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Orestes A. Brownson: An American Traditionalist

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Orestes A. Brownson was an American journalist who converted to Catholicism in 1844, at the age of forty-one. He had been writing editorials and occasionally managing publications since 1828 in connection with religious activities as minister to various sects. Brownson, from the 1830's on, read, reviewed, and kept abreast of European literature concerned with philosophy, social, political, and economic theory. It was assumed that he continued that practice after his conversion in 1844 and that he would enlist the aid of European Catholic theorists to develop an acceptable Catholic system of thought--

particularly since American Catholic literature in the mid-nineteenth century was mainly devoid of theoretical works.

A brief scanning of Brownson's works written after 1844 revealed the names of several French Catholic writers who were part of a group known as Traditionalists--De Maistre, Bonald, Lamennais, Veuillot, Donoso Cortes, Bonnetty, and others. The problem evolved from this discovery to determine whether Traditionalists had influenced Brownson's Catholic theorizing, and if so, to what extent.

The main source of reference for this research problem was the twenty-volume collection Henry Brownson had compiled of his father's Catholic journalistic efforts. Henry Brownson also published a three volume biography of his father, and I obtained the first volume, Early Life. Other biographies on Brownson have been written by Theodore Maynard, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Doran Whalen, which were useful for background material. A variety of articles have been written about Brownson, but none related him to Traditionalism; their usefulness, therefore, was limited.

I relied on secondary sources for interpretations of the French Traditionalists: Quinlan's thesis and Cohen's article on Bonald; works from Lively, Greifer, and Koyre on de Maistre; and a variety of French historical surveys. I also consulted materials which would provide background information on the Enlightenment--a necessity since Traditionalists and Brownson continually attacked Enlightenment ideas.

I compared the social, political, and economic aspects of Brownson's ideas to those of the Traditionalists. The conclusion arrived at was that Brownson had used Traditionalist theory almost exclusively as a

foundation for his own work. Brownson not only displayed ideas similar to the Traditionalists, he featured their exact terminology: "germ of perfection theory", "divine origin of language", and "generative principle of constitution." He referred to them as the "illustrious Bonald" and "illustrious de Maistre" and occasionally stated that he was sympathetic to Traditionalist ideas. Brownson's deviation from Traditionalist theory was usually a result of translating French ideas to American society. He was careful to make the point that the ideas he altered remained valid for France, and Traditionalists were essentially correct in their entire assessment of society.

ORESTES A. BROWNSON: AN AMERICAN TRADITIONALIST

by

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INTRODUCTION

Orestes Augustus Brownson was an American journalist whose career spanned the years 1828 to 1875. At the age of 25 he submitted his first articles for publication to a Universalist paper, the Gospel Advocate, and within a year was appointed editor. The duration of his first editorship was brief and he became corresponding editor to the New York Free Enquirer through an association with Fanny Wright. In 1831 he founded his own magazine, The Philanthropist, which rapidly failed. Brownson then contributed occasional articles to a variety of Boston publications including George Ripley's Christian Register, Channing's The Unitarian, The Daily Sentinel, and The Christian Examiner until he became editor of the Boston Reformer in 1836. Brownson was able to establish his own quarterly in 1838, the Boston Quarterly Review, which ran until 1842 and then merged with The Democratic Review. In 1844 Brownson disassociated himself from The Democratic Review and resumed his own journal, renamed Brownson's Quarterly Review. Brownson's Quarterly Review was published without interruption until 1864 and reappeared for a short time from 1873 to 1875.

The main topic in Brownson's articles was religion. He adhered to a variety of Protestant sects between 1825 and 1844. When he wrote his first editorials for the Gospel Advocate he was a Universalist minister, and in 1832 he became a Unitarian. He even established his own sect, The Church of the Future, prior to editorship of the Boston

Reformer. Brownson became a Catholic in 1844 and began Brownson's Quarterly Review as a spokesman for the Catholic laity.

Brownson's religion and journalism were closely affiliated. Journalism was the result of his desire to inform the public on his beliefs. He did not limit his scope to theology, but wrote articles which analyzed philosophy, science, social reform, politics, and economics in relation to religion. His goal was to discover a harmonious integration of religion and the sciences which would illuminate the public on the best means to man's end. His object was always to convey a message; he never attempted to write neutral articles.

Brownson's shifts in religious belief were accompanied by alterations in his social theory. The frequency with which he changed affiliations and intellectual stances in his early years led some contemporaries to accuse him of being inconsistent and vacillatory. Brownson quoted a critic from the Christian Examiner as writing:

> When, therefore, we find that Mr. Brownson's mind is in the habit of experiencing such extraordinary revolutions, we may perhaps be excused for not paying much attention to his position at any particular time. In a land of earthquakes, men do not build four-story houses; neither do we spend much time in refuting the arguments of a man whom we know to be in the habit of refuting himself about once in every three months.[1]

Brownson did not consider himself radical. He had always read and critically analyzed an abundance of material before converting to a new sect. The various phases of his intellectual changes were usually published in editorials or reviews and he assumed they were logical developments which faithful readers would follow.

The main sources to which Brownson turned for intellectual stimulation were in European literature. He learned to read French,

German, and Italian and had no difficulty in translating works to English. He often read original versions when English translations were available because he did not want to rely on interpretations which might not convey the precise meaning of the author. He read and reviewed articles written by Constant, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Kant, Jouffrey, Cousin, Leroux, Lamennais, Maistre, Bonald, Donoso Cortes, Veuillot, among many other eminent European theorists. Occasionally Brownson was the first American journalist to review a European article. "Brownson's articles in the Christian Examiner which attracted the most attention were those on Cousin's philosophy, and did much to introduce it in this country."[2]

Europeans became aware of Brownson after he began translating and publishing their works. Cousin noted and approved Brownson's translation of his eclectic philosophy and began corresponding with him. "From the time of reviewing the first of the articles above referred to, Cousin began sending his publications to Brownson, and Brownson his to Cousin."[3] Brownson also corresponded with Newman and Montalembert. Some Americans realized that Brownson was highly regarded by European intellectuals. The President of Louisiana State College wrote him a letter stating: "'I can certainly claim no merit for having treated with respect and attention a countryman whom the highest authorities abroad have considered as entitled to our highest intellectual distinctions.'"[4]

A few articles written by Brownson appeared in European publications, but he did not develop a large audience there. In America Brownson was intermittently popular. The first paper he founded, The Philanthropist, did not fail because of a lack of readers

but because of negligent subscriber payments.[5] During the 1830's Brownson was an associate of such eminent intellectuals as Emerson, Thoreau, Ripley, Channing, and Bancroft. He occasionally attended Transcendentalist meetings and visited Brook Farm. Brownson invited associates to submit articles to the Boston Quarterly Review and was in turn invited to contribute to their publications.[6] The Boston Quarterly Review was well received by the American literary public. Henry Brownson's biography of his father contained a letter from a woman who wrote:

> 'One may form some idea of the popularity of your Review by casting an eye on the reading table of our Athenaeum where it is to be seen in a very tattered and dog-eared condition long before the end of the quarter while its sister journals lie around in all their virgin gloss of freshness.'[7]

Brownson had found an audience for his works among authors, social reformers, clergy, and other intellectuals. In the 1840's there was an abrupt upheaval in his journalistic career. When he became a Catholic in 1844 he denounced affiliation with all non-Catholics and lost nearly the entire audience he had gathered since 1828.

> When Brownson came into the Catholic Church he was at the peak of his fame. . . . Though he probably did not have, as yet, over a thousand subscribers for his Review, they included most of the best minds in the country. He was now able to say, 'For the first time I had the sentiments of the better portion of the community with me.' Yet it was just then--just when he had recovered a position he had imagined to have been lost forever--that he threw it away again by becoming a Catholic.[8]

Prior to his conversion, Brownson had published articles in the Democratic Review which enabled readers to follow his development toward Catholicism. However, he made a seemingly inexplicable methodological change in the Brownson Quarterly Review and became slanderous toward his non-Catholic audience. Brownson's method

differed under the influence of his advisor, Father Fitzpatrick, who directed him to assume the traditional apologetic method of Catholic writing. After 1844, then, Brownson was discouraged from developing an intellectual mode whereby Protestants might be converted to Catholicism. Brownson later regretted his methodological transition. In 1857 he wrote:

> But this suppression of my own philosophic theory, --a suppression under every point of view commendable and even necessary at the time, became the occasion of my being placed in a false position towards my non-Catholic friends. Many had read me, seen well enough whither I was tending, and were not surprised to find me professing myself a Catholic. The doctrine I brought out, and which they had followed, appeared to them, as it did to me, to authorize me to do so, and perhaps not a few of them were making up their minds to follow me; but they were thrown all aback the first time they heard me speaking as a Catholic, by finding me defending my conversion on grounds of which I had given no public intimation, and which seemed to them wholly unconnected with those I had published.[9]

Father Hecker, one of the few friends of Brownson who had followed him into the Church, also believed he would have convinced many readers to become Catholic had he not been advised to change method and style.

> For This Father Hecker, writing after Brownson and Fitzpatrick were both dead, roundly blamed Fitzpatrick. After quoting a long passage from The Convert, the founder of the Paulists remarks: 'These extracts reveal plainly how Dr. Brownson, by shifting his arguments, shifted his auditory and lost, never to regain, the leadership Providence had designed for him. I always maintained that Dr. Brownson was wrong in thus yielding to the bishop's influence, and that he should have held on to the course Providence had started him in. . . . Had he held on to the way inside the church which he had pursued outside the church in finding her, he would have carried with him some, and might perhaps have carried with him many, non-Catholic minds of a leading character.'[10]

Brownson had not intended to alienate non-Catholics from reading his Review. His apologetics were intended to argue non-Catholics into

conversion. He warned them that Protestantism was heathenism and they were doomed to hell unless they became Catholics. The result was a mass withdrawal of non-Catholic support from his quarterly. The only notable portion of non-Catholics who retained subscriptions to Brownson's Review were southerners who agreed with his political views on states rights prior to the Civil War.[11]

Brownson managed to develop a relatively strong position for his Review among Catholic periodicals, though. His income from the publications, along with intermittent public lectures, was sufficient to support the Brownson family although it was never lucrative.

> When he began Brownson's Quarterly he had only 600, which he considered a good start. In 1840 the Boston Quarterly had had less than a thousand; in 1850 its successor had reached a circulation of about 1,400. Probably Brownson's Quarterly Review never had more than 2,000. But it was immensely influential. In 1853, so Brownson noted in his personal postscript to the January issue (p. 136), the interest in his Review was great enough to bring about an English edition. This was almost, though not quite, the first instance of such a thing happening to an American magazine.[12]

Although Brownson had changed his technique, he retained his interest in European works and social theory. He read and reviewed articles written and published by eminent European Catholics and developed his Catholic philosophy, social, political, and economic theory in reference to their works. His main ideas were derived from a French school of thought, Traditionalism. Brownson basically agreed with the Traditionalists who desired the dominance of religion over all facets of society as a solution to the social turmoil the French Revolution created in France. Brownson's articles continually asserted the necessity of dominant Catholicism to establish and maintain harmonious society in America as well as Europe. He developed

an American Catholic system based on ideas adapted from works of de Maistre, Bonald, Lamennais, and Montalembert.

Brownson had an intense belief in the mission of Catholicism to rescue American society. His articles written between 1844 and 1854 conveyed his dismay that conversions were minute and anti-Catholic sentiment was increasing. He was pessimistic about the future of the United States.

Brownson realized that his apologetic method did not convince Protestants of the necessity to enter the Catholic Church. In 1854 Father Fitzpatrick went to Europe and Brownson was relieved of pre-publication censorship of his articles. Coincident to the departure of Father Fitzpatrick was Brownson's dismissal of traditional apologetics and an attempt to regain his non-Catholic audience.

> That Brownson had set out in 1844 with high hopes of bringing numbers into the Church is certain; it is equally certain that he came to give up that hope. Then, instead of changing his methods, he changed his audience and began to say that he regarded his mission that of confirming the faith of Catholics and of quickening their intellectual life. In this of course he had remarkable success. But he was always troubled in mind that he had failed in his first purpose, and now that he was free to work along his own lines, he returned to his former hope. At last he could use the instrument Fitzpatrick had virtually forbidden him to use.[13]

Brownson's articles written after 1854 reflect optimism. He believed a new approach to Protestants would win their confidence and devotion, conversions to Catholicism would be facilitated, and American society would be saved. The extent of his optimism is reflected in a passage he wrote in 1856: "It took three hundred years of persevering labor to convert the German conquerors of Rome; but at length they were converted, and the great majority of the Germanic race are still Catholics. A fourth of that time would suffice to convert

the American people."[14]

Brownson's new direction after 1854 was to eliminate Protestant objection to Catholicism by being conciliatory in all non-dogmatic areas of his religion.

> We wish . . . to show our non-Catholic readers that many things peculiarly offensive to them, contended for by Catholic theologians, are not obligatory on the believer, because they are not of faith and taught by the church on her divine and infallible authority, and therefore may be received or rejected on their merits, freely examined and judged of by human reason.[15]

He reversed his negative assessments of Protestant intellect and morals and surmised that Protestants were not stubborn in resisting authority but were perhaps misinformed.

> We have acted on the rule, that it is rarely that fair-minded and intelligent non-Catholics gravely object to anything really Catholic, and that what they object to is almost always something which they take to be Catholic, but which is not, --something, perhaps, which has been associated with our religion without being any part of it, though Catholics may have sustained or practised it, the church has never sanctioned, favored, or approved it.[16]

While Brownson became less critical of Protestants, he became more critical of Catholics. He was convinced that Catholics were often justifiably criticized in America. He wanted to eradicate their objectionable qualities and increase their stature.

An anti-Catholic organization, the Know-Nothings, gained strength in the 1850's primarily from a reaction to immigration. Between 1845 and 1860 approximately 1,500,000 Irish had immigrated to the United States and settled primarily in the eastern cities. By the 1850's immigrants constituted over half the population of New York City, and the major ethnic group was Irish. An increase in crowding, poverty, disease, and crime was attributed to these foreigners. Since the Irish

were primarily Catholic, their religion as well as race became reprehensible to part of the American populace.

Brownson was sympathetic to the Irish dilemma in the cities, but chided their lack of adaptation to the American system. The Irish seemed determined to retain their European identity and contributed to the American identification of Catholicism as foreign. ". . . and Americans have felt, that to become Catholics, they must become Celts, and make common cause with every class of Irish agitators, who treat Catholic America as if it were simply a province of Ireland."[17]

Many Catholic publications sustained prejudice because they were exclusively oriented to an Irish audience. "Our so-called Catholic journals are little else than Irish newspapers, and appeal rather to Irish than to Catholic interests and sympathies."[18] Brownson's desire was to Americanize Catholicism. "We insist, indeed, on the duty of all Catholic citizens, whether natural-born or naturalized, to be, or to make themselves, thorough-going Americans . . ."[19]

The Know-Nothings claimed that Catholicism was related to monarchy and Catholics would not accept the republican form of government in the United States. The charge that they preferred monarchy seemed substantiated in 1851 when the Catholic community in America extolled the conservative triumph of Louis Napoleon in France.

Brownson denied that Catholicism was related to any specific form of government. He claimed that all forms of society would benefit from predominance of the Catholic religion. For the benefit of the Catholic as well as Protestant community he devoted several articles to the exposition of relations between Church and State. The spiritual realm was proclaimed superior to the temporal, but the ideal

relationship would entail mutual non-interference. Brownson perceived America as having the only government which absolutely guaranteed non-interference with the right to establish a church and practice religion. There was no necessity for the Church to negotiate civil rights with the government.

> We, then, may conclude further that our government, honestly administered in accordance with its fundamental principles, meets the principles, the wants, and the wishes of the Catholic Church; and therefore, that we may be loyal American republicans, and assert the equality of all religions before the state, that profess to be Christian, without failing in our true-hearted devotion to that glorious old Catholic Church . . .[20]

He not only believed Catholics could avidly support the American constitution, he believed the United States would revive the Church which was beleaguered in Europe, and maintain its future strength.

Brownson's efforts to Americanize Catholicism led him to demand a transformation of Catholic education. He considered syllogistic training as necessary but inadequate to the needs of thorough intellectual growth. He desired the development of an intellectual Catholic elite who could convince Protestants to emulate them.

> The rigid logical training given in our schools fits us to be acute and subtle disputants, but in some measure unfits us, unless men of original genius and rare ability, to address, with effect, the non-Catholic public. A freer and broader, and a less rigid scholastic training, would render us more efficient.[21]

A higher level of education would also create a larger audience for the Catholic periodicals and strengthen the faith of the entire country. Brownson attempted to impress his readers with the necessity to support a variety of Catholic publications. An increased distribution of Catholic literature was the crux for conversion of non-Catholics and invigoration of religion for Catholics.

> The controversy must be carried on through the press by books, pamphlets, periodicals, journals, etc., and these on the Catholic side must be sustained, if sustained at all, by the Catholic public. Few non-Catholics will at present buy our books, for they have something to lose, and we much to gain by the controversy. The most we can expect of them is that they will read our publications when placed in their hands by their Catholic friends and acquaintances. We have a small, enlightened, pure-minded, and independent Catholic public who are up to the level of the age, master of the controversy in its present form, and prepared to do their duty, and even more than their duty in sustaining the right sort of publications; but these, though more numerous than we could reasonably expect, all things considered, are, after all, only a small minority of even our educated Catholic population.[22]

Brownson also appealed to journalists to improve the content of their publications since they were representative of the Catholic community. He stated the goal his new journalism would pursue and for which other Catholic journalists should strive in order to make their popular support necessary.

> . . . we must labor to elevate the character of our journals, demand of them a higher and more dignified tone, and insist that their conductors devote more time and thought to their preparation, take larger and more comprehensive views of men and things, exhibit more mental cultivation, more liberality of thought and feeling, and give some evidence of the ability of Catholics to lead and advance the civilization of the country.[23]

Brownson's attempts to regain a non-Catholic audience was not an entire failure. In 1856 The Universalist Quarterly contained the following passage regarding his stature:

> 'Few American readers need to be told who or what is O. A. Brownson. Perhaps no man in this country has, by the simple effort of the pen, made himself more conspicuous, or has more distinctly impressed the peculiarities of his mind. Other writers may have a larger number of readers, but no one has readers of such various character. He has the attention of intelligent men of all sects and parties--men who read him without particular regard to the themes on which he spends his energies, or the sectarian or partisan position of which he may avow himself the champion.'[24]

Brownson believed his new methodology was at least partially successful. In 1857 he wrote: "We may not have had great success in making converts, for converts are not made by human efforts alone; but there is a respectable number of persons, whose lives adorn their Catholic profession, who have assured us that they owe their conversion under God, to our writings and lectures."[25]

The autobiography that Brownson published in 1857 in order to publicize his development of ideas from Protestantism to Catholicism, The Convert, or Leaves from my Experience, was successfully received by the public. It was even translated into German.[26] However, Brownson's final assessment of his journalistic success in achieving the goal of mass non-Catholic conversion was dismally recorded in 1874:

> The difficulties in the way of neutralizing by Catholic journalism the destructive influence of Protestant journalism, are, that we lack the Catholic public to sustain Catholic journalism and purely Catholic publications; and also, to a great extent, eminent laymen who are competent to the work that needs to be done, and are able and willing to devote themselves to the defence of purely Catholic interests through the press. But even supposing these difficulties are successfully overcome, a greater and more serious difficulty remains behind. The public, controlled by Protestant journalism, do not, and will not, as a general thing, read Catholic journals or Catholic publications. No matter how ably we write in defence of the faith, or how thoroughly and even eloquently we refute the sects and secularism, what we write will not reach those for whom it is specially designed. The Protestant and secular journals, knowing that they are in possession of the field, refuse all fair and serious argument with us, and answer us only with squibs, flings, and misstatements. The leaders of the non-Catholic community, knowing that they can only lose by fair and honorable discussion with us, study as far as possible to ignore us, to keep our publications from their people, and, if compelled to notice us at all, to prefer some false charge against us, some accusation which has no foundation, and which can only serve to keep up the prejudice against us, and render us odious to the public. We confess, therefore, that we see little that can be done through the press, to neutralize the effects of Protestant journalism, except to protect, to a certain extent, our own Catholic population against those effects.[27]

Brownson was never able to effectively reclaim the position he held as an opinion leader prior to 1844. His new methodology had only served to antagonize the Catholic community he had criticized. He acutely realized the impotent effects of his journalism.

1. Orestes A. Brownson, Works, comp. Henry F. Brownson, 20 vols., vol. VII (New York: A. M. S. Press, Inc., 1966), p. 204.

2. Henry F. Brownson, Orestes A. Brownson's Early Life: from 1803 to 1844 (Detroit, Michigan: H. F. Brownson Publisher, 1898), p. 387.

3. Ibid., p. 393.

4. Ibid., p. 235.

5. Sister Mary Rose Gertrude Whalen, Some Aspects of the Influence of Orestes A. Brownson on His Contemporaries (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1936), p. 38.

6. Henry F. Brownson, p. 214.

7. Ibid., p. 216.

8. Theodore Maynard, Orestes Brownson: Yankee, Radical, Catholic (New York: MacMillan Cpy., 1943), p. 152.

9. Works V, p. 9.

10. Maynard, p. 160.

11. Whalen, p. 69.

12. Maynard, p. 188.

13. Ibid., p. 261-2.

14. Works III, p. 228.

15. Works VIII, p. 21.

16. Works XII, p. 296.

17. Works III, p. 220.

18. Ibid., p. 220.

19. Works XII, p. 584.

20. Ibid., p. 30.

21. Works III, p. 206.

22. Works XII, p. 290.

23. Ibid., p. 153.

24. Ibid., p. 33.

25. Ibid., p. 341.

26. Whalen, p. 76.

27. Works XIII, p. 575.

SOCIAL THEORY

Brownson did not appreciably alter his Catholic social, political, and economic theory during his methodological change. His efforts to Americanize Catholicism shifted some aspects of his ideas, but his fundamental theories remained intact. He basically agreed with the French Traditionalist version of an optimum society.

Traditionalism was an outgrowth of the French Revolution. Traditionalists, who were staunch Catholics, strenuously objected to the desecration of the Church which occurred during and after the French Revolution. Catholic land was seized, its hold on education was usurped and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy demanded an oath which proclaimed clerical homage to the Republic. The Church eventually regained some of its losses, but reinstatement involved compromises and political agreements with the government. After the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was dependent on the State. De Maistre, Bonald, and Lamennais were opposed to the political alliance of Church and State. They sought an unmitigated restoration of the Church in French society.

Traditionalists asserted the requirement of religious predominance for harmonious society. They upheld the medieval relation of religion and government and maintained the Revolution was an unnatural separation of French society from its past. They wanted to realign France with its tradition and were labelled Traditionalists because of their stress on the necessity of accomplishing the realignment.

Brownson was impressed with Traditionalist appeal for the predominance of religion in all facets of society. He was also convinced of the cohesive force of religion; adherence to religious principles would not only prepare men for salvation, it would bring as much peace on earth as was possible with human fallibilities.

It is evident that Brownson read many articles written by the original Traditionalists, de Maistre, Bonald, and Lamennais, as well as their successors, Veuillot, Bonnetty, and Cortes. In 1846 he reviewed an article written by de Maistre, An Essay on the Generative Principle of Constitutions:

> Of the several works of Count de Maistre, there is no one which, at the present moment, could be circulated or read with more advantage amongst us, than the one now before us, or better fitted to the actual wants of our politicians, whether Catholics or Protestants; for, unhappily, a very considerable portion of our Catholic population are as unsound in their politics as their Protestant neighbours. Both classes, with individual exceptions, have borrowed their political notions from the school of Hobbes, Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Paine, and forget, or have a strong tendency to forget, that divine Providence has something to do with forming, preserving, amending, or overthrowing the constitutions of states. We say nothing new, when we say that modern politics are in principle, and generally in practice purely atheistic. Even large numbers, who in religion are sound orthodox believers, and would suffer a thousand deaths sooner than knowingly swerve one iota from the faith, may be found, who do not hesitate to vote God out of the political constitution, and to advocate liberty on principles which logically put man in the place of God. It is to such as these the little work before us is addressed, and they cannot study it without perceiving the capital mistake they have made--not in seeking political freedom, but in seeking to base it on atheistic principles.[1]

In 1853 Brownson reasserted his admiration for the Traditionalists when he wrote an article on Donoso Cortes, who had recently died:

> He (Donoso Cortes) was among the ablest, the most learned, the most eloquent and unwearied of that noble band of laymen, who,

> beginning with De Maistre, have from the early years of the present century devoted their talents and learning, their genius and their acquirements, to the service of religion, and done so much to honor to themselves and our age in their eminently successful labors to restore European society, shaken by the French Revolution, to its ancient Catholic faith, and to save it alike from the horrors of anarchy and the nullity of despotism.[2]

The extent of Traditionalist influence in Brownson's theories can be recognized by comparing basic ideas in their works.

Traditionalists believed the French Revolution had diverted France from its natural development. Temporal goals had suddenly become more important than spiritual goals in society. De Maistre, Bonald, and Lamennais were united in their belief that the Reformation and Enlightenment were responsible for the reversal of goals and the French Revolution. The Reformation had provided a precedent for questioning Christianity and society, and Enlightenment thought revised scholastic philosophical, social, political, and economic theory. The Reformation and Enlightenment were regarded as having brought popularization of power, individualism, and attack on authority.[3]

The writings of Bonald and de Maistre were abundant with denials of eighteenth century ideals and vituperations against those who propagated the ideals, the philosophes. Men such as Locke, Condorcet, Rousseau, and Voltaire were either disliked or loathed by the Traditionalists for their contributions toward the progression of rationalism, empiricism, secularization and the attacks on religion.

> There is no mistaking the personal virulence and contempt de Maistre levels against the philosophers. . . . The catalogue of calumny is endless, and can be excused only because it was the concrete expression of a very real feeling that the philosophes were not merely mistaken but were depraved, even satanic, in their persistent and conscious advocacy of atheism and subversion.[4]

Flint, in the Historical Philosophy in France, aptly describes the ultimate goal of the Traditionalists. "To meet, conquer and crush the spirit of the Revolution, was the aim which, under a sincere sense of duty, they set before them."[5]

The ability of man to reason correctly was the crux for the philosophe elevation of human nature. After man was conceived of as being able to use his reason to perceive worldly phenomena, he was bestowed the ability to change phenomena in order to reorganize society and eliminate evil. Traditionalists felt that it was presumptous of men to feel they could change the order of things. Man was not able to obtain complete knowledge through his reason, and therefore was not able to perceive the total design of the Universe which God had created. In fact, the less man attempted to utilize his reason, the more solid would be the foundation of society.

Man's deficiency in perception of the order of things excluded, for the Traditionalists, the possibility of him changing the order for the better. Cause was not necessarily related to effect in nature, and attempts to logically eliminate evil by removing its cause were not usually successful. De Maistre did not totally exclude the improvement of society. Man was merely not able to initiate changes "unassisted."

> Creation is not man's province. Nor does his unassisted power even appear capable of improving on institutions already established. If anything is apparent to man, it is the existence of two opposing forces in the universe in continual conflict. Nothing good is unsullied or unaltered by evil. . . . Nothing, says he (Origen), can be altered for the better among men WITHOUT GOD. All men sense this truth even without consciously realizing it. From it derives the innate aversion of all intelligent persons to innovations.[6]

Bonald believed that the attempt of men to alter society was upsetting to the natural balance of its order. However, despite man, the balance would return, in time, to what God had planned. "'There are laws for the moral or social order, as there are laws for the physical order, laws whose full execution the passions of man may momentarily retard, but with which sooner, or later, the invincible force of nature will necessarily bring societies back into harmony.'"[7]

The philosophes sought to create a new order which would facilitate good and hinder evil. They felt that the Church and State, through institutional resistance to change, limited men's freedom of redesign. Also, absolute authority of the Church and State appeared to be the cause of evil in society. Harmonious society, then, necessitated the mitigation or dissolution of influence of the Church and State.

Rousseau's Social Contract was the philosophical foundation for the new order. It established two basic tenets which ideologically secularized the political and moral realm. The Social Contract removed the source of power of the monarch from the heavens (absolutist monarchy) to the people (constitutional state) by declaring that society had been created by men and its leaders were merely representatives of those men. The people who constituted society were justified in restricting their leaders because they derived power from the people. The Social Contract also established that the ultimate authority of government, the people, would not misuse power because they were naturally moral. Prior to the organization of society, man's nature was exclusively good. Evil had been introduced with the inequitable

distribution of property, power, etc. However, the collective social body inherited the tendency toward truth and goodness. The will of the people, if left unfettered, would move society toward the good of all men.

Rousseau established the concept of man existing prior to society in order to justify an anthropocentric shift of religious, social, political, and economic theory. He denied that the guiding authority of Church and State was necessary since man was innately good, intelligent, and in fact had created his own society. Rousseau denied value in lessons of history, since civilization had been misdirected by spiritual authority prior to the Enlightenment.

Traditionalists reacted strongly against Rousseau's concept of harmonious society which the philosophes had adopted as the basis of their renovative systems. Bonald, de Maistre, and Lamennais insisted on the necessity of religious and political authority and denied that the unlimited powers of Church and State were a hindrance to the progress of society. Instead, they asserted that the philosophes were a maligning influence because of their attempts to displace the heritage of tradition and laws with a priori systems of morals and government. De Maistre asserted that no system could be developed which, when applied practically, would result in a mature organization. "The idea of any institution full grown at birth is a prime absurdity and a true logical contradiction."[8] Bonald objected further that questioning the authority of Church and State would result in the disruption of society.

> 'When he examines with his reason what he ought to admit or reject of those general beliefs that serve as a foundation to the

> universal society of the human race and upon which rest the edifice of general written or traditional legislation, he thereby by that very act sets up a state of revolt against society. . .'[9]

Bonald and de Maistre also criticized the concept in the Social Contract that man existed prior to the development of society. They maintained that society was integral to human nature. For Bonald, primitive and unorganized life ended when Moses received the law of God on Mt. Sinai.[10] De Maistre denied that any historical evidence could be found which would support the supposition that men had existed prior to society. He contended that men were born into society and it was not legitimate to consider the elements of their nature outside of society. He rejected abstract theorizing on this point; "man" or "mankind" who was innately good and independent prior to society never existed. ". . . as for man, I have never come across him anywhere; if he exists, he is completely unknown to me."[11]

The rejection of mankind as initially independent of society was the fundamental argument for rejecting the concepts of man's innate goodness and his willful creation of society. Bonald wrote, "'However, all these errors of the philosophers are, after all, but supplementary and secondary. They all alike spring from a single fundamental error, a basic one, to wit, considering man as capable of existence without society, and before the creation of society.'"[12] Men had to be considered within the framework of society; their innate personalities and capabilities were to be found in the history of civilization.

According to the Traditionalists, Rousseau's most naive belief was that by nature, man was exclusively good. All experience had

contradicted this concept. "There is nothing but violence in the world; but we are tainted by modern philosophy which has taught us that all is good."[13] His explanation for the presence of evil in the world was totally unacceptable to the Traditionalists. They denied that evil appeared with the occurrence of institutions. Evil was instead seen as inherent in human nature as well as society. The concept of Original Sin eliminated the possibility of man being morally innocent. "De Maistre and Bonald replied (to the philosophes) that, on the contrary, man is naturally bad; original sin is the ultimate truth; and man is saved by society."[14] De Maistre dwelled on the evil in man's nature to counter the total goodness in man which the philosophes had projected. He wrote, ". . . man in general, if reduced to his own resources, is too wicked to be free."[15]

The evil which was integral to human nature was inscrutable. Attempts of philosophes to define and remove the causes and effects of evil by logical inquiry were futile; they were irrationally distributed in society. Disturbance of the natural order, in fact, tended to increase disparity between causes and effects and therefore increased social problems. Traditionalists regarded the French Revolution as a natural, punitive reaction to the culmination of evil in French society. "De Maistre saw the victims of the Revolution as sacrificial offerings, who expiated the sins of other members of society."[16] Creation of the serious imbalance of nature which caused the Revolution was attributed especially to the philosophes.

> . . . they (Traditionalists) believe it to be the inevitable result of a radically erroneous conception of man's relation to God and to his fellow-men which had been growing and spreading into wrong habits of thought and action from the time of the

> Renaissance downwards, till at length head, heart, and every member of the body politic were diseased and corrupt.[17]

The Traditionalists did not limit their rejection of the Social Contract to denial of man's innate goodness. They also vehemently rejected the concept that "man" could create society. It has already been stated that the Traditionalists regarded society as integral to man's nature, but there were further objections to Rousseau's democratic concept of authority. De Maistre contended that the authority of government could not emanate from the people because they would not be obliged to adhere to directives of their leader or leaders. Bonald wrote,

> 'Thus, obedience to a popular assembly is naught but obedience to particular individuals, beings who are our equals, and by that fact have no right to our obedience. Moreover a power that has a right to obedience is properly speaking a despotic power; and to have to obey someone who has no right to such obedience actually means being a slave.'[18]

If the people willingly consented to be governed they could also be discretionary in efforts to obey the authority which they created. Every act or law would be subject to scrutiny. In effect then, it was impossible to create authority on a democratic basis.

De Maistre and Bonald elaborated on their repudiation of man's ability to create society. They eventually concluded that man was incapable of "creating" in any capacity and thus reasserted his inability to use reason in changing the order of things.

> On this point, we are often deceived by a sophism so natural that it escapes our notice entirely. Because man acts, he thinks he acts alone. Because he is aware of his freedom, he forgets his dependence. He is more reasonable about the physical world, for although he can, for example, plant an acorn, water it, etc., he is convinced that he does not make oaks, since he has witnessed them growing and perfecting themselves without the aid of human power. Besides, he has

> not made the acorn. But in the social order, where he is always present and active, he comes to believe that he is the sole author of all that is done through his agency. In a sense, it is as if the trowel thought itself an architect. Doubtless, man is a free, intelligent, and noble creature; nevertheless, he is an instrument of God.[19]

The philosophes were found to be in error in every facet of their thought. De Maistre, Bonald, Lamennais and later Traditionalists insisted that Rousseau, along with his contemporaries, attempted to simplify the complexities of human and social nature far beyond the point of feasibility and incurred the social devastation of the French Revolution. Their social theory, then, was basically a repudiation of Enlightenment concepts.

The Traditionalists wrote many polemic tracts in order to refute ideas of the philosophes, but they also set forth their own formulations of the ideal society. The recourse which Traditionalists advocated is implicit in their name. They wanted to reestablish a society which would function according to sanction of spiritual authority and tradition. They viewed religion as society's necessary base, and authoritative government as the temporal inheritor of God's will. De Maistre wrote, ". . . it was through the acceptance of revelation and submission to punishment and authority that men could reach social and political concord."[20] Bonald stated the need for guidance from the Church and State as follows: "'. . . it is necessary that they (men) should approach each other without destroying each other. . . . Hence the necessity of exterior or general societies of preservation, religious and physical, called public religion and political society.'"[21] As the following passage indicates, Bonald conceived of the will of God as an active force in society.

> The will of God is more to Bonald than a mere theological expression, it is for him the central fact of all existence. Either the world has existed from all time or it was created; if it was created so was man, and everything must come from the Creator. Man has discovered nothing, invented nothing: everything has been God's gift, every human development God's will. . . . All power is exterior to society and to man; revolt against order and authority is therefore revolt against God. . .[21]

Traditionalists agreed that the resurgence of Catholic predominance in France and the rest of Europe would restore order in society; and that its further decline would precipitate the total destruction of society.

According to John C. Murray, ". . . if Maistre exercised a widespread influence in France, it was probably between the years 1840 and 1880 rather than at any other time."[22] In 1851 Louis Napoleon established a dictatorship in France which existed until his downfall in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. Louis Napoleon was convinced that the Catholic Church was an integral segment of French society and removed many strictures placed on it by post-Revolutionary governments. Mid-nineteenth century Traditionalists attempted to inundate the public with Traditionalist literature in order to strengthen the demand for independence of the Catholic Church and reinforce Louis Napoleon's belief that the public was concerned with the fate of the Church. These were the years that Brownson was formulating his Catholic social, political, and economic theory. He read and agreed with the Traditionalist literature and believed the Catholic Church in America had comparable problems to the Church in France. The Catholic Church in America was attempting to increase its strength amidst a variety of obstacles,

among which were Protestantism, anti-Catholicism, and religious indifference. Brownson wrote: "Bred amongst those who gave all to human reason and human nature, we have wished to bring out and establish the opposing truth, and it is not unlikely that we have, on many occasions, apparently expressed an undue sympathy with the views of the Traditionalists . . ."[23] The basis for his "undue sympathy" with the Traditionalists was concern that the moral and social order should be founded on Catholicism. "All society must conform to the principles of our holy religion, and spring from Catholicity as its root, or sooner or later, lapse into barbarism. The living germ in all modern nations, the nucleus of all future living society, is in the Catholic portion of the population."[24] Brownson shared with de Maistre and Bonald the belief that society would disintegrate if it was not under the spiritual and temporal authority of Catholicism. "No man can attentively study our political history, and analyze with some care our popular institutions, but must perceive and admit that our state contains the seeds of its own dissolution, and seeds which have already begun to germinate."[25] The seeds of dissolution were derived from the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, all of which contributed to the secularization of society.

The Traditionalist' enemies were Brownson's enemies. He severely criticized the philosophes and often made slanderous remarks regarding their mental capacities and character. His main contempt was reserved for Rousseau. "Jean Jacques Rousseau was a sophist, a puny sentamentalist and a disgusting sensualist, who set forth nothing

novel that was not false."[26] Voltaire, Locke, Hobbes, and others were also censured.

> Locke is transparent; there is seldom any difficulty in coming at his meaning: but he is diffuse, verbose, tedious, and altogether wanting in elegance, precision and vigor. Hobbes, while he is equally as transparent as Locke; infinitely surpasses him in strength, precision, and compactness.[27]

Brownson objected to the eighteenth century philosophers because they attempted to utilize the scientific inductive method to verify faith and religion. "They conform to the infidelity and corruptions of the age, instead of resisting them. They deceive themselves, if they think they are promoting faith in our holy religion by laboring to bring its teachings within the scope of human philosophy."[28] He accused the philosophes, as did the Traditionalists, of secularizing philosophical, social, political, and economic theory by attempting to discover a rational order of phenomena through reason. According to Brownson, men could not perceive the totality of the natural order.

The inductive method used by modern philosophers for proof of God, among other inquiries, was invalid because it relied solely on human experience and reasoning. The philosophes had questioned matters of faith with empirical foundations and had asserted the right of individuals to investigate every realm of thought with the scientific method.

> The modern philosopher begins by putting Christianity on trial, and claims for the human reason the right to sit in judgment on Revelation. . . . Taking this view we necessarily imply that philosophy is of purely human origin, and that the human reason, in which it originates, is competent to sit in judgment on all questions which do or may come up.[28]

The result of assertions that man could obtain knowledge solely

through his power of reasoning led to an individualistic movement which became quite intense in the United States. Brownson believed the most harmful individualists were the Transcendentalists, who held that religion was natural to man and could be apperceived through intuition rather than revelation. "The right of all men to unrestricted private judgment necessarily implies that each and every man is in himself the exact measure of truth and goodness . . . the very fundamental proposition of transcendentalism."[29] The right of all men to unrestricted private judgment entailed ability of individuals to recognize the truth or the ultimate design of things through intuitive, inductive, or deductive reasoning. These were propositions which Brownson rejected; in every act of private judgment the standard or measure was the individual judging, and truth was made subjective. But for Brownson, truth or knowledge was objective. "Truth, as you well know, is independent of you and me, and remains always unaffected by our private convictions, be what they may."[30]

The individualistic movement in the United States produced an attack on institutions similar to the Enlightenment onslaught of Church and State. As George M. Fredrickson described it:

> The ideals of the Declaration of Independence combined with the hopes of enthusiastic men of God to foster a bold vision of national perfection. Nothing stood in the way, many believed, but those inherited institutions which seemed devoted to the limitation and control of human aspirations, such as governments, authoritarian religious bodies, and what remained of traditional and patriarchal forms of social and economic life.[31]

Even limited authority of the government was called into question. "It is a sort of maxim with us Americans, that no man can be justly held to obey a law to which he has not assented. This, taken absolutely,

is not admissable."[32]

During the mid-nineteenth century, reformers in the United States were attempting to extend political democracy in order to achieve equalization of rights and ultimately social harmony. Brownson was very much opposed to this optimistic trend and sought to impress reformers with the idea that men needed more rather than less guidance in society. Original sin necessitated fallibility and successful individualism required the perfectability of man.

> At the bottom of this idea of progress, which our modern reformers prate about, is the foolish notion that man is born an inchoate, an incipient God, and that his destiny is to grow into or become the infinite God; that he is to grow or develop into the Almighty; that, to be God, is his ultimate destiny; and, as God is infinite, he is to be eternally developing and realizing more and more of God, without ever realizing him in his infinity.[33]

Americans felt that reform would inevitably result in the betterment of society and it was Brownson's contention, along with the Traditionalists, that change did not assure improvement. The reformers eventually attempted to create and implement new systems, and in so doing, neglected the tradition of the United States which had emanated from the Constitution.

Brownson's objection to popular theory was that it was not based on the experience of mankind. In accordance with the Traditionalists, he did not approve of the a priori construction of social systems. Men could not achieve enough knowledge to make judgments regarding positive or negative aspects of society and there was often no scrutible connection between cause and effect in social relations. He criticized Descartes for helping to substantiate the belief that man could independently perceive order in the universe, and thereby incriminated

the scientific revolution in association with his attack on individualism. "Here, then, is Descartes, without tradition, without experience, reduced, as it were, to the state of primitive destitution; all is before him, nothing is behind him. He has no ancestors, no recollections . . . All is to be constructed."[34] Man was not capable of creating perfect systems--this was the province of God. Brownson echoed de Maistre when he said, "Man can be a destroyer, he can never be a CREATOR."[35]

Brownson found it necessary to refute the Social Contract in order to negate popular theory. Like the Traditionalists, he found the Social Contract central to the justification of secularization and individualism, and his arguments against it paralleled those of the Traditionalists. Brownson asserted that, contrary to Rousseau's ideas, society was natural to man. "He is born and lives in society, and can be born and live nowhere else. It is one of the necessities of his nature."[36] In an essay entitled "Origin and Ground of Government" Brownson rejected the "social compact theory" because "This state of nature, of which Hobbes has so much to say, and which was the phantom that haunted all the philosophers of the last century, is a fiction."[37] It was not legitimate to attribute pristine virtues to individuals prior to their socialization; it was necessary to study man in relation to society.

Brownson perceived man's value as being a contributor to society. In and of himself man had very little significance. "Individuals are nothing in themselves; they are real, substantial, only in humanity. The race is everything. Individuals die, the race survives . . . The race is not for individuals; individuals are for the race."[38] This was a strong retaliation to individualism. Brownson diminished the

aspects of human nature in proportion to the Enlightenment expansion of them. Whereas the philosophes and their successors viewed society as a hindrance to the individual, Brownson saw the individual as only a minute contributor to society. "No individual is sufficient for himself, and however free individuals may be, if left to act always as individuals, without concert, without union, association, they can accomplish little for themselves, or for the race."[39]

Society was natural to man and a necessary part of his existence. It had accumulated the experiences of generations of men. Society had incorporated knowledge that far surpassed the futile attempts of which the individual was capable. Brownson described society in terms similar to Bonald--that it was a living organism which was capable of growing and learning. "The people taken collectively are society, and society is a living organism, not a mere aggregation of individuals."[40]

Since Brownson rejected the idea that man had existed prior to society, he agreed with Traditionalists that the causes of social distress were innate and could not be alleviated by altering society's structure. Rather, the nature of man and society had to be investigated and redefined before actual social progress was feasible.

Rousseau's account for the abuses of man as being coincident to society and institutions was reprehensible to Brownson. Man's nature was not devoid of evil. "Is it, I ask, not natural for man to oppress man? Is not every man naturally a tyrant? Does not every man naturally seek to gain all he can for himself, and thus prove himself the plague and tormenter of his kind? Away, then, with this

insane deification of human nature!"[41] The evil in man's nature was ineradicable. Brownson described its inevitability in almost Manichaean terms of human nature. "Man has a double nature, is composed of body and soul, and on the one side has a natural aspiration to God, and on the other a natural tendency from God, towards the creature, and thence towards night and chaos."[42]

The philosophes' idea that the will of the people was synonymous to truth and goodness was as unacceptable to Brownson as the idea that individual men were potentially innocent. If good and evil were necessarily integrated in man's nature, humanity's will could not be unsullied. "The will of God is always just, because the divine will is never separable from the divine reason; but the will of the people may be, and often is, unjust, for it is separable from that reason, the only foundation of justice."[43]

Brownson believed that it was irrelevant to consider what characteristics constituted the will of the people anyway, because a government of human origin would not possess the collective will. He recognized potential despotic power in a populace which believed it had originally authorized government and had the right to alter it, and agreed with Traditionalists that the idea of men creating their own government was unacceptable. It was a destructive principle too often cited by Americans as the foundation of their government.

For Brownson, practical application of the collective agreement principle was impossible. Men would not voluntarily submit unmitigated power to the leaders of government, but would reserve the right to disobey directives opposed to their individual interests. 'What most benefits ME, is most patriotic and for humanity. No government will

work well, that does not recognize this fact, and which is not shaped to see it, and counteract its mischievous tendency."[44] Laws were rendered arbitrary by their vacillatory creators.

In America Brownson saw the will of the people resulting in a tyranny of the majority wherein the real power of government resided in the group of men who could demand the largest following. The variety of groups which rose and fell from power pursued multiple interests. Thus, the aims of government and legitimized behavioral norms for the populace continually fluctuated. Brownson believed that social aims needed to be provided by a power which would never vacillate in its definition of the best interests of society.

> Right is right, eternally the same, whether all the world agree to own it or to disown it; wherefore, then make it dependent on the will of majorities? . . . The doctrine that the majority have the inherent right to rule, not only destroys all solid ground for morality, not only destroys all possibility of freedom for minorities . . . It creates a multitude of demagogues, professing a world of love for the dear people, and lauding popular virtue and popular sovereignty, the better to fatten on popular ignorance and credulity . . .[45]

Brownson agreed with the Traditionalists that a monarch who was restricted only by God's will was preferable to tyrannical individualism. "In making the governments responsible to the people, power was shifted, but not rendered responsible, for the power then vested in the people instead of the magistrate; but who was there to call the people to an account, should they chance to abuse their power?"[46]

Brownson believed that the ultimate power of authority for society and government should be attributed to God. The concept of

right and wrong would be stabilized by an unarbitrary foundation of religious principle, civil obedience would no longer be a subjective matter, and man would be placed in the proper perspective of being created and not the creator. "The assertion of government as lying in the moral order, defines civil liberty, and reconciles it with authority. Civil liberty is freedom to do whatever one pleases that authority permits or does not forbid."[47] When man was depicted as being free of God's will, the only power which could legitimate government and authority was removed. "Take away the subjection of the state to God, and you take away the reason of the subjection of the subject to the state. . ."[48] Men could not create among themselves a power of authority. Government of the people would be arbitrary and if it forcefully asserted itself it would be tyrannical. There would be a constant struggle for power between the people and their leaders. ". . . we have forgotten that freedom is impossible without order, and order impossible without authority, and authority able to make itself respected and obeyed. . ."[49]

Brownson regarded the inviolate authority of God as more conducive to the freedom of men than was individualism. Individualism was based on a misconception of human nature that men were equal in ability to function in society. Like the Traditionalists, he was appalled at the attempts to free man from institutional "oppressors." He maintained that men were not equal in potential capabilities; and institutions, especially the Church and State were necessary to protect weaker men from the stronger. The effect of freeing men's potential would be the destruction of the less equal members of

society. "We are far from pretending that all men are born with equal abilities, and that all souls are created with equal possibilities, or that every child comes into the world a genius in germ."[50] It was because men were unequal that government was necessary.

Brownson believed, as did the Traditionalists, in the necessity of Church and State authority as guides for the spiritual and temporal needs of man. "The type, indeed the reason, of this distinction of two orders in society is in the double nature of man, or the fact that man exists only as soul and body and needs to be cared for in each."[51] The Church was the ultimate authority because it represented God's will and established the laws to which society must adhere. "But the church holds from God under the supernatural or revealed law, which includes, as integral in itself, the law of nature, and is therefore the teacher and guardian of the natural as well as of the revealed law. She is, under God, the supreme judge of both laws. . ."[52] He did not advocate that the Church should administer the laws in civil society and therefore direct the government. He asserted that the Church should monitor the laws and particularly the government's adherence to them. "We do not advocate--far from it--the notion that the church must administer the civil government; what we advocate is her supremacy as the teacher and guardian of the law of God,--as the Supreme Court . . ."[53] The Church would therefore serve as the barrier to governmental abuse of power which the society formulated by humans could not provide. Brownson stated that he was in agreement with the medieval notion of government--the real sovereign

on earth was the Church to which the government was subordinate.[54]

Brownson feared that reform which was aimed at levelling institutions would be the destruction of American society and agreed with de Maistre and Bonald that interference with the natural order would result in catastrophe. ". . . it is to be feared, that, if we do not now take measures to strengthen the barriers against the popular movement, and to secure the supremacy of the constitution and the majesty of the state, it will henceforth be forever too late."[55] It was necessary to reverse the democratic and individualistic movement.

Brownson's social theory did not alter when he sought Protestant approval of his ideas after 1854. He was thoroughly convinced that Catholicism was the only means to improve social conditions in America. When the Civil War began, then, Brownson welcomed it as an event which would convince Americans that stabilized values and authority of government were necessary. During the Civil War, Brownson was zealously patriotic. Several times he was invited to lecture to groups for the purpose of increasing approval of the war. Coincident to the patriotic lectures, he usually used the opportunity to attempt to proselytize his audience. He stressed the point that only the predominant belief in Catholicism would establish real order in America. ". . . without the Roman Catholic religion it is impossible to preserve a democratic government, and secure its free, orderly, and wholesome action."[56]

1. Works XV, p. 556.

2. Works III, p. 163.

3. Michael Reardon, "Providence and Tradition in the Writings of De Maistre, Bonald, Ballanche, and Buchez", (Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, 1965), p. 44.

4. Jack Lively, The Works of Joseph de Maistre (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965), p. 8.

5. Robert Flint, Historical Philosophy in France (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), p. 368.

6. Elisha Greifer, ed., Joseph de Maistre On God and Society, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Cpy., 1959), pp. 54-55.

7. Mary Hall Quinlan, The Historical Thought of the Vicomte de Bonald (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), p. 87.

8. Greifer, p. 34.

9. Alexander Koyre, "Louis de Bonald", Journal of the History of Ideas 7 (January 1946): 56-73.

10. Quinlan, p. 19.

11. Lively, p. 80.

12. Koyre, pp. 65-66.

13. Lively, p. 64.

14. Lord Elton, The Revolutionary Idea in France (London: Edward Arnold and Cpy., 1923), p. 90.

15. Lively, p. 144.

16. Reardon, p. 70.

17. Flint, p. 368.

18. Quinlan, p. 64.

19. Greifer, pp. 14-15.

20. Ibid., p. 15.

21. Roger Henry Soltau, French Political Thought in the 19th Century (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959), p. 25.

22. John C. Murray, "The Political Thought of Joseph De Maistre", Review of Politics 11 (January 1949): 63-86.

23. Works I, p. 306.

24. Works XI, pp. 105-106.

25. Works XV, p. 441.

26. Works X, p. 276.

27. Works I, p. 4.

28. Works XIV, p. 272.

29. Works VI, p. 127.

30. Works V, p. 242.

31. George M. Fredrickson, Inner Civil War (New York: Harper, 1965) p. 7.

32. Works XVI, p. 20.

33. Works IX, p. 142.

34. Works I, pp. 149-150.

35. Works X, p. 41.

36. Works XVIII, p. 36.

37. Works XV, p. 311.

38. Works IX, pp. 50-51.

39. Works XV, p. 232.

40. Works XVIII, p. 41.

41. Works XV, p. 390.

42. Works IX, p. 178.

43. Works XVI, p. 66.

44. Works XV, p. 238.

45. Ibid., pp. 340-341.

46. Ibid., p. 320.

47. Works XVIII, p. 17.

48. Works X, p. 129.

49. Works XVII, p. 139.

50. Works IX, p. 412.

51. Works XIII, p. 264.

52. Works X, p. 129.

53. Ibid., p. 133.

54. Works XV, p. 348.

55. Works XVI, p. 102.

56. Works X, p. 1.

POLITICAL THEORY

Political theory of the Traditionalists was based on the necessity of government and religion coinciding in the leadership of society. However, Bonald, de Maistre and Lamennais stressed different aspects of the relationship between Church and State. Bonald and de Maistre were concerned to establish an optimal political role for the Church and Lamennais was interested in its spiritual prowess. "De Maistre and Bonald were primarily statesmen, interested in religion for social ends. Lamennais was a defender of the Church."[1] Lamennais was an Ultramontanist (an advocate of papal infallibility) because of his belief in the spiritual superiority of the Catholic Church and de Maistre was an Ultramontanist, aside from his strong belief in Catholicism, because of the temporal veto of power the Pope would have on the monarchs of Europe. ". . . De Maistre talks of Christianity exclusively as a statesman or a publicist would talk about it; not theologically nor spiritually, but politically and socially. The question with which he concerns himself is the utilization of Christianity as a force to shape and organise a system of civilised societies. . ."[2] Lamennais eventually disengaged himself from the Traditionalist movement and even the Catholic Church when Pope Gregory XVI rejected his demands of spiritual and temporal separatism.

Even Bonald and de Maistre, who were resolute Traditionalists, differed in their stress of the relationship between religion and

government. Bonald desired a return to the monarchical system of government unhindered by constitutional limitations, whereas de Maistre was more interested in asserting papal infallibility. "De Maistre's admiration for the Church made him the apologist of Papal supremacy, as Bonald was the apologist of monarchical authority."[3]

The stress of Bonald's and de Maistre's political theory may have varied, but their orientation to it was identical: religion and government were necessary companions for the welfare of society. Their writings dealt with many of the same topics and the similarity of their ideas are more obvious than the dissimilarities.

Bonald and de Maistre objected vehemently to the creation of the Republic in France which occurred as a result of the French Revolution. Their objections had a variety of facets, foremost of which involved the definition of a constitution. Bonald and de Maistre viewed the French Republic as an entirely man-created government. Its constitution was the practical application of Enlightenment principles with which they disagreed. De Maistre reasserted his position that man was not a creator. As he could not create society or governments, he could not create constitutions. "Every constitution is properly speaking a <u>creation</u> in the full meaning of the word, and all creation is beyond man's powers."[4]

The true constitution of a government would have to be flexible enough to guide all of men's experiences in society. This eliminated for de Maistre the possibility of a successful constitution being created by men. Especially when those men were dismissing the past in order to design the constitution. Man's past, or tradition, was

the culmination of centuries of experience in society and the knowledge gained from that experience. A valid constitution would incorporate the knowledge gained from man's past.

> The constitution is the work of circumstances whose number is infinite. Roman laws, ecclesiastical laws, feudal laws, Saxon, Norman, and Danish customs; the privileges, prejudices, and pretensions of every virtue, every vice, all sorts of knowledge, and all errors and passions; in sum, all these factors acting together and forming by their admixture and independent effects countless millions of combinations have at last produced, after several centuries, the most complex unity and the most propitious equilibrium of political powers that the world has ever seen.[5]

It was presumptuous of men to dismiss the accumulation of experience.

When the past was summarily dismissed by the instigators of the French Revolution and the ensuing Republic, it was necessary to establish new rules for the operation of society. The attempts at innovation resulted in a plethora of directives. De Maistre believed that the abundance of written rules was an indication of the propensity of French society toward destruction. ". . . writings are invariably a sign of weakness, ignorance, or danger and that the more nearly perfect an institution is, the less it writes."[6] Written laws were the results, rather than the guidelines, of unique problems. They misdirected justice when applied to circumstances which varied from the causes of their origin. Written laws were obsolete upon their conception. De Maistre preferred law to be based on a foundation which incorporated all of man's experience and could anticipate nearly all the problems which would occur in society--tradition. If the government would rely on tradition as a basis for the resolution of society's ills, the strength of its justice would be much firmer than if discretionary man-created

directives were applied. De Maistre delineated his Principles of Constitutional Law as follows:

1. The fundamental principles of political constitutions exist prior to all written law.
2. Constitutional law is and can only be the development or sanction of a pre-existing and unwritten law.
3. What is most essential, most inherently constitutional and truly fundamental law is never written, and could not be, without endangering the State.
4. The weakness and fragility of a constitution are actually in direct proportion to the number of written constitutional articles.[7]

Pre-existing and unwritten law was secured in tradition.

Bonald agreed with de Maistre that the creation of a constitution was unfeasible. He believed that man was the instrument of society rather than society being the instrument of man. Human attempts to create a constitution would be abortive since they would be in conflict with nature. He wrote that the constitution of a society is ". . . the necessary result of the nature of man and not the fruit of his genius or of the fortuitousness of events."[8]

The result of man's deviation from nature would be a destructive, realigning phenomenon, revolution. The error of those who would attempt to create a constitution from which nature would necessarily rebound was the inability of men to acknowledge their ineptitude in perceiving all the possible problematical situations in society. The Constitution, which was to determine guidelines for the newly created government was not supple enough and could never be extensive enough to deal with all the difficulties leaders of the Republic would encounter. Laws could not be created until after problems had arisen and were resolved. A government, then, which was restricted to functioning according to written law would be acting

outside the law in resolving unique problems. It would essentially be a despotic power acting on its own authority. It was ironic to the Traditionalists that the intended purpose of a constitution was to limit the power which people had bestowed on their leaders, but it in fact increased those powers through insufficient laws. The written constitution would invite objection to government because of the weakness inherent in its creation. It would promote the lack of legitimate authority, and the government based on a constitution would not only be susceptible but prone to revolution--the only necessary catalytic ingredient was a faction who would question the government's authority.

Traditionalists were abhorred by the prospect of governments based on revolutionary principles. They felt that the continual overturn of governments and authority would be the cause of the corruption and dissolution of society. It was an impossibility for men to conduct a revolution with any projected effects being realized. ". . . men do not at all guide the Revolution, it is the Revolution that uses men."[9] Evolution was the only form of positive progress, for it allowed man's new experiences to slowly adapt to and integrate with the past. ". . . no real and great institution can be based on written law since men themselves, instruments in turn, of the established institution, do not know what it is to become and since imperceptible growth is the true promise of durability in all things."[10]

The concept of evolution for the Traditionalists entailed the gradual addition of man's experiences to the past. It was a process of

assimilation which was based on tradition--tradition being the culmination of men's experience in society and the store of knowledge men had gained from their experience. Evolution, then, adapted society to the present, but retained knowledge for society which had been gained in the past.

Traditionalists felt the only legitimate basis for social change was evolution and that tradition should determine governmental growth. Tradition would allow flexibility to justice because it retained precedent for situational problems in society which had already been encountered, and could gradually absorb and adapt new problems. Justice would be less arbitrary since governmental actions could be judged according to their contiguity with tradition.

Tradition not only embodied society's store of knowledge for the Traditionalists, it also was the heir of revelation. "Bonald and Lamennais (in his early writings) put forward boldly the idea that national traditions embody the primitive revelations of God. While Maistre was never so explicit, he was just as sure that widely held traditional beliefs were in some sense the voice of God."[11] Bonald formulated his concept of revelation in tradition with the theory of divine origin of language. He maintained that men did not learn to speak through volition. Instead, the ability to speak was learned by imitation. Bonald asserted that the first man must have learned to speak from the ultimate creator, God. ". . . that since one must learn to speak by imitation, the first man must have learned to speak from God himself, and if God were speaking to man, what would he have said to him but the first principles of the moral

life?"[12] De Maistre agreed with Bonald and wrote, "Again, he should realize that every human tongue is learned and never invented and that no conceivable hypothesis within the sphere of mortal powers could explain either the formation or the diversity of languages with the slightest plausibility."[13] Revelation was handed down through the generations by word of mouth, and it eventually became integrated with tradition. Tradition was not only the store of man's knowledge in society then, it was also the conveyor of God's word.

Tradition as the educator and moral guide of man was the only legitimate base for the functioning of society. The theory of the divine origin of language, ". . . led directly to the result which the theocratists (another name for Traditionalists) were above all anxious to demonstrate--viz., that man is dependent for his intelligence, its operations, so far as legitimate, and its conclusions, religious, moral, political and social, so far as true, on tradition flowing from a primitive revelation."[14] Optimal functioning of society would occur when men followed the direction established in tradition. "Man acts, he (Maistre) said, not from reason but from emotion, sentiment, prejudice, and our aim should be to found society on right prejudices, to surround man's cradle with dogmas, so that when reason awakens he can find his opinions all ready made, at least on everything that bears on conduct."[15]

The task of government would be to adjudicate according to tradition. It would then be governing in adherence to Providence and man's practical experience in society rather than the arbitrary base of a written constitution. Government authority would be truly

limited by the precedent of tradition whereas it was increased by ineffectual laws.

The French Revolution was an indication to Traditionalists that society had strayed from its foundations and defied nature. It was not an entirely deplorable event, however, since it forewarned of society's imminent destruction. Positive consequences could be derived from this tragic event if its lesson would be heeded and society returned to the designs of nature. "The Revolution itself was a tool of Providence, a chastisement and a destructive event which cleared the way for the reordering of society."[16] Bonald and de Maistre felt that ". . . the miseries of the French Revolution were not entirely devoid of positive value. Humanity, so easily seduced by sophistical reasoning needed a lesson, a factual lesson. Hence Divine Providence made arrangements to administer it in order to set mankind on the right road leading back to God."[17]

Bonald was among the nineteenth century theorists who maintained that history provided evidence of patterns in society and revealed the designs of nature. He believed the French Revolution marked the end of an epoch.

> 'But today when we have seen the strongest and most enlightened nation of the earth fall in its political constitution from the most concentrated unity of power into the most unbridled and abject demagogy, and in its religious constitution from the most perfect theism to the most infamous idolatry; today when we have seen this same nation return in its political condition from that astonishing dissipation of power to the most sober and well-regulated use of authority, and in its religious state pass from the absence of all cult to respect and soon to the practice of its former religion, all the accidents of society are known, the social tour du monde has been taken; we have travelled to the two poles; there remain no more lands to discover, and the moment has come to offer to man the map of the moral universe and the theory of society.[18]

Quinlan wrote, "Bonald sets himself up as the prophet who can explain the designs of nature, and hence he feels that he has a great mission in the world."[19]

Bonald depicted the progression of society in a cycle of three stages. The three stages were labeled personal, public, and popular, and represented the successions of governmental power within one cycle. The stage of personal power consisted of a strong leader who would bring order out of chaos, public power was defined as the phase where a hereditary monarchy and nobility would develop, and popular power was a democratic phase where power of government passed into the Third Estate.

> The three stages of power, personal, public, and popular, take into account all the accidental modifications of society; they include all the periods of power, its birth, its life and its death, and they explain at one and the same time both the different aspects under which power has been considered and the various reactions which it has aroused.[20]

For Bonald, the deliverance of society from chaos by a strong individual was inevitable because man's stature was of a hierarchical nature and the most capable man would emerge to unify government. Eventually he would establish a hereditary succession to his position and thus ensure continuity for the power and leadership he had assumed. A second estate would develop, the nobility, in accordance to the hierarchical nature of man in society and would provide a buffer between the power of the monarch and the third estate. This was the stage of public power and represented for Bonald the optimal circumstance of government for society. There was a gradation of power from the citizens to the monarch that was in correspondence to nature. The popular stage of government occurred because of the desire

of persons in the third estate to secure power for themselves. Society could never remain in the popular stage because it was in disagreement with nature. "'This state (of disorder) is always transient, however prolonged it may happen to be, because it is contrary to the nature of beings."[21] The third stage provided for the dissolution of society because it was ". . . marked by an unabashed rush for power resolving itself into a destructive struggle and resulting in the most cruel tyranny."[22] Bonald saw the French Revolution as the event which marked the denouement of French society and the summation of the three stages of society. He was not exclusively a cataclysmic theorist, however. He foresaw a possible rejuvenation of society and wrote in 1827 that perhaps Napoleon was the strong leader who was characteristic in the first stage of power.

Bonald believed that evolution, or positive progress in society, was possible only as long as development was reconciled to nature. Society's natural development was not a random experience but an unfolding of Providence.

> Thus, Bonald maintained, every constitution by which a society lives has within itself a 'germ of perfection' which will develop proportionately with the society, and, being both the cause and effect of its progress, 'will conduct it infallibly to the highest point of perfection to which the society is capable of attaining.'[23]

The maturity or perfection of society presumably fell within Bonald's second stage of power, public ascendancy, since the third stage of popularization inevitably led to the destruction of society.

A practical indicator of the stage which society had attained at any given time was literature. "In the course of time elegance of expression develops and becomes the mark of an advanced society."[24]

Bonald considered Bossuet a great historian because he believed the regime of Louis XIV represented the most advanced state of French society. "From this point of view, then, Bossuet is presented by Bonald as an ideal historian."[25] Bonald treated the philosophes more leniently than did de Maistre since they were merely spokesmen for their stage of society. "The fortunes of France decline, and Voltaire expresses the degradation which follows the great age."[26]

Bonald specified his optimal structure of government to be in accordance with medieval relationships of Church, State, and populace. He determined that a monarchy, nobility, and third estate, whose actions were all modified by the Catholic Church was the form of society which optimally integrated the characteristics of nature. "Monarchy is a system of government conformable with nature, a system that views man as a naturally and hence necessarily social being, while the Republic, which regards man as an isolated individual, is government contrary to nature."[27] Bonald was not sympathetic with the French Republic but he was also opposed to the English government along with many other systems. "According to his view, the English constitution has the fatal weakness that it is not unified in its power, and thus a sort of juxtaposition of opposites becomes the salient feature of the whole society."[28] He even restrained complete approval of the Restoration in France. His preference was for a return of the old, unmitigated form of monarchy which was the only type of government he acknowledged as legitimate.

De Maistre, differing from Bonald, was not rigid in his specification of governmental structure. He admired the English

constitution because it was flexible and had adapted to various phases of English government throughout history. He claimed that the most viable part of the constitution was unwritten--the use of precedent. "The true English Constitution is that admirable, unique, and infallible public spirit which transcends all praise. It guides everything, conserves everything, and restores everything. What is written is nothing."[29] De Maistre felt that there was no one form of government which was applicable to all nations. He believed that monarchy was a superior form of government especially suited to France, but all forms of government were legitimate once they were established. "Every possible form of government has shown itself in the world, and everyone is legitimate when once it has been established. . ."[30] De Maistre's theory entailed a broad interpretation of legitimate government because he considered every successful form of government divinely inspired. "Every particular form of government is a divine construction."[31] He stressed the variety of factors integral to the constitutions of particular nations. "The Constitution involves population, customs, religion, geographical situation, political relations, wealth, good and bad qualities of a particular nation, to find the laws which suit it."[32] Every particular form of government was constructed through a nation's tradition and Providence.

De Maistre had a relative stance, then, regarding the various forms of legitimate government. He was concerned only that the authority for government would be divinely inspired rather than created by man. "Although he may have put all his faith in monarchy, Maistre consistently

adhered to a political relativism. In 1794 he wrote that the question of the best form of government is academic, each form of government is the best in certain cases, and the worst in others."[33] De Maistre could not refrain, however, from implicating democracy as one of the worst forms of government. The only successful and therefore legitimate democracies were not at all democracies in the theoretical version. "Democracy could not last a moment if it was not tempered by aristocracy. . ."[34] Actually, successful democracies were hierarchical regimes in which power was attributed to the constituents but in fact was usurped by elite groups of politicians. Misinterpretation of where the power of government was located resulted in the inability to effectively check that power. Therefore, ". . . of all monarchies, the hardest, most despotic, and most untolerable is King People."[35]

De Maistre was concerned that religion should be a predominant force in every society. Religion could positively or negatively appeal to man's spiritual inclinations to suppress his evil attributes. Political government was limited mainly to punitive measures of subdueing man's evil tendencies. "The value of religion, Maistre maintained, lay in the positive and the negative influences it exercised over the human mind, the result of which is that religion becomes a fundamental source of strength and durability for institutions."[36] De Maistre wrote, "And the duration of empires has always been proportionate to the degree of influence the religious element gained in the political constitution."[37]

De Maistre considered the medieval structure of society as an

optimal form, as did Bonald, because religion was a predominant force in that society. There was a viable equilibrium between the Church and State and both yielded enough force to unify society. De Maistre saw the Pope as representative of the Church, in a position of withstanding the political sovereignty and securing the power of authority of religion. ". . . in the Middle Ages, Popes were a check to temporal reign."[38]

De Maistre sought to revitalize the power of religion in nineteenth century western civilization by securing a strong position for the papacy. It was necessary to reverse the trend of Gallicanism which weakened religion by localizing it and rejecting Rome's authority. He attempted to unify and fortify Catholicity by asserting a doctrine of papal infallibility; official papal directives were not to be disputed among Catholics. De Maistre attempted to validate the doctrine of papal infallibility by locating its precedence in tradition. "He undertook to establish, on historical grounds, the validity of the Papacy, its infallibility, and its absolute authority."[39] He claimed that the power of the papacy was present in the beginning of Christianity, but it had increased in relation to the need for strong and unified spiritual leadership. The legitimacy for this expansion of power was established in de Maistre's Law of Development. "This nature (of an institution) is instilled by God at the inception of the institution and reveals itself in the gradual and imperceptible growth elicited by time and circumstance."[40] Thus papal authority grew with time, but according to a preconceived design.

The main difference between theories of Bonald and de Maistre was the assertion by Bonald that monarchy was by nature the only legitimate form of government and it was a necessary companion to religion for the successful operation of society, whereas de Maistre viewed any successful form of government as divinely inspired. They both stressed the need for the rejuvenation of the Church and State. Bonald and de Maistre both believed that France's republican government was illegal and were particularly concerned that it should regain a legitimate government. De Maistre believed that republican France was not based on the tradition of France and Bonald required a monarchy anyway. According to Shklar, "To Bonald and Maistre, France seemed to have a divinely ordained mission to lead Europe, and her defections meant the end of civilization, and so of religion."[41] Bonald wrote, "'Republican France will be the end of Monarchical Europe, and Republican Europe will be the end of the world.'"[42]

Brownson at one time commented on de Maistre in one of his editorials:

> Of de Maistre we have little to say. He is neither a father nor a doctor of the church, he writes as a statesman and politician, not as a theologian; and is always more commendable for the rectitude of his heart, and for his erudition, than for the critical exactness of either his thought or expression . . . but, as we should never think of citing the distinguished author as a theological authority, there is no necessity of doing it.[43]

He did not use de Maistre as a theological authority, but he did employ de Maistre's ideas as a statesman and politician, as well as Bonald.

Brownson conceived of religion as a practical as well as

spiritual necessity which should coincide with government in the operation of society. Religion served a function in that it was inspirational. "I need, then, religion of some sort as the agent to induce men to make the sacrifices required in adoption of my plans for working out the reform of society, and securing to man his earthly felicity."[44]

The political as well as social doctrine Brownson set forth was derived from Traditionalist theory. Religion was the foundation for the successful operation of civilization and all other considerations of politics stemmed from this fact. For Brownson, politics was a temporal extension of religion. "Politics are simply a branch of ethics, and ethics are nothing but moral theology, the application of religious principles and dogmas to practical life."[45]

The task of government was to unify and direct society. "Its business is to protect, to guide, to control, and by combining the many into one body to effect a good, which must forever transcend the reach of mere individual effort."[46] Brownson agreed with Bonald and de Maistre that individuals had to be considered within the framework of society and society constituted a greater, more powerful body than any collection of individuals per se. Society was greater because it enveloped the body of knowledge transmitted through tradition from which government was to rule. Tradition also embodied the works of Providence. Brownson stated his version of the Divine Origin of Language in a proof of God: "God taught the first man his own existence, and the belief has been perpetuated to us by the un-

broken chain of tradition. This of itself sufficiently refutes the atheist."[47] Although he did not specifically attribute this idea to Bonald he later stated, "And hence man cannot reflect, or perform any operation of reasoning without language, as has been so aptly proved by the illustrious de Bonald. . ."[48]

Brownson imbued tradition with the value which Traditionalists had bestowed upon it and insisted that government adhere to the dogma which had been developed with the aid of Providence. Government was limited to guiding society and punishing offenders of the laws. Religion was a necessary complement to government because it could inspire people to defy the evil in their nature and seek spirituality, as well as promise punishment for sins. Religion could direct society by defining the lessons of Providence.

Religion also provided a check on the abuse of government. Brownson believed that religion had to be unencumbered by the State in order to successfully perform its function as censor. From Europe's political and religious dilemma he concluded that the Church's subjugation to the State would result only in abuse and tyranny by the government. "It is therefore absolutely necessary that religion should be free and independent, if the government is intended to be a free government."[49]

Brownson was convinced of the need for religion as a strong force in society to the extent that he espoused de Maistre's Ultra-montane doctrine. "We are ourselves ultra-montane, and have not the least sympathy in the world with what is called Gallicanism, though we have a deep love and veneration for Catholic France."[50] Brownson

agreed with de Maistre that the power of Catholicism should not be diffused through the nationalism of religion. The Pope should unite the Catholic Church and render it a more powerful, more independent organization. Ultramontanism would minimize the State's effect on the Church, and would enable the Church to direct its power unhindered. Brownson equated the strength of Catholicism with papal independence since spiritual goals were best attended apart from political binds. Unfortunately, some members of the Church had limited their scope to temporal concerns and had not supported the Pope, who was the representative of spiritual authority. He wrote, "The subjection of the spiritual order to the temporal was not only the capital crime, but the capital blunder of the old monarchical regime."[51]

Brownson defended de Maistre's theory of the Law of Development whereby the power of the papacy was shown to be legitimate. He agreed that the full papal powers were inherent in the "germ of perfection" which was present upon the origin of Christianity.

Brownson was besieged by outraged citizens who felt that he was invoking papal tyranny. The Know-Nothings were reinforced in the belief that Catholics wanted to see the Pope issue directives to the U.S. government and replace the Constitution. There was very little support for Brownson's ultramontane position among American catholics. He realized and resented the lack of support.

> It has been customary here to deny in the most positive terms all authority of the pope in temporals ex jure divino, and to indulge in no little abuse of the sovereign pontiff hypothetically. We have read in Catholic journals, and heard from the rostrum, and even from the pulpit, expressions with regard to buckling on one's knapsack and shouldering one's

> musket, and marching against the pope, in case he should do so or so, that have made our blood run cold, --expressions which we should hardly have ventured on ourselves even when a Protestant.[52]

Most American Catholics did not agree with the doctrine of papal infallibility and tended to resent Brownson's unrelenting stance. American Catholic publications such as The Metropolitan criticized him for asserting doctrines which would only embroil the public and increase popular antipathy toward the Catholic populace.[53] They accused him of using no discretion, especially because the doctrine he projected was not official within the Church.

Brownson replied that the doctrine of papal infallibility was not as ominous as it sounded. Only the Pope's official directives as head of the Church were infallible and could not be disputed among fellow Catholics. "It is only those that come in an official form that we are obliged to receive as authoritative, and therefore as infallible."[54] Brownson assured the irate Catholics that his theory was within the strictures of Catholic dogma. He was not concerned that he might substantiate suspicions of the American public regarding the loyalty of Catholics in this instance.

Neither non-Catholics or Catholics were placated and both elements continued to regard Brownson's Ultramontane position suspiciously.

Brownson did not express the desire to institute a monarchy in the United States, as Bonald had wanted to in France, but he did defend the monarchical form of government. He claimed that monarchy was a legitimate means of operating society because it had proven successful historically. He displayed, then, de Maistre's relative

approach to legitimate government. He felt that monarchies had a right to maintain their system and agitators for democracy were not to be admired for attempting to instigate a superior form of government.[55] Brownson claimed that republicanism was not a superior form of government, it was only a new form of institutionalism. Any form of government which was successful was legitimate. Moreover, the numerous societies in the world required a diversity of governmental forms, since their traditions varied. No form of government could be transplanted successfully if there was no precedent for that particular form of rule in the society's tradition. ". . . no form of government can bear transplanting, and because every independent nation is the sole judge of what best comports with its own interests, and its judgment is to be respected by the citizens as well as by the governments of other states."[56]

Although Brownson did not advocate the transplantation of monarchy in the United States, he agreed with Traditionalists that the medieval relationship between Church and State had been optimal. The Church was held in high esteem in that period and its strength was unfettered. Brownson was not in accord with critics of the Middle Ages who contended that the Church had been corrupt. He conceded that temporal representatives within the Church had occasionally abused their power. However, sinful conduct of individuals could not be attributed to the Church; it should instead be attributed to the evil in man's nature, which caused disobedience to the Church. "The glory of the church is not tarnished by human depravity, even though it is found in persons attached to her external communion."[57]

Medieval society was representative of the best possible relationship between Church and State. Brownson was atuned to Bonald's idea that a monarchy and papacy reigning coincidentally was in conformity to the nature of society which was hierarchical and unified. He wrote, "We are not in relation to our own country any the less loyally republican because we believe the departure from mediaeval Europe has been a deterioration instead of a progress."[58]

Apparently Brownson agreed with Bonald that literature reflected the progress of society. He admired Bossuet, as did Bonald and de Maistre, because he was a representative of medieval society. Brownson made a complimentary, and therefore unique, comment on Bossuet's thought: "Bossuet very justly concludes from the variations of Protestantism its objective falsity, because the characteristic of truth is invariability. . ."[59] Brownson also rejected all literature which was not related to some aspect of religion. Since he conceived of literature as a reflection of the state of society, it is not surprising that he disliked and wished to discourage the preponderance of temporal concerns in prose and poetry. "We do not set our faces against all literature, as not a few will allege; but against all profane literature, sundered from sacred letters, and cultivated separately for its own sake. . ."[60] He considered the revival of temporal arts during the Renaissance as the initial event which resulted in modern theory. "It is easy to understand why the revival of letters, the renaissance, as the French call it, was influential in preparing Protestantism. It was an effect and a cause of the revival of the secular order."[61]

Brownson was in agreement with the Traditionalists' objection to pure democracy. He wrote, ". . . for democracy is essentially the antagonist of every institution."[62] He denounced the ability of fallible humans to conduct a successful operation of society through their own authority. ". . . when we come to practice, this virtue and intelligence of the people is all humbug."[63] Brownson did not have a high regard for the intelligence of American constituents and did not wish to bequeath sovereignty and the fate of civilization to them.

> The land is full of cowards, imbeciles, half-way men, well-meaning but timid men, conceited men, incapable of becoming wise. . . . They are always a terrible clog on every great and noble enterprise; and in every age and nation they are numerous enough to prevent it from being more than half successful. Hence it is that human progress is so slow, and terrible evils remain so long unredressed.[64]

The translation of social theory advocating equality of the masses into practical politics resulted in demands by the American public of political equality. Brownson objected to political equality in such areas as women's rights and later the negro vote for a variety of reasons. The foremost reason was that the levelling aspect of political equality assumed that human nature had retained its primitive integrity and eliminated the aspect of man's Original Sin. Pure democracy also denied that the nature of man's abilities was hierarchical. The popular assumption regarding pure democracy was, if equal political rights were secured to individuals, they would be free and able to secure the necessities of life. Brownson objected fervently to this concept. "Mere political equality is by no means the equivalent of equal rights or legitimate freedom."[65]

He believed shrewd politicians knew that political equality was not advantageous for the populace, but they were using it for their own ambitions. ". . . they are to turn you off with mere political equality, while they reap all the advantages of the social state. Out upon them. They are wolves in sheep's clothing."[66]

Political equality necessitated an educated populace which was unable to be swayed by irrational appeal of corrupted politicians. The election of Harrison in 1840 proved to Brownson that public opinion was easily influenced. "The process of manufacturing public opinion is very simple, and well understood, and no sensible man has the least respect for it."[67] Brownson believed that the right to vote was not a valuable privilege, since the choice of voters was manipulated by politicians with the most money or most authority anyway. "Hence your 'negro vote' will only go to swell the ever rising tide of political corruption."[68] This also held true for the women's right to vote. The voting process merely reasserted the hierarchy inherent in social nature, but it was more corruptible than monarchy since leaders had virtually no check on their power. Brownson, in the early years of his Catholicism, found the remedy for political abuse of the voting privilege in strict constitutionalism. ". . . till we can confine the government within its constitutional limits, it will, in spite of all that can be done, be wielded for the special interest of the class, or section, that . . can command a majority; and this will not be the interest of the laboring classes."[69] Government could not function successfully on the idealistic theory of political equality. It would result in

the rule of the leader or leaders who could manufacture the strongest appeal to public opinion. Brownson considered pure democracy as mob rule, and, "As mobs are at best despots, and as kings are only despots at worst, we are not prepared to raise the shout of joy merely because a mob in its wrath has deposed a king. . ."[70] Monarchy was preferable, then, to pure democracy. The election of 1840 in its flagrant appeal to public opinion was an indication to Brownson that unhindered democracy would result in the destruction of American society. "A few more such victories, won by similar means, and it will be time for even the most sanguine among us to begin to despair of the republic."[71]

Brownson believed, along with de Maistre, that the aristocratic aspects of applied democracy were the source of its success. "Our government owes its success not to the democracy of the country, for that is ruining it. . . but administered at first by men who didn't have democratic sympathies."[72] He wished to define the constitution of the government in America as a republic instead of a democracy in order to avoid the political implications which the word "democracy" entailed. "Our government is not a democracy, but a constitutional republic . . ."[73] And the ". . . American people committed a serious mistake in translating republicanism into democracy."[74]

Orestes Brownson was 57 when the Civil War began and it had a significant impact on his thought. His primary reaction to the actual struggle between North and South was the abhorrence of revolution in general. He agreed with the Traditionalists that revolution for the sake of changing the political order was not a

legitimate means of improving society. ". . . but they can never lawfully overthrow an established government for the sake of adopting another political form, even though fully persuaded of its superiority."[75]

Brownson conceived of the progression of society as an evolutionary process whereby the constitution would alter according to the assimilation of mankind's new experiences to tradition. The constitution of a given society was attained through the historical experience of its constituents. Evolution allowed modification of society's constitution, but not its rejection. ". . . the people may modify the existing forms of the constitution, but only in obedience to the constitution itself."[76] The legitimacy of society's constitution had to be intact at all times. Brownson wrote, "We must obey the law in correcting the abuses of the law, the constitution in repelling its enemies."[77]

According to Brownson, no government could successfully rule on the foundation of revolutionary principle, which defined liberty as the right to criticize authority rather than the need to obey it, and ultimately led to anarchy. "The state cannot be constituted on the revolutionary principle, nor recognize the right of the people to abolish the government; for every state must have as its basis the right of the state to command, and the duty of the citizen to obey."[78] The authority of government was to be continuous and indisputable. Even perceived governmental abuses of the law were to be tolerated by subjects of the state unless they were denounced by the Church. "Hence, where there is no infallible authority to decide, the subject must always presume the law to be just and faithfully obey

it, unless it manifestly and undeniably ordains what is wrong in itself, and prohibited by the law of God."[79] The theoretical right to revolt against a supposed tyrannical government was excluded by Brownson's concept of authority. "The obligation to support the government and the right to abolish it are not compatible. . ."[80]

Brownson claimed that a society would be destroyed if the original constitution, which had evolved through history, were displaced by revolution. He wrote, ". . . if we may credit at all the lessons of history, the change of the original constitution of a state, if fundamental and permanent, is always and inevitably the destruction of the state itself."[81] The inclination of Americans to internationally institute democracy because it was perceived to be a superior form of government was disastrous. Brownson chastised American support of the Hungarian revolution and rued the fact that ". . . sympathy with these banded European conspirators, these Jacobins, red-republicans, socialists, Carbonari, Freemasons, Illuminati, Friends of Light . . . That is, our institutions are founded on the denial of the lawfulness of all forms of government but the democratic. . . "[82] Brownson attempted to convince his fellow citizens that a crusade to spread democracy was in error. Men ". . . cannot admit the right of rebellion and revolution in the people, without destroying the very foundation of government."[83] The constitution of a state could not be altered radically even though it might be considered inferior to other forms of government. The legitimate constitution of a state was the one which was in existence. "Our principle is, to sustain the existing constitution of the state, whether it conforms to our abstract

notions or not; because in politics everything is to be taken in the concrete, nothing in the abstract."[84]

Prior to the Civil War Brownson claimed abolitionists were agitating the public conscience in order to manipulate public opinion for their benefit. In 1838 he wrote, ". . . it is not their (abolitionist) object to discuss it. Their object is not to enlighten the community on the subject, but to agitate it."[85] He viewed the abolitionists as an extremely dangerous faction of reformers who were trying to level society for political equality. "What we object to is the agitation systematized and carried on through self-constituted and therefore irresponsible associations. These associations are the grand feature of our times, and they are of most dangerous tendency."[86]

Brownson felt abolitionists were the potential destructors of society because they were more concerned with their philanthropy than with the continuity of institutions. He considered philanthropy as a subjective sentiment based on individual judgement, and denied the validity of philanthropists' demands. "But philanthropy is a sentiment . . . all sentiments are subjective, individual and variable."[87] He was horrified that abolitionists felt justified to create mayhem and circumvent the law by harboring fugitives and demanding the complete cessation of slavery. ". . . there is no prudent man who can for a single moment doubt that the continuance and even extension of negro slavery is a less evil than the destruction of the whole legal order of the country."[88] Beside the revolutionary aspect of the abolitionist movement Brownson disagreed with the practical consequences of their call for the abrupt dismissal of slavery.

Slavery was an institution which had grown and developed a tradition and a stable social scheme. If the institution was destroyed, tradition would be lost and slaves would have no guidelines or protection in their supposed freedom. Brownson felt freedom for slaves would have to be an evolutionary process. "The slave is never converted into a freeman by a stroke of the pen . . . The slave must grow into freedom, and be able to maintain his freedom, or he is a slave still, whatever he may be called."[89] Abolitionist sentiment was not conducive, then, to the needs of the slave. "They are the worst enemies of their country, and the worst enemies, too of the slave. They are a band of mad fanatics, and we have no language strong enought to express our abhorrence of their principles and proceedings."[90]

Immediately preceeding the outbreak of violence Brownson became dissettled by the Southerners' threat to secede from the Union. "Others, hardly less mad, seek to obviate the difficulty by dissolving the Union, but the dissolution of the Union would be the dissolution of American society itself."[91] Brownson's sympathy with the South ended abruptly upon its secession from the United States government. This act surpassed the evil which had been perpetrated by the abolitionists.

Prior to the Civil War Brownson was influenced by Southern arguments, primarily presented by Calhoun, that the states were individual entities with separate traditions and unique institutions. These separate societies were not to be forced to assimilate their institutions to the traditions of the other states. "The real question . . . whether one state has the right to avow the design of

changing the institutions of another state, and of adopting a series of measures directed expressly to that end?"[92] Brownson had the balance of power of the states in mind when he wrote, "Peace among the nations of the earth is to be maintained only by each nation's attending to its own concerns, leaving all other nations to regulate their internal policy in their own way."[93] Brownson construed the Constitution of the United States as a protector of the rights of individual states, and claimed the states possessed sovereignty of power. "A state is to the Union what the tribune was to the Roman senate."[94] He was concerned to retain authority of government primarily in the states by limiting federal authority strictly to what was explicitly stated in the constitution. Prior to the Civil War he feared the power of federal authority. "Destroy the states as sovereignties, and make them only provinces of one consolidated state, and centralization swallows up everything."[95]

The Civil War transformed Brownson into a federalist. He realized that the logical conclusion of states rights theory was analogous to the revolutionary aspect of individualism. States rights and state sovereignty allowed criticism of central authority and rendered the United States merely an amalgamation of individual entities. "You have no right to call the seceders or the confederates rebels, or to treat them as rebels or traitors, if you concede their doctrine of state sovereignty."[96] Brownson began to advocate the enhancement of federal authority and decrease of state authority. ". . . and the Union itself, if it has any defect, is in the fact that it leaves the federal power too weak for an effective central power."[97] Brownson's final stance retained the need for state government, but with

a diminished aspect in relation to federal authority. "They are in each one and the same people, and the two governments combined constitute only one full and complete government."[98]

Brownson justified his removal of allegiance from state to federal sovereignty by contending that the separate entity concept of states was never valid. He reoriented de Maistre's generative principle of constitutions to prove that unity of the federation (rather than the separate states) had preceded the written constitution. Unity had, in fact, been forged when America was under the domain of Great Britain. ". . . the United States preceded it, and must have been anterior to that convention."[99] Brownson founded his justification, then, in tradition; but a tradition which had formerly upheld his state sovereignty theory. He had only shifted emphasis, and a statement made in 1847 was still valid in 1863: "The people of this country have not made, and could not make our political constitution. It was imposed by a competent authority, and has grown to be what it is, through the providence of God . . . It was not their foresight, wisdom, convictions, or will, that made it republican."[100]

Aside from proving the necessity of centralized authority, the Civil War prompted Brownson to define American tradition as non-revolutionary. He maintained that the American Revolution was not a revolution because tradition which America had inherited from Britain was not relinquished. Brownson maintained that the leaders of the American revolt were adhering to the laws provided by Great Britain in justifying their dissatisfaction with its rule.

> The simple fact is, that the men who resisted what they regarded as the tyranny of Great Britain, asserted American independence, and made us a nation, were not democrats, and rarely, if ever, appealed for their justification to democratic principles. They argued their case on the principles of the British constitution, and their grievance against the mother country was not that she was monarchical, aristocratic, or oligarchical, but that she, by her acts, in which she persisted, violated their rights as British subjects, as set forth in magna charta and the bill of rights.[101]

Brownson was anxious to discount the formation of the United States by revolution because he desired to avoid the possibility of further strife ensuing the Civil War. This necessitated removing revolutionary principle from the popular theory in America.

The Civil War was a disastrous event in America and nearly destroyed the United States. Brownson believed that it was useful as a lesson, though, in that it proved individualism and other outgrowths of modern theory were destructive to society. The Civil War ". . . proved the necessity of conservative principles, and respect for established authority."[102] Brownson translated de Maistre's belief in the constructive aspect of the French Revolution when he wrote, the War ". . . will be the thunder-storm that purifies the moral and political atmosphere; it will enable us to see and understand the wrong principles, the mischievous principles we have unconsciously fostered, the fatal doctrines we have adopted, the dangerous tendencies to which we have yielded."[103]

By reading Traditionalist works, Brownson was informed on the Catholic prognosis of European events and his editorials contained abundant references to political developments on the Continent. His comments on the war between France and Germany in 1870 are exemplary

of Traditionalist thought.

After France's defeat by Germany, Brownson recalled the Traditionalist warning that society would have to be reconstituted on the basis of authority and tradition under the leadership of an independent Church and the State. He recognized that neither France nor Europe had done so. In 1871 he wrote, "France has now no legal government, no political organization, and, what is the worst, recognizes no power competent to reorganize her society and reconstitute the state and has recognized none since the revolution of 1789."[104] Brownson recognized that religion, instead of regaining its power in European society, had steadily diminished in strength. He believed France especially had failed society because it had not rejuvenated Catholicism. "France has fallen because she has been false to her mission as the leader of modern civilization, because she has led it in an anti-Catholic direction, and made it weak and frivolous, corrupt and corrupting."[105]

The war of 1870 proved to Brownson that European governments had not removed their foundations from the revolutionary principle and were bound to deteriorate. ". . . revolution was the real disaster, and Paris, not Prussia or Germany, has subjugated France."[106] According to Brownson, none of the necessary steps had been taken to rebuild a solid foundation for European society after the Revolution of 1789. He heeded de Maistre's warning that the continuance of government based on modern theory would culminate in the eventual dissolution of society. The various revolutions which followed 1789 convinced Brownson that the progression of European society was being

accompanied by a destructive process. The governments were continually moving further from the concept of God as the creator and foundation of civilization. In 1874 he wrote, "The present anarchical state of Europe is due to the emancipation of the governments from the law of God . . ."[107]

1. Harold J. Laski, Authority in the Modern State (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1968), pp. 192-193.

2. John Viscount Morley, Biographical Studies (London: MacMillan and Cpy., 1923), p. 223.

3. Reardon, p. 78.

4. Lively, p. 108.

5. Greifer, p. 5.

6. Ibid., p. 31.

7. Ibid., p. 14.

8. Quinlan, p. 58.

9. Lively, p. 50.

10. Greifer, p. 33.

11. Lively, p. 15.

12. Quinlan, p. 12.

13. Greifer, pp. 65-66.

14. Flint, p. 373.

15. Soltau, p. 18.

16. Reardon, p. 46.

17. Koyre, p. 58.

18. Quinlan, p. 48.

19. Ibid., p. 88.

20. Ibid., p. 36.

21. Ibid., p. 25.

22. Ibid., p. 42.

23. Ibid., p. 52.

24. Ibid., p. 25.

25. Ibid., p. 94.

26. Ibid., p. 30.

27. Koyre, p. 65.

28. Quinlan, p. 69.

29. Greifer, p. 11.

30. Ibid., p. 142.

31. Ibid., p. 107.

32. Lively, p. 80.

33. Murray, p. 75.

34. Lively, p. 123.

35. Greifer, p. 24.

36. Murray, p. 76.

37. Greifer, p. 45.

38. Lively, p. 142.

39. Reardon, p. 85.

40. Ibid., p. 86.

41. Judith W. Shklar, After Utopia, The Decline of Political Faith (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1957), p. 183.

42. Reardon, p. 27.

43. Works XIV, pp. 102-103.

44. Works V, p. 66.

45. Works X, p. 331.

46. Works XV, p. 126.

47. Works I, p. 265.

48. Works I, p. 289.

49. Works XVI, p. 125.

50. Works X, pp. 332-333.

51. Works XVI, p. 126.

52. Works XI, p. 132.

53. Works XI, p. 114.

54. Works X, p. 348.

55. Works XVI, p. 201.

56. Works XVIII, p. 97.

57. Works X, p. 253.

58. Works XVI, p. 259.

59. Works VI, p. 139.

60. Works X, pp. 360-361.

61. Works X, p. 363.

62. Works XV, p. 384.

63. Ibid., p. 261.

64. Works XVII, p. 477.

65. Works XV, pp. 387-388.

66. Ibid., p. 387.

67. Works XVIII, p. 247.

68. Works XVII, p. 551.

69. Works X, p. 206.

70. Works XVI, p. 103.

71. Works XVIII, p. 180.

72. Works XVI, p. 262.

73. Works XVI, p. 376.

74. Works XV, p. 205.

75. Works XVI, p. 179.

76. Works XV, p. 394.

77. Works XVI, p. 79.

78. Ibid., p. 124.

79. Ibid., p. 23.

80. Ibid., p. 121.

81. Works XV, p. 566.

82. Works XVI, p. 203.

83. Works XV, p. 397.

84. Works XVI, p. 118.

85. Works XV, p. 65.

86. Works XVI, p. 170.

87. Works XVII, p. 538.

88. Works XVI, p. 48.

89. Works XV, p. 70.

90. Works XVI, p. 26.

91. Ibid., p. 49.

92. Works XV, p. 51.

93. Ibid., p. 76.

94. Ibid., p. 248.

95. Ibid., p. 62.

96. Works XVII, p. 277.

97. Ibid., p. 166.

98. Ibid., p. 492.

99. Ibid., p. 480.

100. Works XV, p. 562.

101. Works XVII, p. 483.

102. Ibid., p. 280.

103. Ibid., p. 139.

104. Works XVIII, p. 484.

105. Ibid., p. 501.

106. Ibid., p. 482.

107. Ibid., p. 249.

ECONOMIC THEORY

Economic ideas of the Traditionalists were a reaction against the growth of industrialism and liberal laissez-faire theory. The Industrial Revolution had begun in France by 1815.[1] However, industrialism had not altered France's agrarian economy significantly during the time Bonald and de Maistre were producing their critiques of society. "There is no evidence that Bonald had any direct or sustained experience with the effects of industrialism . . . Moreover virtually everything he wrote on the subject was published between 1800 and 1817, well before massive industrial change and dislocation swept over France."[2] Bonald perceived the imminence of industrialism in France, though, and predicted it would be similar to the English experience. He investigated effects of industrialism by examining English society, and found ominous implications in the establishment of an industrial society. He sought to prevent its occurrence in France.

Bonald and de Maistre viewed industrialism as an outgrowth of eighteenth century ideology. Liberal economic theorists proclaimed the necessity of production without infringing restrictions from Church or State. They assumed that free competition would assure individuals an equitable chance for economic progress and mobility between classes. Bonald and de Maistre rejected the idea that free competition would produce fair results. They claimed that free competition would increase disparity between the competent and

incompetent men of society. Bonald recognized the practical manifestations of varied potential in the polarization of wealthy and poor in England. "The new production processes encouraged the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, which resulted in the emergence of a new industrial aristocracy. At the same time, a poverty-stricken working class was created, concentrated in urban slums."[3]

Economic liberals had claimed that free competition would increase production and therefore the wealth of nations. Bonald argued that the wealth of a nation could not be considered in terms of its monetary assets. He rejected the quantitative assessment of society's progress. Liberal economists had prolifically quoted figures in order to show the economic progress which occurred with the development of industrialism. Traditionalists preferred to assess the damage which industrialism was effecting upon social and political aspects of the state. Bonald contended that liberal economists, as well as their contemporary social and political theorists, had attempted to apply scientific principles to determine the optimal functioning of society rather than heeding the necessity of directing all human endeavors toward spirituality and the Church.

> Political economy, he argued, was merely another symptom of the social sickness arising from commerce and industry. It represented the triumph of the 'small mind' for it rested on the view that significant social insights could be obtained through the mechanical compilation of statistical data on production and trade: 'We know exactly . . . how many chickens lay eggs . . . we know less about men; and we have completely lost sight of the principles which underlie and maintain societies.'[4]

The richness of tradition and a content constituency constituted

a wealthy society for the Traditionalists. "'Manners, customs, and laws are the true, and even the sole wealth of society, that is, their only true means of existence and conservation!"[5] Traditionalists rejected the bourgeois class which developed as a result of industrialism. Members of the bourgeoisie had accumulated wealth, but they had no established customs to guide their behavior. The power of the bourgeoisie accompanied by its lack of tradition made the new class a threat to society.

The Traditionalists felt that working relationships which accompanied the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society caused profound social dislocation. Workers who had previously been secure on their landlord's farms had to engage the entire family to work in factories for as long as 16 hours a day to achieve a barely subsistence level of wages. Bonald attributed labor unrest, unemployment, urban slums, crime, and extreme poverty to industrialism. He frequently compared agrarian to industrial society and found few positive attributes in the latter form of economy.

Agrarian society was based on a cooperative familial effort to produce enough goods for survival.

> Production and consumption were both family centered; the family labored mainly to meet its needs and for the most part consumed only its own products. Work was a cooperative venture, not a competitive individual enterprise. All separate tasks had an obvious purpose and could be readily seen as part of a whole enterprise. The rhythm of labor was natural, fixed by the flow of the seasons and the path of the sun, not by the artificial beat of factory machines. Considerations of the 'market' --national or international--were peripheral, for the economy was the household.[6]

Industrial society, though, was not cooperative but individualistic

and based on competition. "Industrial and commercial society was characterized by a style of relations patterned on the marketplace. All the social bonds of church, family, and village were dissolved, and in their place were substituted money relationships, which alienated men from each other."[7]

Traditionalists preferred the agrarian system of economy. They felt it could accomodate the stratification of human abilities to a greater degree than could industrialism. Cooperative effort would provide for the care of all inhabitants of society whereas the competition inherent to industrialism would ensure destruction of society's least capable members. Bonald claimed that any increased production which occurred with industrialism was beneficial only to the already wealthy members of society. It was therefore considered by him as overproduction.

> He held loosely that manufacture and commerce were beneficial only insofar as they met the immediate needs of agricultural production, and he insisted that international commerce was needless and harmful. 'Rural economy' was in all respects preferable to the extremes of poverty and luxury associated with a society based on trade and manufacturing. All production which tended beyond the standards of rural economy was 'useless and dangerous.'[8]

Traditionalists maintained that once the physical needs of the populace were met, it was necessary to fulfill their spiritual needs. The Church was the guide to that objective. Acquisition of excessive temporal goods was a hindrance to the accession of spirituality. They emphasized agriculture, landed property, custom, nationalism, and Catholicism as factors in an economic system which were conducive to the designs of nature and the destiny of man.[9]

Industrialism was entrenched in American society by the mid-nine-

teenth century and Brownson regretted the apparent loss of rural predominance in the economy. He stated in his autobiography that the practical application of demands in his Essay on the Laboring Classes published in 1840 would have ". . . broken up the whole modern commercial system, prostrated all the great industries, or what I called the factory system, and thrown the mass of the people back on the land to get their living by agricultural and mechanical pursuits."[10] Brownson's autiobiography published in 1857 made explicit that he viewed agriculture as the preferable economical system for society. "I believe firmly even still that the economical system I proposed, if it could be introduced, would be favorable to the virtue and happiness of society."[11]

He believed that the agricultural society was conducive to social order because the entire range of abilities in the populace was absorbed in the economic system. Relationships were generally fixed and therefore stable; labor was of a cooperative nature.

> Between the master and the slave, between the lord and the serf, there often grow up pleasant personal relations and attachments; there is personal intercourse, kindness, affability, protection on the one side, respect and gratitude on the other, which partially compensates for the superiority of the one and the inferiority of the other.[12]

Brownson, in agreement with the Traditionalists, disliked industrialism because of its detrimental effects on the social order. Industrialism provoked competition and created animosity between society's inhabitants. Individuals became insular economic units and the cooperative system characteristic of the agricultural economy disintegrated.

> . . . the capitalist and the workman belong to different species and have little personal intercourse. The agent or man of business pays the workman his wages, and there ends the responsibility of the employer. The laborer has no further claim on him, and he may want and starve, or sicken and die, it is his own affair, with which the employer has nothing to do. Hence the relation between the two classes becomes mercenary, hard, and a matter of arithmetic.[13]

According to Brownson, competition had a demeaning effect on labor. The personal relationships between owner and employer and the identities of laborers dissipated with industrialism. "The great feudal lords had souls, railroad corporations have none."[14] He did not believe that the economic system was rendered equitable when free competition was invoked. Rather, the ability of many members of the populace to survive became more remote when laws were established to create free competition. "But men's natural capacities are unequal; and these laws, which on their face seem perfectly fair and equal, create monopolies which enrich a few individuals at the expense of the many."[15]

Brownson agreed with Bonald that industrialism had fostered a large disparity between the wealthy and poor.

> Capital will always command the lion's share of the proceeds. This is seen in the fact that, while they who command capital grow rich, the laborer by his simple wages at best only obtains a bare subsistence. The whole class of simple laborers are poor, and in general unable to procure by their wages more than the bare necessaries of life. This is a necessary result of the system. The capitalist employs labor that he may grow rich or richer; the laborer sells his labor that he may not die of hunger, he, his wife, and little ones; and as the urgency of guarding against hunger is always stronger than that of growing rich or richer, the capitalist holds the laborer at his mercy, and has over him, whether called a slave or a freeman, the power of life and death.[16]

Brownson claimed that no man could be removed from the circle of poverty unless he learned to manipulate and exploit the labor of others. "Poor men may indeed become rich, but not by the simple wages of unskilled labor. They never do become rich, except by availing themselves in some way of the labor of others."[17] Industrialism, then, promoted usery and egoism.

The men who benefitted from industrialism and became wealthy were viewed as corrupt and presumptuous by Brownson. They had been ruthless in achieving their fortunes; but even worse, they lacked tradition in their status.

> The system elevates the middling class to wealth, often men who began life with poverty. A poor man, or a man of small means in the beginning, become rich by trade, speculation, or the successful exploitation of labor, is often a greater calamity to society than a wealthy man reduced to poverty. An old established nobility, with gentle manners, refined tastes, chivalrous feelings, surrounded by the prestige of rank, and endeared by the memory of heroic deeds or lofty civic virtues, is endurable, nay respectable, and not without compensating advantages to society in general, for its rank and privileges. But the upstart, the novus homo, with all the vulgar tastes and habits, ignorance and coarseness, of the class from which he has sprung, and nothing of the class into which he fancies he has risen but its wealth, is intolerable, and widely mischievous.[18]

Brownson disliked nearly all facets of industrialism. He was inclined to espouse a return to agrarian society as the Traditionalists had, but admitted his desire was unrealistic. "But I look upon its introduction as wholly impracticable . . ."[19]

Brownson contended with industrialism by defining and attempting to dispel its most vitiating aspects. He saw materialism as the primary foundation of industrialism. "The great danger in our country is from the predominance of material interests."[20] The desire for

material objects compelled men to compete mercilessly. "Competition results from the inequality of fortune, the freedom and the desire to accumulate."[21] Brownson believed that political economists not only advocated the necessity of freedom to accumulate, they sanctioned struggle for possessions.

> Political economists regard this struggle with favor, for it stimulates production and increases the wealth of the nation, which would be true enough, if consumption did not fully keep pace with production; though if true, we could hardly see, in the increased wealth of the nation, a compensation for the private and domestic misery it causes, and the untold amount of crime of which it is the chief instigator.[22]

He sought to diminish the effect of materialism by devalueing man's possessions.

> . . . gratify every sense, every taste, every wish, as soon as formed, and the poor wrtech will sigh for he knows not what, and behold with envy even the ragged beggar feeding on offal. No variety, no change, no art, can satisfy him. All that nature or art can offer palls upon his senses and his heart, --is to him poor, mean, and despicable. There arise in him wants which are too vast for nature, which swell out beyond the bounds of the universe, and cannot, and will not, be satisfied with anything less than the infinite and eternal God. Never yet did nature suffice for man, and it never will.[23]

Brownson reduced wealth and poverty to relative measures. "Moreover, is it certain that poverty, in itself considered is evil, or opposed to our destiny? Where is the proof? Wealth and poverty are both relative terms . . ."[24] He linked human contentment to spiritual fulfillment rather than temporal possessions.

> For the same reason, it does not necessarily follow that the wealth, luxury, and other things you propose, are necessarily in themselves at all desirable. You must go further, and before attempting to decide what is good or what is evil, tell us WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF MAN, for it is only in relation to his destiny, that we can pronounce this or that good or evil.[25]

Brownson felt that Catholicism was the means for reducing the progress of industrialism and dissipating its harmful effects. If men would adhere to the teachings of the Church, "There would be no unrelieved poverty, no permanent want of the necessaries or even comforts of life; for the Church makes almsgiving a precept, and commands all her children to remember the poor. There would remain no ruinous competition; for no one would set a high value upon the goods of this world."[26]

Brownson's economic theory was correspondent to Traditionalist ideas even though he was not able to propose the reinstitution of an agrarian economy. He relied solely on moral suasion of the Church to rescind evils of industrialism, while abiding its presence in American society. It is clear that Brownson felt the more power Catholicism wielded in a given society, the more stable and content that society was. "We regard it (competition) as an unmixed evil which could and would be avoided, if poverty were honored, and the honest and virtuous poor were respected according to their real worth, as they are by the church, and were in all old Catholic countries till the modern democratic spirit invaded them."[27]

1. Matthew H. Elbow, French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), p. 23.

2. D. K. Cohen, "The Vicomte de Bonald's Critique of Industrialism", Journal of Modern History 41 (December, 1969) 475-484.

3. Ibid., pp. 476-477.

4. Ibid., pp. 477-478.

5. Ibid., p. 479.

6. Ibid., p. 477.

7. Ibid., p. 480.

8. Ibid., p. 477.

9. Elbow, p. 44.

10. Works V, p. 117.

11. Ibid., p. 118.

12. Ibid., p. 116.

13. Ibid., pp. 116-117.

14. Works XVIII, p. 234.

15. Ibid., p. 237.

16. Works V, p. 115.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

19. Ibid., p. 118.

20. Works X, p. 8.

21. Ibid., p. 55.

22. Works XVIII, pp. 235-236.

23. Works X, p. 52.

24. Ibid., p. 431.

25. Ibid., p. 45.

26. Ibid., p. 66.

27. Works XVIII, p. 236.

CONCLUSION

The social, political, and economic theories Brownson propagated after his Catholic conversion were derived from Traditionalist thought. Brownson occasionally referred to the Traditionalists in his essays, indicating that he had read their publications. He also stated that he was sympathetic to Traditionalism. The similarity of theories, though, is the strongest defense for supposition that Brownson assimilated Traditionalist ideas in his own system.

The high regard Brownson extended to Traditionalists was due to an agreement with their objective of rejuvenating Catholicism. He believed an increase of support for the Catholic Church would direct more men to salvation; but he also maintained, in agreement with the Traditionalists, that it would facilitate order in society.

Other systems of Catholic thought which were prevalent in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century were rejected by Brownson. Gallicanism called for a resurgence of Catholic strength, but sought it in political alliance with the State. Brownson believed the Church's fate would then be bound to unstable governments. Liberal Catholicism was rejected by him for the same reason--liberal Catholics wanted to form an alliance between the Church and the democratic movement, which they believed would be the future governmental form of Europe. Brownson preferred the Ultramontane position that the Church would remain independent of all governmental forms, although it would be responsible for enlisting obedience of society's constituents to the

Church and State. The Church was mainly responsible for maintaining spiritual predominance over temporal objectives; if all men would seek salvation, social distress would be alleviated by serious attempts to adhere to moral teachings of the Church.

Brownson's efforts to convince the American public that Catholicism was necessary for social harmony entailed problems which were nonexistent for the Traditionalists. Whereas the French had a tradition of Catholicism to restore, American society was mainly devoid of Catholic influence. The object of Traditionalists was to engage in successful polemics against the philosophes in order to convince the French that Enlightenment ideals were errant and a return to Catholic-dominated society was necessary. Brownson, beside invalidating Enlightenment ideology, had to convert to Catholicism a nation whose primary heritage was Protestant. He therefore sought to impress upon Protestants that their sects were derived from Catholicism and Protestantism was merely a political rebellion from authority. Protestantism was conceptualized as a phase of the individualist movement which rendered morals to a subjective status and condoned the supremacy of temporal goals. Brownson objected to Protestant revision of religion for the same reason he objected to the social compact conception of government--it was an attempt of humans to create or reform. He attempted to convince Protestants that their sects were not valid and they were, in fact, either latent Catholics or atheists. Protestants had the choice to admit their atheism or return to the Catholic Church. In this manner he established a quasi-Catholic heritage in America.

Brownson wrote voluminously in an attempt to establish what he considered the correct foundation for American society. The quantity of material he produced is indicated by his collection of selected works written after 1838 which constituted twenty compact volumes. Brownson was the major contributor to the Boston Quarterly Review and the sole author of Brownson's Quarterly Review.

Brownson was unsuccessful in his goal to convert America to Catholicism despite his lengthy and intellectual labors. The goal he strived for was unrealistic, especially since the Catholic base he depended on was a very small portion of the American populace and even the Traditionalists, whose society had a strong tradition of Catholicism, had difficulty obtaining popular support.

The influence Brownson's works did procure was confined to his generation because his ideas were not a part of the intellectual trend in America. He is, therefore, an obscure figure in the American past.

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