Henson's ideas were set around the turn of the century and "form the foundation" of his History. It would seem, then,  

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by the 1830s Henson is no longer a "representative figure" since his ideas are more typical of earlier years. Yet he is a representative of this earlier time and even by the 1830s his ideas have a bit more value than merely "survivals". Similarly, his Gothic language is more than merely symptomatic but is a moment or "an active and constituent principle" in his thought. For these reasons Henson is included here. What is given is merely a small sample of his ideas. It does not do justice to the historical or philological intricacies involved in his language.

So far as my reading of Henson's writings have gone, any Lockeian or Machiavellian language, that is to say a vocabulary of natural law and virtue, comes through in the form of assumptions rather than being explicit. If there is any dominant 'paradigm' it is custom. Liberties and laws are rooted in custom rather than created by acts of virtue or sanctified by natural law. Henson's writings show the idea of custom could be used not to support aristocratic hegemony but to challenge it. Henson seems to have believed in everything Burke believed in even, unlike Paine, championing the chartered rights of the towns and companies but he saw in their old documents or charters testaments of liberty rather than rank and hierarchy.

But good laws required "genius" or "virtue" to frame them, and what patriot monarchs such as Elizabeth and Alfred had, but was lacking in lesser kings and statesmen. In a passage of Burkeian sensibility, Henson relates how Elizabeth's "statute of servants", like the Anglo-Saxon constitution, is "a magnificent ruin, patched and deformed" but like Alfred's constitution founded on virtue, its spirit hidden by these deformities from the eyes of the people. The existing law and constitution was merely the superstructure hiding the real or "genuine" article from the populace. Similarly, in the same cognitive mode that is, luxury corrupts the framework knitters' company and brings about its downfall. "Pomp" and "a sumptuous feast" and other aristocratic vices lead to its disintegration. Also, like Spence, although less articulated, Henson seems to have a notion of a Mosaic or natural law in which land was held in common or in small plots, but

on the whole Henson's argument is conducted in terms of laws which exist in English history and are customary.  

Yet if a particular notion of property and independence are also supposedly associated with Machiavelli and Locke, then there are other signs that Henson's ideas are still reflective of a social structure which also fed the thoughts of these two writers. Henson uses the ideas of property and independence to champion the artisans against the pretensions to hegemony of the rulers. For Henson, the artisan's property and the basis of his rights were his tools and his trade. "A workman", he writes,

is, generally speaking, a man without capital; his tools, though not his own property, he considers in great measure his estate, when he has applied any invention to them; and he feels, when deprived of his tools and his improvement, the same bitter pang as a nobleman would, should his estate be overwhelmed by the sea, or swallowed up by an earthquake.

A workman regarded his tools and his skills and the knowledge that accompanied their use as part of his personality or property. Since Henson uses the word "estate", these gave him not only property rights in his job but in society, just as the aristocrat's estate gave him social rights and status. At the same time, Henson realises independence could not be guaranteed unless the working classes had some access to land. After Queen Elizabeth had subdued the aristocracy, the lower classes "destroyed the enclosures and declared the land should be one common" and from this time they were considered "as men having rights". Before the Norman Conquest, the land was held "in small lots" and from time to time the working classes had regained their rights to the land in one form or another.

If the artisan classes had a stake in the country it would promote patriotism. The value of a commodity "arises from the labour or skill bestowed upon it", and, "the spirit and patriotism of the inhabitants of a country will be in proportion to the liberty and means of subsistence which the master and servant enjoys". Good laws, laws

100. Henson & White, A Few Remarks, 47-48; Henson, History, 68, 75.
which protect the trade, form "a national character". The protection of the trade evoked the strongest patriotic sentiments in Henson. With apparent approval, he cites old laws through which "it is enacted that no person shall wear cloth not made in England", and demand that "foreign merchants shall not import cloth under pain of forfeiture of cloth and imprisonment". Henson himself was involved in getting Queen Adelaide to wear a dress of "Nottingham machine-wrought bobbin net silk lace". This act of "distinguished patronage" would promote aristocratic consumption, it would introduce the native craft "to the notice of the nobility and gentry" and "their patriotism might induce them to prefer a British wrought article in preference to foreign". The export of machinery was an especial anathema, so much so that Henson relates with approbation a law of 1719 which included severe penalties for this offence including the loss of English citizenship, property and so on. The rivalry with the French on this question is very intense. English artisans working in France were "traitors" and "the French smiths were the worst of all possible", while Frenchmen generally have "not common genius in mechanical matters". Yet too much should not be read into his anti-Gallicism, since Henson welcomed "the Protestant Hugonots" (sic) and the English artisans of an earlier period "were glad to accept them as neighbours". Like Thomas Paine, he is critical of William of Orange who introduced the system of corruption, "was ignorant of the laws and customs of England" and "inaccessible to the working classes of England whose language he did not understand". But patriotism blunted Henson's class consciousness. "'We are''', he writes, "'all embarked on the same boat (our country) and we must sink or swim together'". Allied with preceding Radical writers, he saw patriotism as a matter of internal liberties and external defence, as the basis of a morality or "moral economy" with only slight leanings towards any expression of cosmopolitanism.101

In Henson's mind, this moral economy was based on the laws and customs embedded in English history, to which all Englishmen could subscribe. A fair "system of legislation" would give "the rich man full enjoyment of his wealth" and "the poor man a just and equitable price for his labour". In framing new labour law it was necessary to look

to the past for assistance; such a system of customary law would improve the moral health of the people as a whole, another sense in which Henson uses the term "national character". He relates how "by ancient law, a person must serve seven years apprenticeship". The laws governing apprenticeship are crucial to "the morals of the country" and the "education and restraint of youth". Like other Radicals, Henson distinguishes between law as it exists in its corrupted form and law as it was and ought to be. Like Cartwright and company he has no time for lawyers and the complexity they give to law. He recounts the case of a group of workmen who took a lace manufacturer to court only to find "a series of legal appeals and delays" whereby "the case became entangled in a web of statutes and judicial machinery". The legal costs of industrial relations, "obstruct justice". Party or interest also prevent justice. "The same men" are "at once legislators, justices and landholders". Lawyers are professionals in their pay. "To frame Acts of Parliament", then, there is a need for amateurs or "practical men ... who are aware of all the quirks which designing men take to evade the laws". Again in common with other Radicals, Henson distinguishes between the encrustations or corruptions of the spirit or original purity of the law, or between real and "genuine" or false and complex or mysterious law. "The 5th Eliz. Cap. 4th. is now the foundation of the laws of England respecting masters and servants" but, "from a change of time and their circumstances" the act has got "patched" and needs radical revision. Many of its numerous amendments alter its original spirit of intentions and tip the balance in favour of the masters. Wanting radical reform of the law, Henson also believes the original law was true law. Similar to Cartwright referring back to medieval voting procedures, he cites a law which "fixed ... the number of dishes to be served up at each baron's &c table and the value of them", and, he declares,"this is the law now". These original laws were the real basis of the constitution. As he says, concerning the old charters, "these charters were conceived in English law as the foundation of all written law, very little attention being paid to Parliaments, only to confirm them". The charters were, "venerated by the English and regarded as the cornerstones of their liberty and of their trade". He adds, in a passage echoed by Bewick and Cobbett, that possession of these laws and charters has cultural consequences. The freedom of the English workingman is symbolised by what he consumes. If the free market system casts aside the charters he will find himself, like the Continental workman, swallowing "black bread and soup maigre instead of roast beef.
and plum pudding and good ale". Laissez faire has already made big inroads and since the English workingman has gained his freedom but lost his liberties a slave was better off. At least in slave societies there were generally "laws which regulated the food of slaves and their treatment". Henson deplores "the ignorance of the laws which pervades the working classes" and implies a programme of political education. 102

The phrase "working classes" is common in Henson's vocabulary and it is significant in the ideological placing of his thought. His own life suggests some of the problems involved in interpreting his ideas and highlights some of the paradoxes. He was as one time apprentice, artisan, trade union leader, employer of eleven journeymen, and, latterly, workhouse inmate. One view sees in this experience Henson the believer in entrepreneurship and enterprise, while vilifying the free market principle, and wanting to use the state to mollify class antagonisms. He is seen as a sort of later 19th century liberal living before his time. Yet it is really very difficult to make rational his belief in enterprise, or, better, efficiency, and his total opposition to a market economy. It makes more sense to put Henson's thought and ideas in a pre-entrepreneurial capitalist or mercantilist framework. Both master and servant had a common interest in promoting enterprise not merely because it would increase wages and profits and give a bigger share to competing interests but rather because it would have an effect on the consumption pattern of the gentry and aristocracy. His aim was to promote the well-being of the whole trade, the trade being a kind of organic or moral community. The Nottingham Artisan's Chamber of Commerce - Henson was a leading figure in its formation - included master framework knitters as well as journeymen. The kind of enterprise Henson praised was artisan invention and 'enterprise' in terms of artisan or small master independence. His criticism of the general trade unions tended towards their infringement of independence and liberty, not their restrictions on profit. The independence and liberty of the artisan and small master could be guaranteed by a benevolent and corporatist state. Henson was critical of both the free market school, including the "Philosophical Radicals", and the radical working class movements. His complaint against

the Chartists was that they forgot to mention the "laws and regulations" or customs that "we are to have from the Charter".¹⁰³

But if Gravenor Henson's class consciousness is blunted, it is still similar in kind to that held by John Baxter, Thomas Evans or William Cobbett. He frequently talks of the joint interest of masters and men. But, "the law is now totally in favour of the master, and the end of it is that the master is grinding down the workman". Yet he deplores machine-breaking and says the masters ought to receive protection from the law. At the same time he commonly expresses a certain class consciousness against the "masters". As he says, "why suffer masters alone to take dishonest advantages of the very foundation of Society, the operative labourers". Not too much should be anticipated in the way of a labour theory of value here, at least in its socialist garb, since Henson ultimately believes in a society of orders or ranks, an organic whole in which there are "common interests that should bind man and man in one regular gradation of society", cemented by a system of legislation that would protect the property of rich and poor alike. Yet, as for other Radical writers, belief in a society of orders or ranks is not incompatible with an acute but ambivalent class consciousness against the aristocracy. Since they, rather than the bourgeois or middle class, are seen as the real rulers of society, they are the main object of attack. Henson is aware that the contemporary aristocracy is not a feudal aristocracy since Henry VII "put the finishing stroke to the power of the barons by abolishing their retinues". But with the defeat of the plebeian forces in the Civil War, "the landholders ... now in their turn became the ruling power". Their ascendancy is associated with the loss of corporate or chartered rights by the people, and the people became divided by the policies of the new aristocracy. "They acted", Henson argues, "upon the policy to separate the interests of the manufacturer and workman, and the farmer and the labourer". To some extent they were still a race apart since "the landholders ... were principally of Norman or French origin". Ultimately, though, the aristocracy and gentry were necessary because of their conspicuous consumption. The English nobility have left "the mighty engine of fashion entirely at the disposal of the petit maîtres of Paris".

He urges the journeymen to induce "the nobility, gentry and other public figures to encourage fashions which would benefit the Nottingham trades". Once again, there is the notion that paternalism is a two-way affair, a morality or additional sense of moral economy, based on a system of exchange.

It has been said Henson used the term "working classes", an essentially 'pre-industrial' form of phrasing, as part of his social analysis. Although the idea is based on craft, or rather trade, much more than simple craft consciousness is at issue. The trade itself is said to have genteel origins. Framework knitting, like the other trades, was an "art or mystery" - a kind of personal property - that could only be learned after seven years long apprenticeship. In the past, through their charters, the trades "managed their own concerns"; they were independent. Traditionally, the trade or craft was a family concern handed down from father to son. The old statutes required that an apprentice was "the son of any freeman", someone "not occupied in husbandry, or being a labourer". Labourers were men without property or independence, virtually another social class altogether. The outcasts, "vagabonds" and the like, were yet another class, a class for whom Henson has very little sympathy. Like Radical writers of an earlier period, Henson dates the ascendancy of the post-feudal aristocracy, their alliance with the monied classes and the establishment of corruption as a system from the reign of William of Orange. This coincided with the enormous increase and shift in the burden of taxation. "In former ages", he says, "the wealthy had paid all the taxes", but

A new plan was now devised, which had a tremendous effect upon the working classes: this was that the wealthy, instead of paying the money to the state, should only lend it ...

Henson's 'problematic', then, still centres upon the aristocracy and the monied interest, upon the system of Old Corruption and taxation. The system of society and economy he is analysing is still in many senses pre-modern. He differs from the earlier Radicals in the extent to which a laissez-faire economy was a part of his world. In the History, he states the free market economy started in the 1750s, but still looks back, rather than forward, to an earlier period when trade was regulated. In this respect, his thinking is 'pre-industrial'. He sees

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106. Henson, History, 110.
that modern capitalism is a world economy where "the Westminster clique" are "'citizens of the world' to benefit foreign artisans at the expense of their suffering countrymen". Smith and Hume wanted to bring in "more foreigners", while McCulloch, Malthus and Place were contributing to "the taming of English workmen by bringing them to the Continental level in wages". And given the demand for labour in recent years, and the poverty of many artisans, there is no reason why "by his own common agreement" the artisan may not "sell or hire himself for life" and "become the property of his master". Consequently, "the idea of throwing the trade entirely open displays ... a field for consummate villainy". Nowhere was this more true than in the area of wages. If Henson was not class conscious in a modern sense then neither did he believe in "class-co-operation" if collective bargaining can be taken as an example of this. Both interpretations miss the paradigmatic nuances of his statements. Like Thomas Paine, Henson recognised that legally-fixed wage rates could sometimes result in low wages, as they did "from 1349 to the aera of Cromwell" and did, too, under the Elizabethan law which through being "patched" had strayed from its original intention. But he does not agree that through joint collective bargaining "masters and servants" ought to be allowed "to make their own agreement and that the law ought not to interfere". He does not agree with the proposition that "provided a man agrees to any contract he cannot be oppressed or injured" since there is "an immense difference between masters and servants". In a similar vein, he supports the clubs and societies that defend the workingman's interest but also promote their moral well-being.107

In an earlier age, the clubs and societies and the chartered companies were able to order things very differently. Henson did not want the ruins of the old laws replaced by no laws; he wanted new laws built on the old, Gothic, foundations. This mental pre-disposition can be called mercantilist. Through the old "Guilds and Fraternities ... now called Companies", Henson writes, production was controlled "by dint of law". The apprenticeship system, the quality and cheapness of the goods and so on were all under the regulation of the companies charters. Foreign merchants were allowed "in large corporated towns" to prevent the

companies "becoming monopolies". Yet, in the time of Edward III and after, there were laws which, at least in theory, limited the employment of foreigners, curbed foreign merchants, fixed the price of meat, prevented the "monopoly of farms and sheep", as well as laws which were supposed to enforce people to wear certain dress, although they coincided with low wages and a low level of employment. Elizabeth abolished the restrictions on wages; regulation was wanted but not a return to the fetters associated with feudalism. Although, a law of Edward which "prevented the interest of money" and thereby compelled "persons to employ their money in trade" is applauded. In company with such diverse figures as Burke and Spence, Henson sees money employed in the making of money as a sort of social and economic phantasy. And if Henson wanted wages to be freed, in the hope of a general increase, other proposals he made were incompatible with the coming liberal capitalism. Nightwork is prohibited since it "destroys the most robust constitution", while his reforming Bill includes a clause in which "masters holding Letters Patent" can "compel their servants to remain with them during the time of the Patent". Yet, "no Servant or work­man shall be discharged before the term of his hiring is expired without his consent". Time and time again, Henson refers to laws which enforce the consumption of English-made clothing, the prohibition of machinery and men for export, the curtailment of monopolies, and the regulation of apprentices. This system of law and economy, "these regualtions", if against "modern received notions of trade and commerce" made England "in less than two hundred years ... a great exporting nation". Without wanting to be too precise, it can be said Henson was, like his brother Radicals, against the free market but not against a 'free' but regulated trade. It was trade, rather than industry, trade uninhibited by aristocratic or big merchant monopoly, and especially foreign trade", that was the basis of wealth. Like patriotism, with which it was linked, trade had an internal and external significance. Stopping the exportation of machinery abroad would keep framework-knitting "as an English manufacture, exclusively to this country, for the benefit of the commonwealth". Using a common mercantilist argument, Henson connects trade with the trade. If trade was not protected "parents would not put out their children to the trade, for fear that it should leave the country". In other words, the trade would go into decline through lack of manpower. Output would fall; and so would consumption. If consumption fell, England would cease to be a powerful nation. Economy was, after all, at the root of politics. 108

Plenty of Henson's statements lead back to the problem of consumption. Consumption is central. He is full of praise for an Elizabethan statute which incorporates,

the foreign artisan with the English, which was the object of the decree, and thus adds additional impulse to industry, by employing the English, which led them to consume, and thus to march on steadily by their own consumption to employ themselves. 109

This economic object was, in turn, linked with a political aim. With increased consumption "the population might be doubled and the United Empire join the blessings of a really free constitution". In order for both these things to happen, the artisan had to get a fair return for his labour. Henson did not ask for "the right to the whole produce of labour". Neither must it be forgotten that his labour theory of value is intrinsically connected with these two things, with the constitution and consumption. He denies,

the erroneous impression that the more the labourer obtained for his work the less remained for the landlord and capitalist ... the grand problem of political economy is, that where either the state, the church, landlord, the master, or any other means takes from the labourer the greater part of his wages, as soon as it is earned, prevents him from circulating such wages to employ another labour, and consequently, the employment instead of increasing through the means of exchange of labour is derived from the unproductive person alone; thus there will be found in all poor states a number of persons unemployed because the population cannot employ each other, arising from money being consumed before it has obtained due circulation ... 110

It would not do to read anything like a modern under-consumption theory into this. Neither is there any direct attack on profits or capital, even less on a class of capitalists. Henson's language, his social categories, his other assumptions made elsewhere concerning taxation and so forth, also have to be taken into account; at most a minor break in thought could be considered. Not least because of his

109. Henson, History, 35.
long looks and musings on the past. In Cromwell's time, for example, the laws left "the labouring and productive classes" free to demand "their own price". Against the modern "scramble" of the free market "our forefathers" were governed by good laws and regulation. Consider, Henson writes, what the free market "is making of old England" and recollect "these new doctrines are ... from France".

In taking up this strategy, in using certain tropes and rhetorical devices, Henson was placing his thinking within a certain cognitive framework, he was producing a certain kind of 'knowledge' effect. His constant references to history and myth, for example, asserted the Englishness of his manners of thinking and denied or toned down any assumptions which involved the notion of man as a cosmic or cosmopolitan figure or any class of men in a fraternal union stretching across nations. Paraphrasing Burke a little, it can be said Henson started out from the family, linked this with the trade and the company and then on to the people or the nation. If for Burke the centre of community was the landed estate, for Henson it was the trade. Knowledge of the trade, of its laws and regulations, of its customs and practices and its mysteries, was historical; it was, therefore, English. There seems to be at least a correspondence between political knowledge, popular magic and knowledge of the trade, in this case of "the art, mystery or trade of framework-knitting". Since each form of knowing was hidden and mysterious, each was sacred and set apart awaiting revelation. It followed that sacredness was endowed by recourse to some kind of purity of origins. In modern Indonesia, the founder of a genealogy who is also the legitimiser of a trade and the possessor of 'religious' knowledge, is usually of genteel birth: his social status, as it were, puts the matter beyond dispute. So, for Gravenor Henson, "the first stocking-maker's apprentice was a knight, and eldest son to a lord, who was of blood royal". The old aristocracy turned their hands to "even the common trades", and a law existed setting aside the trades for "persons of property". At one time, Alfred the Great was "compelled to go into service as a neat-herd and to watch cattle for his livelihood". He "learnt experimental wisdom in adversity". Consequently, any taint or impurity that might be attached to manual or, rather, skilled labour is removed. An artisan possesses as much moral worth and personality, so it

111. Henson & White, A Few Remarks, 65, 159, see also Burke, Reflections 29-32, 44, 143, 210, 212, 311-14 for how Burke generally relates 'kinship terminology' to political inheritance.
would seem, as his 'betters'. A close study of Henson's text elicits
other statements in keeping with this mentality or outlook. For example,
just as for Cobbett appropriation of monastic wealth led to a Providential
and untimely end, so the export of machinery and skills to France or any
other foreign country meets with misfortune. "Jones met with a tragical
end: the plague broke out ... and he, with all his workmen and family,
fell victims to its fury; the frames became useless", while "two men
who had been left in France made no progress whatever, one had died"
and so on. Crossing the Channel, and taking the trade with you, leads you
to the fountain of impurity or pollution. The same question, the same
mental attitude or turn of mind, comes into play when writing about the
virtues and vices of kingship. The patriot king or queen gained virtue
and purity through upholding or restoring the laws and customs of the
people. Upon such popular actions, "Henry the Great" was "this benevolent
Monarch ... the darling of the French nation, particularly the working
classes". 112

In England, the two most virtuous patriot monarchs were Elizabeth
and Alfred. Elizabeth and Alfred were the darlings, the virtuous yet
consummate lovers of the English people. Before they had learned the
unromantic arts of self-reliance and organisation, semi-mythical heroes
transformed the misery and suffering of the English working classes into
a dream-time of plenty and prosperity. Just such a time, Henson says,
was "the golden days of good Queen Bess". Even harsh laws which enact
"that all vagabonds shall be grievously whipped, and burned through the
gristle of the right ear an inch, and being above eighteen shall suffer
death as a felon", are praised. Except for the fact that a lot more is,
of course, involved, it could be said: so much for the foundations of the
making of the English working class. But Elizabeth is also praised for
"fixing an equitable and moderate rate of wages". She is said to have
reduced the rate of crime considerably, something always used as a measure
of charismatic and patriotic virtue. On the material side, she promoted
consumption and gave the artisan his independence; she discouraged
monopolies, refusing to grant them if there was a danger of impoverishing
her subjects. Yet Elizabeth does not quite reach that point of apotheosis
reserved for Alfred. Her reign is flawed. She caressed the people but
they were only allowed a passive response; their active liberties had been

112. Henson, History, 46, 51, 54-55, 76.
compromised by the crown's growing prerogative. 113

The purer origin was Alfred the Great, and considering the late date of Henson's writings and the pregnancy of particular passages, it is fruitful to reproduce some of them in full. They are no mere "rhetorical flourishes", references to the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution occurring significantly in both books. In the earlier one, it is in Alfred's time that artisans and workingmen were first granted rights, an important Alfredian innovation being also the giving of freedom to the towns to "chuse their own magistrates", that is their political representatives. The charters granting these liberties "are very ancient" being "the Saxon laws which were brought over from Germany" and which "are founded upon the principle of community, responsible as a body for the actions of each individual". Read, in this, the fraternal principle of the trade club. Alfred appears yet again as the liberator of England and during this period he mixed and worked alongside the common people. Henson goes on to describe Alfred's system of government, the Anglo-Saxon constitution. He describes in detail, the tything system and the hundreds typically depicted as a system of direct democracy on the Rousseauan model, although it is important to add there is no direct connection. Representatives are chosen "by the community" who are directly assembled. They also choose or elect juries, the jury system once again originating with Alfred. There is an order of ranks in which the king appoints the earls, but the religious orders and the sherriff are appointed by the local people. "This system of jurisprudence", Henson declares, "is the constitution of England", the real or genuine constitution, hidden from the people by aristocratic mystery. 114 Under this system, through charters obtained from a patriotic King,

each corporate town became a community making its own regulations, subject to the general law of the land. In ... several large towns, where particular manufactures were carried on, the masters and workmen met, and governed their own concerns, principally by custom, (which was regarded by the Saxons as the strongest of all laws,) and in many instances charter. Almost all the laws of the Saxons, made in addition to their general written code, were by charter, which were signed not only by King, but also by

114. Henson & White, A Few Remarks, 26ff; Henson, History, 72-73.
numbers of the nobility, bishops, and sheriffs, as witnesses: nothing could be more solemn than the granting a charter ... Each community regarded these charters as their birthright, being solemn contracts or grants. 115

The political language, code or vocabulary is the same as Burke's; the purposes, the 'hegemonic' implications, different. These statements are also mythic in the proper anthropological sense of the word. Founding heroes, themes of purity and pollution, the disregard of historical time, the transcendence of a particular interest through the sanction of community origins and so on, are all evident or implicit. The implied ideal independence, of concern for the artisan, intimates the past masquerading as the 18th century present. Another important passage, brings this point out even more clearly. "At the conquest, in 1066", Henson writes,

William, at the head of the Normans, Flemings, and others, whom he had hired from various parts of France, after swearing to maintain the Saxon laws and immunities, and so causing himself to be acknowledged King, after the dreadful battle of Hastings, upon the pretext that the people had rebelled, redeemed his pledge to his mercenary followers, and seized upon the whole of the lands of the English, which were held in small lots ... a right to carry arms ... was denied to the English ... As a necessary consequence to this total loss of their property, by which they became servants, the whole system of their laws was abrogated; every copy was destroyed ... each baron administered justice ... by holding courts ... from which the natives were excluded, yet the trade companies, or guilds, still held together, and set the Norman authorities at defiance, by their secret combinations. The weavers' guilds ... are mentioned in history, within thirty years of the conquest ... During the reigns of the two Williams, the guilds ... met in secret, and had their signs and secret method of knowing each other ... Henry I ... granted a charter to the kingdom, confirming the Saxon laws; but the Normans being then strong in power, the charters were little abided by. 116

Henson goes on to mention the Robin Hood myth, Magna Charta, "which confirmed ancient liberties and free customs", the precedence of charters

116. Henson, History, 74-76.
over "the authority of Parliament" and so forth. Through the
coronation oath, then, the Anglo-Saxon constitution has (hidden)
continuity. William the Bastard's seizure of power was illegitimate
since the people were not rebelling against their legal king; land
was owned in small plots; William originated the institution of a paid
standing army and denied "the militus", the right to bear arms, to the
English. Losing their land and property, the English who are here
identified the common people, with artisans or "servants", also lose
their independence. They lose it with the loss of their laws or
customary liberties which are codified in written charters. In origin,
the aristocracy is foreign and their property illegitimately acquired.
The guilds, especially the weavers' guild although others are mentioned
later, are of great antiquity. So, too, are their practices: their
oath-taking (now illegal), their rituals, their underground tradition.
For guilds, then, read 18th century trade clubs. Read, that is, a whole
structure of '18th century' assumptions, and remember this piece of
mytho-logic was written in the 1830s. There is quite a bit more in this
manner, in the mythical use of history to justify a contemporary situation.
For example, we are told "the English craftsmen had been long inured to
secret combinations, by the oppressions of the first Normans", and that
charters were "nearly coeval with the Saxon Constitution". In many ways,
the 'histories' of John Baxter and Gravenor Henson, rather than Thomas
Evans' pamphlet, make up "the magnificent culmination of the myth".
Their "political testaments", reveal not only, as Henson puts it,
"the political state and condition of England" and "the true and real
course of the present convulsed state of the western world", they also
open the windows on a significant but misunderstood aspect of 18th
century mentality.  

This analysis of Henson's writings has again indicated the
structure of that mentality. In one sense, in Henson that structure
is, as in William Cobbett, founded on the concept of custom rather
than virtue and natural law. Like Cobbett, Henson's ideas
illustrate a proximity to Burke; from a paradigmatic point of view
meaning is more revealing than politics. Custom is not necessarily
a word denoting gentry or aristocratic hegemony. Yet it has
also been made clear that assumptions based on the ideas of virtue

and natural law are never very far from the surface. Patterns of landholding (virtue) and the natural rights (Locke) associated with labour and personality are also central preoccupations for Henson. But labour and tools are also inherited as part of the artisans' estate (Burke).

This idea of an inheritance led down to a, perhaps, 'deeper structure' embedded in Henson's mind; one that I have argued is built around concepts of origins, purity and pollution, moral community, of heroes and villains and of a 'pre-industrial' patriotism. In all this, Alfred's Anglo-Saxon polity was the model of trope against which to measure everything else. Alfred, as I have shown was the ultimate hero incorporating undefiled virtue and patriotism. And this mythological language also formed the moral basis for Henson's statements about the economy. Patriotism, for example, was shown explicitly in my analysis to be linked to consumption and to other mercantilist problems of trade, land and tax. The laissez-faire economy existed and was rejected but was not to be contemplated as part of this artisan's mental outlook, even in the 1830s.
Invention ... does not consist in creating out of a void, but out of chaos; the materials must ... be afforded: it can give form to dark shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself ... Invention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

In the three preceding chapters, discussion of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution as a moment or strategy in an overall pattern of thinking has suggested a particular paradigm, either explicit or implicit. This paradigm, or semantic field, or system of meaning, or value-system, which can be characterised as the 'Gothicist' or 'Country' or 'Whig-Radical' dialectic now needs to be given a degree of explicitness not found in the writings of any single author or representative figure considered so far. The dialectic or paradigm can be put in the form of a rough diagram like this:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Epistemological' or axiomatic structure</th>
<th>Moral Values</th>
<th>Minus</th>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>Manliness)</td>
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<td>'National Health' or Models, including heroes and villains</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxon Constitution, Greeks, America, Alfred &amp;c</td>
<td>French Absolutism, Romans, Turks &amp;c Napoleon &amp;c</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>Republic, Constitution or Polity; People, Militia, Navy, Patriot King</td>
<td>Monarchy, Court, Aristocracy, Standing Army, Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Patriotism (Patriot)</td>
<td>Ambition or Venality (Courtier)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Ideals</td>
<td>Liberty and Democracy and Equality (Many)</td>
<td>Despotism and Oligarchy (Few)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral State</td>
<td>Virtue (Purity)</td>
<td>Corruption-Luxury (Vice)</td>
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<td>Enlightenment, ('Political') Knowledge</td>
<td>Darkness, Ignorance, Error</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Amateur, 'Property')</td>
<td>(Place, Profession, Tax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiments</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Complexity</td>
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<td>(Harmony/Balance)</td>
<td>(Excess)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epistemic Foundation</td>
<td>Nature (One)</td>
<td>Culture (Many)</td>
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<td>(Natural Law, Deism, Millenarianism,</td>
<td>(Legal Institutions,</td>
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<td>Reason and Custom</td>
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<td>Origins)</td>
<td>Party)</td>
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The diagram is no more than a guide to aid understanding; it does not pretend to any great degree of precision. Neither are the oppositions as rigid as they would seem to be here, either in content or form. The monarchy in the guise of a patriot king could take on a positive value; the formal categories of the one and the many could take on a positive or a negative guise. In religion, deism postulated there was one true religion of nature, while the dissenting tradition allowed for freedom of conscience and sectarianism. In politics, the people as the embodiment of the many were positively regarded, while the principle of party was rejected in favour of patriotic unity. Other categories are less plastic, although they could envelop a variety of different meanings and assumptions some of which now need to be stated more fully.

**Country vs City**

The myth of the free Anglo-Saxon polity was incorporated as strategem into 'Country' language for what looks like a variety of intrinsic reasons. Saxon liberty comes out of a rural environment. This is the theme of numerous poems, including Thomson's *Liberty*. It was also part of the myth, taken over by Engels, that rural vigour, and the moral virtue that emanated from it, enabled the Goths to overcome and destroy effete Roman civilisation and bring about a rejuvenation of the world. "Gar-man etymology", suggestive of "German manliness" was a significant feature of 18th century linguistic enquiry. The distinction between "ger-man", meaning "courageous man", and "guerre-man", meaning "belligerent man" is important for an understanding of the Gothic conception of patriotism. There was, in
English mercantilist political culture, a tendency to reject any purely primitive leanings. "Country" signified nature had to some degree been cultivated or "balanced". Humphrey Repton expressed the general sentiment of the time when he wrote that the English garden, unlike the French, was not over-done such that culture suppressed nature. It represented "the happy medium betwixt the liberty of savages and the restraint of art" in the same way as "the English constitution is the happy medium betwixt the wildness of nature and the stiffness of despotic government".¹

Political language spilled over into other areas of discourse since political language reflected a wider social reality. Industry and rural or agrarian existence if not always in harmony, were closely related. The putting out system enabled the merchant "to give work to the villagers and yet not move them from the village". Even in the 1820s, at harvest time many woolcombers would "lay aside" the woolcomb and "take up" the scythe. Before the arrival of the factory system, semi-rural existence gave to the weaver a varied and independent or 'amateur' work pattern. In general, "the urban culture of the eighteenth century was more 'rural'... than we often suppose", and "most of the new industrial towns did not so much displace the countryside as grow over it". By 1811, most of the population and most industry was still in the countryside; many of those living in towns had a country outlook. Gravenor Henson's framework-knitting industry was still "preponderantly rural". Popular culture in general was "intimately involved in the seasonal rhythms of agricultural life". A view of Birmingham dated 1796 shows "how even in a town of small industries of long standing, the immediate surroundings were still rural". The same is true for London and Manchester, where rural surroundings symbolised liberty and independence. William Lovett vividly describes how the fields around London were a place for sport, political meetings and so forth.


* See also Appendix A
Francis Place would often escape the drudgery of work and run out into the fields which were "all around London", an expression of independence denied to the later factory worker.  

The country is often blessed with a kind of purity and holy quality lacking in the urban environment. "God made the country and man made the town". Luxury, the source of all evil, fed and festered in the town or city. Pastoral poetry was used "to criticise the corruptions of an over-sophisticated society", of which luxury was a symptom, and to celebrate purity and simplicity of character. Yet since industry in the widest sense also occurs in the country, and since country life is not without its harsher realities, the opposition between town and country is not always as sharp as it would seem at first sight. A distinction has been made between "the Georgic rural" and the pastoral where in the former "a sort of balance" is evident which avoids "the idyllic and sentimental" but does not present "the harsh and the ugly" as normal. There is a degree of romanticism but it does not lapse into the over-sentimental. In Radical ideological poetry, there is a connection between the two modes since the loss of a type of production is also connected with a change in a certain kind of landscape. If it is true the weaver-poet, Samuel Law, struggles "with an alien mode", that is the pastoral, his choice of topic, the seasons and the countryside, are close to his own personal and working experience and reflect some of the harsh reality of lower class rural existence. "All the terror cruel Winter brings" when hard frosts and icy snows "pierce my windows" and "every corner of my dwelling find". The snow blocks up roads and starves the sheep and is followed by heavy rains and floods which drown men and cattle. Even when spring arrives and the language of the rural idyll takes over, there is still "labourious work ... pruning the hedge, or tilling barren ground". Either in Law or in, say, Bewick, there is very little

illusion about the harsh realities of country existence, yet it is still preferred to the corruptions associated with town life. The material basis of pastoral or Georgic poetry was the separation or alienation occurring between rural and urban life which, as Marx saw, reflects the division of labour within society. With the growth of towns and the increasing division of labour, the material foundation of independence was disappearing so that 'pastoral' politics and poetry took on an increasingly nostalgic air as city life lost its contact and dominance over the country. It is useful to distinguish, as Gramsci does, between urban and industrial. All cities and towns are urban but they are not all industrial in the modern sense. In the late 18th century, the 'old' urbanism was giving way to the 'new' urbanism in the form of a modern industrialisation that was irreversible. Modern industrialisation "destroyed the old partnership between industry and agriculture", even if that partnership often involved antagonisms. Under the old mercantilist mode, then, the opposition between 'Country' and 'Court' language is less significant than the more fundamental break which occurred later and is expressed in the realm of ideas and ideology or mentality in the development of socialist and liberal thought.  

Both town and country relations expressed a sense of community that got eroded in the new entrepreneurial order. Both involved "a world of face to face contacts" where "people's social relationships stemmed mostly from the ties of family... of neighbourhood... and... work". Many festive occasions revolved around family, locality and trade. This included even "out-work manufacturing" which was "intensely local, with working cottagers living round the employer's family and known to them over the years". In the towns, workmen and employers and their families lived and slept together in the same building where the floor or room occupied would be related to "the tenant's status or daily wage". The patronage and hierarchy of town

and trade was modelled on the patronage system of the countryside. 

**Culture vs Nature**

From one angle, the Country and Court dialectic is only a more empirical expression of the abstract categories of culture and nature the formal characteristics of which were discussed in chapter two. These categories were used to manipulate and comprehend 18th century social reality: in content they carry distinct historical meanings. Synonymously with the notion of country in all its forms, there was a pre-disposition to favour nature against culture. Yet the opposition was not always as clear cut as it at first seems since if nature was unified and sacred, God had given man the propensity to make culture. Paradoxically some of men's institutions and customs could harmonise or be founded upon the law of nature. Human nature was part of the law of nature. Work was natural for humans, and through work, or, more abstractly, production and consumption, the natural world got transformed into culture or civilisation. From this point of view, nature is seen as matter; culture as form. Man makes nature (matter) into culture through "art" (form). J.G.A. Pocock has argued that in Augustan neo-'Machiavellian' thought "commerce and culture were incompatible with virtue and liberty"; liberty and virtue opposed culture or commerce, commerce being "the active form of culture itself". Yet, given the 'mixed' nature of mercantile society, and the way in which the concept of the Georgic could be used to express the application of industry to nature, more ambiguously, "the plunge into nature could be described simultaneously in pastoral and industrial terms". Consequently, a garden, a farm, any type of agrarian industry, any type of industry that had close relations with the natural world, could all be seen as sources of virtue. Throughout this thesis, the term "natural economy" has been used because of the closeness of the 18th century economy with nature. A list of products manufactured by Georgian industry, "silks, lace, furs, jewels, furniture, sugar, rum", and so on, shows an industrial process directly connected with nature. This, so to speak, provides the material basis for the culture-nature nexus found in political language,

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and it is an economy different in kind from 19th and 20th century economies which if not always divorced from nature are at least almost invariably at one remove from it. Besides the proximity, and therefore identity, of industry (culture) with nature, there is also the Radical and sometimes Whiggish or Tory notion of 'natural' commerce involving again the idea of excess. "Commerce", wrote Tobias Smollett,

is undoubtedly a blessing, while restrained within its proper channels; but a glut of wealth brings along with it a glut of evils: it brings false taste, false appetite, false wants, profusion, venality, contempt of order, engendering a spirit of licentiousness, insolence, and faction, that keeps the community in continual ferment..."6

In other terms, the triumph of passion over reason which could be remedied "by proper regulations", that is the state, so that "commerce may produce every national benefit". Besides commerce and economic activity, custom and law were other areas of human endeavour that produced ambiguity or identity in the relationship between culture and nature. If natural law was the source of man's natural propensities custom nurtured the things that were his "second nature". Custom,

as the origin of second nature, served as the best means of explaining what made a people and its laws uniquely and autonomously themselves; and wherever we read that a people must be governed by laws suited to its nature, second nature and customary law are primarily intended. A claim to uniqueness was a claim to autonomy... the claim that the English possessed a historical and immemorial sovereignty over themselves.7

What starts off as an epistemological proposition soon gets made into a political assertion. The author of this passage, J.G.A. Pocock,

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argues the notion of experience is the irreducible concept upon which custom rests. For Pocock, there are at least three distinct strands or paradigms of political thought evident in the 18th century and experience gives the epistemic root to custom. Custom is personified in Burke, natural law founded in pure reason or rationalism in Locke, and Anglo-Saxonism founded in an admixture of charisma, reason and virtue is carried around in the minds of the Georgian Radicals. The Burkeian idea of the ancient English constitution is said to contain three assumptions: first, that "all law in England might be properly termed common law", second that common law emanated from "common custom originating in the usages of the people" and third that custom "was by definition immemorial". It followed that this kind of law and custom itself "was constantly being subjected to the test of experience" and "was ultimately rooted in nothing but experience". English custom and common law were an accretion of particular events and experiences which "cannot be reduced to general principles or scientific laws" since they are made up of "'one emergency following upon another as wave follows wave'". Because each event or experience is unique, "'there can be no generalisations'". In practice, and therefore in thought, the distinction between Anglo-Saxonism and the common law paradigm is not as clear cut as it would seem from Pocock's initial remarks. Accretion involved "adapting old precedents to new situations" such that over a period of time "the old precedent became, by degrees, and generally insensibly, both refined and enlarged until it took on a new meaning beyond anything those who first established it could have intended". Remembering Henson, Baxter and other Gothicists, this is precisely one of their key assumptions. The corruption of the constitution was a process of accretion or encrustation. Using the same categories, Gothic Radicalism seeks the pure and original constitution; simply, what for Burke is progress and irreversibility is for them corruption and return.

Up to a point, Pocock acknowledges the two languages or codes are intertwined. The crucial point or difference, for him, is whether or not the constitution is stipulated to be immemorial or is knowable;

the crucial conceptual question is that of time. As he puts it, Georgian Radicalism offered,

a partial rationalisation of the traditional common law doctrine. There exists an ancient constitution, it said, whose claim upon us lies largely in its antiquity; but this constitution was founded upon principles which can be known, and we are therefore able to know it has degenerated from them and to restore it to them. This Burke denied. He was, therefore, faced not only with a rationalist doctrine based on a Lockean theory of natural rights, but also with a modified form of seventeenth century 'ancient constitution'.

This latter, despite the fact "English common law traditionalism repeatedly denied that the origins of tradition could be found at any specific moment", which, Gothicism with the charismatic figure of Alfred and the paraphernalia of tythings and so on, asserted. The Georgian Radicals sought "the original principles of the constitution". They "abridged the constitution into the Polybian-Machiavellian 'science' of mixed government, according to which every stable constitution must be founded on certain principles". It could "degenerate" from these principles and should then be "restored". This form of legitimation "did not belong to the common law"; authority was "no longer located in the stream of transmission" but depended on the "charismatic or rational" for "its validity". The outcome is that "the strategist of return... cannot invest the past in which he believes with the authority of tradition". Yet, ambiguously, the Gothic mind or moment, "borrows elements of charismatic or rational authority from the tradition it is criticising", since "the stream of transmission" already carries within it "elements of charisma or rationality"; therefore the Radical dips into the "stream of transmission". Pocock's way out of this difficulty is to argue that the Radical or Gothic mode "is obliged to create a new past and invest it with authority which easily abolishes the necessity of referring to the past at all." So, "the

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radical, the rationalist or antiquarian... assert that the past can be known by means that do not presume its continuity with the present". Unlike the conservative, the Radical "reconstructs the past in order to authorise the future; he historises the present in order to deprive it of authority". Yet in doing this, "in re-arranging concepts about the past" the Radicals also "form a pattern" of ideas which contain "much that is acceptable and even dear to conservatives" even if they end up "seeming to authorise in the present only a set of arrangements other than those that actually exist". Even more significantly, there were "doubtless many occasions on which the two", Gothicism and common law theory, "were blithely combined and confused by persons unaware of the foundations on which each rested".  

A number of questions come to mind. First, there is the question of whether or not the two, or even three, stratagems or manners of thought rest on different structural or epistemological foundations or whether the differences are largely functional. Second, there is the empirical question of whether in fact Radical ideology did get rid of the need to refer to the past at all. Third, there is the question of why the three or two conceptions of time needed to exist; to what did they relate? What specific social or intellectual need did they fulfil? Taking the second question first, the empirical analysis of artisan thinking presented here would deny charismatic and rational criteria dispensed with the need to refer back to the past. John Baxter's and Gravenor Henson's elaborate histories speak otherwise. On the first question, it was hinted that Burke's thought, for example, took over many of the basic assumptions or ideas involved in the 'languages' of natural law and virtue. This in itself does not disprove Pocock's contentions, but it does suggest a certain conceptual fluidity or, perhaps, a common core of assumptions. Explaining it away in terms of ignorance and "confusion", as many other writers besides Pocock have done, is not only slightly condescending but avoids rather than settles the problem. It is at least equally plausible to argue that the important point is not whether custom is a good thing or a valid mode of argument, for both Radical and conservative agree that it is; but what is crucial to them is the


* On Burke's use of natural law, see Reflections, 32, 38, 44, 46-7, 56-8; on virtue as a moment in his ideas see Reflections, 38, 94-5, 113, 143, 159, 199, 223.
function or interpretation of a particular custom or law. The
difference is political rather than conceptual. Only this would
explain why Radicals could use the language of Burke to deny Burke.
It is extremely important not to forget the 18th century understanding
of reason in which reason was at one time experience and at another
time principle. Historical experience, say Alfred's sacred polity,
was merely the embodiment of natural law principles. Put another
way, experience is culture, while reason is nature. Both are
comprehensible in terms of sacred or divine origins suggesting that
from a certain angle 18th century reason can be properly described
as mythological. Additionally, regardless of how the past is re-
arranged, the ultimate significance lies in the fact that the past
is referred to as the origin of authority and legitimation simply
because the past is closest to God. From this point of view, perhaps
the time question dissolves itself once it is realised, as it is
being argued here, that we are dealing with a single paradigm of
thinking materialised through its relationship to a quasi-agrarian
mercantile society in which perceptions of time are still tied to
the non-progressive rhythms of nature.

In a later work, Pocock does not always make such paradigm
distinctions. "The cult of customary antiquity" becomes "a peculiarly
English brand of legal humanism", or, "a mode of civic consciousness" that
has certain affinities with "civic humanism in the republican and
Florentine sense". Liberty, including Radical and Whiggish liberty, so
it would seem, is "rooted in the fabric of immemorial custom". My
contention is that the identity is clear if it is realised natural law,
too, is without memory; as is virtue. Virtuous custom, so to speak, is
seen as "a mode of civic consciousness particularly appropriate to a
gentry asserting itself in parliament, in litigation, and in the local
administration of common law". A close reading of popular political
tracts and books shows virtue and natural law were the measure of custom
but another measure was also that a practice was "age-old" or time out
of mind. What counted, in John Baxter's words, were "free customs".
Or, in the same conceptual complex, another measure was the deistical
one of truth and error, of genuine custom and erroneous custom or law.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} Pocock, Moment, 341.
That the political language of "legal humanism" was not wholly owned by the gentry has been demonstrated in the body of the thesis. Several writers, including Pocock, but more recently, on an institutional basis E.P. Thompson and his followers, have stated the law had "an unusual pre-eminence" in the 18th century. It displaced "the religious authority and sanctions of previous centuries" and made way for "economic sanctions ... the ideology of the free market" and the "political liberalism" of the nineteenth century. The question is why, and I would point not only to the dominance of the gentry but also to the mode of production; law because of state and taxation as the central means of appropriation. It is as much from this fact, perhaps, as it is because of gentry-aristocracy hegemony, that the law has a degree of universalism; that, as Thompson argues, the law is more than ideology in this period. Custom and the laws were an integral part of artisan consciousness. This ought to have been made clear in the last few chapters; some more examples will add to the picture. Samuel Bamford in his memoirs reproduces a piece called "The Union Hymn" sung by himself and his fellow prisoners while "agonised by visions of the scaffold". Religion, liberty, patriotism, a rural and pastoral setting, the notion of a deliverer or patriot king are all mixed in together and the Hymn contains lines about "our father's rights; our father's laws", making "Old England free" and so forth. Some artisan verses from a similar period, which are an anticipation of Gravenor Henson's sentiments, speak of Queen Elizabeth, "of workmen's rights she's still a guarantee" against "innovating fools"; "journeymen" are "sheltered by her laws". Until about 1814, many trade clubs "employed an attorney to conduct prosecutions in the law courts".

Equally, though, the word 'law' in artisan political vocabulary could refer to the laws of nature. Natural law must be conceived as entwined in nature-culture dialectic; as part of a mythological mode of expression. Yet although there is a certain identity since "human

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laws may be simply the translation of the commands of natural law into the formalised commands or rules of a particular kingdom", there is also a separateness since human law is particular or national as well as sometimes being rational or universal. In one sense, the universalism of natural law is inherently radical, and provides a tool with which to criticise customary and contemporary political arrangements; it is based on the assumption that "there is a reason or law ... which runs through all change and under-lies all existence". An unalloyed version of this was typical of Paine; it was not of Gothic Radicalism. In the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, "natural rights ... became almost merged into historical ones". According to the Westminster sub-committee in 1780, "equal representation of the people...annual elections, and the universal right of suffrage" came from "the natural feelings of mankind". But, "were substantially enjoyed in the times of the immortal Alfred, and, form the grand palladium of the nation ... they are the birthright of Englishmen". This last phrase, "the birthright of Englishmen", used again and again in the literature points to the paradoxical nature of the language, of the merging of culture and nature. As Pocock himself has written, in seeming contradiction to other statements, in the American context "the pursuit of nature ... can be readily expressed in the rhetoric of virtue and corruption". Yet it is something of an anachronism to see this as a linking of "Christian theology, English empiricism and European rationalism", if only because English empiricism had not yet come about. As Catherine Macaulay argued both "the grounds of experience" and "the principles of a rational belief" substantiate belief "in the omnipotence of God". English reason had two sides to it.13

The last sentence was a point of emphasis, and emphasis and elaboration needs to be given to other points touched on earlier. Catherine Macaulay, supposedly one of the more rationalist of the Whiggish Radicals, indicates how far removed natural law assumptions could be from secularism. It was one thing to conceive of the universe

as "a great clock ... left to be governed mechanically by the wheels which the Creator had set in motion"; it was another to deny "the miracles of the Bible and the role of providence in daily life". While he presented a 'demystification' of the Bible, Paine is a good example of the way in which 'rationalists' were slow to shed many of their basic religious assumptions. Yet frequently natural law has been connected with the secularisation of political thought. Combined with Machiavelli it is said to free men "from the need to refer to divine will or to history to justify political activity". Natural law presuppositions "were accepted as self-evident without further theological or prescriptive justification". While this may have been true in some circles, it is a naive assumption that "such secular, rationalist ideas 'as the rights of man' and other products of the Enlightenment would, when they gripped the common people, necessarily serve as an antidote to religion". The extent to which they were ever coloured by the Enlightenment in the English context is a moot point, especially if we recall Joseph Priestley's shocked reaction to the extent of unbelief in France.  

But, in order to get a proper paradigmatic understanding of what was going on in the history of ideas, the flowing tide of rationalism and secularisation cannot be completely ignored. A more complete view can be gained by looking both backwards and forwards. During the medieval period, the institutional setting of natural law theory ought not to be overlooked. Natural law ideas were contextually related to the corporate existence of the Catholic church. Conciliar theory, for example, held "the whole body of the church, the congregation of the faithful is the source of its own law". Natural law bolstered this assertion of the autonomy of the church against the state. In the 18th century, the conception of a mixed constitution did not include the church. Natural law theory in the earlier period can only be properly understood, as with Thomas Aquinas, in relation to a whole complex or totality of ideas. Natural law was only comprehensible in relation to other concepts such as eternal law and

divine law. Despite what has been written earlier, there is a
degree of secularism and individualism in natural law ideas in the
18th century that seems to be absent in the earlier period. The
relationship with God is often more indirect. The right of self-
defence is not immediately that life is holy but man, by use of his
own individual reason, will act in his own self-interest. Volney,
paraphrasing Hobbes, tells us "self-love, the desire of happiness,
and an aversion to pain are the essential and primary laws that
nature ... imposed on man". Volney also stresses individual choice
whereby "man is become the artificer of his own fate". But within
the idea of natural rights and laws a more collective orientation
could exist. By nature, Volney wrote, there is inherent in man
"the tie of their reciprocal connections". Since a man ought not
to "do that which is destructive of his own life", it followed for
the Radicals, he ought not to do that which threatened to destroy
the lives of other men. The way this could be ensured was through
collective responsibility; through the pre-medieval institution of
the tythings, through communal local government. It is frequently
and strongly argued by Marxists and others that natural law theory
is pre-eminently bourgeois and individualist, but the Georgian
Radicals transformed the 'bourgeois' individualism inherent in
modernised natural law and looked back to community; although the
social reality from which this was constructed was vastly different
from the medieval social world. If there is some formal element
in natural law theory that stretches across the classical, medieval
and mercantilist worlds, it is because all three are, albeit in
different senses and with different social content, "natural societies".15

With Spence, and other plebeian writers, it was shown how natural
law ideas suited their natural and social environment. The two elements
cannot be separated, and natural law cannot be adequately understood
outside of these twin contexts; it is not a purely intellectual
construct. "The simple Deistical and Republican system of Jesus"
was, according to Robert Wedderburn, the natural form of government.

or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires, (London, 1795), 35-6;
on the question of natural rights as bourgeois apologetics,
besides Continental Marxian writers, see for example Basil
Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, (Pelican edn. 1972),
24; "natural law, sanctioning liberty and progress, [and
property],was to be the basis of the modern liberal bourgeois
state" &c.
"Those gaudy appendages, those trumpery additions" of modern government and society had "conspired to corrupt its native purity, its original simplicity". Singled out for special mention are "the game laws - the right of primogeniture", measures which are "unjust infringements' of the law of nature"; laws which attack agrarian property rights, the rights of the small producer. It was a common assumption during this period that "nature manifested itself most clearly in those who were untouched by the artifices of civilisation". The Radicals felt "the peasant living in the country and on the land", and "the working man living on a small income were both able to get along without luxuries, like the noble savage". Despite modern expressions, it is essential to grasp that natural law all but died out in the 19th and 20th centuries because its supporting social structure and physical environment had disappeared. Natural law was the mental product of agrarian and semi-agrarian society, and it became more and more anachronistic to argue from nature. But the process of change was slow. "Post war radicalism", according to one writer, "was for the most part confined within the social and political categories of the eighteenth century ... attack on the aristocratic constitution". Only after 1819 was there a "gradual transformation". It is argued "the primary social category of the ideology was 'the People'", not "the 'working class' or 'working man'!", and was cast in terms of "'the rights of all men'" instead of class. In the light of my investigations, what follows is that the category of "the people" in this period has a set of meanings which mark it off from modern connotations. The concept of the people in the 18th century is only properly comprehensible in relation to other concepts such as virtue and natural and common law. In the last instance these ideas need to be linked to men's relationship to their natural environment and, to 'deeper' social categories. The notion of Providence has been defined as "the course of worldly events ... seen as the working out of God's judgements". This was "but a refinement of the more basic assumption", also a natural law assumption, "that the material environment responded to man's moral behaviour". A belief in Providence could exist side by side with a belief in science or natural causes since it did not so much spring from ignorance concerning the workings of nature as from "the ancient belief that there was an ultimate relationship between man's moral behaviour and the apparent caprices of his environment".
And as Keith Thomas says, "the same belief underlay the providential view of history, in which the rise and fall of nations appeared as the expression of God's unsearchable purposes". Virtue, as a moral and 'historical' process, rests on the same set of cognitive assumptions, and if a more secular idea in its Machiavellian form, was never completely distinguished as such in Radical ideology. Perhaps linking both to less political and more popular belief is the idea of fortune and misfortune which was also a central idea in the explanation of witchcraft.16

Simplicity vs Complexity

The analysis of nature and culture is far from complete since no extended attention has been given to the question of nature and natural law as either a hierarchical or a more or less egalitarian ordering of things. The social group to which you ascribed virtue, varied according to this initial 'epistemological' conception. One concrete extension of this was the English garden, but no analysis of this can be presented. Neither has there been any further, more 'contextual' analysis of millenarianism, deism or the idea of origins. Some treatment was given to these in earlier chapters; what are considered next are those parts of the paradigm which have so far only been looked at within the framework of a particular writer's thinking.

One of the most basic yet generally overlooked words and ideas in 18th century political vocabulary is "simplicity". It had a great variety of meanings and associations. There is, perhaps, something paradoxical in the idea of "noble simplicity", a notion by and large appropriated by the upper classes. Put in this form, in architecture, in poetry and in painting the idea of the simple is very stylised. The countryside is conceived as a landscape; something to be looked at and admired from a distance, a thing that has an excess of culture laid upon it. The Radical idea was often very different. When Thomas Spence

spoke of "simplicity" as "the Rule of Heaven's Art", he had in mind a vision of society totally opposed to Burke's. He meant "the simplicity of a republic", while also associating simplicity with patriotism. Alfred's system, according to John Cartwright, possessed "simplicity, uniformity and exact proportions". There is "simple honesty"; truth was always held to be simple. Cartwright, like many other Radicals, opposed simplicity to "mystery" and "to confusion and darkness". Samuel Bamford wrote of "the simplicity of an uncorrupted mind". Elinor Dashwood in Jane Austin's Sense and Sensibility, speaks of "manly, unstudied simplicity". Apart from the association between manliness and simplicity, and the dissociation of simplicity from feminine mystery, the idea carried here is that since the simple is unstudied it is also spontaneous or 'natural'. George Boas writes of an 18th century "tradition" which felt that "the older a thing was the better". So "primitive Christianity" and "primitive simplicity" were terms of approbation. Again there is the idea of a return to origins. The simple was also the original. "Some of the customs", said John Brand, "have been originally good, though at the present day they retain little of their primitive purity". The measure of custom was how closely it still conformed to its original simplicity and purity.17

"Simple", in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, is associated with a lack of duplicity and guile; it means "innocent and harmless, undesigning, honest, open and straightforward". Additionally it means "free from, devoid of, pride, ostentation" and so on. Another meaning refers to freedom from "elaboration or artificiality, artless, unaffected, plain, unadorned". And, "of persons", a 1794 meaning, connotes "unsophisticated and unspoiled". Of dress, it refers to a form of clothing "not marked by any elegance or grandeur" and is "very plain or homely". This carries over to living, diet and abode. A negative connotation is that it is "not complex in respect of parts or structure". Of special interest is that simple also refers to "persons in a humble ordinary condition of life" and "a plant or herb concocted for medical purposes", and, "a single uncompounded or unmixed thing, a substance free from foreign elements". Perhaps just as

interesting is a use of simple taken from weaving. "Simplicity" contains many identical meanings to simple and includes a reference to "rusticity" and "freedom" from useless accessories. Another Oxford dictionary describes "the simple life" as the practice "of doing without servants and luxuries" and an "attempt to return to more primitive conditions". This view, involving the idea of a return to an original condition can be contrasted with the 19th century evolutionist idea where the simple was the lowest form in the history of evolution and progress. All the associations and synonyms listed, were contained within 18th century Radical vocabulary and ideology. Not least, is there a suggestion of an overlap or spill from artisan herbalism into artisan politics, such as in the writings of Samuel Bamford.

"The mind begins to reason", wrote one Radical propagandist, "until ... it can determine and point out the most plainest and simple plan". Through the idea of simplicity, this quotation points to an association the Radicals often made between politics, language and reason with simplicity weaving the connecting thread. It has been said of Paine that "his style", his "simplicity and lucidity" embodies "his political and moral values". According to another author, his arguments "were stripped of refinements and qualifications" so that "everything was reduced to its simplest terms". This style is in contrast "to the complexity and subtlety of Burke". It is also typical of Radical writing in general. Part of Joanna Southcott's appeal, according to William Sharp, the engraver, rested on her "simplicity ... of language, drawn from nature" understood "by every capacity ... for these effects of nature ... may be understood by illiterate men of every nation". Ignore the learning of the ancients, Robert Wedderburn declared since "reason informs and admonishes us" to follow "the simple Truth". Since truth was simple it was capable of being understood by all men and best expressed through simple language. Samuel Bamford gives a glowing description of his uncle "a christian patriot of the old simple and unpretending class" who was not gifted "with a multiplicity of words". He "gave lessons by example" which was, so to speak, reason incarnate. Mention has already been made that reason itself was seen as simple. In reasoning, it was a basic methodological principle of the age that true knowledge could only be gained through "discovering that which is simplest, then that what is next simplest" so "one can progress inevitably to the most
complex things of all". You started from the present or the most complex and went backwards to find true knowledge; you did not regard the complex present as the zenith of man's development and mental progress. A recent work in linguistic philosophy describes simplicity as "informativeness". Simpler theories, it says, "are more likely to be true than complex ones". This was precisely the position of the Georgian Radicals and in their view there was a symmetry between the order of the mind and the order of society. In both, simplicity held the key to the truth. William Hazlitt describes the method of Horne Tooke's philological researches in which he did not attempt to explain "the obscure by the more obscure but the difficult by the plain, the complex by the simple". Inevitably Tooke found that many modern words were "a corruption of the old Saxon" just as the modern constitution was a corruption of the old Anglo-Saxon constitution. Simplicity as informativeness and as common sense also lay underneath the Radical shibboleth of political education.18

For Paine, and others, simplicity in politics led to a small amount of government, or so it would seem. He also justified independence for America on the grounds that it is "a SINGLE SIMPLE LINE". Reconciliation, like partial reform, was "perplexed and complicated". The "grand system of reform", urged Allen Davenport, "is so simple". The 'metaphysic' of simplicity is clearly seen in the millenial attitude towards political reform, where radical reform is to be carried out immediately or "done in a day". Radical reform or revolution was more likely to succeed because it was so simple and therefore could be done quickly. Partial reform was by nature complicated and slow and uncertain in its outcome. "Simplicity, order and facility of execution, are the distinguishing characteristics of Radical Reform", wrote one Radical journal. It went

on to claim radical reform "is already nearer practice than moderate reform for millions are in favour of the former".19

Earlier some attempt was made to elicit Thomas Spence's millenialism; simplicity was "Heaven's Art". Yet simplicity has a wider religious value than this; it is a key value in the Dissenting tradition. It has been called a central feature of "Calvinist aesthetics". Protestantism, and especially the varieties of Puritanism in the British context, defined itself against the complexities of belief and ritual of the Catholic church. Without too much difficulty, this was transferred over to politics where the simplicity of Radical beliefs and culture were contrasted with the complexities of aristocratic politics. Although the English gentry and aristocracy would often extol their own homeliness and simplicity against foreign counterparts, it was an easy matter for the Radicals to equate the aristocracy with complexity given the way they aped the French Catholic aristocracy and given their alleged origins. As one writer has said, "along with the cult of plain-ness went a very general contempt for whatever was medieval", the aristocracy being the epitomy of medievalness. In the Radical mind, simplicity, a religious concept in origin, is also given the gloss of social class.20

Apart from being associated in 'religious' thinking with the one rather than the many, with unity rather than plurality or complexity, the attachment to the simple is a reflection of the social circumstances of the artisans and lower gentry. It has already been mentioned how it was felt the lower orders lived a more natural life than the upper classes. It followed they also led a more simple life. Volney called plebeians "children of simplicity" and "simple men". As he puts it, in dialogue form:


Q. You have classed among the social virtues, simplicity of manners; what do you mean by that expression? A. I mean the confining of our wants and desires to what is really useful for the existence of the individual and his family: that is to say, the man with simple manners has few wants, and is content with little.  

Volney shows how this individual virtue or moral value is connected with the collective health of the economy. Since,  

if this virtue of simplicity be extended to a whole people, it secured abundance to them; everything that they do not immediately consume becomes a source of trade and commerce to a very great extent; they labour, they manufacture, and sell their productions to a greater extent than others; and attain the summit both of external and internal prosperity.  

The opposite vice to this virtue is "cupidity and luxury". Again, then, there is the example of personal and moral health leading to public and economic health: a truly moral economy. Thomas Holcroft remarked how "every man in Nottingham gentle or simple", supported a particular measure. "Such ideas of difference between gentle and simple", reported a farmer-artisan in 18th century America, "were, I believe, universal among all of my rank and age". Simple and simplicity were words which conveyed a sense of class consciousness, a positive evaluation, an anti-'hegemonic' evaluation of your own class. Thomas Spence frequently referred to the aristocracy as giants, and there is perhaps some echo of John Baxter's account of the Brutus myth. Spence makes the not unwarranted association, given physical differences, of class with size. Small is beautiful also in that the artisan, small businessman and master is preferred over monopoly which is, of course, associated with aristocratic wealth and politics. The small is, of course, the simple as well.  

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The dictionary defined simple in contradistinction to the aristocratic virtues of grandeur, ostentation, elegance and so on and a life-style of luxury. In this sense, simplicity can be related to the idea or concept of excess. A recent statement argues that while the Radicals used the language of a balanced constitution, they also used it as a sort of black propaganda to disguise "the novelty of their ideas". Enough example has been given from the Radicals themselves, for instance from Thomas Evans and from John Cartwright, upon whom the critic rests her argument, to suggest a different interpretation. If the cry was the people's sovereignty, the people were only to rule in partnership with a reconstituted aristocracy and monarchy. As Bernard Bailyn has put it, "it was not assumed that each estate would singly dominate ... the branches of government". The fact that the Radicals still adhered to a notion of excess prevented their approval of one element governing alone, which, anyway, they would have regarded as a version of monopoly. This idea of a political or constitutional balance also had a much wider resonance. According to Bailyn, a balanced or popular government required "spartan self-denying virtue on the part of all the people" and would only survive "where poverty made upright behaviour necessary". But the words of Volney, and others like him should not be interpreted too easily or casually. Neither should the association between the simple life and rustic living be taken at its face value. "Simplicity is the Mean between Ostentation and Rusticity", said Alexander Pope. John Bull, a common Radical symbol, was used to represent rural simplicity or honesty but not idiocy. He does sometimes show gullibility but this only means that his honesty and simplicity have been taken advantage of. The simple was what was according to nature's laws; it did not necessarily imply anything about rural poverty or total asceticism. Rousseau believed children ought to be brought up "in their first simplicity", according to natural reason; he also believed this would best be done close to the natural world but he did not recommend they be free of some of the benefits of civilisation. Once again we come back to the proposition that only an excess of a thing is wrong or bad. Since Saxon times the simplicity of reason and custom had given way to the excesses of lawyer's law. The "more homely and more sensible manners of the Saxons", John Baxter wrote, were exchanged for the excesses "of chivalry, and the subtleties of school philosophy". In Don Quixote, a passage extols the simple life in which
the necessaries of existence are taken "from the sturdy oak" and from mother earth. But, by and large, it would be a mistake to attribute this sort of primitivism to the Radicals. To some extent their position, their view of the simple life, is stated by a character in one of William Godwin's novels. "Though I love the sight of peasants", she says, "I would not be a peasant",

I would have a larger stock of ideas and a wider field of activity ... I would not sacrifice ... the best characteristics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries, but they are the refinements and purifying of the intellect, and the luxuries of uncostly, simple taste.

Another writing, by analogy, brings out the 'Gothic' position even better. "Civilisation", it is said,

is like cooking. When you see light, healthy and well-prepared food on the table you are very pleased to realise that cooking has become an art; but when we see juices, jellies and pates with truffles we curse the cooks and their art for producing such wretched results.

This approximately is how the Radicals felt. They rejected the elaborate desserts: they were the overdone or 'excessive' or complicated part of civilisation, or culture or art. They rejected the effeminate, over-done and superfluous, even nauseating, culture of the aristocracy and of the French aristocracy in particular. The Anglo-Saxon polity was natural but a 'natural' civilisation rather than simply being natural in the Quixotian sense; it was the original civilisation. It was civilisation without too many frills. Or, in the German conception,


25. William Godwin in Willey, Background, 222.

the Anglo-Saxons had culture but not civilization.

**Virtue vs Corruption-Luxury**

Paired with the opposites of simplicity and complexity was the ideological opposition between virtue and corruption. There is also the association between simplicity and virtue. Both were related to the problem of excess through the question of luxury. Luxury gave rise to complication; it also originated corruption. John Jebb spoke of "the slumbering virtue of the people", implying its connections with past polities and with popular government. Lord Hillborough said, in 1780, that the people were "mad from virtue" and "were bent on reforming the government", implying from a conservative or Whiggish point of view there could be an excess of virtue. On a personal level, the opposite of virtue was not corruption but vice; on a public but still personal level, venality. Corruption is, as it were, a collective system, whereas venality refers to personal or family gain on the political level; it refers to that which can be bought and sold as against virtue for which there is no price. "Let no man", said Thomas Spence, "think of aggrandising his family at the expense of public welfare". At his trial, Henry 'Redhead' Yorke declared "the sacred lessons of virtue" were "the foundations of all human polity" and were allied with love of country or patriotism. Being a partially political thing, virtue was also a public act which involved an active principle.

"Innocence is not virtue", argued William Godwin, "virtue demands the active employment of an ardent mind in the promotion of the general good". For Godwin, as for many other Radicals, virtue could be gained from "knowledge and wisdom" thereby giving us another indication of the depth of the idea of political education. Virtue provided the active principle in freedom or liberty since freedom was "animated by virtue". Liberty, Rousseau declared, cannot exist without virtue. "Gothic freedom and virtue" was a common phrase on the lips of Radicals and others. "Our Saxon ancestors" established "constitutional freedom ... wisdom and virtue". Alfred was always "virtuous Alfred".
As Richard Brothers, among many others puts it, "virtue animates the hero"; vice or venality motivated the villain or anti-hero. Like patriotism and other ideas in the complex or paradigm, it was necessary to distinguish between false and "genuine virtue". Rousseau held that "even virtue is discredited in the mouth of one who does not practice it". For one poet, virtue was "all that life can give", suggesting the significance and pervasiveness of the idea in 18th century mentality. He called for "active virtue and patriotic exertions" leading to "political salvation". The association of "religion and virtue" was made frequently. There was also "rustic virtue" and "domestic virtue", the latter sometimes signifying English rather than purely personal virtuous behaviour. Like simplicity, virtue was associated with harmony and balance; in the prints of the time, the idea of disharmony whether expressed through ill-fitting clothes or things turned upside down and so on, seems to imply a loss or lack of virtue. This idea is partly contained in the Shorter Oxford's definition of virtue, which is also of more general interest in the light of later discussion.

Virtue is,

1. The power or operative influence inherent in a scriptural or divine being. c. An act of superhuman or divine power; a 'mighty work'; a miracle (1526)
2. Conformity of life and conduct with the principle of morality; voluntary observance of the recognised moral laws or standards of right conduct.
M.E. b. Chastity, sexual purity esp. in women
3. A particular moral excellence; a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct...
5. Physical strength, force or energy
6. The possession or display of manly qualities...

Virtue then, is connected with a divine origin, provides a moral underpinning to public conduct, is a kind of energy or action, is something women have and do not have and is a form of purity or integrity. What follows is largely an articulation and a critical

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assessment of these meanings. What is missing in the dictionary definition is the historical question. "Virtue" is a word not often used nowadays, especially in political speech. Why? What is it about virtue that makes it a word and idea peculiar to a pre-industrial or semi-industrial setting? "The decline of virtue", writes J.G.A. Pocock, "has as its logical corollary the rise of interest". Put another way, it could be said that part replaces whole; representation (a coalition of interests) replaces delegation and participation (a community of interests). Or, if you like, a capitalist ethic replaced a mercantilist one in politics. Yet this only tells us what happened; it does not suggest why. Pocock tells us the "theses and antitheses of virtue and corruption is the central element in 'Machiavellian' thought". Given the importance Pocock places on the "Machiavellian moment" in the history of 18th century ideas it is useful to examine the ramifications of this assertion more closely.

For, Pocock has been the most prominent figure in a minor revolution in the study of 18th century thought. Before, natural law and rights held sway; but largely thanks to Pocock, virtue is now seen as the central concept in political thought and ideology. Great minds think alike, and a number of the ideas and conclusions expressed here were reached independently of his Machiavellian Moment, a book published while this thesis was in progress. At the same time, he has expressed these ideas at a far greater level of sophistication and articulation than I have been able to do here. My own use of the book should be clear by now. But there are also considerable divergencies and disagreements. My analysis has been more detailed in many areas or writers where Pocock has naturally offered only general remarks. Overall, the analysis has been directed at a very different content, at popular ideology. The use of the idea of a paradigm, the attempt to specify the relationship of the ideas to their social structure and so on, all show a divergence from Pocock.

Having done with this minor digression, what then has he to say about virtue as a central organising concept in 18th century ideas? In an earlier work, he stresses the universalist or cosmopolitan nature of the idea and consequently the problems faced by English political writers in applying it to an English context. The analysis
of John Cartwright and other pamphleteers has suggested what in fact happened was that the universalist element was considerably watered down: the humanist republic became the English republic. Contrary to this, Pocock argues 18th century thought was fundamentally classical and secular. It was "the most classical-minded of English centuries". Whereas "Tudor political thought is Christian, medieval, and slightly Machiavellian", and "Puritan political thought is a battle-ground between the apocalyptic and the secular", the 18th century "needed a new vision of itself in radically secular terms". Apparently, part of the reason for this secular twist in Georgian political thinking was an "increased awareness of the role of commerce and finance as historical determinants", and, as sources of corruption rather than as agents of fortune. As he interestingly remarks, "a Marxist might say that this was a mercantilist rather than an entrepreneurial consciousness, if that were not revisionism". 29

His later work shows some modification of these views, although it might only be amplification since Pocock's general and original conclusions still seem to stand. In the classical tradition, stemming from Aristotle and running through to Machiavelli and others, "citizenship was a universal activity". Besides the universalism, the secularisation process is also re-stated. "During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ... Western political and social thought passed from its post-medieval to its early modern stage". Generally, historical explanations replaced religious ones. "The antithesis of virtue ceased to be fortuna, but became corruption instead" and "the habit of presenting English politics in terms of grace and apocalyptic underwent after 1660 a rather sharp decline". The cause was the integration of history, that is classical thought, with Christian eschatology; a rejection of Augustine's down-grading of secular life and a recognition of a Christian commonwealth wherein a measure of salvation might be achieved. "Prophetic history ... served as a means of politicising grace and re-sacralising politics". History could then be read as the history of virtue, or its opposite,

and in "the later Christian centuries" the "political apocalyptic" was an index of the tensions between the sacred and the profane or church and society. Alternatively, Pocock describes this as "the politicisation of virtue" where the maintenance of virtue depended upon "the maintenance of the polis" or constitution. Also, whereas before virtue was a private relationship with an external force, now it was public since a virtuous republic rendered the individual's virtue "dependent on the virtue of others". Virtue developed three meanings which were carried "down to the end of Old Western thinking". Virtue is first a form of power which allows "the individual or group to act effectively in a civic context"; second it was an "essential property" of the personality; third it was a "moral goodness". As a type of power or action, Machiavelli saw virtue as an "innovative force". It also gave legitimacy to the innovatory acts of heroes, "the classical legislators in the strictest possible sense of state founders", or "the divine or divinely aided beings who could create societies because their virtu was such that it did not need the social frame which was a pre-condition in ordinary men". They were, "gods ... with a little of the beast in them"; mythological creatures close to nature and origins, although this is not a point Pocock makes or stresses. "The innovator must be a legislator" who imposes form or virtue on matters of fortune, and we think in this context of Alfred and the codification of the Saxon laws. There are, then, two types of virtue: charismatic virtue performed in a state of grace, say Alfred; and the more everyday political virtue as in the fight for freedom of the press. Charismatic virtue provides the inspiration and foundation for political virtue. It might be thought at this point the secular basis of virtue is undermined but Pocock argues that for Machiavelli "virtuous republics" could make war on each other and "for this reason the Christian virtues and the civic could never coincide", although there is really no thoroughgoing examination of the alleged conceptual discreteness between Christian and 'Machiavellian' virtue, still less an attempt to study it in the realm of practical ideology.30

Pocock also insists on the separation or opposition of virtue and grace against custom and prudence, the latter is "an antithesis to

what Machiavelli had to say", an alternative political language or paradigm. "Machiavelli's individual is a ruler seeking to shape events through virtu in the sense of audacity, Guicciardini's a patrician seeking to adapt himself to events through prudence." Yet since virtue is seen as a kind of power and moral sanction, prudential actions would sometimes get endowed with virtue and Pocock admits, if that is the right word, that in Guicciardini prudence (custom) and virtue (reason) are often identified. Pocock also says virtue and reason form a pair in 18th century 'Machiavellianism' since virtue (form) as control over fortune (matter) corresponds to reason (form) as control over passion (matter). But, given the way he wants to distinguish and define his paradigms, what Pocock overlooks is that reason could also be identified with natural law and that law or reason as form could also control culture as passion. The ambiguities involved in the idea of reason meant that many connecting links could be made between virtue, natural law and custom.

Apart from drawing attention to the important meaning virtue has in relation to the militia, another aspect of virtue Pocock develops is that dealing with political economy. Initially, this provides support for the statement about connecting links and reinforces my own researches and study. During the early 18th century, he says, "the agrarian values of independence and virtue remain a constant in this period's social perceptions". Land is the source of both independence and virtue, and this was accepted by all: Country and Tory; Court and Whig. "The Augustan debate" never put agrarian against "entrepreunerial interests"; it was not land versus trade, but land and trade against credit. "No writer of either party presumed to defend stock-jobbing, the speculative manipulation of the market value of shares in the public debt". The monied interest strove to increase "through war, the extent of the public debt", and so threatened liberty. "Augustan neo-Machiavellianism" carrying within it "Aristotelian and civic humanist categories", insisted with Machiavelli that virtue depended upon arms or the militia and

31. Pocock, Moment, 238, 243, 253, 269.
with Harrington upon property. Virtue, liberty and independence were founded on "real or landed property which was inheritable rather than marketable". This was defended by ancient institutions and sometimes by common law. This civil structure brought with it "membership of the related structures of the militia and the parliamentary electorate, thus guaranteeing civic virtue". Around 1675, a new "rentier class", based on parliamentary patronage and a professional army, came into being. This new class threatened "the balance between estates" or the ancient constitution, and, subsisting on pensions, offices, credit, and dependent upon the executive power was "incapable of virtue". This, as it were, is the negative side of "the Machiavellian moment".32 Paradoxically, it also involved a perception of society and government "founded in the order of nature" and based upon real property.

Such a government would tend to be a common-wealth (with a monarch) of independent proprietors with a balanced and ancient constitution, fortified by immemorial customs which helped keep the parts independent and in place; it would be patriotic in defence, but would avoid war and empire. But the ambivalences of the neo-Harringtonian posture reveal that those who took this direction could no longer present history in terms of uninterrupted continuity ... Change had occurred, they were looking into the past and seeking to defend virtue against innovative forces, symbolised as trading empire, standing armies and credit ... Their attitude to change was therefore negative ...33

Custom and nature are, then, part of the Machiavellian paradigm, but it is a different custom and nature from Burkeian custom and Lockeian nature. This, "Machiavellian vocabulary of virtu and fortuna" is opposed to the Lockeian language of natural law which was used as an apologetic for the new urban capitalism based on moveable property. But there are problems. Both Locke and Burke could use the language of virtue and balance and Locke's attitude towards property was far from

32. Pocock, Moment, 199, 203, 302, 448, 450.
unambiguous or anti-traditional; and there is certainly no conscious rejection of the language of virtue by him.* The extent to which the monied interest, so called, is outside the traditional order of things is also problematical. A similar problem arises when Pocock finds "a 'Protestant ethic' of frugality, self-denial and re-investment" and trade within the 'pre-industrial' vocabulary of virtue. My view would be that such ideas do not constitute an 'ethic', that they have only a *symptomatic* existence within a mercantilist ideological framework of which virtue is one aspect. Paradigmatically, trade needs to be separated from investment; consumption, as we have shown throughout, ought to be brought into the picture.

Though unintentionally, Pocock at one point tells us why it was, on an intellectual level, the slogan of manhood suffrage and annual parliaments was so significant in Radical ideology. The passage also shows how, again, the idea of the people in the 18th century differed from the idea of the people in later centuries. In 'Machiavellian' politics,

> The implication was that the people, being propertied and independent, were by definition virtuous, but that their representatives were constantly exposed to the temptations of power and corruption; it was therefore necessary that the representation should return regularly to the represented to have virtue renewed ...
> Virtue was an active principle, and in the election of a new parliament the people displayed virtue...

This idea was no different from Locke's who called for frequent elections in order to prevent corruption. The requirement of propertied independence could be used by Burke to deny that the common people had virtue.** Lacking this, they had no right to take part in elections or the political process except in a very attenuated way. Pocock himself argues the language of virtue was peculiarly suited to the gentry. The problem that confronted the Radicals was to extend the notions of property and independence and virtue so that they covered all of the people, and this was done, it has been argued,

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34. Pocock, Moment, 464, 470 ff; on Burke, see footnote, p223; on Locke, see Second Treatise, (Blackwell's edn.) 54, 57-59, 66, 71, 73, 77, 80, 84, 105, 107, 109.
35. Pocock, Moment, 519.
** Burke, see footnote, p249.
without fundamentally altering the concepts of virtue etc. My argument has also been that the artisan Radicals and their 'representatives' took from Locke the idea of property and from 'neo-Machiavellianism' the notion of virtue. All along, the question has been less one of influence, though something like it has also been involved, than one of 'fit' with the artisans' social and economic environment. Both Locke and Harrington were influenced by and shaped ideas that had a common social currency.

How common is shown by referring to a few examples that illustrate the extent to which the idea of virtue was taken up by different members of the social spectrum. George Berkeley, like John Cartwright, took a close interest in public sport as a means of promoting virtue. In the classical manner, he suggests that "triumphal arches, columns, statutes, and like monuments of public services, have, in former times, been found great incentives to virtue". He wanted closer regulation of the popular sports and pastimes which he felt "corrupt our morals". Like Cartwright, he took his example from the Greeks and said public works of this sort would "discourage private luxury". The aim would be "to recover a sense of public spirit", since the English were a people "broken and corrupt by luxury". Through virtue and unity, Berkeley condemns the principle of party; patriotism would be promoted. Whigs and Tories should forget their petty bickering, their "little womanish passions and obstinacy" and instead, "steadily promote the true interests of the country". Immorality, the pursuit of "private ends" would "necessarily ruin the state". But the classical, secular and 'Machiavellian' or universalist elements in Berkeley's thinking lose their strength or impact for two reasons. First, virtue is a return, it is necessary to "restore" the "public spirit", but it is a return located in the Anglo-Saxon past rather than a classical past. "Free governments", he writes, "were planted by the Goths", the implication being that in classical times governments were not free. Second, through the "portentous villainies" of the present, "we have long been preparing for some great catastrophe"; in Berkeley's mind, the political apocalyptic was still very much alive. 36

From what he says about popular sports, it is clear Berkeley would have agreed with Fielding that the term "mob" meant, among other things, "persons without virtue". This was true as a kind of political or ideational tautology. Since the 18th century political system only allowed political participation to the few, and not to the many, by definition the common people lacked the means of gaining virtue, or at least political virtue. This is the moral impulse behind Radicalism although it was still held by many Radicals and others that the ordinary people could gain virtue by their simple habits. To some extent, they held to the view expressed in Don Quixote that "nobility is inherited, but virtue acquired" and that "virtue is worth more in itself, than nobleness of birth". The plebs had their own heroes or political saints who acquired virtue and nobility through their "moral courage". Thomas Hardy, for example, who "fear'd his God but had no other fear", was "a man and a Christian", a "true patriot" who "followed those immortal heroes, an Alfred and a Wallace". From his life it can be learned that "virtue is true nobility". Disputing Burke's version of virtue, Francis Place argued that poor men, "journeymen, labourers or servants" had at least a kind of social virtue which consisted of their stoicism in the face of poverty. Dissoluteness, held by the upper classes to be the reason for their lack of virtue, was not the only reason for their poverty. Samuel Bamford also spoke of the poor having virtue; they lean to "virtue's side", he said. Again, what he had in mind here seems to be social rather than political virtue; social rectitude, not political propriety. Yet it is clear Bamford's own thinking was imbued with 'Machiavellian' assumptions. Expressing a cyclical view of history where governments "change from the despotic to the anarchical" and back again he argues that there can only be "redemption for the masses" if it arises "from their own virtue and knowledge". Since he undoubtedly means 'political' knowledge it is not at all clear here that he separates political from social virtue. The joining together of the two ideas seems to be confirmed in another passage, where in words similar to those used by Thomas Evans and others he proclaims "a virtuous and enlightened people could not be enslaved" and talks again in millenial terms. Another millenialist who denied virtue to the upper classes was Joseph Priestley. He attributed virtue to "the middling sort of people", as they were called. Recalling the time he spent with Lord Shelburne, Priestley insinuates a lack of virtue among the aristocracy. In "the middle classes of life" who
are "above fear and want" there is the "most virtue".37

In effect Priestley denies there can be virtue where there is excess. It has been said "those who embraced Shaftesburian Virtue" were also those who "did much to destroy the Virtue they ... desired and loved". They engaged, that is, in trade and industry. Again, though, it was not so much trade and industry in themselves but an excess which corrupted the moral fibre of the nation. Ultimately, virtue resided in the ownership of land rather than other forms of property. Daniel Defoe in Moll Flanders has one of his characters saying "virtue alone is an estate", but as the rest of the book makes plain an estate alone is virtue. Estates, or rural property, are the basis of independence and therefore of virtue. In a very real sense virtue is, then, the 'mental property' of the landowning classes. "Land and inheritance remained essential to virtue", Pocock writes, and "the function of property was to affirm and maintain the reality of personal autonomy". Yet it is important to remember Locke would not have disagreed with this; there are passages in his writing where he supports it. The artisans did not bother to distinguish between the two writers, and though they attempted to extend the idea of virtue to personality and occupation, ultimately they too placed virtue in the ownership of land. Almost every single pamphlet has something to say about the redistribution of land. But, in the light of Pocock, this gives some indication of the changes that had taken place in the 'classical' concept of virtue. Despite certain important formal resemblances, in content virtue now referred to the people as a nation, its expression was related to the impact of modern capitalist relations and through the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution it referred to the cultural and historical experience of the English people, to their contemporary political institutions and so on.38

37. Cervantes, Quixote, Vol.II, 269; MacPherson, "Advertisement" to Thomas Hardy, Memoir of Thomas Hardy, (London, 1832); Place, Autobiography, 127-8; Bamford, Early Days, 73; Bamford, Passages, Vol.I., 154, 281; Priestley, Selections, 49-50.

On the conceptual or intellectual level, it is difficult to separate a Christian meaning of virtue from any classical semantics, thereby undermining the argument that wants to see 18th century versions of virtue firmly "rooted in the classical world". The virtuous person, said Thomas Bentley, should "declare his sentiments of the present state of the Nation ... as a Man - an Englishman - above all as a believer and rejoicer in the Missions of Moses and Jesus Christ". Lord Shaftesbury, for whom the classical elements are held to be so important, saw virtue's origins "in the state of nature" and saw its collective or public aspect deriving "from the effective or herding impulse" which "had its origin in God". Virtue, according to a popular American pamphlet "was the law of our nature and the law of our nature was the law of God", a sentiment that would have suited Locke more than Machiavelli. Nirad C. Chaudhuri is surely right when he labels virtue, Jane Austen's keyword, "an inheritance from the Christian- Classical tradition", although it is also much more than this if only because virtue is also an important idea in popular magic and mentality. Catherine Macaulay argued it was not sufficient to fix "the principles of morals and virtue" on any form of utility; virtue "includes all the relative duties which a man owes to his Creator and to his fellow creatures". If political virtue was distinct from its other forms, it was still seen as having religious origins, though it is possible perhaps to distinguish between the more active and the passive forms of virtue here. The Protestant elements in 18th century virtue would also seem to be intimated. "Shaftsburian Virtue" postulated that a vicious act which produced public benefits was still not a virtuous act; "actions were only to be considered good if they arose from an intent to achieve the public good". Or, as William Sharp put it, "no person can be praised for an act of virtue, if its appearance proceeds from compulsion or force", for "it then can only be appearance but not reality". Virtuous acts had to be conscious and proceed from a purity of heart, from a pure Christian conscience. 39

From what has been said in the last paragraph or so, it would also seem the distinction between private and public virtue, as a way of walling off Machiavellian virtue from other types is hard to maintain. In Roman thought, not only was there nothing that approximated to corruption in the 18th century institutional sense, or anything like the Christian religion, but a virtue that was not exercised in public was "no virtue at all". In the 18th century conception, private and public virtue were dialectically related. William Hone was fairly typical when he argued, in one of his pamphlets, that "men of virtue and moderation seldom, if ever, turn tyrants", while "despotic rule gives reins to lust, and makes the errors of government, and the crimes of life mix together". Listing the five principal private virtues, Volney even went so far as to relate cleanliness to political virtue. Also, "the very essence of virtue consists in it being a voluntary act of choice "by the private individual". Identifying virtue with patriotism, the Radical Reformer stated the "public spirit consists in sacrificing personal gratification to the public good"; and the basis of patriotism or public virtue is "private virtue" in family relations "ensuring domestic felicity". Beyond this, virtue had wider connotations and broader foundations. Ebenezer Sibly, associated "the mercy of God" with "the reward of good and virtuous actions"; corruption brought plague and famine. But if purity of mind and action led to political purity and virtue, then public or political virtue was analogous with nature. Like foreign kings, foreign herbs lost their virtue on English soil. The 'archaism' of virtue, its 'pre-industrial character' can best be defined by pursuing this line of research; by establishing the connections which exist between political virtue and virtue as a manifestation of a natural economy. 40

The same goes for the notion usually held to be in antithesis to virtue, the idea of corruption. It is useful, again, to start with Pocock. The change from fortune to corruption, he says, is part of the

process of secularisation in thought. The key element in this process is the role of property. Corruption occurs when independent property gets undermined; the result is to pervert government "from a public authority into a private interest", through the sale of offices, places and so on. Corruption, a variety of excess, is "the only cause of change in political systems" in the Machiavelli-Harringtonian scheme of things; and is "a moral as well as a political phenomenon". Degeneration or corruption also has the effect of disturbing the balance of the constitution. Consequently, in the 18th century the term "corruption" is, we are told, "very often being used in its Machiavellian sense, as well as in the vulgar sense of bribery". In other words, "it is used to denote a disturbance of the balance of the constitution, with the demoralisation of individuals and the public that is supposed to go with it". The constitution is defined as "an ideal balance between the powers of the Crown and those of Parliament, which stands for property and independence". It is "the replacement by private relationships" of public relationships" which Pocock emphasises as "the salient meaning" of corruption in his later work. The way out is "a return to first principles" which he sees as "a classical attempt to locate all value in a particular period", such as Alfred's England. The tendency to make corruption more secular in conception is reformulated as Harrington's inclination to "discount Machiavelli's emphasis on strictly moral corruption" and to relate corruption to the imbalance between "political authority" and "the distribution of property that should determine it". Or, it is said, "Harrington emphasises less the moral than the material bases of personality". Specifically, "there is less about the moral degradation involved in corruption than there was in the sixteenth or was to be again in the eighteenth" centuries. In 'Country' ideology, virtue and independence emanated from property, from "their freeholds". Opposing this was "place and pension" as another "species of property" or livelihood. With this shift, "the language of 'balanced government' and the 'separation of powers' took on a new meaning", in which "the key term is 'corruption'". This "marks a further stage in the assimilation of English constitutional theory to the categories and vocabulary of civic republicanism". The operative word here is "assimilation" which is more appropriate to the methodology of traditions than the paradigm method. But to continue, the political language of corruption "was an attack on modern government". 

whereas the defenders of modern government "enlisted the services of Locke".41

Similar to virtue, then, there is an emphasis on the political and secular nature of the concept of corruption and its incompatibility with the Lockeian frame of mind. A fairly recent critic has stated that in the work of Thomas Northcote the idea of corruption has a Christian foundation and is evidence against Pocock's contention that there was a major movement of Country ideas into "the radical-democratic" tradition. Pocock insists virtue and corruption take their most political and secular form in the 18th century, but provides no detailed evidence to show how Harringtonian politics was transformed back into Machiavellian morality; something that is fairly crucial given the Radicals were still using the idea of corruption rather than fortune in the late 18th century. Previous chapters have also shown how not only artisans but also for example John Cartwright's political language was tied up with Christian-mythological ideas. Equally, it would not do to see Cartwright and others using a purely Christian logic; Machiavellian and Christian ideas about corruption do in fact happily intermingle or integrate, at least up to a point, in that they have a common 'mythological' core. Pocock's mistake is to confound a shift from the moral to the material with a shift from the moral to the secular.

It will help things along again to look at a few definitions or meanings. Frequently, in the pamphlet and periodical literature, the phrase "systematic corruption" is used suggesting, pace Pocock, that a political system is being referred to and corruption as a political and social system did not exist prior to 1688 even though elements of corruption can be traced back to William the Conqueror. But this system of corruption "this ministerial bureaucracy and a warlike state as an economic power" generated debate "about the nature of society and government", and "arguments about government and society were also arguments about human nature". So that it was just as easy, if not easier, to take your arguments about personality as property, if you were a Radical, from Locke but without dropping all that 'Machiavellian' stuff about a democratic militia, a balanced

41. Pocock, Politics, 93, 128-9, 131; Pocock, Moment, 54-6, 93, 390, 420, 422.
government etc. Neither did you forget natural law and corruption had religious connotations. As one contemporary pamphleteer put it, "we have the right to resist corruption wherever we find it lurking; it is our duty both divine and human". The Biblical epigraph to William Sharp's An Answer to the World asserts "corruption shall be overcome, and the Truth, which hath been so long without fruit, shall be declared". A statement from another pamphlet makes the connection between the political and moral, if not strictly religious, meaning clear; it also points to some of the more subterranean meanings involved in the 18th century idea of corruption. The "excellence" or "original purity" of the English constitution was "poisoned by foreign invaders" and it is therefore necessary "to expel the corrupt and the heterogeneous". This meaning pertains to that which is real or genuine or original or pure or perfect and is a meaning that has no necessary or invariable connection with either Machiavellian or Christian concepts of corruption.42

Before these last couple of points are discussed and illustrated further, it is useful to look at the question of political corruption as a discrete object in 18th century political speech, being aware of what Pocock says regarding a return to the idea of more moral corruption during this period, but also of what he says about bribery as against 'conceptual' or Machiavellian corruption. What is at issue here, to some extent, is the question of social structure versus the transmission of ideas or the "assimilation" to a tradition, however much Pocock wants to phrase it in terms of paradigms. For Henry 'Redhead' Yorke, to take an example, corruption in the House of Commons referred to "the corruption of many of its members ... it relates to the general venality", he said, and "only of a part of its members". But it could not be isolated. Corruption in the House was "an engine employed to corrupt the people". Venality and bribery was very much intended. Berkeley many years earlier wrote of "that most infamous practice of Bribery" in which "every one who takes a bribe plainly owns that he prefers his private interest to that of his country". Worse, corruption in the narrow sense has "infected

the lowest as well as the highest among us". Taking the opposite view, Bishop Tillotson told his congregation there was no evil "in riches, places or profits". Good Christians, he affirmed, could be certain "of a place in Heaven". But for "the pioneers of 'Country' ideology", according to Pocock, the essentially political aspects of corruption are crucial; "dependence was worse, because more lasting than mere venality". Yet, in actual political speech the "vulgar" or moral sense of corruption is difficult to separate from the political sense and was used just as freely.43

Closely connected with the "vulgar sense" is the cognate idea of luxury. Late 18th century Radicalism did have a notion of political corruption to some extent inspired by Harrington ('property') and Machiavelli (cycles, balance) but at the moral level it is necessary to go beyond Machiavelli to Christianity and myth. Certainly there is no real separation between the political and non-political forms. Saying all this, it is also important to note the idea is related to a post-Machiavellian, post-Harringtonian set of social institutions known as "Old Corruption". It is also necessary to examine the 'silences' in the Machiavellian paradigm. Not only is there an absence of corruption as a total system there is an historical silence about luxury as a problem. By contrast, the idea of luxury is central to late 18th century English 'intellectual' context. Whether luxury is caused by the political system or acts as the agent of corruption in the political system is a moot point. What is clear is that a social and moral concept is being looked at and in an important sense it has, initially at least, nothing to do with politics. Luxury is pre-eminently connected with trade. Another absence in Machiavelli, again something central in the English ideological configuration, is any concept of trade. According to Isaac Kramnick, what he describes as the economic revolution of 1690 to 1740 consisted of a number of institutions. He lists these as the birth of the Bank of England, the National Debt, the growth of joint-stock companies, the East India company and the South Sea company and stock-jobbing. None of these pertained to Machiavelli's world. Corruption does get materialised, and this gets carried through

to the late 18th century as well but is far from being non-moral and non- 'religious' despite this.

The language of luxury is, then, concerned with trade and its effects on social life, although it has obvious less immediate connections with politics. With "frugality of manners", said Berkeley, goes "the strength and nourishment of the bodies politic", although any idea of frugality associated with the Protestant ethic was remote from his mind. Consumption was only wrong in so far as it was a type of excess, in so far as it was luxury. Luxury had never been "at so great a height". In women especially "luxury of Dress" was "the source of great corruptions". More important, loss of moral integrity leads to loss of bodily integrity. Berkeley quotes from Isaiah a passage which ends with the assertion "that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink ... instead of well-set hair, baldness ... and burning instead of beauty". Millenially, "war, famine or pestilence" are the result of luxury. This language, this metaphor - which is more than a metaphor - was still used later in the century. Basically, it is the language of purity and pollution. "Those who have first deflowered the constitution", Henry 'Redhead' Yorke declaimed, have "afterwards prostituted it for sale". Men who were "enervated by luxury" were "soft beings". Luxury was an excess of culture, too; "a deluding picture of elegant manners, gay society, a fancied emancipation from all the sorrows of life". On this level, the opposite of corruption is not virtue but integrity or wholesomeness. Luxury destroyed "original purity" not only in politics but also in social and individual life, or, as the London Corresponding Society Journal put it "natural power depraved by Indolence, Luxury and Flattery will degenerate into contemptible weakness or brutal sensuality". This way of speaking about luxury or corruption has a fairly loud 'Christian' resonance. William Sharp accused the clergy of pretending to "heal the nation over, while they continue in their sins and in their blood, without searching their wounds to the bottom". Without, that is, "first drawing out the corruption that is originally from the devil". Yet this sort of thing could easily lead back to politics. Evil or vice was complicated and luxury and corruption being based on these two things were also complicated. Luxury is associated with the aristocracy and all their doings; therefore evil is also associated with the aristocratic class.
But since luxury was connected with the devil, it could also be associated with God's natural laws. "Exquisite pleasures produce satiety, moderate ones acquire force" this is "the law of nature", said one pamphleteer. Luxury, then, is un-natural; it shows an excess of culture, although once recognising it in these terms we move outside of a purely Christian frame of mind. "Commerce" said Catherine Macaulay, was "superior to every other cause" in "spreading the contagion of a lagatious luxury". Yet this did not lead to a complete rejection of culture. Commerce also softened "that barbarous fierceness which want of means or the want of incentives towards a general communication produced in the manners of our ancestors". Similar sentiments were expressed by the astrologer and herbalist, Ebenezer Sibly, who stated "nature is content with little; but luxury knew no bounds". Whether in the body, social life or politics excess leads to "fever" and "poisoning" of the system.44

That there is some sense of totality involved in the notions of luxury and corruption is perhaps brought out best by Volney in his small book entitled The Law of Nature. Volney thinks luxury is a vice which includes within itself the seeds of all the other vices. A man and a society committed to luxury can never find his or their own wants satisfied. And he, or they, can never find enough money to buy sufficient luxuries, a theme that runs through 18th century literature. A man who has the craze for luxuries, "begins by borrowing ... then swindles, robs, plunders, becomes bankrupt, is at war with mankind, ruins others, and is himself ruined". In a nation, the effects are even worse. Luxury as a system of economy has disastrous political effects. Total consumption, as it were, means a nation "is poor in the midst of abundance; it has nothing to sell to the foreigner ... it loses its respectability, its means of defence and preservation at home and abroad". And, "at home ... all its citizens being greedy after enjoyments are perpetually struggling with each other for the attainment of them; all are either inflicting injuries or have the disposition to do so". There exists "moral corruption or intestine war between members of the same society"; and "from luxury are derived the corruption of the judge, the venality

44. Berkeley, "Essay", 200-1, 202-4; Pocock, Moment, 430-1, 493; Sharp, Answer, 67; Rousseau, Writings, 73; Macaulay, Treatise, 10.
of the witness, the dishonesty of the husband, the prostitution of the wife, parental cruelty", in fact "all the disorders which destroy society". Such are the costs of luxury; and such is its centrality to 18th century political thinking.45

Through the ideas of luxury and trade, then, corruption in the late 18th century is not an essentially Machiavellian way of talking about politics through moral precepts, although the Machiavellian bit cannot be entirely discounted. It is a moral language, although there is another 'material' source of luxury and corruption also absent in Machiavelli. Besides being an economic measure, taxes had moral consequences. They were linked with luxury and corruption. Luxury and corruption, Volney says in his famous pamphlet, bring about economic collapse because high taxes necessary for the consumption of luxuries led to the loss of incentive. "The merchant seeing himself robbed took a disgust to industry". High taxes also led to the centralisation of landholding and a sharp social division into rich and poor. This led to a loss of interest by the majority of the people in the safety of the state. The people become "enfeebled and ignorant". Early empires when reaching this point were easily over-run by barbarians. Taxes hit the poor through the necessaries of life. "Was not their loaf taxed? Was not their beer taxed? Were not their shirts taxed?", declaimed 'Orator' Hunt to a large crowd. It was at the point of economic impact the artisans entered the language of corruption and luxury. "The government in almost every state", wrote "A Citizen of London", are "apt to oppress the people for their private advantage". With similar rhetoric, a Radical journal in 1816 asked "what was the cause of unemployment? Taxation. What was the cause of taxation? Corruption"; and so on.46

In the minds of Radical artisans, the moral side of the corruption question was always to the forefront. After Peterloo, Samuel Bamford was still speaking in a poem of "corruption's throne"

45. Volney, Law, 174-75.

and "the gallant Sydney", but also of the moral corruption of
the people. The same moral-political-mythical language is as
evident in the writings of artisans as in Bishop Berkeley. Bamford
records his friend Healey's remarks that "bribery and corruption"
had "produced a political gangrene in the state", needing an
"amputation of the corrupting influence". The mixture of 'Lockeian'
with 'Machiavellian' language is brought out by The Radical Reformer
which declared as its aims the promotion of "the NATURAL RIGHTS OF
MAN" and "the genuine principles of the Constitution" against "the
corruptions of government". Its campaign would aim to spread moral
and political "purity". It called for "a return to Nature"; "cease
from contemplating the future", it said. Nature would punish
"voluptuousness, intemperance and excess". The voluptuous had
"prodigated health". Bodily purity, moral purity and political
purity are all of a piece; it did not require an astrologer and
herbalist like Sibly to speak this language. Even further, corruption
ruined commerce and was unpatriotic. All this was still connected
with the "undeniable rights of every Englishman" for which "their
forefathers had fought and bled".47

Independence vs Patronage

Perhaps these rights are best made more solid or 'material'
through the idea of independence. Without independence there would
always be corruption and a loss of rights. Independence is another
term or idea absent in Machiavelli, although it is evident in
Harrington and other English political theorists. Like corruption,
and its fellows, it has meanings which are not at first apparent.
No other word or idea could better illustrate Tom Paine's remarks
about different "habits of thinking" being peculiar to "different
conditions", to different historical moments and social groups.
Yet there was an element of common usage and meaning in the idea of
independence which pointed to an area of social consensus or agreement.
In the 18th century, as now, this agreement was based on a joint
misunderstanding which the ambiguities of the political vocabulary
allowed. When King George III spoke of the "defence of our CONSTITUTION,

47. Bamford, Passages, Vol.1, 154, 245, 254; Vol.2, 150; The
Radical Reformer or People's Advocate, No.1, Vol.1, Sept.15,
1819, 3; No.2, Vol.1, Sept.22, 1819, 9; No.5, Vol.1, 39-40,
No.7, Vol.1, 54.
our RELIGION, our LAWS, and INDEPENDENCE", Cartwright commented the King had shown that he and his subjects "have a COMMON INTEREST and make a COMMON CAUSE". Cartwright was right to some extent. But when he went on to say the king's words "were not lightly chosen" since they were "words which conveyed to those who employed them the same 'distinct ideas' of things expressed as they convey to all others", he was a bit wrong. A clue to the source of the misunderstanding is in Cartwright's own diction where he refers yet again to "the recent patriot declaration of HIM WHOSE VEINS THE BLOOD OF ALFRED FLOWS". The myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution concealed the conservative intentions of one and the radical interpretations of the other. They could both agree that in some minimal sense independence meant the independence of England from foreign aggression. When, however, the Cap of Liberty wrote of "the badge of our NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, THE CAP OF LIBERTY", it was taking national sovereignty in a direction that would hardly have met with royal approval. Another conservative meaning of independence concerned the independence of the member of parliament. Unlike the Radical view, the more Whiggish idea saw the member as independent of both crown and people; he must not be a "creature" of either. "I glory in my independence", said Henry 'Redhead' Yorke, referring to his independence from "pecuniary assistance", and hence attachment to any sort of party. If you could not be bought you retained your independence since you kept your integrity. Part of you was not bought off by any special interest. You were still a whole man. The idea of independence is connected with the ideal of the amateur, of the person who remains whole or is a generalist, not committed to any particular end. "He was a man of too honest, and too independent a turn of mind", Thomas Holcroft remarked, "to lend himself as a tool to the violence of any party". Yet another sense of independence concerned the independence of the various parts of the constitution from each other. "An House of Commons free and independent of the Crown", and similar kinds of phrases, were common in the political speech of the time. 48

But these more or less political meanings of independence, not

all of which have been covered, rested on a sociological and economic idea of independence. Without material independence there could be no moral and political independence. Sometimes, statements about material independence do not seem to be directly connected to any ideological construct, Harringtonian or otherwise, but merely relate to the question of a private income or means. In one of his speeches, Yorke spoke of how he had "enough to keep me in ease and independence". Yet, quoting Beccaria, he went on to refer to "the natural state of independence" depending on "the fruits of my cottage and industry", an ideal expressed in the writings of most Radical ideologues - even Spence. If, for the gentry, land was source of independence, for the artisans the matter was a bit more complicated.

Above all, the value of independence as part of artisan mentality is part of a general movement of loss and change. The "ideology of economic 'independence' and sturdy political individualism" is said to have fitted the experience of many groups of artisans "like a glove". Even if he was living on "the edge of famine", the independent weaver and others like him would often display more freedom of thought and action than the new factory workers. While "the semi-employed weavers and artisans might take time off to tramp many miles" to address reform meetings, this kind of activity was "not open to the adult cotton spinner". Both factory wage-labour and unemployment which resulted in help from charity or the parish were regarded as relations of dependence. "The cardinal sin (corresponding to the cardinal virtue of independence) was reliance upon the parish for support". It has been argued that, especially in the domestic system, "the once-vaunted independence was often an illusion". The outworker more often than not was heavily in debt to the merchant who sold him his supplies and bought his products. If the worker or artisan worked in his own time this often meant "periods of furious work alternating with periods of idleness". When there was nothing to do, earnings were often dissipated "in the local ale-house". There is a lot of truth in all this but it is far from the complete picture. The elements of independence cannot be dismissed as total illusion and were sufficient to inspire the collective memory to look back to when times had been better, while for some trades and occupations loss of skill and a worsening of conditions was a contemporary fact resulting from new production
methods. In this context, as well as others, "the value of independence" acted as "a lever of social change". If Radicalism, of the old type, was a compound of "nostalgia for loss of status and the assertion of new found rights", the former sentiment structured the political language of the time and demanded that new rights were in fact old ones. Besides wanting a return to a 'Machiavellian' balance in the constitution, the London Corresponding Society called to "restore" the working man "to that Independence and that rank of society to which he is entitled". If "early industrialisation" created "'dependent' artisans who controlled neither the supply of raw materials nor the finished products of their trade", it remains true that before 1800 and in many cases afterwards, many of them owned or controlled at least part of the means of production. Their sense of loss reflected a present as well as a past reality. 49

It was also reinforced by the rural environment which surrounded the towns and industrial villages and in the working conditions of the trade. The rural surroundings provided a place of freedom and play, away from the cares of employment, and also at least a partial means of independent livelihood. Here, the romantic symbol of agrarian independence is Robin Hood, and there are in fact many parallels between Robin Hood and Alfred. Both were seen as "champions of justice" who operated outside an oppressive legal system. Robin Hood, in attempted mirror-image of the artisan and yeoman, is often described as "proud, independent and free". There are many references to him in artisan literature. After causing a stir at a theatre in Manchester, an incident which in itself demonstrates their lack of deference and their independence, Bamford describes how he and his fellow artisans "went laughing and singing to the merry woods again". Later, the "sweet cool air of the fields"

meant freedom as "we jumped up from our looms" to go drilling. Another side to the artisan's freedom of movement is the tramping system referred to earlier. With the irregularity of the work, it aided the independence of the craftsman. The Framework-knitters Society provided for "houses of call ... a central fund for the letting of frames, travel grants for the unemployed, and relief payments to the infirm and aged". The friendly society, it was said, could ensure it would not be necessary to live on the parish funds or die in the parish workhouse. As one contemporary pamphleteer put it, a "proud spirit of lofty independence" could be kept up. The "effects of Friendly Benefit Societies are like the glorious light of sun-beams bursting forth on animated nature" and were sanctioned by God's will or Providence. They also ensured independence from the clergy and the state. 50

The prospect of becoming independent through being self-employed and perhaps employing others was probably greater in the 18th century than to-day. According to E.P. Thompson, "the line between the journeymen and the small masters was often crossed" and "the line between the artisan of independent status and the small shopkeeper or tradesman was even fainter". Samuel Bamford reveals how easy it was to cross these lines. After quarreling with his employer, he took up weaving expressing his preference "of a country residence with domestic employment, which consigned me at once to a life of independence with alternate ease, exigency and poverty". But at the time he first became a weaver trade was good. "Work was readily obtainable", he "purchased looms" and "bespoke work" for himself and his wife. George Holyoake describes how his mother had a horn button business with a "workshop attached to the house". She ran the business herself "employing several hands" and had owned it before her marriage. "It was", Holyoake says, "a peculiarity of Birmingham that numerous small trades existed" and this gave many of the working people "independence" and, depending upon trade, either fortune or

misfortune. "The condition of mechanics who worked in little workshops on their own was bad". They were at the beck and call of the merchants who kept them hanging about their warehouses "until nine, ten, and often eleven o'clock on Saturday night, before they were paid their money". But in the foundry where Holyoake was a wage-earner, "there was continual resentment, sullenness and disgust, but no independence, or self-dependence". He also avers that "there is more independence in the pursuits of handicraft, and more time for original thought than in clerkship or business". His "mechanical days" gave him a strong and continuing "sense of independence". Even as an apprentice, the artisan had a degree of freedom and independence not experienced by other workers. Francis Place recounts how he worked "at least twelve consecutive hours six days a week, with only three holidays at Easter Whitsuntide and Christmas", when apprenticed to "the art and mystery of Leather Breeches making". Yet, he adds, "during the whole of my apprenticeship I was under no control so long as the work expected of me was done" and "I might go whenever I pleased and do as I liked and this was the case with many other apprentices". Describing his trade club and conditions of work, Thomas Carter remarks how he put his name to "the call-book of a tailors trade club". This was "more respectable and more profitable than ... waiting upon masters to ask for work". William Lovett recounts an incident which shows the high degree of social control the trade club could exercise not only over individual members but conditions of work in general, thereby exhibiting the amount of independence from the employer's authority. He describes the lengthy and elaborate rituals of a shop meeting which took place in the employer's time. This is an example of the "collective independence" about which Thompson makes so much. An even more interesting instance comes from lead miners in Scotland. Their value of "independence and self-help" were based on their work organisation.

"In the Lowther Hills",

Lead was mined on a 'bargain' system, with rights in particular areas being let to groups or 'partnerships' of miners, numbering on average five or six men. Each partnership worked for six hours in every twenty-four, and the closeness of these partnerships extended to much more than a simple working arrangement. If one of the number died ... his share in the partnership was passed on to his widow.  

Here is the social basis, so to speak, of the political theory of parish government, resting on partnership, propounded by Spence and Evans. The term "petty-bourgeois" is too simple-minded to describe this, if only because the Lowther miners, like other artisans had their friendly society and trade club. And if the trade unions and friendly societies helped to maintain working class independence against middle class hegemony, as one historian has recently characterised the situation, then the language is opaque and ambiguous since the middle classes also used the same language of "independence, self-reliance and self-respect". It is not always easy to separate the speech and writings of those working men who meant "genuine independence" from those who "simply conformed to the image prescribed by ... superiors". It becomes particularly problematical, and Thomas Bewick is a good example here, when looking at the upper levels of the working classes who were at one and the same time "the most articulate exponents of radical values" yet "the most susceptible to the social pressure to separate themselves from the mass below" and to identify themselves with those who were immediately 'above'. In fact there was no full assimilation of independence and related virtues until "the newer patterns of middle class hegemony" came about in mid-Victorian England. By that time, as part of a different ideological configuration or paradigm, independence, self-help and so on were associated with the 'spirit' of modern capitalism and signified middle class domination. Although spoken in a later period, the words of Robert Lowry, the Chartist are apt to the type of

mentality I am attempting to describe. The working people, he said, could put up with poverty "and exclusion from the ranks of the wealthy" but they could not "bear insult". Again, it is useful to draw from literature in order to amplify. George Eliot's portrayal of Adam Bede brings out both the deference and the independence of the artisan nature. Adam's attitude towards the gentry is generally that of deference. Until, that is, they encroach on his independence. The two occasions when he rebels against the gentry's overbearance or 'insults' are significant. The first is when he charges what he considers a just price for a piece of craftsmanship which he has worked on for the squire's sister. The squire intervenes, tries to bait Adam down, with the consequence that he refused to accept any payment at all. The second is when his manhood and again his integrity are called into question. The squire's grandson, Adam's friend, tries to take his girl. This example is interesting for while Adam is asserting that what belongs to him should not be stolen away, in fact he gives the squire's grandson a bloody nose, the artisan is at the same time accepting that part of the social code which is based upon deference. The grandson ought not to trifle with the affections of a girl so obviously below him in social station; marriage to her is out of the question. It is implicit it would not even enter Adam's mind that an artisan like himself could or should or perhaps would even want to be allowed to marry a girl from gentry circles. 53

For artisan and gentry alike, independence could only truly exist if your livelihood was obtained from more than one source. No-one would then have a monopoly over your income. To be tied to an occupation narrowed your outlook on life, made you susceptible to "influence" by a single 'party' and therefore made you unfit for citizenship and government. Barrington Moore has characterised this attitude as "the aristocratic conception of the amateur", as against the professional view of life. As he says, it is hardly possible to speak of "an amateur businessman or an amateur lawyer except as a derogatory epithet". The aristocratic "ideal of the amateur" consists of a "cluster of ideas" the "main features" of which are as follows.

Because aristocratic status was supposed to indicate a qualitatively superior form of being whose qualities were hereditary rather than the fruit of individually acquired merits, the aristocrat was not expected to put forth too prolonged or too earnest an effort in any single direction. He might excel, but not just in one activity as a consequence of prolonged training; that would be plebeian. The hereditary aspect ... is not completely decisive ... the 'real' ruler-gentleman was a qualitatively distinct form of humanity ... the aristocrat was expected to do all things very well, but none of them, not even making love, too well... such ideas ... are in substantial measure due to the persistence of an independent aristocracy.  

The ideal of the amateur has political and economic ramifications that go beyond this. That the notion of the amateur was not the exclusive mental property of the aristocracy and gentry was implicit in earlier analysis. Aristocratic amateurism cannot be put up against plebeian professionalism. Amateurism was intrinsic to 18th century society. Much has been said already about the way in which artisans, especially those in country areas, could supplement their income at harvest time and at other times of the year. The domestic or household economy supported a great variety of tasks or pursuits. In the army it was a "long-standing practice" to let soldiers who were off-duty "take civilian employment". On the political level, "the great mass of country independents" who made up the body of the parliamentary opposition would not usually be in attendance "save between January and the Easter recess". At other times "fox-hunting, gardening, planting or indifference" kept them at home. It was felt parliamentary representatives should meet for a short period to modify and enact legislation but should then quickly return to private life "to experience the consequences of their actions along with other members of the society". There is a passage in Locke that explicitly expresses this sentiment although Pocock puts the idea down to the more 'Machiavellian' notion that "specialisation was the prime cause of corruption". It was "only the citizen as amateur, propertied and independent" who "could be said to practice

virtue". Yet not only the gentry scorned professional politics. After describing how he got paid four shillings for attending a meeting, Samuel Bamford comments,

... I was entitled to it having lost work to that value at home. But I never, except on this occasion, took money or any other remuneration for attending reform meetings. I considered it a mean thing, though the practice was coming into use, and several of my friends without any scruple continued to do so until 'their occupation' was gone! It was a bad practice, and gave rise to a set of orators who made a trade of speechifying. These persons ... left their work or business, for a more profitable and flattering employment ... at the expense of the simple and credulous multitudes.

Professional politician or professional soldier, it made no difference. An article "On Standing Armies" in the Radical Reformer, quoting from Godwin, declared "the man that is merely a soldier ceases to be, in the same sense as his neighbours a citizen: he is cut off from the rest of the community".

Non-specialisation, the existential basis of independence, was only possible if the individual had some kind of property; in the Machiavellian paradigm this meant landed property. Land was "essential to virtue". The monied interest, owning only liquid or moveable property "cared little for the commonwealth" since "no tangible part of it was their own". In fact, they were a threat to the commonwealth. They were behind the national debt and since the debt funded the East India Company and the interest that the Company paid to their shareholders and for their borrowings led to high taxes on land, capital as money put the "commonwealth in


57. Radical Reformer No.6, Vol.1, 44.
danger". Small landholders were also being threatened by the large estate owners who could afford to pay taxes and absorb those smaller landowners who had got into difficulties. Worse, independence was doubly threatened because foreigners had a large interest in the national debt. And since taxes paid for the debt, the debt-holders supported the government. Yet in Country ideology "the function of property is to guarantee the citizen his independence"; obviously only land could do this. Real property, then, gave independence and in "neo-Harrington hands", the English constitution was held to be founded on a "gothic balance" which protected property and independence. But if in this scheme of things, the monied man is the real villain since the merchant "was not involved in his exchange relationships in political subordination", it is difficult to see why the merchant and, still less, the artisan should take up a set of ideas which pre-supposed landed property as the source of all virtue. 58

For Pocock insists that Cartwright and other Georgian Radicals are "neo-Harringtonians" believing in the rights enshrined in the ancient constitution. If the objection is that Cartwright comes from the lower gentry, sufficient example has been given in the earlier chapters to show his beliefs were shared by a number of artisans. Recently, an alternative and opposing view to Pocock's has been put. This argues that the Radical demand for manhood suffrage represented something of a break with the older Gothic language; it involved a shift from landed property to personality as the basis of the representation. From this point of view, James Burgh, to take but one example, is a "political rationalist" pace Locke rather than a neo-Harringtonian despite the fact his publications are full of stuff about the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Supporting this is a passage from Burgh stating that every man's "unalienable property" is his "life, personal liberty, a character, the right to his earnings, a right to a religious profession" or belief. Yet, if there is a break, it is perhaps only minor since all this, and especially the bit about earnings has to be related to a mercantilist problematic. Earnings,

that is, have connections with ideas about under-consumption and high taxation. Generally, in the political language of the time, there is little to suggest voting rights ought to rest on personality or natural rights alone, or that natural rights were a sufficient guarantee the voting public would not get corrupted. Yet it cannot be denied natural rights, and Locke, played an important part in artisan ideas. But there were senses of property held by artisans which, properly speaking, were neither derived from Locke or Harrington; they had more to do with the artisans' social and economic conditions. Their "wage was a 'selling price'"; their "property was labour" and their values centred around the idea of "earned independence". Virtually "the entire skill or 'mystery' of the trade was conveyed by precept and example in the workshop" and "the artisans regarded this 'mystery' as their property". John Thelwall "voiced the claim of the artisan for an independent livelihood by moderate labour" but while he avoided "remote schemes of land nationalisation", he still attacked the "land monopoly", enclosures and so on. Beyond this, rights based on "craftsmanship and skill" were regarded as fundamental, as natural rights, since they were "inseparable from the ordinary man because essential for his existence and necessary for the work which it was God's will that he should do". This was the artisans "sanctity of property" and was expressed as a bundle of rights including legal rights which were not only in accord with nature and the constitution but also protected by common law and custom. 59

It can be deduced that a tax on articles of consumption was seen as more than a merely economic measure. High taxation threatened the artisans property, his means of subsistence. It also infringed his liberty. He might have not much more than a "wretched hovel" but "still the king could not enter" even though legislation for a beer tax and a window tax provided for this. "According to the true principles of the English constitution", Sir Francis Burdett said,

"every man is entitled to participate in the power of making ... laws" and electing those "who dispose of his liberty, his property, his life". Quoting, he added "that the people of England have a property in their own goods, which are not to be taken without their own consent". Burdett vacillated between manhood suffrage based on personality and household suffrage. Many artisans favoured rate-payer suffrage and excluded "the right of paupers and household servants to vote" or followed Sir William Jones in giving voting rights to all who were "not dependent upon the parish". Political rights, if they included personality, and they did, also often included some sense of propertied independence even if one that does not fit snugly with the gentry interpretation of that idea.60

Patriotism vs Ambition

Linking independence with patriotism, even Godwin spoke of "this chosen seat of patriotism, independence and generous virtue". Patriotism was unlikely without independence and some form of property. Patriotism was the active principle in virtue; this "fine and lively feeling", as Rousseau calls it. In the mind of one anonymous pamphleteer, a patriot was a representative of the people; "patriot" coming from the word "people". Private interest, being partial, is contrasted with patriotic sentiment since the former attacks the people as a "body" as an integral whole or unity. Patriotism, that is, has cognitive roots which suggest a deep historical meaning; it is not merely synonymous with national feeling. Besides an association with virtue and independence, patriotism was connected with reason. "For the honour of his country", John Cartwright wrote, the English soldier in battle should keep "his reason and his intellectual ability" and should only fight when "his reason is most clear". He should not be intoxicated by "the use of Turkish opium or French brandy". Other associations in my paradigm were with simplicity as in the patriotic figure of Britannia. Through Britannia, patriotism was also linked with liberty, justice, religion, plenty and so on.61


One of the most thoughtful pieces on the meaning of the idea of patriotism is still Johan Huizinga's essay. The main purpose of the essay is to distinguish, as is still not often done, between patriotism and nationalism. The difference is in,

patriotism, the will to maintain and defend what is one's own and cherished ... nationalism ... the powerful drive to dominate, the urge to have one's own nation ... assert itself above, over and at the cost of others ... In practice ... the line dividing them is often very difficult to trace. 62

Huizinga's last statement obviously has a lot of truth in it, although in what follows there is at attempt to trace or uncover that line. For now, it is important to notice that patriotism, Huizinga finds, is an 18th century word. In English the oldest use of the word nationalism "dates from 1836" and has "a theological significance" suggesting "that certain nations have been chosen by God". Later uses are more secular. Generally, "national consciousness is a product of the modern period" but "initially such feelings did not have a great deal to do with the state and statecraft". Nationalism is associated with the growth of the modern state. Originally, the idea of the patriot is associated with the Dutch struggle for independence and meant "countryman"; soon the meaning of "lover of one's fatherland" got attached to it. But in England, patriot took on the additional significance of "friend of freedom". It signified "an appeal to the personal authority of the king and the spirit of the people against the ... aristocracy". What will be shown is that "the term 'patriot'" was not "quickly ridiculed and worn threadbare" in the English political context. Even so, Huizinga says, "this English usage" was carried into France. And he detects a shift, rather than an interconnection, from the old meaning of "an affectionate attachment to the fatherland" to "a political struggle for popular freedom, equality before the law, reformation of the state" and so on. Huizinga also throws in the interesting observation that "as soon as one sets out to formulate the rights of man, the state appears to be required as the framework for his society". Whereas patriotism

has no firm link with free trade, "the theory of economic freedom concealed in itself the seeds of an unbridled expansion of capitalism... and ... of an unavoidable imperialism of the more powerful states and nations". The term "jingoism" was coined by the British "around 1878" to express the idea of this "overweening nationalism". While patriotism is associated with subjectivity and "affection", nationalism is objective and "flourishes almost entirely in the sphere of competition and opposition". Patriotic feeling is perhaps best expressed by Grimm who wrote of the place "'where one has wore all the roads and paths bare ever since childhood'" and "'where you believe you can hear voices from the graves of your forefathers encouraging and admonishing you'". This is certainly very close to English plebeian sentiments about patriotism; it is, of course, also very close to Burke. 63

Unfortunately, historians have tended to overlook this point and have also failed to grasp the full significance of the kind of distinctions drawn up by Huizinga. By far the greater part of historical criticism has found a vital nationalistic or even chauvinistic element in 18th century mentality and in artisan mentality in particular. Where the English conception of patriot as friend of the people has been noticed, the nature of its relationship to other uses of patriotism has not been spelt out or have been misconceived. D.P. Crook states "radicals ... historically have been lukewarm patriots" since "their faith has been in mankind rather than the nation". P.M. Kemp-Ashraf says that during the Napoleonic Wars the ruling classes were able to "enflame a patriotic passion among the common feeling". Patricia Hollis finds a "xenophobic note ... always latent in English working men". Referring to "patriotic gore", J.H. Plumb remarks on "the alienation that took place between radicalism and patriotism" during the American and French Revolutions. More extensively, H.M. Atherton discovers "exhuberant nationalism" throughout the "Georgian era". Still worse, on the evidence of many "alien observers" the Englishman's hatred of foreigners was a product of his "haughty nativism and insularity". Britannia is associated with "aggressive nationalism

and empire. One reason is that she possesses a spear and a shield. George Rude, too, finds evidence of "chauvinism, or hostility to foreigners - particularly though by no means exclusively from Catholic countries". Elsewhere, Rude goes further and argues generally for "a popular xenophobia of chauvinism ... in the eighteenth century" and adds this was related to the notion of "a free-born Englishman". Henry Collins endorses Rude's earlier statement speaking of the English and "their propensity to chauvinism, particularly against France". E.P. Thompson's position is more complex and to a large extent he goes against the grain of criticism, yet does not make use of the kind of insights and understanding found in Huizinga's essay. He recognises the connections in plebeian Radical ideology between patriotism and the rhetoric of liberty. And since, for Thompson, the shibboleth of the free-born Englishman is a form of Jacobinism, English Jacobinism or "the old Jacobin heritage" contained important elements of internationalism, seemingly of the kind that can be carried on to make up a socialist tradition. In his later postscript he admits he may have over-emphasised this spirit of internationalism and not paid enough attention to the "flag-saluting Englishman" or "the anti-Gallican broadside"'s audience. Even in the body of the book, he detects, for example between 1802 and 1806, upsurges of "popular patriotic feeling" which he seems to identify with the kind of chauvinism mentioned in his postscript. As he says, "former Jacobins became patriots", seeming to suggest they became imbued with nationalistic fervour. Thompson not excluded, part of the problem seems to lie in the mis-use of language; patriotism is sometimes used when nationalism or chauvinism is intended. But much more is at issue, not least the nature of patriotism as a moment in language and consciousness.

It would be foolish to deny, probably, there was not a chauvinistic element in the English consciousness during this period. Yet the character of this consciousness is misunderstood if every time the word patriot is used, even in relation to other nations, it is

64. P.M. Kemp-Ashraf, "The Vernacular Poet Faces Reality" in Gallacher, 124; J.H. Plumb, Light, 86-7; Atherton, Prints, 85, 91, 94-5, 96, 105, 168; Rude, Paris, 310-11, 315; Rude, Crowd, 229; Thompson, Working Class, 496-7, 911.
taken as evidence of some kind of chauvinistic feeling. Parenthetically, it is worth recalling John Cartwright's defence of England during the early 1800s which, if he is understood conceptually, made him no less a 'Jacobin' or Radical. It is also worth remembering the complexity of Gravenor Henson's attitude towards the French; to describe it as chauvinist is simply parody. So, too, is Atherton's interpretation of Britannia which can be taken as an example of the general slant of the historiographical criticism. Generally, in the 18th century neither Britannia nor John Bull can be taken as "images of British nationalism" simply because it is anachronistic to do so. Radical patriots could sing "Rule Britannia" since for them the key line told of Britons never being slaves. Defensive items, "the lance, shield and olive twig" were, as Atherton says, Britannia's "standard attributes" and it was only in the reigns of George IV and Queen Victoria the more imperialistic appendages of "the trident, plumed helmet and lighthouse" were added. Also, as the prints show, if she represents national feeling it is in the non-expansionist form of love of country, and she is equally prominent as defender and symbol of patriotic liberty. Friend or guardian of "true patriots", she "embodied Virtue" and was often shown as the "avowed enemy of corruption". If in some non-aggressive sense she represents "martial strength", she is also frequently presented as "persecuted innocence". Similarly, the attitude towards the French is not, as Atherton would have it, "one of unqualified prejudice and dislike", but specific and qualified, and in accordance with natural law and 'excess'. The same persons who supported the French people in Revolution condemned not French things in general but French luxury and all the vices that went with it: effeminacy, foppery, complexity and so on. In common with their English counterparts, the French aristocracy were condemned for their "Garniture" or excessive culture; through this they distort nature and "Burlesque God's images".

This kind of imagery was virtually absent in the 19th century. As Pocock puts it, "the concept of the citizen or patriot was antithetical to that of economic man, multiplying his satisfactions and transforming his culture". The 19th century intellectual environment of nationalism was evolutionism which pre-supposed "mankind was engaged in a struggle that would eliminate the inferior and elevate the superior nations and races". Racism was "wedded" to "the doctrine
of struggle". Perhaps another way of drawing out the difference is in a statement referring to developing countries where nationalism is described as "the modernising passion of the nation that wants to catch up" and patriotism as "the custodian of a country's past". It is not suggested, then, that patriotism disappeared in the 19th century. The seamen of around 1850 were described as "intensely patriotic as well as being strong Nationalists and Imperialists". A recent interpretation has drawn attention to Robert Blatchford's "patriotic version of socialism" but points to his condemnation of "'jingoist' sentiment" and insists on his "defencism". He was "for the defence of Empire but against Imperialism" which he saw as "'economically motivated piracy crudely tarted up as Christian Hypocrisies'". In all this, Blatchford was not far removed from the 18th century view.65

Even the idea of empire was late to crystallise. In Chatham's time, empire "in the sense of vast colonial possessions" was alien to the mentality of the era. "Islands and forts at strategic focal points to trade were desirable but not more, unless necessity compelled it as in Canada". Under the Treaty of Paris, "nearly all" that Chatham had won "was returned", something unthinkable in later centuries. It was thought by many that the economic benefits of colonial possessions were doubtful to say the least, and there was a considerable literature which argued in this vein. Hugh, Lord Sempill argued that "Dr. Smith's book Colonies are commercially useless as well as politically mischievous" was vindicated by the American Revolution. Colonies meant consumption instead of stimulating domestic industry could be directed at "purchasing the manufactured commodities of other countries for export to America". Since American independence this no longer happened; for, "the capital which had been forced by the monopoly, into colony trade, returned to its natural channel, and is now employed in manufactures at home". In this manner, home production had increased tenfold. Trade rather than possessions was the economic motif in patriotism. The strength of kingdom, was "exhausted by foreign acquisitions".

In the Machiavellian tradition "normal usage" distinguished "between republic and empire" and if there was some sense of "Machiavelli's 'commonwealth for expansion'" through the "exercise of ... virtú", some sense of protection of the liberties of conquered peoples, it was also true empire was seen as the source of corruption through high taxes, standing armies, political authoritarianism and so forth.

But perhaps a more important area of correspondence or agreement between Blatchford and the 18th century comes from "defencism". The idea of defence is at the heart of 18th century patriotism. For most, it even had priority over wars of liberation if they were conducted by an invading force. When English émigrés in France were countenancing an invasion of England by French revolutionary forces, Henry Yorke, among others, spoke out against it. "You have no more right", he said, "to cannonade men out of what you call slavery, than they have to cannonade Frenchmen out of what they call freedom". If they carried on with their plans he would go home and meet them "at Dover" with arms in his hands. The basis of defensive patriotism was non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations and, Lord Sempill said, it was derived from natural law, from "the right which every people derive from nature, to frame a government for themselves". The nationalist attitude, "stirring up ... nation against nation" was "the true spirit of the devil". But in order to defend yourself against foreign invasion you had to be strong. Since defence included trade as well as defence of the home soil, this implied the existence of a powerful navy, although the reasons why a navy was preferred over an army are as much ideological as pragmatic. It is a mistake to see what has been aptly called this system of "offensive defence" in terms of a "militant and isolationist" and "insular patriotism". Glorification of the navy and criticism of a standing army was related to an ideological complex which put standing armies together with corruption, placemen, taxes and so on and was identified with "the old Country Interest". If there is some truth in it, it is a parody to say the "patriot scheme" approved of naval war because it was cheap and appealed to a "deep-seated xenophobia". As Halévy points out, despite the fact at the end

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of the wars with Napoleon "the navy cost very dear" there was no high feeling against the navy since "a fleet could neither defend the government against rebellion, nor cause a revolution, nor effect a coup d'état". Cheapness was also more associated with the national debt and "its consequent corruptions"; unlike the army, it was felt the navy would not increase the debt.

This attitude or feeling was shared by all classes. The non-aggressive nature of patriotism comes out in Burke's words when he speaks of bringing "the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth, so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen". If it is objected that this was far from lived up to, then it is important to emphasise that political ideals are being analysed. One of the most elaborate statements of the patriotic ideal was penned by George Berkeley in his "Maxims Concerning Patriotism" written in 1750. In it he lists the desiderata of a patriot. To be either for or against the Court party is, he says, no guarantee of patriotism. A passion for money and an appetite for power is an obstacle to patriotism. Also, "a native than a foreigner, a married than a bachelor, a believer than an infidel has a better chance of being a patriot". Epicures, "gamesters, fops, rakes, bullies, stockjobbers" and those without religion would not make genuine patriots. "To make a true patriot there must be an inward sense of duty and conscience". Consequently, "a patriot will never barter the public money for his private gain". The patriot considered the public interest as a whole and was not tied to party so that "the fawning courtier and the surly squire often mean the the same thing, each in their own interest". It is clear patriotism was tied up with a religion, and was bound up with both defence and love of country in preference to others and with concern over the country's internal morality. It is implicit, too, that patriotism is a very plastic term used by all sorts of political tendencies, including the Court, as is implied in Dr. Johnson's statement that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, although to say it is a cant word does not mean patriotism was devoid of meaning or effect. Quite the contrary is true. Since it was an idea basic to 18th century conditions of existence, patriotism was a value held by all kinds of people. The Radical view shared much in common with Tory and Whig versions. Volney defined

country as a community of citizens "united by fraternal sentiments and reciprocal wants" who united their individual forces "for the purpose of general security". Using words similar to Burke, Volney says that "in a country" the people "constitute a family of tender attachments by means of which charity and love of our neighbour are extended to the whole nation". The idea of patriotism seems to give further evidence of a "moral consensus" later replaced by the language of class, race and nation.  

None of this is to say that artisans did not give patriotism their own gloss and turn its rhetoric against the dominant classes. In the Declaration of the Derby Society of Political Information, a mainly working class organisation, internal patriotic sentiment is pitted against a seemingly aggressive nationalism. The interests of the poor would "never be promoted by the accession of territory". A large army was unnecessary when "we have a well-regulated militia". The saving in tax could be used to comfort "the peasantry" by "promoting agriculture and manufactories". Instead, "we see the continuation of oppressive game laws and destructive monopolies" and, equally as bad, "excise laws". So it is asked, "are we in England? Have our forefathers fought and bled and conquered for liberty?"; and, have not "the fruits of their patriotism" been squandered. The pages of the London Corresponding Society journal are full of similar patriotic language. "We claim the Privilege and Glory in the Character of Britons", it declares. Although the Society's members spoke of themselves as "Friends to Civil Liberty" and "Natural Equality" and declared these were "Rights of Mankind", any cosmopolitan or internationalist edge was blunted. Still, in 1797, they were speaking of themselves as "Independent Britons ... reclaiming the Rightful Constitution of their Country". Neither is there any strong tinge of chauvinism since they claimed "that every nation has an inalienable right to choose the mode in which it will be governed". Outside interference was "tyranny and oppression". This was one of their "patriotic motions" addressed to "brother patriots". During the last executive debate in 1798, Evans wanted everyone to join the Volunteers. Others were against this move and

68. Boulton, Language, 54; Berkeley, "Maxims Concerning Patriotism" in Miscellaneous Works; Volney, Law, 175.
while they did not want to join the French, neither did they wish to defend "the bad against the worse". Much later, Evans' friend, Allen Davenport, pleading for a Spencean commonwealth, asserted that if "such a commonwealth were adopted", England could never be conquered. Under "Agrarian equality", the people would defend their country since "all self would be lost in the glorious blaze of social love". Even at the 'crudest' level libertarian patriotism rather than authoritarian chauvinism is often the predominant sentiment. Said a framework knitter,

if ever that bulwark is broke down of every english mans hous being his Castil then that strong barrier is for iver broke that so many of our ancesters have bled for in vain.

Earthly artisan sentiment of this kind explains why Anglo-Saxon rather than Venice or Greek myth had the greater linguistic resonance in the 18th century. The artisan took pride in his 'historical' liberties and perhaps a more vicarious pride in England's wealth and power. It was not, as earlier for the gentry, the classical Brutus who was the destroyer of tyrants; the English Brutus myth was used to legitimate tyrannicide or the destruction of 'giants'.

The Cap of Liberty, which started publishing in 1819, was full of the old rhetoric. The journal saw itself as defender of "the Constitution of England" held up as "the admiration of the world"; only those in power "want to change it". The journal spoke with "the heart of a true patriot". Clearly identifying patriotism with internal libertarianism it refers to the "patriotism" of "a Jury of our Countrymen". They defended the historical liberties won by heroes like Hampden who "stemmed the torrent of corruption" with "the glow of patriotic ardour". The connection of all this with self-defence and the Christian ethic is also made clear. Since Peterloo, the

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69. Declaration of the Derby Society of Political Information, (1792) in Cone, Jacobins, 225-28; Place Papers 27812; Williams, Artisans, 102; Davenport, Spence, 15-16.

70. Cited in Thompson, Working Class, 89 from Records of the Borough of Nottingham VIII, (1952), 152.
"duty to God, point out ... the moral obligations of self-preservation and consequently of self-defence" and "duty to ... country, of being prepared to die in defence of its liberties". Not, that is, in conquest of other countries. As if to confirm this, the Cap makes an appeal to the semi-mythical figure of a patriot prince. The Prince of Wales is looked upon as a law-giver, a defender of Englishman's rights, of "the Laws and Constitution". A similar outlook is evident in the Radical Reformer, published during the same period. Augusta, the Prince of Wales' daughter had died and was now "with her murdered people", victims of Peterloo. With her death "every royal virtue" had gone and the political martyrs and the princess are identified with the English patriotic heroes "Hampden, Russell, Tyler and Sydney". Declaring its defence of property and condemning "National Debt and Taxation" as Egyptian bondage, a letter from "Female Radical Reformers" in Carlisle asks "Britons" to mourn the "Patriotic brave" who had lost their lives in the defence of liberty. Like many others, the Reformer also links up patriotism or virtue and "public spirit" with "private virtue" in family relations. 71

Besides the journals, artisans' memoirs also exhibit the language of patriotism, and again it is a language largely devoid of 19th century grandeur. Samuel Bamford's eye is particularly good at drawing out the fine texture of English artisan patriotism. Bamford's observations take us into the heart as well as the mind of the artisan. He tells us of a hymn written by his father in 1793 called "God help the Poor", full of stuff about Old Corruption and freedom for the English poor aided by God's hand. His uncle he calls "a christian-patriot". Buying cheap and selling dear, paying wages at less than subsistence level is "not Christian-like" and the laws of supply and demand are unpatriotic. Bamford is writing in and of early Victorian times here, and he insists that in his father's and grandfather's time, under mercantilism, things were more patriotic and more in accord with "Jesus Christ's rule". Economy, religion and patriotism

71. The Cap of Liberty, Sept. 8, 1819, No. 1, vii, x, 14, 29; No. 6, 94, 96; No. 15, Dec. 15, 1819, 237-9; No. 16, 242; The Radical Reformer, No. 8, Vol. 1, 62-3; No. 9, Vol. 1, 69, 74.
were all linked together. Bamford also reminds us of the tie up between herbalism, magic and patriotism in his portrait of Dr. Healey whom he describes as a reformer, a cunning man and "a self-devoting patriot". A friend called Bill is "a specimen of dogged straight-forward John Bullishness ... as ever left England".72

The shape and colour of English patriotism was in the character of the English people, then. It was also in their material life. While on the run from the authorities, Bamford describes his feeling for his home in which are 'treasures'. That is, his wife, child, possessions and religious sentiment which "have made into a palace 'the lowest shed that ever rose on England's plain'". A fair bit of his furniture is made from oak and "above the fire-place is hung a rusty basket hilted sword" symbol of defence of the home and hearth. Patriotism is also associated with the countryside as well as the home. After leaving Lincoln gaol, Bamford and his wife took a "short and very agreeable walk through rural country with pretty English cottages embowered in gardens and fruit trees". The association of town with fleas is put against the purity of the "green lanes" and the "sweet country air". There is also another association between English natural beauty and God since while there it was appropriate for Bamford and his wife to "adore the Creator". Hospitality, one of the factors in creating national sentiment, and transmitted through the Anglo-Saxon myth, is another element in this 'material' relationship. When calling at a village blacksmith's house and asking for "a draught of water", they were given "with good old English hospitality" a "jug of good brown ale" and "pressed to sit down and partake the family dinner of hot potato pie". So, "be it ever so humble", quotes Bamford, "there's no place like home", or, correspondingly, England. For even in greeting, when "the weaver and the collier would reciprocate their good wishes", this was better, "more manly, and more in the old English way ... than the vaunted French mode of fraternisation."73

Yet it would not do to take this expression of national or cultural prejudice at its face value. The discussion of prejudice,


not only in the literature of sociology, has suffered from too much emotional commitment and simple-mindedness. We should at least start from Burke and look at the relationship between prejudice and experience and tradition. When "the nation was to be invaded by a French army from Boulogne, and the whole kingdom was bristling with volunteer bayonets", Bamford enlisted. For his efforts he got a lecture from his aunt "who said it was the first time a cockade had ever been worn by one of their family and that I was in the way to perdition". Anti-standing army sentiments, internal patriotism, outweighed any anti-Gallicism. Bamford's own patriotism was limited to defensive organisation and tinged with a consciousness of the rights of his own class, which was, in a sense, more cultural than political. "The hardest workers", he writes, will "always be the hardest and best fighters" in defence of England. The workers ought to be "cherished" since "they are the strength and defence of our country, and of everything within it which is worth defending". They therefore ought to get "all comfortable requisites - whatever other class is stinted". They are "the noblest in God's High Court" and all over the wise world there has never been "such another race as that which guards the shores, and labours on the fields and in the manufactories of Old England". Not only is "race" used in a pre-19th century sense, labour is seen as God's elect. This tends to turn patriotism inwards. At the end of the wars with Napoleon, the upper classes are shattered while "the artisans and labourers" of England, "struggling through adversity, and directed by an extraordinary genius, are pealing the shouts of Liberty! Liberty!" In prison in Lancaster Castle, Bamford composed a poem. Among its lines were "still for England's service ready" and words about "cruel tyrants" whose persecutions of the working populace would only make them more united. This verse, he says proudly, "afterwards became of some celebrity among the Lancashire reformers". Significantly, service of country is identified as service for reform and liberty. Patriotism gets identified with the artisan interest or the interest of the people in general. Still using the old rhetoric, Bamford exclaims "THE NATION - That is the only party I will serve". The monarchy is "the sport of faction"; the aristocracy clutch at "their rents"; the clergy lusts after "worldly gain". Only "the land-tillers" and "the manufacturers" who are "striving for cheap bread" have any public virtue. Ultimately, though, and under threat from overseas trade and manufacture, all classes must pull together "as a family".
Under a Radical programme of cheap government, the aristocracy, clergy etc would be reformed rather than abolished. There would be a closer relationship between the classes; a return to community, a return to our "grandfathers" simple way of life. 74

Bamford was not an isolated figure; on the contrary, he has been chosen because his language is 'representative'. Also, some of the points made can be clarified by referring briefly to the writings of other artisans. Thomas Holcroft, who went to Ireland for a while found, on occasions, "a shocking depravity of manners among the Irish". But he also found them "warm and generous". Ultimately, there is no condemnation of the Irish as a nation or race in the 19th century sense since their lack of moral rectitude is put down to "the laws". It is "the legislature which forms the manners of the nation". Similar things are said by Thomas Carter. He tells of his friendship with an Irish tailor, "a member of the Roman Catholic Church". There are many Catholics among his shop-mates and he found them "far better men" than "the avowed sceptics", atheists and "nominal Protestants". Early in 1814 when some Italian tailors, prisoners of war, arrive at the shop they are "far from being good tailors" but "were not lazy men". They sang a lot, and relations with the other tailors were good. When England was at war with other nations, opinion was split; there was no blanket chauvinism or jingoism. On the question of Napoleon, "occasionally a debate would ensue between sturdy John Bullites and those who were dazzled by the exploits of the French Emperor". War with America produced a similar division. "My fellow workmen", Carter says, "took their respective sides according to the tenor of their political opinions". Some supported the Americans; others "felt concerned for the honour and well-being of their countrymen". But nearly all seemed to regret the war itself. 75

Samuel Bamford's apotheosis of the people and of the working classes in particular has suggested the language of patriotism was coloured or fired with millenial feeling. We are Britons, John Gale

75. Holcroft, Memoirs, 200; Carter, Memoirs, 155-6, 170, 172-3, 182.
Jones declared, "and liberty is our birthright". To regain it, he said, "men may perish" but "the holy blood of Patriotism, streaming from the severing axe shall carry with it the seeds of Liberty". The human rights Jones first spoke of got transformed into English rights. William Sharp, while acknowledging divine knowledge would spread across the whole world, found "the English nation will be first redeemed". Even Thomas Spence embraced "with Christian zeal, whate'er is friendly to my race". Ironically, given the general drift of interpretation on his writings, perhaps no one better illustrates Pocock's comment regarding "Milton's much-quoted but quite un-John Bullish remark that God revealed himself ... 'first to his Englishmen'". But, unlike Spence, many gentry and artisans thought their "radical and chiliastic reformation must be endorsed and legitimised by the ancient liberties of England". Or, as Christopher Hill has put it, "the patriotic theory of the Norman Yoke reinforced ... the Puritan sense of destiny". But it cannot be agreed it did this "upon a civil account", neither can it be agreed with Pocock that somehow patriotism was especially secular or Machiavellian. The political language of people like Bamford and Sharp would deny this. 76

Which brings me to the question of how patriotism fits in with culture and nature, with experience, custom and history on the one hand and natural law on the other; with Machiavelli, with Burke or with Locke. Typically, Lord Sempill calls himself "a citizen of the world" but then goes on to talk about his rights "as a Briton". Or, as the plebeian Black Dwarf said, "slavery characterises the Asiatics". But if England or the English were part of the pattern of millenarian eschatology, it was not so much because they were English, not that is because of any biological peculiarity, but rather because "the uniqueness of England ... could ... be defined in terms of its antiquity as a community of custom". Not only were the aristocracy a French ruling class, they were also a Norman ruling class. The English were the chosen people because of their laws and customs. Through custom, rather than race, they had inherited Gothic freedoms. Just as "Gothic energy and

purity" had triumphed over "Roman torpor and depravity", so popular energy and purity would win against aristocratic torpor and depravity, though there was no suggestion of any genetic inheritance. Besides the idea of custom, some sort of "neo-Harringtonian" notions also coloured the conception of patriotism. Patriotism was a term "which had carried 'Country' and 'commonwealth' connotations since the seventeenth century". Again, though, there is a concrete reality behind the political idea. There is an identification between the simplicity and "rugged virtue" of provincial or country life and patriotism, symbolised by the English bulldog which often "takes upon itself a rustic flavour". At the same time, the precept of defence at the core of patriotism was based on natural law or, as Sancho Panza put the matter, "all laws, whether of God or man, allow one to stand in his own defence". Here, of course, natural law and human law are seen as one, and what Thompson and others have tended to discount is that in 18th century political rhetoric the phrase "true bred" is just as likely to accompany the word "Englishman" as the phrase "free born".  

Enough has been written to show the concepts listed at the start of the chapter form some sort of unity or paradigm. Natural law, custom, virtue and so on if to some extent paradigmatically distinct can also be collapsed into each other. Each concept entails others. Patriotism entails simplicity, simplicity entails ideas about natural law, natural law gets identified with custom; and so can virtue and custom and so on and so on, in a sort of chain or circular form of reasoning that makes up a whole or 'totality'. This totality of ideas, or mentality, is but a reflection or projection or interpretation of a more concrete social reality. Underlying discussion or use of the concepts or ideas is their relationship to culture or nature and the fact that this dialectic exercises some kind of determining or organising influence is, ultimately, a sign of a level of social and economic development. It is a sign the society under analysis is still to some extent under the control of nature and its dominant modes of thought are therefore not entirely secular or rationalised.

77. Sempill, Address, 46; Pocock, Moment, 345; Kliger, Goths, 3; Atherton, Prints, 117; Cervantes, Quixote, Vol.II, 49.
But there is another source of paradigm unity that can almost be called the symbol of the spirit of the age; the notion of the constitution; the word constitution is also virtually interchangeable with the words "polity" and "commonwealth". But their conceptual resonance, as it were, has not been properly investigated. This has had certain repercussions in the critical or historiographical literature. The 'gap' or omission is either the consequence or cause of adopting the critical rather than the sympathetic approach.

For example, George Sabine is critical of Burke for not drawing "a clear line" between "society at large and the state". Burke is guilty of "a serious confusion of words", since "society, the state, and government have certainly very different meanings". Because of the failure to make such distinctions, he tended to idealize the state "by making it the bearer of all that has the highest value for civilisation". The key as to why Burke thought and wrote in this apparently indiscriminate way is brought out in another criticism, a common one made of Radical ideology in general. The Radicals, we are told, thought reform "lies through politics" and consequently their idea lacked any theory of social cause regarding the structure and ills of society. The same sort of thing is implied by Bernard Bailyn. Since they were not 19th or 20th century Radicals, he writes, the agitators of Georgian times advocated political "not social and economic reforms". They hoped to eliminate corruption through politics and not "recast the social order". And according to Gordon Wood, Burke's misconceptions must have been general since "eighteenth century Englishmen had not yet made any clear distinction between state and society". The "only meaningful kind of power" in most of the thinking of the time "was political"; it was not based on class but political divisions within the state. John Osborne, like many others, sees this emphasis on politics as a definite short-coming. At the same time "the general anti-state attitudes of the radicals" are usually remarked upon and like their liberal utilitarian successors they are lumbered with advocating "minimal government" and not wanting to capture state power but "turning their backs on it". If, as Emmanuel Wallerstein would have it, there was after the 16th century a "discontinuity between economic and political institutions", then constitutionalism or seeing the world as politics,
was truly, as Thompson has remarked, "the illusion of the epoch\textsuperscript{78}.

There is some truth in all this. Looked at from one angle, the 18th century did lack a properly constituted social theory; they lacked a social explanation of politics. Constitutionalism was certainly the major form of political rhetoric and consequently often used as black propaganda and sometimes as pure cant. Whether by conservatives or radicals, the appeal to the constitution also took the form of illusion in so far as it was meant to refer to a state of affairs either in the past or the present. All sides appropriated it and each gave the word their own particular meaning, attaching a degree of ambiguity to the idea of the constitution so as to make it almost meaningless. Lord Braxfield, the Scottish Trials judge, asserted "the British Constitution is the best that ever was since the creation of the world, and it is not possible to make it better". Many of the "Scottish Martyrs" whom he sentenced would have agreed, although their interpretation of what the constitution amounted to would have been diametrically opposed to his. Something close to what Braxfield meant came out at Bamford's trial when reference was made to "the law and the constitution as they were now administered". Each party accused the other of "advocating departures from the traditional and mixed constitution". Just as there was a false and genuine patriotism, so there was a true and false constitution. As Joseph Gerrald, the Scottish Martyr declared, "the word constitution, constitution! is rung in our ears ... is the talisman which the enemies of reform wield over the heads of the credulous and simple". Yet the manner of existence of "placemen and pensioners" is "one uniform violation of its principles", and to hear them "talking of a constitution" is "like a monk preaching population". Even the old Anglo-Saxon constitution, usually seen as a Radical trope, could be given a conservative twist. In a play of 17th century

origins, but performed in Newcastle in the 18th century, the Anglo-Saxons are originators of "restricted rather than popular government" and Alfred is depicted as the founder "of the civil power of a limited oligarchy". 79

The notion of the constitution is synonymous with ideas about the commonwealth and polity. Originally, commonwealth referred to "the public welfare or general good" and later came to mean "the body politic or state, especially viewed as a body in which the whole people had a voice or interest"; it also designated a republic. To start off with, then, politics, and the idea of the state in particular, subsumed the social. Like the idea of the commonwealth, the notion or concept of the constitution also subsumed the economic and moral and perhaps, in one sense, the religious order. According to Lord Bryce, "the aggregate of laws and customs through and under which the public life of a State goes on may be fitly called its constitution". This, perhaps, was the 'truth' or reality in the Saxon myth, that, as Wallerstein has written, "the roots of England's state machinery are in part to be found in the legal homogeneity deriving from the Norman Conquest". Yet the constitution was more than law and custom. For Bolingbroke, the constitution was not only an "assemblage of laws ... and customs" but included "institutions" all of which accorded with "certain fixed principles" or natural law. Bolingbroke's use of the term institutions gives out a hint that the meaning of the constitution or polity could be extended to include all social relationships including economic and, as Samuel Bamford makes clear, 'personal' ones, too. The connection between moral or personal health, political health and economic health has been mentioned a lot during the course of the thesis. "An old Whig" attributed England's "unexampled prosperity" to "the singular formation of its constitution". According to Cartwright its "foundation is FREEDOM; its fruits the delicious fruits of liberty". 80


So that if there is a weakness in 18th century ideology it would seem not so much that it contains no sense of the social, for it does merely in a different form, but rather because of the manner in which it describes social change. In other words, it is seemingly 'mentalistic' or 'idealist'. If everybody believes in freedom, millenial-like, the institutions will come about. So, the importance of political knowledge and education as agents of social change. Underlying this view there is the mythological concept of gnosis or revelation, yet there were also 'material' elements involved in constitutionalist explanation; namely the militia, the pattern of landholding, social class, to say nothing of trade, consumption and other factors. The cognitive idealism may be related to the normative idealism found in constitutionalist language. The constitution was something that did exist, but was hidden, it was also something that had existed and ought to exist again. Writing in 1817, The Black Dwarf distinguished between the "constitution and government". The constitution it defined as "the assemblage of laws, institutions and customs, derived from certain fix'd principles of reason" a definition that seems to have been taken word for word from Bolingbroke. The constitution "is the rule by which our princes ought to govern at all times" whereas government is how "they actually do govern". The constitution is also an "inheritance" derived "from right and the laws". Under the constitution "the people are the fountain of power" and "every Briton" has "a noble and well-balanced Constitution" the gift of "Alfred's freeborn race" and born of "virtuous Liberty". Essential to liberty was the concrete force of the militia; Cartwright called the English Constitution a system of "civil and military polity". The militia guaranteed liberty and prosperity. "When the national militia was in vogue", Lord Hawkesbury said, commerce has always flourished. Trade is always buoyant when there is "a certain degree of military strength in a nation" since "commerce loves security". Commerce and trade are connected with politics, with the politico-moral health of society because "no merchant will with zeal and pleasure apply himself to trade, unless he has a good opinion of the wisdom and conduct of the state" and unless the state is set upon solid foundations or principles and unless there are "good laws to protect him from domestic oppressions" and "a well-constituted force to protect him from foreign invasions". The more plebeian Black Dwarf also argued that "liberty", a good constitution
that is, "is the parent of commerce". It is worth noticing that two of the more concrete concepts in the constitutionalist paradigm derive directly from historical developments in the English social structure. If not the militia, then the standing army was a post-Machiavellian and post-Harringtonian entity and, as Pocock puts it, something "known as Trade entered the language of politics". Whatever continuities in form, the English context added an important dimension to content.81

Also, of not least importance in the English context is the way in which 'Machiavellian' or 'Lockeian' paradigms interrelated with artisan consciousness. As a practical situation, Trade manifested itself to artisans as problems with the trade often coupled with the dearness of provisions. The more plebeian Radicals, and the founding of the London Corresponding Society is a typical example, started out from a criticism of their economic situation. They sought its cause which they saw, at least in the first instance, as political. In their analysis of their situation in relation to political institutions, they analysed their position in the economic structure or economy as a whole. They analysed, and it is at this point that Machiavellian, Lockeian or whatever notions are strongest, how their situation was determined by the exercise of political power. Especially, they saw how political power was exercised through law. The law was enacted by landowners sitting in parliament. As Thomas Evans said, not only "the expenses of government" bore down heavily on the poor, but also "land monopoly" which was "contrary to ... Christianity and destructive of independence". Class analysis was, then, presented as an agent of social cause but was subsumed by the political since ownership of land gave political rights and representation. The weapon of class analysis was also blunted by the basic moralism of constitutionalism, by a lingering sense of community, a community which had been lost but to which there must be a "return". The aristocracy and gentry had their place in the constitution; they were part of its

81. The Black Dwarf, No.35, Sept.24, 1817, 589; No.49, Dec. 31, 1817, 813; No.48, Dec.24, 1817, 790-5; Cartwright, Aegis, 4; Charles, Lord Hawkesbury, Constitutional Maxims Extracted from a Discourse on the Establishment of a National and Constitutional Force, (London, 1757, reprinted by the London Corresponding Society, 1794), 6-7; Pocock, Moment, 413, 425.
eternal balance. Samuel Bamford recounts how in the past "gentlemen were gentlemen indeed" and "if they lived sumptuously, their waste was scattered at home - on the spot from whence it was derived" so that "those who toiled produced much benefit from it". There was a sort of patriotism about their consumption since it did not go out of the country; there was also a sort of community about their personal relations with the lower orders since in past times "the gentleman transacted his own business" and "met his farmer or his labourer face to face".

Of course, as the preceding paragraphs have indicated, the key to aristocratic power and the central institution of the polity or constitution, was the state. Far from turning their backs on the state, the Radicals saw a reformed state as vital to a more general reformation of manners and everything else. It was an ever-present reality and the cause of artisan distress. After the 1688 Revolution,

There took place a great reform of government finance which resulted in the creation of the national debt. The debt, principally serviced by the revenues from the Land Tax, transferred a growing proportion of the surplus produced in agriculture out of the hands of the landowners and placed it in the pockets of stockjobbers and speculators, government functionaries, military men and placemen.

The small landowners, as mentioned before, were hit hardest while some of the large landowners benefited from the new system, and "the army and navy grew apace and the bureaucracy expanded". Into the 19th century Southey complained that the sum paid into taxation "is beyond what any other people paid to the state". State expenditure, he went on, "is almost incredible - for the last years of the war it exceeded a million of English money per week". Put another way, by 1722 the national debt has been calculated at £53 million, "rather more than the gross national product", while "by 1750 it had risen

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84. Southey, Letters, 376. See also the taxation figures in Thomas Paine's Rights of Man, (Everyman edn.) (footnote 93, p309) for some of Paine's strongest statements in the Gothic mode or moment.
to nearly £79 million". All this the Gothicist Radicals viewed, as they did personal and bodily corruption, through the lens or language of "excess", as an imbalance between nature and culture. What they looked for was a restructuring of tax and consumption by the state. These two ideas are at the centre of their 'problematic', of their "moral economy", and they show what has been gathered for analysis is a mentality that can be specifically characterised as mercantilist. This chapter has aimed at specifying the deeper meaning of "moral economy", at showing the 'philosophic' assumptions behind the call for a "just price" and so on. Mercantilism is a structure in its own right.
The thesis shows up the tension between an interest in method and science and an interest in historical particulars. I have tried to apply a method but at the same time I have maintained an interest in the individuality, the individual expression of an artisan or "honorary radical jack". At the same time I have looked for the common features in the beliefs of a number of persons. I have tried to explain the Norman Yoke or the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution in terms of the broad historical movement of rationalisation and through social science concepts of myth, ideology millenarianism and so forth and I have attempted to place it within its historical, intellectual and social context. The method can loosely be called 'structuralist', the common features are summed up in the last chapter which describes the main aspects of the gothic or constitutionalist paradigm, and the historical and social context is mercantilist. Power is also not left out since, with varying degrees of success I have pursued the question of hegemony as part of my analysis of individual artisan writers. But perhaps I ought to say again that the emphasis has been on knowledge rather than politics, and in this is the 'novelty' of my approach. Each representative figure or organic intellectual has been examined by looking at how they perceive the world and how that knowledge or perception is structured, including knowledge of the political world, rather than how they participated in a particular political event or situation or what political interest they represented. This approach is rooted in political philosophy or the history of political thought and social science generally, although I am by no means arguing for the exclusion of narrative type history.

In the light of the questions and aims raised in the introduction, this approach has, I hope, shown three things. First, it has offered an alternative understanding of particular writers or Radical figures. Second, the use of the paradigm method and certain social science concepts such as myth and general notion of a structure has revealed a 'surface' language involving the use of ideas or concepts such as natural law, virtue, custom, the militia, patriot king and so on. The methodology has also been used to point out that this political language rests on a Christian religious substructure in which deism, millenarianism, providence, are crucial concepts. Digging down further, there is another layer or 'deeper
structure' or a sub-language of myth involving the concepts of culture and nature, purity and pollution, excess, origins and so on, which is common to all societies where agrarian rhythms of life remain in the ascendancy. And the third thing of note or conclusion is that the notion of a structure has shown how seemingly disparate ideas are interconnected or analogous through association. For example, that ideas such as virtue, natural law and custom, though usually seen as part of different political traditions can in fact be related through seeing them as part of a structured ideology. Also, for example, that corruption in the state by analogy or association can be related to bodily corruption.

Keeping with the questions and aims raised in the introduction, the case studies have shown, I hope, that Anglo-Saxon gothic assumptions were more widespread and played a more significant part in Radical artisan mentality than was previously thought; that these ideas are not irrational. John Cartwright, whose ideas have often been interpreted as Enlightened (Rationalist) or irrational (Gothic) is, perhaps the most notable example of this. His 'representativeness' has been confirmed, and his ideas are best made sense of by seeing him not as a figure of the Enlightenment (natural law) or as a figure of reaction (virtue) but as someone who includes both these 'positions' in his ideas and who is also not adverse to eating some slices from the cake of custom. This 'surface' trilogy is to some extent common to all the other representatives or organic intellectuals. The particular 'balance' varies from author to author. Thomas Bewick, who is now seen as much more than an engraver and less an ideological pupil of Marat, organises his statements mainly around custom and independence, but his ideas are only fully intelligible by taking into account what he has to say about virtue and natural laws as well. William Cobbett's History of the Protestant Reformation is no longer to be seen purely as a piece of gothic literature in the medieval sense, but as gothic in the Anglo-Saxon meaning. Yet regardless of whether the Catholic church or King Alfred's constitution is the dominant trope, Cobbett uses the vocabulary of custom and virtue to support the people's natural rights. In a similar manner, Sir William Jones ideas are neither subject to an exclusively "Lockeian influence" nor is he solely a follower of Burke. His labour theory of value,
such as it is, has also more to do with political rights than later socialist conceptions. It is concerned with rewarding labour on the grounds of labour's virtue conceived in terms of property and 'self' and a natural but lost right to land.

These concepts and views can be found to a greater or lesser extent in the more plebeian radicals. John Baxter, Thomas Evans, Thomas Spence and Gravenor Henson are all now seen as at best 'constitutionalist' revolutionaries, all speaking a language of virtue, custom and natural law and all 'mercantilists' in terms of their political economy. The focus of that political economy is consumption, land, tax, trade and commerce; a 'pre-socialist' and perhaps pre-capitalist type of economy containing strong natural elements. At one level these political and economic ideas are the pieces of the paradigm common to all writers, a paradigm whose existence was given support by fairly copious illustrations of other writers in chapter four.

Nearly all the writers mentioned, including in an odd way Spence, used this political and economic language to grapple with a contemporary situation. They assumed that the 18th century constitution was descended from Anglo-Saxon origins, the latter being the genuine or natural constitution overlaid with centuries of corruption or culture. In order to describe this system of corruption or, "the political state and condition of England", the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution uses words like virtue, custom and natural law. But it has been argued that the paradigm has a wider scope or greater depth than this. Each of the representative figures has a religious background. All are Protestants, all are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by millenialist ideas, all seem to take over deist assumptions and all believe in providence. The Christian substructure, then, referred to above, seems to be another part of a shared paradigm. Yet there still remains the question of why all these writers (and others) were influenced by the Anglo-Saxon myth. Why did they reach back so far? In what sense is the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution a myth? A close reading of the texts revealed, again to a greater or lesser extent, a sort of mythical sub-text, or again Foucault's "what was being said in what was said". More fully than above, this mythical sub-language is a series of concepts and
oppositions including purity and impurity, origins, excess, darkness and light, types or heroes and villains, passion and reason and nature and culture and cyclical time. These are precisely the sort of notions that social anthropologists and historians of religion, such as Eliade, use when they analyse mythological thought among 'primitive' or pre-industrial peoples.

That, then, is the third 'level' of the paradigmatic elements common to the representative figures. And perhaps to some extent my analysis has been no more than a tidying up operation. But within the various levels of the 'gothic paradigm' I would claim a certain novelty. Myth is often said to reflect the division of labour within society. To some extent the dominance of the ideal of the amateur is also a reflection of a relatively simple division of labour. Consequently, from time to time in the case study chapters, and more extensively in the paradigm chapter, I have extended Barrington Moore's association of 'amateurism' with gentry and aristocratic mental culture to artisan politics and consciousness. I also claim novelty in my treatment of the concept of simplicity, an idea usually overlooked in the analysis of the political ideology of the time. Again, the links between simplicity in politics, as simple reform, and simplicity as a key concept in Protestant religion and in English culture or character have been traced. My treatment of virtue and patriotism is, perhaps, less original. But against Pocock, a writer who commands my greatest intellectual respect, I have emphasised the religious aspect of virtue and its connection in one direction with politics, and in another with private or social behaviour. Another, probably more controversial, piece of reassessment is the way I see the role of the state in Radical thought. The attacks on the cost and power of government are not so much liberal arguments about a smaller amount of government, but artisan arguments about decentralised government and about the distribution of taxation. Consequently, they are also mercantilist arguments about 'amateur' government and a paternalist social welfare state. But they are also moral assertions about virtuous and unpolluted government.

What the analysis of concepts such as simplicity and virtue has suggested, then, is that although there is a struggle going on over ways of perceiving a particular term or concept, that although
hegemony is involved, there is also, to some extent, a shared culture or mentality. The more structuralist explanations of myth have stressed that oppositions in thought, such as purity and pollution or culture and nature, must be seen as part of a single mode of cognition or level of mentality. They are 'surface' contradictions or oppositions. Without too much difficulty, the 18th century opposition between natural law (nature) and custom (culture) can be seen in this light. But the analysis can also be extended. What I hope has been shown is that this sort of understanding can be fruitfully applied to more complex configurations of ideas. From this angle, the oppositions between Country and Court strands of 18th century ideology are also surface or political oppositions. And, to bring in another structuralist device, they are not fundamental breaks in the 'epistemologies' of popular ideas; they do not belong to different types or modes of social perceptions or theories, or mentality. So, for example, Paine's ahistorical natural rights arguments are not necessarily more 'progressive' or radical in terms of knowledge and in the sense of belonging to a future tense of political perception than artisan statements about mythical customary rights. Similarly, in some ways the Radical artisan mind has at least as much, if not more, in common with Burke than Tom Paine.

Lastly, the structuralist-anthropological-paradigm mode of analysis has revealed, or characterised, the extent to which 18th century mercantilist society was a natural a 'pre-industrial' society since Country/Court, custom/natural law oppositions also rest on the mythological structures designated by culture/nature purity/pollution and so on. The availability of 18th century version of the myth of the Anglo-Saxon constitution to this sort of analytical approach suggests that a large part of 18th century mentality and society can be seen in this 'primitive' or 'pre-industrial' or pre-Rationalist light. It is a society more mercantilist than modern capitalist, a society still in some sense a natural society, or a culture still relatively close to nature.
First, it is necessary to deal with the question of eccentricity again, to show The Trident was a rational product of Cartwright's time and mentality, if not of ours. If it was "politically irrelevant", it was not culturally irrelevant. The plan for "a monument of naval celebration" was not got up out of his own head but was a general proposal put forward by "men in high official situation, and other individual Englishmen". It seems they took notice of his plans and did not regard him, as Cartwright himself feared, "as a vain projector who has lost his wits". His niece reports the plans were considered by the government and by the president of the Royal Academy and blames political prejudice for the fact the Hieronauticon was not erected. The plans got him elected as an honorary member of the Marine Society, and Cartwright claims they met the approval of artists as well as Nelson and Southey. From the figures he gives, it is likely cost played a part in the government's rejection although there was "a commercial part" to the plans. Even here, though, Cartwright points out that the initial cost and upkeep would be considerably less than Blenheim palace, another 18th century militaristic 'fantasy' built at public expense. He thought the approval of the Duke of Clarence and other personages would lead to the plans' execution.¹

There are other examples which help to put Cartwright's architectural ideas into context. Besides Bentham's Panticon, the Hieronauticon seems neither grandiose nor fantastic. From one point of view, Nelson's column and the whole of Trafalgar Square is an extravaganza, yet Cartwright claimed his temple would not have "that unsupported tottering appearance". A model was "Indigo Jones's Tuscan Temple, on the plan of which he built Covent Garden". Or, think of the Rotunda, or 18th century follies and grottoes. Even the incorporation of Anglo-Saxon imagery is not particularly irrational if we take for example the 'folly' of Alfred's tower at Stourhead or fellow

Radical Thomas Bewick's ideas which ran along parallel lines to Cartwright's. Not too far apart were the ideas of Thomas Wood who saw his buildings in Bath as a "vision of a Roman and Christian Utopia" promoting "God and Virtue". A source of inspiration for Cartwright may have been the classical republican ideas about militaristic ritual. Martial sports and ritual, to refer back to John Brand, would offset "the general spread of luxury and dissipation". To Cartwright, this was exactly what the Hiernauticon represented.2

This is suggestive, of course, of his classical frame of mind, his "Machiavellian Moment". Support for an interpretation along these lines is easily found in the text. The principles of the temple or Hieronauticon are founded on the "same laws of nature" as the Greeks, as indeed is the idea of a public games or olympics. Britain lacks institutions of this sort "by means of which a wise legislature may effect a moral purpose". The Greeks possessed political wisdom whereby politics and religion were intermingled. "Taking advantage of popular superstition, they wisely engrafted it on their political institutions; the foundation of the Olympic games themselves was religion". Rousseau and others, the idea of the Noble Lie, immediately come to mind here. The common people, if not simple-minded professed simplicity of belief and taste. For this reason, cluttered Roman columns are rejected. Britons, though, as in the sub-title, are constantly compared in their deeds and thoughts to the glories of the Greeks and Romans. Yet somehow Britain or Albion transcends these glories. Even the harbour where the Hieronauticon is to be situated, Portland, is praised because it is a natural harbour "formed by the mighty hand of nature", whereas all Rome had was a wet dock or "a pool dug in the suburbs of the city". Although he based his ceremonies or rituals on "the practice of the antient Romans" Cartwright stated his object was opposite to theirs; he endeavoured to display virtue rather than riches.3

Undoubtedly there is a classical moment or model in Cartwright's thinking but is continually being undermined. If Cartwright respects Greece

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3. Cartwright, Trident, 9, 10, 13, 175-6, 197.
and Rome, his feeling for Alfred the Great and England is that of adulation. This work, more than any other, sees the apotheosis of Alfred. The "Invocation and Dedication" brings this out clearly. It reads,

Alfred ... Thou, wisest, greatest best of human kind;/The king, the sire, the saviour and the sage,/Hero and bard of Albion's grateful land!/ And thou who sittest on Alfred's throne,/ And call'st him Ancestor/...Where Alfred's sacred acorns were sown/...Him, in whose veins the blood of Alfred flows.4

Among other things, what is noticeable is the association between Alfred and the oak and Alfred and political knowledge. The message to the reigning monarch is also clear. Descent from Alfred gives the right to rule but the legitimacy of that rule also depends on the monarch conducting himself as Alfred did and guarding the people's liberties. The model to venerate was "Saxon election, Saxon liberty, Saxon happiness, provided for and so eminently enjoyed under the institutions of the divine artificer Alfred". William the Conqueror had "utterly subverted the Saxon freedom" and it was not revived again until "the latter end of the reign of Henry III". Liberty and its opposite permeates the totality of culture. Even Norman (and Danish) armour gave the impression of "an entire man in an iron mask, imprisoned without election, in a shell riveted on him, till he be cramped and stiffened into deformity and misery".5

Alfred was a patriot and hero in other senses. Alfred is "the founder of that Navy, which now surrounds our country in a blaze of glory". This would seem to be part of the answer to Christopher Hill's question as to why Alfred replaced Edward the Confessor as the hero of the myth. The Hieronauticon was a monument in honour of the navy's founder, Alfred, and other naval heroes. But Alfred was the heroic founder of other institutions as well. "The Saxon militia" was the work of "god-like Alfred". And, "where but from this patriot lawgiver of England shall legislators learn the heavenly art of entwining liberty with law, property with power, willing obedience with firm authority". Knowledge of the arts and political knowledge also lead back to Alfred the Great. As scholar and patron of scholars he is found "sending learned persons to Hindoostan ... writing the

5. Cartwright, Trident, 5, 7, 52, 149.
narration of discoveries". First and foremost, although all his roles are connected, Alfred is founder of the constitution. He is, then, a founding hero in the proper mythological sense and is literally worshipped as "immortal ALFRED".6

There are other important connections to notice. A picture celebrating military death has in the background "a church ... a small portion of the mansion-house of the family, seen through plantations in a style of natural beauty, where a grand oak in decay" and other trees are shown. Here Alfred and his Anglo-Saxons are associated with intermingled sentiments of nature, naval pride and prowess, familial and patriotic feeling and the idealisation of the gentry and mercantile classes. The association of Alfred with the rural idyll is made again in a line quoted from Pye's Alfred where the king's voice "shall teach the labourer of the field, the sickle and the sword by turns to wield". Alfred is an upholder of the agrarian value of amateurism, although not quite of the aristocratic variety.7

If the Anglo-Saxon myth undermines and modifies the classical and cosmopolitan sentiments and categories in Cartwright's writing, then so does his adulation of the English navy. The Hieronauticon is a "naval temple" celebrating the "heroic spirit of the British navy". The work is dedicated to "Howe, Jervis, Duncan and Nelson". They are "fit companions for Alfred". Alfred figures so prominently because "the celebrated galleys of Alfred" were "the first ships ever built by the English, and consequently the germ of the English navy". He is the founder of a tradition. The present navy can do no more "in respect of defence" than was done by Alfred's navy. Like the militia, and perhaps even more so, the navy was seen by the Radicals as a defensive institution. Under threat from Napoleon it protected liberty in a very real sense. Had the navy's reputation "been less renowned", Cartwright writes, he would have planned the work on "less scale". Britain was a "naval nation" and in Cartwright's plans even the army or militia would carry flags with emblems which characterised "our troops as the soldiers of a naval nation". The "nautic character" has the virtues of "simplicity and strength" while nautical architecture should be "simple

and strong". Britain's naval power was exhibited "by means of her naval force, and the immensity of her shipping" through which "she visits all seas, and every part of the terraqueous globe subject to her interest". But the aim is or ought not to be conquest or occupation and colonisation but commerce "by which she is enriched by the produce of every land". On naval power depended "the protection of their colonies and commerce, and the chastisement of those who insult their coasts". Doing this job, the navy was the manifestation of political virtue. Cartwright was far from alone among Radicals in associating the navy with virtue and liberty. A design of Thomas Spence has an anchor over which there is an emblazoned cap of liberty. This was a far cry from The Blessings of War, a pamphlet of the 1790s that described the navy as "a floating hell".  

Patriotism, besides being connected with the figure of Alfred is the dominating idea in The Trident in which the strong meaning of the word is defence and unity and pride in the nation of the English people. Again, then, the effect is to weaken and undermine any cosmopolitan or classical meanings of patriotism. The words 'patriot' and 'Englishman' are constantly equated. Patriotism also means that "the first paramount of national interest is political freedom; the only legitimate cause of war, self-defence" in order to preserve those freedoms. Once more there is reference to the defence of the colonies and it is interesting to note Cartwright distinguishes between the relatively unpeopled colonies which were "offsets" and "gardens" springing from "the root of the mother country" and dependencies which are "seed-beds" of war. There was to be no "absolute dominion at sea". The shield, as in Britannia's shield, and the trident, signified "military, political and moral defence". The reference to moral defence is crucial. The Hieronauticon was "to celebrate more than nine centuries of moral virtue in time past, and to perpetuate its continuance"; it was "the grand martial temple of a naval nation". So that it is the object of the work, Cartwright writes, "to call forth British genius in honour of British heroism, and to perpetuate British fame".  

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9. Cartwright, Trident, 18, 20, 94, 98, 102, 120.
Other themes are present. Among the things to defend is property; there is "a scroll on which is written PROPERTY, FREEDOM, FAME and LIFE". Yet any hint of luxury is to be avoided in the Hieronauticon or in the celebrations surrounding it. Cartwright looks for "the greatest simplicity and plainness consistent with good taste". The aim was to make the building and the rituals accessible to the common people. At the same time, the principle of hierarchy was not ignored. In one ceremony, where the navy is preferred over the army or militia, the more meritorious swords are given to the higher ranks. The ceremony itself is conducted according to rank, the commanding admiral getting the highest honours, then the next in command and so on; although the lower ranks are represented. "The Arch" can be entered only by the king and members of parliament and "the great officers of government". Clearly the people's government would not do away with social dignity and distance. This is brought out vividly in "Sculpture no.8" called "Rural Happinesss". It includes a somewhat idyllic representation of agrarian labourers, that is agrarian rather than urban workers, and depicts "in the farther distance, Windsor Castle, the residence of the shepherd of the people". In the Hieronauticon besides a "Hall of Alfred" there is an "Audience Chamber" and a "Royal Pavilion". Alfred himself is shown in aristocratic pursuits, for example hunting on horseback. Agrarian justice and redistribution obviously had its limits even though "in the presence of the god ... the works of every hand is equally divine".  

These last words are a reminder that ideas about power, politics and hierarchy are organised through a non-secular mode of cognition. If religion gives the organisational content, myth determines the form. The Trident is more than a metaphor; it is a mythical production in the full sense of the word. At one point, Cartwright seems to recognise the mythical content of the Greek legend of Neptune. "Superstition having bestowed him the sovereignty of the sea", he writes, "it was the business of poetry to invest him with all the attributes of that sovereignty; and of fable to embellish his history with exploits and amours". Yet, in truly mythical fashion he appears to take over and incorporate the basis of the legend into the present whereby "this metaphoric language when translated literally means no more than that ALBION is the most powerful, is king of the maritime states". Quoting from Milton, he also says "seeing that oft-times relations

10. Cartwright, Trident, 30, 34, 56, 80, 116, 157, 159.
hereforeto accounted fabulous have been often found to contain in them many footsteps and reliques of something true". If there are elements of doubt and scepticism with regard to Neultune and classical myth in general, the credulousness is complete in the face of Alfred and his Anglo-Saxon democracy. The theme of the Hieronauticon is the restoration, "the right to restore" Alfredian principles and patriotism, in "copying antiquity" if not down to the last detail then certainly in its most important and essential parts. Besides the time question, there is glory as a sub-theme of The Trident. Glory is essential to the idea of the hero and consequently part and parcel of the structure of myth. Orgins as God, as "divine origins", are also present as legitimating features, as in the example of the art of shipbuilding which comes from "divine inspiration". Symptomatically, ritual and symbol are also important elements in Cartwright's 'story'. For Cartwright and others like him, the truth of myth is not its underlying logical structure or a formal representation of social relationships and structure but the extent to which this or that myth can be used to legitimate a current state of affairs or an ideal situation. Perhaps a better statement could not be found of what I mean by the term "lingering credulousness".

Monuments and altars are to be used for festivities to create a sort of Durkheimian "effervescence" or feeling of community solidarity and unity. In contrast to the pyramids which suffered from a "poverty of meaning", Cartwright's temple or Hieronauticon was intended to have a "political or moral effect". A high point in the main ceremony is where paganism in the form of speeches by Neptune and Albion is intermingled with Christian ritual. On the altar is a closed book, "bearing on its cover the portrait of ALFRED". This perhaps symbolises political knowledge and its historical embodiment. One of the most pervasive cultural symbols, often presented in association with Alfred, is the oak. "Our native storm-encountering oak" is "monarch of the forest, sacred to Neptune and composing the wooden walls of our state". In this presentation are sentiments of nature, naval pride, patriotism and constitutionalism. The oak was important in Cartwright's scheme of things for providing for the future "an assured supply of oak timber for the navy". Practicality and romanticism went side by side, with the heads of naval heroes "enriched ... with oaken wreaths". Figuring prominently in the victory ceremonies the oak also symbolises strength as well as nature's

11. Cartwright, Trident, 91, 93, &c.
simplicity. Lastly, even science is presented in association with natural/cultural symbol and myth. "Newton ... leaning against the upper horn of the hill" has "in his left hand a rainbow ... the subject being of a historico-allegorical kind". Not only are science and tangible nature often represented together, but science is often represented visually, typically for the 18th century as a sort of spectacle or entertainment in which the visual, aesthetic and even playful elements are mingled.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} Cartwright, Trident, 188-9, 65, 180-83, 59ff, 62.
John Baxter

A government spy described Baxter as, "a mean-looking man, sallow complexion, thin-faced, black hair queued, dark brown coat, black snuff waistcoat, about forty". If this is correct it means he was born about 1750. In the 1790s, he was a journeyman silversmith working in Shoreditch. There is some mystery surrounding his early activities in the London Corresponding Society. The first mention of a Baxter given in the Society's journal is for 14th March 1793 when Baxter is one of a special committee of delegates set up "to revise and consider the Constitution of this Society". Later, in May, it is announced that Baxter, "delegate of Division 16" and another delegate reported favourably on the re-admission of Robert Littlejohn. It is accepted that Littlejohn be re-admitted provided he makes an effort to "clear up his conduct" for no one doubts his "public spirit".

In June, Baxter brings charges of spying against another delegate, George Lyneham. Despite Baxter's persistence, the charges are finally rejected by the executive committee. Also, Baxter is here referred to as "Wm. Baxter, delegate of Division 16". Possibly, then, this is a different Baxter from John Baxter. This is further suggested when both the journal and Thomas Hardy in his historical sketch of the London Corresponding Society - where he seems to rely on the L.C.S. journal - refer to John Baxter presenting his credentials as delegate for Division 16 (in place of John Pierce who had emigrated to America), as if for the first time. Although it seems unlikely that Hardy would make a mistake, I am inclined to assume with P.A. Brown that the two Baxters are one and the same person. It is possible that Pierce replaced Baxter for a while. And, more strongly, despite the fact that it was said of Baxter that "he leads a good deal as he can speak well", it seems unlikely that he would have risen to be chairman of the Society by November 1793, if he had so recently become a delegate.

1. Place Papers, B.M. Add. Mss., 27811
In September, he is nominated as member of the committee for drawing up an "Address to His Majesty". Later, along with Daniel Isaac Eaton he is complaining that the Address sent off was not the one drawn up by the committee. Baxter says it was unconstitutional and did not keep faith with the public. He also criticises it for its crudeness. On 17th October 1793, he was elected as a member of the committee to provide instructions for delegates to the Edinburgh conference or convention which gave rise to the Scottish Trials. Some indication of Baxter's popularity, perhaps, is given by the voting figures. Margarot got the most, ten votes, and Baxter, along with the one other, got the least - six votes. The instructions the committee drew up contained the usual Radical demands: annual parliaments, freedom of speech and so on. Baxter was also put forward as delegate for Edinburgh, eligibility being three months membership, but - significantly perhaps - he declined the nomination. Margarot and Gerrald were elected.

After the Scottish Trials, Baxter succeeded Margarot as chairman. But other than his signature to an Address to the Friends of Peace and Parliamentary Reform, there is little indication of his activity during this period, save what comes out at Thomas Hardy's trial for treason in 1794. In the autumn of 1794, Baxter appeared as co-defendant with Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke, John Thelwall and eight others on the charge of high treason. After Hardy, Tooke and Thelwall were acquitted, the charges against Baxter were dropped. But a lot of evidence was given against Baxter by Gosling, the Government spy, during the course of Hardy's long and gruelling trial.

By 1795, Baxter and another member, Joseph Burks, had formed a breakaway group which split off from the L.C.S. and called itself the Society of the Friends of Liberty. Gwyn A Williams calls it "anarchist". Possibly this is based on John Baxter's remark when meeting a delegation from the London Corresponding Society to the Friends that, "there was not an individual in the Society of the Friends of Liberty but what despised the idea of leaders". On this occasion, there had been some misunderstanding concerning remarks Baxter's group made about the London Corresponding Society's leadership. But the matter was settled amicably, and it is evident in this period that there is much coming and going between the two societies. It is also evident that the Friends of Liberty accepted the general leadership of the L.C.S. as still the largest reform society.

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3. Place Papers, B.M.Add.Mss. 27812, 21714;
Yet there were strains; and these often seem to centre around the questions of tactics and the personalities of Radical leaders, as much as around ideology. In August, Baxter, Burks and Bell, as a deputation from the Friends, waited upon the executive committee of the L.C.S. and were said to be "admitted to the honours of the sitting". Their business concerned the publication of the trial of Henry "Redhead" Yorke. The matter had come to the Friends' attention after one of their members who was passing through Sheffield - where Yorke had been tried - had chaired a large meeting there. The Friends also produced a letter from Sheffield. Francis Place, who was now an executive member of the L.C.S. said they should have nothing to do with it as the letter had been sent to the Friends and not to the L.C.S.; and he briefly crossed swords with Baxter over it. The L.C.S. committee ignored Place's advice but made some inquiries at Sheffield and Birmingham, where some money had been collected. In the event, they decided not to donate money to Yorke personally since the collections had been made for general publication of the state trials and Yorke was said to have personal wealth.

Other than the fact that in 1799 he is in prison suffering great hardship, along with many other Radicals, to my knowledge there is nothing much more to tell about Baxter's life. It is, though, important to consider his political reputation since it has a bearing on some broad questions to be discussed. Baxter's reputation is in fact based on evidence given at Hardy's trial and on interpretations of a political pamphlet he wrote that was published in 1795.

At Thomas Hardy's trial, Gosling the government spy said Baxter was involved in the manufacture of pikes for revolutionary purposes. According to Gosling, Baxter also wanted to blow up the royal family, subvert the army and foment armed rebellion. Thomas Erskine, for the defence, accused Gosling of leading Baxter on, and he totally discredited Gosling as a witness. Remember this is the time of the so-called "Pop-Gun Plot" when there was supposedly a plot to assassinate King George III by means of blowing a poisoned arrow through an imitation walking-stick. Most of this stuff was got up by Upton, a government spy and agent-provocateur. Yet there was a seemingly more specific piece of evidence brought against Baxter at Hardy's trial. He was said to be the author of a handbill for a mock play entitled "A New and Entertaining Farce called LA GUILLOTINE or GEORGE'S HEAD IN A BASKET"... Erskine said that the handbill was "fabricated by spies". Edwards, also a silversmith and a member of the L.C.S. said the handbill Baxter had given him was of
a different date from the one produced at the trial. The suggestion is also, I think, that its contents were milder. Whether they were or not is not all that important given the distinction that has been made between Jacobin revolutionary ideas and 'Lockeian' rebellion or 'resistance'.

P.A. Brown threw a lot of cold water on Gosling's evidence on the grounds that Baxter would have been arrested before he was if he had been involved in, among other things, the manufacture of pikes. Yet Brown says that he was a Jacobin and concludes that Baxter must be classed with Margarot and Hodgson "as leaders who seem to have dabbled in the doctrine of physical force". Brown refers to Baxter's pamphlet Resistance to Oppression, in support of his argument. G.S. Veitch reproduces quite an extensive quotation from Baxter's pamphlet and he is the only one who indicates that it might be something other than a revolutionary tract. He quotes a piece where Baxter argues that the reformers are not "reduced to the awful necessity of opposing Force to Force" since "the horrors of a Civil War" can be avoided through an "Association to obtain Redress of Grievances". This sentiment is all the more significant when it is remembered that the pamphlet was published in the famine years of 1795. Baxter appears to be advocating resistance only as a last resort; this point has not yet been reached. The government, if repressive, has not yet become a despotism. All historians have overlooked the way Baxter has taken over Lockean language and incorporated it into his own ideology, including the Lockean ambiguity towards political resistance and violence. Gwyn A. Williams refers to Baxter's "anarchism", his membership of the ultra-radical Society of the Friends of Liberty said to be "grand in style and French in temper", and the pamphlet as evidence of Baxter's

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5. State Trials, (London, 1809-1826), Vol.24, 687. Edwards also said that pikes were made "not for a rebellion against the government; not against any legal power". Keeping in mind the Priestley riots and the activities of the anti-Jacobins and so on, many of the pikes would have been manufactured as a defence against these unofficial elements. A lot of Americans have guns in their houses but this does not make them revolutionaries. Private arms are often seen as a means of self-protection and preserving order.


leanings. But he makes no attempt to interrogate Baxter's ideology in terms of paradigms, breaks and so forth. Williams also refers to a handbill which asks for the execution of George III. This same piece of evidence is said by John Cannon to indicate that Baxter was one of the members of the L.C.S. whose behaviour was "unrestrained" and "unconstitutional". Yet as mentioned before the authenticity of the handbill was disputed at the time.

Besides Baxter's activities in the Radical societies, there are two other pieces of documentary evidence: the pamphlet and his massive *New and Impartial History of England*. Williams interprets Baxter's

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History in a similar manner to his pamphlet. Its main object is "to derive the right of armed resistance from Saxon precedent".10 Earlier historians did not use the History and it seems that E.P. Thompson brought it to light. Thompson's analysis of the book is important since it is indicative of his analysis of Radical ideology as a whole. He also associates Resistance to Oppression with Baxter's taste for "more forceful measures" than were put forward by other reformers. Thompson reads the History such that Baxter emerges as a Jacobin and a Painite. Baxter's History shows that "Saxon precedent is almost indistinguishable from the state of nature, the noble savage, or the original social compact". From the time of the ancient Britons, Baxter reads English history as a history of progressive corruption. Using "industrious constitutional arguments" he arrives "at the right of the people to defy the Constitution". Alongside constitutionalist language, and in combat with it, ran Paine's political language of pure reason and natural law, unencumbered by historical precedent. But 'Gothic' ideology had a revival after 1793, "when Paine was driven into exile and his Rights of Man was banned as seditious libel". Yet, unlike the years between 1770 and 1790 when "the theory of the Norman Yoke" or political Gothic was substantially authentic, it is now "in part, a matter of expediency". Political oppression demands that ideas be expressed in the milder constitutionalist language. It becomes a kind of "black propaganda". Baxter's "'Saxons' were Jacobin and sans-culottes to a man". But, shifting his ground a bit, Thompson recognises that "it was more than expediency", that Gothic language still had some real currency although Baxter himself "felt it expedient to dissociate himself from Paine's total lack of reverence". Constitutionalist rhetoric "even when tricked out in Baxter's improbable Saxon terms ... implied absolute sanctions of certain conventions" including "the hereditary principle ... the Established Church" and so on. Anyone who took up constitutionalist political categories got "caught up in the trivia of piecemeal constitutional renovation".11

10. Williams, Artisans, 73.
In a detailed analysis of Baxter's book Thompson's interpretation is disputed. For now, only methodological implications are considered. Along with the other writers mentioned in relation to Baxter's pamphlet, the ideological question put by Williams and Thompson leads them to interpret the textual complexity of Baxter's History in a somewhat one-dimensional manner. The inherent empiricism of their question has led all writers into an "essentialist" reading of Baxter's mind; to a one-sided abstraction from a complex structured ideological formation.* Williams feels that Baxter's book has only an immediate political object. He fails to see the adoption of the stratagem of the Anglo-Saxon myth means that Baxter is bound to write English history as the history of liberty or non-liberty. He is bound to write it using certain conventions which have an 'epistemological' effect. Thompson adopts a position that is close to crude Namierism or vulgar Marxism which argues that ideas are never what they appear to be and need to be re-interpreted according to the subconscious or 'real' or 'essential' motives of the historical actors. Baxter's real political language is that of Tom Paine; the Gothic is only expediency. Thompson is aware of the "ambiguities of Locke" but does not see their proper significance in Baxter's thought. He also mentions Baxter's praise for a citizen militia but he is apparently not conscious of this as evidence of a neo-Machiavellian moment in Baxter's thought or of the implications it could have for his understanding of history and revolutions. Attachment to the ideological question precludes any probings along these lines. Baxter's book is not merely a functional thing; something that is produced by a particular political situation and an attempt to legitimate a certain political position. It includes social descriptions that contain paradigms of an 'epistemic' nature. More surprisingly, Thompson is at this point less aware than he ought to be of the question of hegemony. Since Thompson and Williams feel that Paineite language is the 'real' language of the more radical or

* See for example Sonya Jowett "The Role of Language and the Development of English Political Ideas in the late 18th century from c. 1774 to 1785" (University of Manchester Ph.D. 1976) for an essentialist interpretation. Here constitutionalist language is used to express new ideas but the old vocabulary is used because it is safer.
plebeian reformers, the Gothic form can only be expedient or pragmatic. If Whig or constitutionalist categories are genuinely believed in they are a sign of domination or hegemony since they necessarily lead to moderate reform or "the trivia of piecemeal renovation". The question is never raised of whether these categories could undergo a degree of transformation and be adapted for purposes very different from what was originally intended.

Thomas Evans

On Evans' personality and political attitudes, the sources are conflicting and the picture has been made murkier through historians' selectivity. It is known for certain that he was at one time in 1798, a colourer of prints and later a patent brace-maker. For William Hone, who saw him at work in "his little shop" in Newcastle Street in the Strand, he appeared "as one of the plainest and most honest-minded men I ever saw ... had a round good, healthy fat-looking face, the very index of a manly mind". While "his speech was as bold and as English as his appearance". Sensitivity to 18th century 'language' suggests this is as much a political statement as it is the description of a person. Hone, who was later a friend of Evans wrote this in 1816. As early as 1797, Hone had co-operated with Evans and John Bone as representatives of the London Corresponding Society in his first joint publishing venture. Other Radicals had different view of Evans. Samuel Bamford did not like him much. Bamford first seems to have come across Evans in the lodge in Coldbathfields prison. They did not speak and Bamford describes Evans as "a wordy and intemperate man". This, despite the fact that Bamford received financial aid from Evans' son and later stayed at Evans' house in Newcastle Street. Allan Davenport, his brother Spencean, expresses his debt "to the lectures and writings of Mr. Evans". But, for Francis Place, Evans' ideas and mind were mad and eccentric. "Evans was a strange creature", he says "with very contemptible reasoning power, a sort of absurd fanatic, continually operated upon by impulses". Evans had, Place adds, "the imagination of a man out of Bedlam". Evans "used to march from his house to the public house where ... the meetings of the society were held, with an old bible under his arm". The society to which Place refers was the Spenceans who Place disparages in terms of ideas and following. This
point will be returned to later but for the present it is worth noticing
that Place did not always think so badly of Evans and yet it is Place
who has largely been relied on for establishing Evans' and the Spenceans'
eccentricity and wildness. Earlier, Place had listed Evans as one of
the "cleverest men I was intimately acquainted with", and at one time
had looked after Evans' wife and children. The cause of Place's change
of view was probably a dispute over money in 1806.12

If the tone of Evans' writings is shriller and more strained than,
say, those of John Cartwright it is because he suffered a lot at the hands
of the government. In 1798 or 9 he was arrested, his house was seized
and he was sent to prison for nearly three years. By his own account the
conditions were terrible. In his most well-known pamphlet he describes
how his wife and infant son were sent to prison, and how all persons
calling at his house "whatever their business" were also sent to gaol.
Evans himself was put into solitary confinement. In 1817 he was held
again, and this time not with John Baxter but with Gravenor Henson among
others. His son was arrested with him and the case caused "a great stir"
leading eventually to their unconditional discharge. Apart from the
mulatto, Robert Wedderburn, support was also forthcoming in Hone's
'Broadsheets', Cobbett's Register, the Black Dwarf, the Independent Whig
and other Radical journals where accounts of the Spenceans and their
ideas were published.13

Yet the impression got from Place and Thomas Hardy is that
Evans' contribution to the Radical cause was marginal, while Christopher
Hill calls him a "secondary figure". The view given is not only that
Evans' ideas were derivative and not very important but that he was
always involved in political groups that were in decline or did not get
off the ground. It has been mentioned that in 1795 Evans was a member of
the executive committee; in 1796 he is still listed as a deputy of the
London Corresponding Society. In 1797, after the arrest of the main

12. Place Papers, 27815, 27808; Henry Collins, "The London Corresponding
John Saville, 129; Olive Rudkin, Thomas Spence & His Connections,
(New York, 1927), 96-7, 189; J. Ann Hone, "William Hone (1780-1842)
Publisher and Bookseller: an approach to early 19th century London
Radicalism" in Historical Studies, 16, 1974, 56; Samuel Bamford,
Passages in the Life of a Radical, (2nd Edn. Heywood, 1839-41), Vol.I,
109, 126; E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class,
(Pelican edn. 1968), 672; Biographical Dictionary of Modern British

13. Thompson, Working Class, 191, 736; Thomas Evans, Christian Policy
The Salvation of Empire, (London 1815, 2nd edn.) iv; Olive Rudkin,
Spence, 159-60; Robert Wedderburn, The Folorn Hope or A Call to the
Supine, (1st Issue n.d.).
leadership, he became secretary. According to one historian "by this time it had shrunk to a sect of some 200 passionate men". Yet E.P. Thompson has pointed to the probable existence of a large underground movement as a result of persecution and virtual illegality.  

Since ideas about the Anglo-Saxon constitution were widespread among the London Corresponding Society membership, it is likely that Evans first came into contact with the myth there. They also had a certain currency among the Spenceans, something that is not usually given much notice. 'Dr' James Watson, another link between the London society and the Spenceans, addressing the crowd of distressed artisans and operatives before the Spa Fields riot told them how "ever since the Norman Conquest kings and lords have been deluding you". He also made reference to Wat Tyler. As E.P. Thompson suggests, there was a certain ideological diversity among the Spenceans. Evans and Robert Wedderburn, for example, both gave Spence's land reform principles their own particular twist and emphasis. Thompson also argues that Evans was a Spencean while still a leader of the London Corresponding Society, whereas according to Olive Rudkin it was when he was released from gaol in 1801 "that he began to turn his attention from the United Englishmen to the Spensonians" even though the latter did not actually form themselves into a society until 1807. Evans is said to have "played a leading part" in this formation. Out of the Spensonian society, in October 1814, Evans "instituted the Society of Spencean Philanthropists". With historic spite, Place comments that "Evans ... like all fanatics thought ... he could produce a millenium"; the Spenceans, he records, "were next to nobody and nothing ... their Society consisted of Evans, his son and their friends". If this is so, the Evanses must have had a lot of friends. It has been said the Spenceans were "very harmless as a body: and "never had any provincial branches" and "at no time numbered more than fifty persons". Thomas Evans' son has been quoted as "admitting" that the group or society never numbered above forty. Yet Evans himself says that when the Spenceans were founded they consisted of "4 sections and about forty members". At a meeting of one of the sections at the Mulberry Tree in Moorfields a government spy reported that attendance was "to the number of 130 and upwards" another figure of 150 is also quoted. After 1812, writes Olive

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14: Christopher Hill, "Norman Yoke" in Puritanism and Revolution, (London, 1968), 113; Thompson, Working Class, 182; Gwyn A. Williams, Artisans and Sans-Culottes, 103, 107; Place Papers, 27815.
Rudkin, the Spenceans "had become increasingly active". She adds that "probably their numbers grew after the outbreak of the Luddite riots". Also, around this time, "the principal meetings of the lower classes were those held by the Spenceans". Not only were they the organising force behind the Spa Fields Riot in 1816, they also set up the successful preparations for Henry Hunt's entry into London after Peterloo in 1819. Evans' Christian Policy went through two editions in the same year, while his second pamphlet which he had not "dared to publish" before is attributed to their increasing popularity and was published in 1818. As Thompson points out, what Place's comment means is merely "that they had no wires to pull in Parliament nor in influential middle class circles". Place's statement is probably no more than an indication of the extent to which his own thinking and attitudes had become suffused with middle class ideas. He ought to have known, as one who had been active in a social movement of the working classes that a movement is more than the beliefs and actions of its leading enthusiasts or even of its 'card-carrying' members. Even today, the extent of a movement is obscured by concentrating on this element; in semi-legal and illegal conditions the visible element would have even more understated the degree of support and the spread of ideas. 15

After the Society of Spencean Philanthropists folded in 1820 as a result of the Cato Street conspiracy, Evans seems to have left for Manchester with his son who later became editor of the British Traveller and the Manchester Observer. There Evans published a life of Thomas Spence in 1821. He was in a good position to do so since as librarian of the Spenceans, he was the keeper of Spence's ideological heritage. As an activist and as a populariser of Spence's ideas Evans was, then, a "representative figure" - a primary rather than a secondary figure. Even more, the extent to which Evans merely transmitted Spence's ideas is problematical. He certainly had a few things to add of his own. It has been said that Evans "not only admired Spence" but "was personally attached to him"; that "he never criticises his leader or pushes forward his own ideas". At the end of his biography he compares

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15. DRB, 165; DNB "James Watson", 921; Thompson, Working Class, 177, 672-3, 763, 852; Olive Rudkin, Spence, 144 146, 160-1; Cole & Postgate say that the Society of Spencean Philanthropists was formed in 1812. The Common People, (4th edn. London), 219.
Spence to Jesus Christ. Yet, referring to Spence's attention to commerce, the same author is of the opinion that Evans "influence" on Spence "was manifesting itself after 1798". Instead of trying to chart this 'influence' it is probably more instructive to present two paradigms of each writers' thinking.  

* See text. For more biographical detail on Evans and the Spenceans generally see Iowerth Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London*, (London, 1979), passim.
The symbols in the History 'concretize' Baxter's thinking in that they are there not merely as ornaments or illustrations but form part of the argument. Even the unadorned portraits that appear in the book are symbols or types or figures. They are the heroes or villains in the age-old struggle for liberty. The frontispiece of Baxter's book shows in symbolic or concrete form the essence of the Radical outlook. It shows the female figure of liberty with a shield and covered spear; that is the frontispiece depicts liberty as a defensive idea. She is defending the British constitution, in the shape of a pyramid, from the attacks of anarchy and despotism. Anarchy takes the form of an unclothed primitive and despotism is depicted as a king in full regalia. These figures can be taken as representing, on the one hand, uncontrolled or untamed nature, and, on the other hand, a surfeit of culture. Behind, waiting for the outcome of the struggle is a dark knightly figure gripping a yoke and a chain. The Englishness of the constitution is emphasised by the foundation stone at the base of the pyramid which has the words "Magna Carta" inscribed on it. One of the cornerstones has the inscription "Bill of Rights". The whole picture has oak leaves and acorns entwined around the frame. The goddess of liberty holds the spear in her right hand, suggesting purity combined with strength. Yet since the spear is covered with a cap of liberty, the suggestion is that force is subjected to principle. The cap, then, is associated with English rather than Gallic symbols. The symbol of the oak appears throughout Baxter's book. The Druids who derived their name from the oak, held the tree in "profound veneration". Two sprigs of oak are placed at the bottom of the patriotic Earl of Chatham. Even the engraving showing the storming of the Bastille is garlanded with oak. At the bottom of the frame are two oak branches, while just above the frame is a cap of liberty with two sprigs of oak underneath it. Overall, the symbols surrounding the frame are English rather than sans-culotte or Jacobin. Another common symbol in the book is the rolled parchment, suggestive of the people's age-old liberties and of their foundation in law. Often, the parchments have a pen attached to them suggesting the laws have actually been written down and indicating something of the fetishistic nature with which the Radicals regarded the written word. Sometimes the parchments are inscribed with the word "records", again suggesting their antiquity, and sometimes with the word "liberty". A gory scene showing Louis XVI's execution has
the rolled parchment of liberty inserted into the frame. What is signified here is that Louis' execution had taken place within the bounds of law. He had acted not as a patriot king but as an unconstitutional monarch. There is, therefore, despite appearances to the contrary, no inconsistency between the sentiments expressed in this plate and those symbolised in the frontispiece. As if to confirm this, Horne Tooke appears on the next page as a patriot along with Paine, Thelwall and Thomas Hardy, where parchments are also in evidence. Additional evidence of Baxter's 'archaic' frame of mind comes from his discussion of Harold's oath while in the hands of William of Normady. Harold's oath was "exorted from him by fear" and Harold only "feigned a compliance" with William's wishes to become king. The seriousness with which Baxter regarded oath-taking is highlighted not only by this incident but is suggested by Baxter's artisan background. On this, Baxter's respect for oaths gives support to W.H. Oliver rather than Hobsbawm. The oath represented a bond or contract with God and the religious basis of Baxter's mind is also suggested in an engraving showing George III and a wine cup with a serpent tangled around it. It is also reasonable to see this as symbolising luxury and corruption.¹

It is worthwhile making an extended comment on Sibly's writings. For, from Cooper and from George Plant of Blackley, Samuel Bamford's friend, and from James Lackington, it seems that the influence of Sibly (and Culpepper) on the artisan mind was substantial. Sibly was himself the son of a mechanic and it is possible that his books are not much more than an attempt to present artisan lore about astrology and herbalism in a systematic form. Sibly's brother, Monoah, was a Swedenborgian. Sibly himself was a strong supporter of the Whig candidate in Ipswich; the significance of this can be best gauged by an examination of some of his writing. Nearly all of Sibly's works were published in the 1790s and early 1800s; a number of Nicholas Culpepper's works were also re-published around this time, as were William Lilly's, another 17th century astrologer and herbalist, and radical.¹ Sibly points out the association between reason and religion and astrology; these three modes of knowledge are to

1. Thomas Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper, (London, 1872), 46-7. On the importance of Sibly's work in the history of astrology, see Christopher MacIntosh, The Astrologers and Their Creed, 118, where he describes Sibly's book as a "notable exception" in the face of the Enlightenment onslaught. Since I wrote this, mention has been made of Sibly in J.F.C. Harrison's The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850, (London, 1979), 47-9. Harrison's treatment is brief, and he does not deal systematically with Sibly's ideas or mention the political or 'analogical' aspects of his thinking; Bamford, Passages, Vol. 1, 130-1, 135-143.
be contrasted with ignorance and superstition. This knowledge is
democratic in the way political knowledge or education is but it is still
conceived as a kind of gnosis. "The intellectual faculties of all
men", Sibly says,

are not alike strong and apt for occult speculations; yet it is manifest that all persons are
capable of deriving great improvements from
reading; and that it is not so much the want of
natural ability, as of industry and application,
that so many men disgrace the image of the Deity,
and degrade the venerable possessions of Divinity,
Physic and Law .... 2

In keeping with the deistic message education and knowledge is
not merely self-improvement, it is a duty to God. Contrasted with
"error or the disgrace of ignorance", knowledge or gnosis is holy. "The
occult properties and qualities of all things", and this obviously
includes political knowledge, "occult causes and effects" are "fixed by
the hand of God". Also, "those occult causes and effects, which act
most though they are least seen" lead back to God, "that FIRST and
omnipotent CAUSE to whose power all second causes are subservient".
God is in the world through reason, "the peculiar gift of Providence".
God is in the world democratically since the occult properties of men
can be understood by "all men ... by more or less all mankind". What
started out as an exercise in epistemology becomes politics since, "it is
therefore evident that the humble cottage, the classical curate, the
regular physician, and the village doctor, stand on the same level in
this respect".3 Sibly also says that God is known to man through
"sense, perception and reason", that is empirically and intuitively.
This is only one indication of his deism. He believes that there is
"an eternal, most powerful and knowing being which whether anyone will
call it GOD matters not". But "we certainly know that there is
a God than there is anything else without us". Although God is "an

2. Ebenezer Sibly, A Key to the Physic and Occult Sciences, Opening
to a Mental View the System and Order of the Interior and Exterior
Heavens; the Analogy Betwixt Angels and the Spirits of Men and the
Sympathy Between Celestial and Terrestrial Bodies, (London, 1814,
5th edn.), 1-2.
eternal mind", he is much more than this. His presence is in nature and in the cosmos" "the Deity is visible in all his works". He is active in the world on the moral and social level. "To the mercy of God", Sibly writes,

we owe all the blessings of this life, as the reward of good and virtuous actions. To his anger we justly attribute all violent concussions of the elements, famine, plague, pestilence &c brought on a wicked and abandoned people ...
The vengeance of the Deity cannot be more awfully described, than by David in his Psalms; which should act as a timely warning to those atheists and unbelievers, and to those wicked idolatrous, and polluted countries ... God is present in all places, nothing happens without his knowledge. 4

Astrology is compatible with religion, Sibly thought, because "it is expressly revealed in the scripture" that God is most perfectly apprehended through knowledge of heaven or the heavens. In heaven "he is pleased to afford a nearer and more immediate view of himself". Astrology therefore is the holy science for it is the science of the heavens. Facing one page of Sibly's book there is an astrological map of the heaven. Knowledge of heaven comes from "the Books of Revelation" and "occult philosophy" or astrology. 5 Sibly also spells out the connections between belief in God, astrology and herbal remedies. He starts with a quotation from the Bible which states that "the Lord hath caused medicine to grow out of the earth". From this he reasons that vegetables, "the medium contrived by an all wise and omnipotent Creator" contain "occult virtues" for the "alleviation of human inactivities". Herbs and vegetables are related to astrology by analogy: "vegetables bear relation to the seven planets", he says. In turn, plants have "a signature or similitude with man". For example, "the walnut resembles the brain". They also act upon the disorders of the parts of the body to which they correspond:

truffles and potatoes ... which have a similitude with the testicles, wonderfully stir up and promote the semen; as do the parsnip ... and the mangel-wurzel, or root of scarcity, contribute much to stimulate the virile member. 6

5. Sibly, A Key, 7.
Herbs could even be associated with patriotism in a way that left plenty of mental room for political analogy. Foreign herbs are no good. "CULPEPER recommends English herbs for an English constitution". Implicit here is the image of the constitution and the idea of impurity and the constitution and virtue. Foreign herbs lose their "virtues" in an English climate; the injection of virtue, of some form of Englishness, is necessary to restore health. This image of the constitution and the problem of its restoration to health or purity by means of virtue occurs frequently in Sibly's text. He also brings in the idea of "excess" and it can be imagined how Sibly would have related this to his political interests. "Nature is content with little", he says,

but luxury knows no bounds. Hence the epicure, the drunkard, and the debauchee seldom stop their career, till their money and their constitution fails ... 7

"Excess" of this kind leads to "fever" and a "poisoning" of the system. This is merely the moral language which underlies politics. The connection with politics is also made more explicit. On one page astrological charts supposedly explain the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. "Whoever has perused by ILLUSTRATION of ASTROLOGY", he says,

will have seen, that in my predictions, published in the year 1786, I fortold the revolution in the French empire, and the dethronement and execution of the French king and queen, six years before it happened; with all the dreadfull (sic) consequences ... exactly as they have since fallen out ... though wise the age we live in, yet few would brook the admonitions of a friend though they should lead to prosperity and riches - to glory and reknown ... 8

Astrology apprehends, "the secret operations of Nature" and nature affects civil society and politics. Natural or astrological causes have a "mundane influence". Once again England appears as the elect nation, the nation most favoured by divine or natural operations. God shows "his unbounded favour to the British Isles" and "will overshadow and protect them". Sibly also predicts that "Germany shall be no more". The editor of Sibly's book adds that although Sibly did not live to see it, his prediction came true in 1806 with the "suppression" of the small

7. Sibly, A Key, 132.
8. Sibly, A Key, 391.
German states and the confederation. But astrology did not only offer an explanation of things through prediction, it also comprehended events through a vocabulary in use as political rhetoric. The French monarchy's downfall was written in the stars. The "Moon posited in Scorpio" gave Louis XVI "a taste for luxury". Luxury leads to death, to misfortune: "he was but a man, subject to the severest reverse of fortune". Marie Antoinette's horoscope also shows a taste for excess. In the nativity, "the Moon is the lady of the ascendant, rising upon the sign of Libra, in the fifth house, the house of pleasure and sexual enjoyment". There is sufficient evidence that Marie Antoinette "was passionately fond" of sexual pleasure. "The sun was in his fall" and the "stars in their courses fought against this illustrious pair". The stars, "point out the testimonies of a violent and premature death". Politics is also part of language and knowledge. The simplicity of the English language helps to promote knowledge and knowledge eases communication; ease of communication smooths the workings of the economy. The English language "is the language of a great and powerful nation, whose fleets surround the globe, and whose merchants are in every port". The fact that the English language is easy to use means it "has more perfect treatises on every art and science" than any other language.

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N.B. This bibliography is composed of books, articles, journals and pamphlets that are referred to in the text. Many of the ideas expressed in the body of the thesis are based on much wider and deeper study. For example, I have carefully gone through most of the pamphlets of the London Corresponding Society and the Society for Constitutional Information, combed Sherwin's Political Register and have studied such things as Alfred's Will (1788), an important mythological charter. The secondary literature on the 'mercantilism' debate has also been omitted.