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Parenting the Self:
Welfare, Family, and Subjectivity
in Nineteenth-Century France.

Tomás Alberto CUBILLAS GADEA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis studies the rise of the modern self in France from the aftermath of the French Revolution until the eve of the First World War. Building on the work of Michel Foucault, the modern individual is understood as the result of collective practices and beliefs that change across time and space, as well as being inseparable from the problem of governing and shaping the conduct of oneself and others. The focus is placed on how the experience of being a nineteenth-century self was structured, by considering, on the one hand, the explicit discourses and logics that naturalized specific forms of selfhood and made it possible to identify oneself and others as modern subjects and, on the other, the rise of techniques and technologies aimed at producing and reproducing this modern self. These included practices of the self such as moral analysis or self-mastery strategies, as well as the mechanisms for instilling selfhood in others, such as education or domesticity. In particular this thesis considers the mutually-supportive role of the nuclear family at the micro level and social assistance programmes at the macro level. The home and charity office participated in a new form of governing and understanding of authority called guardianship or *tutelle*. This was a conceptually non-coercive way of moulding those not yet able to govern themselves and others in accordance with freedom, but whose effects extended far beyond the pauper or child. Through mobilizing, sensationalist and threatening images of non-normative subjectivity and family breakdown, social reformers and administrators generated a troubling narrative of both lack and ideal against which poor and rich alike could contrast, measure, and correct the normativity of their own habits and domestic arrangements. This thesis therefore contributes to our understanding of how the modern individual was produced and reproduced as the normative subject of modern collectives.

Con todo mi afecto,

a don CARLOS DORE CABRAL

dedico estas páginas
que dan continuación
a una conversación
que empezamos hace ya
más de veinte años.

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Introduction.

‘Man is a creature who makes pictures of himself,
and then comes to resemble the picture’.
Iris Murdoch.¹

This thesis aims to be a contribution to the ongoing debate on modernity. While the topic remains highly elusive, with literary scholar Anthony J. Cascardi, I understand modernity to be characterized by the simultaneous and inseparable emergence in history of the couple formed by the modern individual and the modern state.² By emphasizing the analogies between the individual and the state, and locating the characteristic contradictions of modernity *within* the modern subject, Cascardi has offered a meaningful reduction of the complexities of modernity which may now be grasped by historians through a history of the modern individual. Michel Foucault moved away from the notion that the individual referred to the universal and ahistorical human being. He emphasized how the understanding of the person as a subject or agent changed profoundly through time and space. This historicity of the subject is what is understood as subjectivity; the concepts of a subject and a person’s sense of him or herself as a subject are historical. As Foucault argued, ‘the problem of the self is not to discover what it is in its positivity, maybe the problem is not to discover a positive self or the positive foundation of the self. Maybe our problem is now to discover that the

¹ Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics* (New York, 1999), p. 75.

² Anthony Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 8-9, 180. See especially the introduction and chapter 4.

self is nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built in our history'.³

Thus by the modern individual I will understand a specific form of historical subject that gradually emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. After the French Revolution, the modern individual became the central problem of government to which the modern state sought to respond. Instead of understanding the individual and the state as opposed to each other, Foucault equally sought to de-centre this dichotomy and 'cut off the king's head'. Foucault reclaimed the concept of power from those who viewed the state as a rational agent. Such views tended to occlude the way both state and non-state 'disciplined' and 'normalized' society.⁴ Instead, Foucault gradually moved from the state and the individual as ontological and metaphysical categories, towards the notion of governing, both of the self and of others. Thus the notion of government should not be confused with that of political government. Instead, 'governing' can be seen as unifying the question of power by focusing on ideas and practices from the self and the home to society and the state.

This thesis will explore the dual history of the individual and the state in the nineteenth century, principally through the discourses and practices of social assistance and its focus on parenting and the family. The most coherent theoretical framework that makes it possible to analyse the dual object of the individual and the state remains the approach Foucault developed in his later years, which we

³ Michel Foucault, *About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980* (Chicago, 2016), p. 76.

⁴ Alan Finlayson and James Martin, 'Poststructuralism', in: Colin Hay, Michael Lister and David Marsh (eds), *The State: Theories and Issues* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 166.

will now outline. The full repercussions of his novel understanding of 'government' have until now not received a consistent scholarly application.

Foucault's 'government'.

Foucault developed the study of governmentality in the last years of his life as a response to criticism for his focus on localized 'microphysics' of power that evaded the wider, global issues of politics, society and the state, and for his disciplinary model that seemingly made freedom impossible.⁵ Governmentality was therefore first and foremost a way of decentring the problem of the state, since it included under the banner of 'government' both the work of state institutions (the macrophysics of power) and the manners in which persons attempted to conduct themselves and others in daily life (the microphysics of power). By doing so, Foucault argued, 'it was possible, without paradox or contradiction, to return to the general problems of the state, on condition precisely that we [do not make] the state [into] *a transcendent reality whose history could be undertaken on the basis of itself*. It must be possible to do the history of the state on the basis of men's actual practice, on the basis of what they do and how they think'.⁶

However, his work on government also revised his understanding of micro-power. From 1975 to 1984, he gradually distanced himself from his previous work on discipline and its often-excessive emphasis on oppression and restriction.⁷

⁵ Colin Gordon, 'Governmental rationality: an introduction', in: Graham Burchell, Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, 1991), p. 4.

⁶ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (New York, 2007), p. 358. Square brackets in original. Emphasis added.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 66.

Foucault kept exploring the 'positivity' of power, meaning its capacity to generate and maintain a sense of self and promote desirable behaviours that were voluntarily adopted, rather than power's capacity to punish.⁸

Historically, the term 'government' has been applied to a rather wide semantic field. One could speak of the government of oneself, of souls, of children, of a household and of the state by the prince. One could therefore govern the self or others, the micro or the macro, a person, school, town or state. What the diverse forms of government had in common was the attempts to shape behaviour or 'conduct conduct'. This directing of behaviour did not imply oppression or negative effects. Although Foucault is best known for his theorizations on *power*, he made plain in 1982 that 'It is not therefore power, but the subject, that constitutes the general theme of my research'.⁹ Power was relevant to Foucault insofar as it shaped and constructed subjects. This capacity was not negative (repression, exclusion, or censorship), but positive and productive.¹⁰ 'In actual fact', he wrote, 'one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual[...] is one of power's first effects[...]: power passes through the individuals it has constituted'.¹¹ For Foucault, power did not emanate from a central point, nor was there a dichotomy between top and bottom, rulers and ruled. Power was local, capillary and unstable; it was everywhere, in continuous circulation, passing through apparatuses and institutions, social stratifications and individuals, without being

⁸ Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975* (London, 2003), p. 52.

⁹ Foucault, *Dits et Écrits, 2*, pp. 222-223.

¹⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London, 1991), p. 194.

¹¹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (New York, 2003), pp. 29-30. Translation modified.

localized in any of them. Power existed in every relationship (be it economic, knowledge-related, or sexual) and existed only within power relationships, where the balance of force was always reversible.¹² Indeed, shortly before his death in 1984, Foucault's definition of power became that of government:

The exercise of power consists in 'conducting conducts'... Power, in the end, belongs less to the order of confrontation between adversaries, or engagement of one with another, than to the order of 'government'... Government, in that sense, is *to structure the possible field of action of others*. The mode of relation that is specific to power should not be sought therefore on the side of violence or struggle, or of contract or voluntary bond... but on the side of that singular mode of action – neither belligerent nor juridical – that is government.¹³

In his later years, Foucault reinterpreted his entire *oeuvre* as an exploration of *subjectivity*. His theory of the subject rejected the notion of a universal, ahistorical individual or a *cogito* that would stand for the sovereignty of consciousness.¹⁴ The subject, then, rested on its pure historicity, which is not to say that the subject was a constant that *had* a history, or that it changed through time. Instead, 'One must, in doing away with the constituent subject, get rid of the subject itself, which is to say to arrive at an analysis that can account for the constitution of the subject in history'.¹⁵ This was because 'in the course of their history, men had never ceased constructing themselves, that is, to shift continuously the level of their subjectivity,

¹² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1 (New York, 1978), pp. 93-98; *Society Must Be Defended*, pp. 27-34, 44-46.

¹³ Foucault, *Dits et Écrits, 1954-1988*, 2 (Paris, 1994), p. 237. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from sources in French are my own. Emphasis added.

¹⁴ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London, 1997), p. 12. His earlier theorization on 'the death of man' can be found in *The Order of Things* (London, 2002), especially 'Man and his double'. For his later position see *Dits et Écrits*, 2, pp. 37-38, 48-49, 52, 54-57, 75, 169-171, 222-223, 697, 718-719.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3, p. 147.

to constitute themselves in an infinite and multiple series of different subjectivities that would never reach an end and would never place us in the presence of something that would be “man”.¹⁶ In other words, the subject ‘is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not always identical to itself’.¹⁷ Foucault’s work, then, should best be understood as a history of the self-production of subjectivity.

From his reflections on the subject, Foucault also derived an emphasis on historical *discontinuities*. This resulted from the idea that ‘Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject[...]. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought’.¹⁸ Foucault’s method sought intelligibility in usually large-scale discontinuities that alter the conditions of possibility of subjectivity.

The method of *decentring* applied to the transcendental subject was applied to all the objects Foucault studied. This implied rejecting institutions, ideal functions, and ‘ready-made objects’ as a given. Instead, he stressed that ‘What is important[...] is not institutional regularities, but much more the practical dispositions of power, the characteristic networks, currents, relays, points of support, and differences of a form of power, which are, I think, constitutive of, precisely, both the individual and the group’.¹⁹ He also rejected studying the ideal functions, of say, the prison, as an opposition of what was intended to what was

¹⁶ Foucault, *Remarks on Marx* (New York, 1991), pp. 123-124.

¹⁷ Foucault, *Dits et Écrits*, 2, p. 718.

¹⁸ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 12.

¹⁹ Foucault, *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-1974* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 15.

actually achieved (the *légal* versus the *réel*). Instead, ‘the real history of the prison is undoubtedly not governed by the successes and failures of its functionality, but is in fact inserted within strategies and tactics that find support even in these defects themselves’.²⁰ Finally, he sought to avoid reifying any object —madness, delinquency or sexuality— by studying it not as something given but rather as something constituted by technologies of power. It was through this very decentring from institutions to technologies of power, from function to strategic analysis, from the privilege of the object to the ‘perspective of the constitution of field, domains, and objects of knowledge’, that governmentality applied to the state.²¹

Decentring also implied moving away from the causes to focus on *effects*, asking *how* rather than *why* or *what*. This was a way of avoiding falling into a reifying, metaphysical or ontological consideration of the object of study, which becomes known tentatively through its very process of constitution.²² Foucault’s emphasis was on making the process intelligible rather than seeking a cause that may never be found.²³ The same applied to power. Since asking ‘who has power?’ led to ‘a labyrinth from which there is no way out’, ‘The goal was, on the contrary... to study power by looking[... at] the places where it implants itself and produces its real effects’.²⁴

²⁰ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 117-118.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-120.

²² Foucault, *Dits et Écrits*, 2, pp. 232-233.

²³ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 33.

²⁴ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 28.

Foucault's work on government fitted squarely within his long-developed reflections on *truth*. He understood governmentality as a 'history of truth', meaning the study of regimes of truth or, to use Foucault's neologism, regimes of *véridiction*.²⁵ '[A] history of truth should not be understood in the sense of a reconstruction of the genesis of the true through the elimination or rectification of errors; nor a history of the true which would constitute a historical succession of rationalities established through the rectification or elimination of ideologies'.²⁶ Rather, the government of the self and of others depended on a series of ideas and practices that could establish rules to distinguish true from false.

For example, liberalism strategically made of the market a site of *véridiction*. Good government, according to the *économistes*, was no longer simply a just government. Rather, the legitimate government was one that did not govern too much or too little. What was distinctive to liberalism was not the rule of law or market economy, since both had existed in illiberal contexts, but rather 'a critical reflection on the practice of government', a critique that may rely on limitations that were external (economy) or internal (law), but that always sought to address the excesses of intervention, driven by the belief that 'one always governs too much'.²⁷ The market established truth from outside government. Since governing too much made things worse, as in the case of fighting grain scarcity, intervention had to be limited so that certain 'natural', spontaneous mechanisms could be allowed to function.²⁸ The state had to respect those 'natural processes, or at any rate to take them into account, get them to work, or to work with them[...] It will

²⁵ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 31-37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 318-322.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

be necessary to arouse, facilitate, and to *laissez faire*, in other words, to manage and no longer to control through rules and regulations'.²⁹ These mechanisms were made intelligible by the scientific knowledge of political economy, which became indispensable know-how for good government.³⁰ 'Political economy was important, even in its theoretical formulation, inasmuch as[...] it pointed out to government where it had to go to find the principle of truth of its own governmental practice'.³¹

This was in stark contrast to the rationality of government of the administrative monarchy that preceded it. Instead of deriving truth from the model of sovereignty that came before it —based on law emanating from a prince characterized by his singularity, transcendence and exteriority to his principality— or on a critique of government such as liberalism, the administrative monarchy was based on a governmental continuum. There was an upward and downward continuity of power; one could govern a family, a convent or a state. Power was therefore multiple and immanent. In order to govern a state, the prince had to be able to govern himself, his family, household, lands and so on. This upward continuity was guaranteed by the education of the prince, and the downward continuity by 'police' which was the name given to the extension through 'policy' or 'police science' (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) of the notions of good management of the market town to the entire realm. While sovereignty acted fundamentally through legal-judicial power (the binary opposition of allowed-prohibited), this new governmental rationality

²⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 352-353

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 342-354, Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 61.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

opened up the possibility of unlimited, non-juridical regulation over spaces, circulation and population.³²

By the seventeenth century, the criteria to establish truth stopped being that of law, justice and sovereignty, on the one hand, and force, war and conquest on the other. The abandonment of *imperium* and sovereignty and the 'opening up of the field we call politics' is signalled in the phrase 'the king reigns, but he does not govern'.³³ Foucault found that truth became determined within the relations of government, in analogous forms to how scientific truth was established by internal reference to scientific discourse itself. This 'great shift from juridical veridiction to epistemic veridiction', was the birth of modern politics itself.³⁴

The 'displacement of the site of legitimation of power towards the governed produced by the theories of contract' also produced a change in the way the governed were understood.³⁵ As Pasquale Pasquino has argued,

Insofar as it is the obedience of the subjects which founds, produces, and renders visible the legitimacy of power, these same subjects, their bodies and the range of ways in which they behave towards themselves and others are to become, increasingly, the site of a new production of knowledge and the point of application of rules governing the conduct of life, objects of 'government' or, to adopt a term in use from the seventeenth century onwards, problems of the state.³⁶

³² Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 91-95, 339.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³⁴ Quoted in: Michel Senellart, 'Course Context', in: Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 331.

³⁵ Pasquale Pasquino, 'Michel Foucault (1926-1984): The Will to Knowledge', *Economy and Society*, 15/1 (1986), p. 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

The results of these changes were not, however, limited to political government as narrowly understood. 'The relation between the individual and the collective, between the totality of the social body and its elementary fragments', and indeed even the very notion of the individual were transformed through the discovery of the notion of population.³⁷ Since 'man is to population what the subject of right was to the sovereign,' it became possible to conceive the abstract, serialized and interchangeable individual as an economic or political actor.³⁸

As a 'singular mode of action' that was neither belligerent nor juridical, governmentality, as put forward by Foucault, was thus the rationality that was immanent to 'a cluster of intelligible and analysable relations' operating at different levels of analysis, going from 'the rationalization of the management of the individual', either the self or others, to 'the rationalization of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty'.³⁹ The aim was 'to study government's consciousness of itself', since these rationalizations were explicit reflections and conceptualizations on the practice, ends and rules of government carried out from within or outside government.⁴⁰ For Colin Gordon, 'A rationality of government will[...] mean a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced'.⁴¹ The notion that governing must be in some way understandable and doable for the parties

³⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

³⁹ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 2, 322; *Dits et Écrits*, 2, pp. 38, 237; *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 338; Senellart, 'Course Context', in: Ibid., p. 389.

⁴⁰ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Gordon, 'Governmental Rationality', p. 3.

involved has greatly influenced the present work. Changes in subjectivity and governing must not be sought in the works of key philosophers alone, but can rather be documented through a very vast range of texts that tried to make *some* form of the wider governing intelligible and reproducible. If the gap separating the individual from the state is breached and a common governing emerges, then the distinctness of different domains of rule and knowledge become blurred. Thus I have found in childrearing manuals deep insights into the nature of the state or illustrated changes in interiority through cold bureaucratic documents; I have made theological texts speak of mundane developments or derived codes of normality from the treatment of the deviant and matters of self from the managing of the crowd. In summary, it is clear that Foucault's later work on government made it possible and necessary to study the individual and the state as a common analytical object rather than a binary opposition. However, neither Foucault nor his followers were able to offer a systematic deployment of these findings and either neglected the importance of personal or collective government. In apprehending in tandem the self and the state, this thesis will offer what may be the first systematic application of Foucault's notions of the government of self and others.

Subjectivity and government.

In a recent historiographical survey, Emmanuel Fureix has argued that 'few historians have been globally inclined towards this general question of the individual and individuation in the history of the nineteenth century'. It is a history

that 'remains to be written'.⁴² My work aims to contribute in addressing this gap. Although my focus will be on this history of the individual, the history of subjectivity cannot be written in isolation from that of the modern state.

The main finding that structures this thesis, and its original contribution, is that two different paradigms of subjectivity and government emerged in the nineteenth century in France. I have called the first *psychological*, and the second the *sociological*. Both of these paradigms developed *before* the scientific disciplines we now understand these two terms to designate had been established and institutionalized in any of their current forms in the late nineteenth century (Théodule Ribot occupied the first academic chair in psychology in 1888, while Émile Durkheim held the first in sociology in 1913).⁴³ The psychological paradigm developed towards 1800 and dominated in the nineteenth century. The sociological paradigm emerged towards 1900 and characterized twentieth-century subjectivity.

I became aware of the importance of what contemporaries termed 'psychology' in reading the works of sociologists Norbert Elias and Richard Sennett, historian Philippe Ariès and Jean-Paul Sartre's cryptic five-volume study of Gustave Flaubert.⁴⁴ Before it emerged as a modern discipline in the 1870s, 'psychology' in

⁴² Emmanuel Fureix, 'Le siècle des identités', in: Fureix and François Jarrige, *La modernité désenchantée: Relire l'histoire du XIXe siècle français* (Paris, 2015), pp. 182, 186.

⁴³ Laurent Mucchielli, *La découverte du social: Naissance de la sociologie en France* (Paris, 1998); Jacqueline Carroy, Annick Ohayon and Régine Plas, *Histoire de la psychologie en France: XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris, 2006); Serge Nicolas, *Histoire de la psychologie* (Paris, 2016); Reuchlin, Maurice, *Histoire de la psychologie* (Paris, 2003); Jean-François Braunstein and Évelyne Pewzner, *Histoire de la psychologie* (Paris, 1999).

⁴⁴ Norbert Elias, *Power and Civility* (New York, 1982); Richard Sennett, *Authority* (London, 1993); *Families Against the City: Middle Class Homes of Industrial Chicago, 1872-1890* (New York, 1970); *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life* (New York, 1970); *The Fall of Public Man*

the eighteenth and nineteenth century made reference to the theories of the modern philosophers, from René Descartes to Immanuel Kant. As will be explained in the first chapter, these were novel theories of human cognition. They presented the mind or *psyche* (hence the term psychology) as a universal human experience. In short, all minds worked the same. This was the basis of the belief that ‘men’ were equal and the birthplace of all universalisms. In the nineteenth century, the eighteenth-century psychology was heavily revised and served as the basis of liberal theories of government and a theory of the self or *moi*. The key work on the subject for France is historian Jan Goldstein’s *The Post-Revolutionary Self*. She has documented how the weak sense of self in the eighteenth century gave rise to the unity and centrality of the modern *moi* following the theories of French philosopher Victor Cousin and others who had ties to the liberal opposition to the Restoration and the government under the July Monarchy.⁴⁵ Another key work is historian Jerrold Siegel’s *The Idea of the Self*, which explores subjectivity from the seventeenth century until the present in the West, devoting a third of the work to French thinkers who are relevant to our period and a chapter to Cousin and Émile Durkheim.⁴⁶

While eighteenth-century philosophy and political thought in general is crucial to understand the modern individual and the state, I have approached this topic only through the secondary literature. I have relied mainly on the philosophical

(London, 1993); Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York, 1962).

⁴⁵ Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008).

⁴⁶ In six chapters Siegel considers the thought of Descartes, Condillac, Diderot, Rousseau, Maine de Biran, Constant, Cousin, Fouillé, Bergson, Janet, and Durkheim. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 2005).

inquiries of Cascardi and Charles Taylor, Giacomo Marramao's political philosophy, Lucien Jaume's intellectual history of the individual in eighteenth and early nineteenth century liberal thought, and the insights of Communist philosopher and mystic Simone Weil as well as the philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch, who was a very lucid interpreter of French thought and literature.⁴⁷ However, my understanding is that the utility of a purely intellectual or philosophical approach to the individual in the nineteenth century is very limited. After 1789, notions of the individual and the state no longer belonged to high philosophical debate, but rather became a problem of policy that can only be understood through a historical approach to the ideas and practices of government.

The realization that psychology had functioned as a paradigm of subjectivity then made me reconsider the 1890s, the Third Republic's political philosophy of *Solidarisme* and especially Durkheim, the founding father of French sociology. Psychology had been both the main target of Durkheim's bitter attacks and the constant point of comparison with the newly born discipline of sociology. As well as laying the groundwork for the study of society, Durkheim offered a new theory of subjectivity and cognition, as Cousin had done before, and many of his contemporaries were working in the same direction. In effect, the twentieth century, as had been the case for the nineteenth, was born in tandem with a new paradigm of the self that re-appropriated and re-interpreted the previous one. The psychological came to signify what it does now, not the entirety of humanness, but

⁴⁷ Cascardi, *Subject of Modernity*; Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); Giacomo Marramao, *The Passage West: Philosophy After the Age of the Nation State* (London, 2012); Lucien Jaume, *L'individu effacé ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris, 1997); Simon Weil, *An Anthology* (London, 1986); Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*. Other works on subjectivity are listed in the bibliography.

an internal dimension of the self, at one particular and universal. The sociological in turn spoke of a national and historical external reality that in turned conditioned and made possible the self's interior.

The best study on subjectivity that focuses on what I have termed the 'sociological' paradigm, is *Divided Existence and Complex Society* (Published in 1963 and translated in 1974) by Jan Hendrik van den Berg, a Dutch psychiatrist.⁴⁸ Van den Berg showed how the structure of society changed alongside the structure of personality, in particular the fragmentation of the self I will discuss in the third chapter. All in all, van den Berg is the best historian of late-modern subjectivity I have encountered. Even though he was to my knowledge the first to have approached the issue of subjectivity historically and was quickly translated into English, he has been undeservedly ignored by scholarship on the topic.⁴⁹ In *The Changing Nature of Man* (published in 1956 and translated in 1961) he first made the forceful claim that human beings change through time, a change that included in particular the concept of the child.⁵⁰ In the Old Regime, children were seen as little adults, a conclusion at which Ariès would arrive independently four years later.⁵¹ As will become evident below, I am indebted to both their views on the historicity and centrality of childhood. In this thesis, then, I build on the work of Goldstein and van den Berg, but also seek to go beyond their conclusions by

⁴⁸ Jan Hendrik van den Berg, *Divided Existence and Complex Society: An Historical Approach* (Pittsburgh, 1974).

⁴⁹ See the journal issue devoted to him: *Janus Head*, 10 2 (2008).

⁵⁰ Van den Berg, *The Changing Nature of Man: Introduction to a Historical Psychology* (New York, 1983).

⁵¹ Eva-Maria Simms, 'Literacy and the appearance of childhood', *Janus Head*, 10/2 (2008), p. 445 ; Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.

bringing together discussions of subjectivity with the wider issue of 'government rationalities'.

Government of the social.

The 'government of the social' was the focus of a body of literature that, starting in the 1980s, sought to develop and apply Foucault's notions of government to the nineteenth century and the subsequent rise of modern social assistance leading up to the modern Welfare State. Working from different disciplines, Jacques Donzelot, Giovanna Procacci, Robert Castel, François Ewald, Paul Rabinow, Mitchell Dean and others, found that in the nineteenth century there was a profound shift in the practice and theory of government and the relationship between rulers and the ruled.⁵² At the heart of this shift was the development of the new notion of 'society'. 'In the course of the nineteenth century,' wrote Rabinow, 'society slowly became to be seen as an object sui generis, with its own laws, its own science, and eventually its own arts of government'.⁵³ This focus on society was 'necessary in order to render governable a democratic society'.⁵⁴

Donzelot and Procacci have shown that this shift in government was a result of the issues raised by the so-called 'social question'. The latter was an umbrella term for the wide-ranging anxieties triggered by pauperism, social disorder and the general

⁵² Jacques Donzelot, *L'invention du social: Essai sur le déclin des passions politiques* (Paris, 1984); Giovanna Procacci, *Gouverner la misère: La question sociale en France, 1789-1848* (Paris, 1993); Robert Castel, *Métamorphoses de la question sociale: Une chronique du salariat* (Paris, 1995); François Ewald, *L'État providence* (Paris, 1986); *Histoire de l'État providence* (Paris, 1996); Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Chicago, 1995); Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (London, 1991).

⁵³ Rabinow, *French Modern*, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Donzelot, *Invention du social*, p.13.

malaise brought about by rapid social transformations. For Robert Castel, ‘The “social question” is a fundamental aporia over which a society experiments the enigma of its cohesion and attempts to conjure the risk of its fracture. It is a challenge that interrogates and reassesses the capacity of a society (that which in political terms is called a nation) to exist as an ensemble tied together by relations of interdependence’.⁵⁵

The ‘social question’ was a key feature of French modernity. The French Revolution altered the make-up of the social body in seemingly irreversible ways. Most importantly, revolutionary law made impossible the survival of a series of intermediary institutions, such as the nobility, the corporations, the guilds, or the Estates, that had hitherto structured society.⁵⁶ 1789 thus inaugurated a period of incessant debates on the individual and the state, posing the riddle of how the two should relate and of what should exist in the gap left between one and the other in order to make the social order viable. While these questions have never been resolved fully, the nineteenth century saw the rise of a new domain of thought and action which Donzelot and Procacci have termed ‘the social’ (*le social*).

Donzelot and Procacci have shown that ‘the social’ emerged as a distinct way of thinking and acting upon reality in order to ‘counteract unsolved problems raised by the individualistic premises of the juridical rationality concerning political

⁵⁵ Castel, *Métamorphoses de la question sociale*, p. 18.

⁵⁶ The issue of intermediary bodies and the French state has been most extensively studied by Pierre Rosanvallon, *The Demands of Liberty: Civil Society in France since the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

relations, and the market rationality concerning economic relations'.⁵⁷ The tension between law and market was at the heart of the revolutionary experience.

The Revolution marked the end of an understanding of poverty as an individual problem that could only affect society in the form of public order. Instead, it became a collective problem, on two levels: poverty moved from the sphere of the individual fate to encompass the collectivity of the poor that, as such, posed a problem to the nation. Moreover, the problem of poverty was itself the result of key failures in the old social organization, through the impediments to free labour or lack of public assistance for the disabled poor. The liberal critique of the *Ancien Régime* had thus tied the faith of the poor to that of the new social order as a whole. A new rationality had arisen, Procacci argued, one that 'implicated society in the causes of poverty and in their resolution, and which tied the existence of poverty to the destiny of society itself'.⁵⁸ In this light, the inability to develop a social policy became increasingly destabilizing.

Post-revolutionary France inherited the challenge of wedding individual juridical equality with profound socio-economic and political inequality: a founding contradiction that the poor embodied better than no other.⁵⁹ It was also necessary to make sense of political voluntarism and to explore the possible limits to be imposed on sovereignty. Caught in a struggle between the individual and the national, sovereignty claimed an ability to transform reality through law and cast social life into the juridical mould. Pauperism in turn symbolized a challenge to the

⁵⁷ Procacci, 'Sociology and its poor', *Politics and Society*, 17 (1989), p. 165. See Donzelot, *Invention du social*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Procacci, 'Notes on the government of the social', *History of the Present*, 3 (1987), p. 13.

⁵⁹ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 16; 'Notes', p. 13.

capacities of the market to organize the social body. Confronted with these problems, French thinkers gradually started to carve out a distinct space of 'society'. Political thinkers established a distinctive interpretation of political systems whose stability rested not on constitutional checks and balances or parliamentary institutions, but on the existence within society of forces such as the aristocracy that were capable of resisting despotism.⁶⁰ Doctrinaire liberals put forward an interpretation of democracy as a sociological rather than political system.⁶¹ French liberal economists in turn developed a distinct understanding of economy as a 'moral science' and an interpretation of poverty as a fundamentally moral problem.⁶² This moral approach became generalized in the first half of the nineteenth century. Misery was read as immorality and 'antisociality, precisely so as to make it governable'.⁶³ This gave the debate on pauperism in France 'an original emphasis on its social, rather than merely economic implications'.⁶⁴

The social interpretation of poverty shifted the focus from the need to change 'the material conditions in which the poor lived', to 'the social conditions that generated them'.⁶⁵ While serving as 'a strategy of depoliticization of inequalities' and thus diffusing the potentially threatening political implications of poverty, society served to open up a new field of intervention beyond the political.⁶⁶ Society was 'at the same time subject and field of application of new practices of

⁶⁰ Annelien de Dijn, *French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville: Liberty in a Levelled Society?* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 127 and chapter 6; Theodore Zeldin, 'English ideals in French politics during the nineteenth century', *The Historical Journal*, 2 1 (1959), pp. 40-58.

⁶¹ Rosanvallon, 'The history of the word "democracy" in France', *Journal of Democracy*, 6/4 (1995), pp. 148-149.

⁶² Nathalie Sigot, 'Utility and justice: French liberal economists in the 19th century', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 17 4 (2010), HAL version (hal-00637265), pp. 4-10.

⁶³ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 24.

⁶⁴ Procacci, 'Sociology and its poor', *Politics and Society*, 17 (1989), p. 168.

⁶⁵ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 318.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 25.

government' that could 'neutralize the potential conflicts caused by inequality in a society founded on equality'.⁶⁷ By classifying problems of inequality and poverty as social rather than political problems, it was possible to see how the ability to deal with those problems lay outside the field of political agency. It is not that the social was apolitical, Procacci argued, 'it is the political that through the social becomes in turn governable, that is to say delivered from the yoke of a consensus on the founding principles of the social pact'.⁶⁸

Misery was targeted preferably within the social itself, at a calculated distance from the state that could remain passive by principle or budgetary constraint. Through philanthropic action it was possible to dissociate the problem of poverty from labour. 'Labour became therefore just one among other means of moralizing and pedagogic intervention... reform was not to modify the industrial system, but rather to promote those practices of citizenship that fit into it'.⁶⁹ And yet, the very social role of the poor was still defined by labour and written into law through highly repressive institutions. 'Only through labour could the poor return to society what the latter had given them in terms of rights'. This led to the politicization of the economy that erupted in 1848 as a demand for the right to work and the politicization of law and citizenship that led to claims of universal (male) suffrage.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 18, 24.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁹ Procacci, 'Sociology', p. 169.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 179, quote in 175. In 1833, the tailor Grignon wrote 'Let us not forget that the rich alone make the law, and that we will not free ourselves from the yoke of misery than by exercising, like them, our rights as citizens'. In: Alain Faure and Jacques Rancière (eds), *La parole ouvrière, 1830-1851* (Paris, 1976), p. 81.

Governing 1848.

Having demonstrated the condition for the autonomous rise of social discourse, Procacci's study finishes in 1848. Donzelot, in turn, started his work by analysing how the 1848 revolution made the issue of sovereignty highly problematic by posing the question: 'how can one give rights to those who suffer an inferiority in their civil condition in relation to their political condition without giving them rights over the state?'⁷¹ For social and political thinkers in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was the French Revolution's notion of sovereignty that was to blame, along with the rights-bearing individual that derived from it. The social question had revealed a founding flaw in the order established by the Revolution and its 'instrument par excellence: the language of law'. The revolutionary ideal, what Pierre Rosanvallon has termed 'nomophilia' (love of law), was now associated with the dangers of socialism.⁷² Thus, 1848 posed the problem of 'separating poverty from work with the intention of dealing with one and the other, outside of the register of subjective rights'.⁷³ In the second half of the century, following especially by the work of sociologists from Auguste Comte to Émile Durkheim, society was conceptualized as a law-giving force that would avoid the problem of sovereignty by relying on social norms.⁷⁴ Instead of a unified subject of rights, the individual became fragmented into a myriad of social duties, thus avoiding 'the direct confrontation between the individual and the state which the notion of right carried'.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Donzelot, *Invention du social*, pp. 13, 21, 40-41, quote in 49 and 71.

⁷² Rosanvallon, *Demands of Liberty*, p. 6.

⁷³ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 317.

⁷⁴ Procacci, 'Sociology', p. 183.

⁷⁵ Procacci, 'Notes', p. 15.

Donzelot has analysed the gradual 'invention' of the social through the work of sociologists, economists, social reformists, and legal and political theorists from a range of political backgrounds that converged in the late nineteenth century in the creation of *solidarité* or *solidarisme*. As a French alternative to British new-liberalism, American progressivism, and similar currents of thought elsewhere, solidarism rested on the 'discovery' of the 'scientific fact' that society displayed the same functional interdependence and solidarity between the parts and the whole, thus superseding the confrontation between the rights-bearing individual and the state.

Léon Bourgeois, one of the leading political figures of the Republican camp, systematized solidarism into a doctrine of government in 1896, shortly after his brief term as prime minister. Subsequently claimed as the governmental doctrine of the Radical republicans in power from the 1890s to 1914, solidarism promised to have found a middle ground between socialist collectivism and liberal individualism, which enabled the Republic to embark on the path of social reform.⁷⁶

The new policies implied a new understanding of the recipient of social assistance that tied aid to autonomy: 'The state should by all means intervene to aid needy persons, but it might do so only to promote their individual initiative. In twenty-

⁷⁶ Serge Audier, *Léon Bourgeois: Fonder la solidarité* (Paris, 2007), p. 8; see: Léon Bourgeois, *Solidarité* (Paris, 1902); Bourgeois and Alfred Croiset (eds), *Essai d'une philosophie de la solidarité* (Paris, 1907); Marie-Claude Blais, *La solidarité: Histoire d'une idée* (Paris, 2007); Judith Stone, *The Search for Social Peace: Reform Legislation in France, 1890-1914* (Albany, 1985).

five words or less, such was solidarism'.⁷⁷ But the repercussions were much greater; this doctrine signified a new way of governing society. 'If an individual's action was a function not of his own moral character, as liberals believed, but rather of his place within a social whole, then it made little sense to try to reform the individual separate from the social milieu within which his actions were formed and normed'.⁷⁸ While Foucault argued that frugality and limitation were central to the liberal art of government that asked 'how not to govern too much', Donzelot has shown that solidarism sought to govern 'neither too much, nor too little'.⁷⁹ Solidarism offered 'at the same time a foundation and a limit to state intervention' as well as a mode of governing that would operate through 'the regulation of the social bond rather than [though] its fixed maintenance or[...] the voluntaristic transformation of social structures'.⁸⁰

The social had become a new and totalizing grid through which to read reality, politics, law, and the economy. 'Discursively, society no longer had an exterior'.⁸¹ The view of society as a self-regulating organism with its own laws allowed for the abandonment of revolutionary notions of sovereignty and the rights-bearing juridical subject. For Bourgeois, 'In destroying the abstract and a priori notion of the isolated man, the knowledge of the laws of natural solidarity destroys with the same blow the equally abstract notion of the state'.⁸² This 'destruction' was effected by legal theorists at the time, and in particular Léon Duguit and Maurice

⁷⁷ Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path: German Influence on Social Reform in France after 1870* (Chapel Hill, 1991), p. 234.

⁷⁸ Rabinow, *French Modern*, p. 11.

⁷⁹ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 13, 17, 19, 24, 28, 319-320; Donzelot, *Invention du social*, p. 84.

⁸⁰ Donzelot, *Invention du social*, pp. 85, 103.

⁸¹ Rabinow, *French Modern*, p. 12.

⁸² Bourgeois, *Solidarité*, p. 87.

Hauriou.⁸³ In his introduction to a translation of Duguit's work, British pluralist Harold Laski explained this 'sociological interpretation of the state' that denied sovereignty and the rights of both the state and individuals by proposing a transition from *subjective rights* (derived from the person) to *objective rights* (derived from social functions). 'Sovereignty is born of rights. M. Duguit, in substance, denies all rights, and insists simply upon the existence of duties. Each of us has certain functions to perform, born of our position in society. Our duty is to perform these functions. Sovereignty would mean the unlimited and irresponsible will of those who exercise it; but they are, in strict fact, limited by the purpose it is to serve. They have power for their special function, and no more'. For the State, this function was to 'provide for certain public needs'.⁸⁴ As summarized by the theorist of guild socialism, Ramiro de Maeztu, 'there are no other rights than the rights annexed to the social functions of every man. No functions, no rights!'⁸⁵ Donzelot concludes that 'From the point of view of Solidarité, the individual is no more than a function. He has tasks to carry out but in no way rights that belong to him on his own'.⁸⁶

Hence, the debates on social problems and poverty were central to the search to articulate modern practices of government that could balance formal equality and

⁸³ Donzelot, *Invention du social*, p. 89.

⁸⁴ Harold Laski, 'Introduction', in: Léon Duguit, *Law in the Modern State* (London, 1921), pp. xvii, xix-xx. Julian Wright and H.S. Jones, 'A pluralist history of France?', in Wright and Jones (eds), *Pluralism and the Idea of the Republic in France* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 1-22 and Wright, 'Vision and reality: Joseph Paul-Boncour and Third Republic pluralism', in: Ibid., pp. 179-197; Cécile Laborde, 'Pluralism, syndicalism and corporatism: Léon Duguit and the crisis of the state, 1900-25', *History of European Ideas*, 22 3 (1996), pp. 227-244; *Pluralist Thought and the State in Britain and France, 1900-25* (Basingstoke, 2000).

⁸⁵ Ramiro de Maeztu, *Authority, Liberty and Function in the Light of the War* (London, 1916), p. 189. Marie-Claire Belleau, 'The "juristes inquiets": Legal classicism and criticism in early twentieth-century France', *Utah Law Review*, 379/2 (1997), pp. 379-424.

⁸⁶ Donzelot, *Invention du social*, p. 94.

actual inequality while warding off social, economic and political disruption. In the nineteenth century, the notion of society went from that of an agglomeration of individuals doubling as citizens and rational economic actors, to that of society as an organic totality generating webs of interdependency. This shift in rationality went hand in hand with the development of new fields of knowledge, technologies of intervention and new arts of government.

My contribution to this debate on government will be to bring in the individual. These profound and wide-ranging changes in governmental rationalities, I will argue, necessarily implied shifts in the way the subject was understood, marking a transition from the rights-based personhood of the sovereign individual to the concept of an agent who was fragmented into interwoven social duties and functions, and whose *self* was coextensive with its social obligations and tasks. These are the changes we will explore. Historian Carolyn Dean has carried out a similar twofold exploration of subjectivity and government. In *The Frail Social Body*, she has analysed in tandem the discourses and practices of the individual body and the social body through the ‘fantasies’ of pornography and homosexuality in interwar France. I have done a similarly dual exploration of the individual and the self through the ‘fantasies’ of pauperism and domesticity and the state policies that sought to address these questions.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Carolyn Dean, *The Frail Social Body: Pornography, Homosexuality, and Other Fantasies in Interwar France* (Berkeley, 2000).

Current literature on the individual.

Many of the works of scholarship that have supported my enquiry were marginal, with little repercussions in mainstream social history. In France they have been overtaken by a more recent literature on subjectivity at the turn of the millennium.⁸⁸ Jean-Claude Kaufmann, Bernard Lahire, Danilo Martuccelli and François de Singly, Christian Le Bart, among others, have been prolific in their development of a new 'sociology of the subject'.⁸⁹ De Singly and Rémi Lenoir are also among those working on a new 'sociology of the family'.⁹⁰ For all their valuable insights, their sociological approach leads to one inevitable conclusion. Identities are social constructs, made exclusively with social building blocks, not private dreams or illusions. Our agency and creativity is limited to playing with these pre-existing blocks and the social norms that govern their combinations. 'If it is true that the instruments of invention (images and emotions) are most volatile', Kaufmann argues, 'they are inscribed in procedures that are socially defined and very precise'. 'S'inventer soi-même ne s'invente pas', he concludes, 'Ego ne se rêve pas n'importe comment'.⁹¹ In short, the subject only has agency in the world, so long as it renounces agency over itself.

⁸⁸ The recent French work on the topic which I have found most useful is by anthropologist François Laplantine, *Le sujet: Essai d'anthropologie politique* (Paris, 2007) and *Le social et le sensible: Introduction à une anthropologie modale* (Paris, 2005).

⁸⁹ Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *Ego: pour une sociologie de l'individu* (Paris, 2010) and *L'invention de soi: Une théorie de l'identité* (Paris, 2010); François de Singly, *L'individualisme est un humanisme* (Paris, 2011), *Les uns avec les autres: Quand l'individu crée du lien* (Paris, 2003), *Libres ensemble: L'individualisme dans la vie commune* (Paris, 2000), de Singly and Danilo Martuccelli, *Les sociologies de l'individu* (Paris, 2012); Martuccelli, *Grammaires de l'individu* (Paris, 2002); Bernard Lahire, *La culture de l'individu* (Paris, 2004) and *L'homme pluriel: Les ressorts de l'action* (Paris, 2011); Philippe Corcuff, Christian Le Bart and François de Singly (eds) *L'individu aujourd'hui: Débats sociologiques et contrepoints philosophiques* (Rennes, 2010). Le Bart, *L'individualisation* (Paris, 2008); Xavier Molénat (ed.), *L'individu contemporain: Regards sociologiques* (Paris, 2006). This list is not exhaustive.

⁹⁰ De Singly has numerous works on the family, see *Le soi, le couple et la famille* (Paris, 1996); Rémi Lenoir, *Généalogie de la morale familiale* (Paris, 2003).

⁹¹ Kaufmann, *L'invention desSoi*, p. 291.

My findings contradict those of Kaufmann and the sociologists of the individual. Instead of emphasizing the fixity of the subject, what will come forward in the following pages is the surprising fluidity and continuously changing development of the individual, the family and the ideas and practices of governing. In this shifting landscape of ideas and practices, I will show how the main task of the subject was precisely self-fashioning and an active and creative adaptation to the milieu. As the third chapter will show, the understanding of the individual sustained by these sociologists, in which the self is made up only of social materials, in itself has its own a history and emerged only towards 1900 as a new way of theorizing subjectivity.

These works can be seen within the overwhelming ‘intellectual and political backlash’ of the 1980s against the questioning of the humanist, liberal subject that characterized the 1968 movement in France and Foucault in particular.⁹² This ‘backlash’ represented a fruitful new age in French liberal thought, which is only slowly receiving the scholarly attention it deserves.⁹³ But this new tradition has little new to say about the subject, whose status must remain the founding *a priori* of the whole liberal edifice. In 1975 the socialist politician Jacques Delors first theorized the present age as characterized by *change*.⁹⁴ But together with the 1977 study *L’acteur et le système* by sociologists Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg,

⁹² Alexander Nehamas, ‘Foreword’, in: Alain Renaut, *The Era of the Individual: A Contribution to the History of Subjectivity* (Princeton, 1999), p. vii.

⁹³ See, for example, Stephen Sawyer and Iain Stewart (eds), *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Anti-totalitarianism and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950* (New York, 2016); Daniel Zamora (ed.), *Critiquer Foucault: Les années 1980 et la tentation néolibérale* (Brussels, 2014); Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York, 2004).

⁹⁴ Jacques Delors, *Changer* (Paris, 1975); Eric de Bodman and Bertrand Richard, *Changer les relations sociales: La politique de Jacques Delors* (Paris, 1976).

Delors understood change as largely impeding personal and collective agency.⁹⁵ Change happened *to* the subject and society. As part of this ‘backlash’, Donzelot and Castel’s most relevant works for this thesis, as well as Pierre Rosanvallon’s entire *œuvre*, may be read as part of this attempt to narrow the scope of transformation to which persons and groups could aspire.⁹⁶ By showing how the modern individual was inseparable from self-fashioning and active participation, I hope to reassess the possibilities of human agency in nineteenth-century France.

The novelty of this new literature on the individual has been human rights, the modernized version of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century natural law. As in the work of Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, human rights have been mobilized as a way of shoring up the liberal subject. The task is to ‘preserve the most valuable aspect of modernity, the idea of human rights, which are shared by all simply by virtue of the fact that we are human, whatever our particular circumstances’.⁹⁷ To question the universally human subject, the simple fact of being human, is thus to undermine if not demolish the possibility of human rights.

But, at the time of writing, the French Republic is under a national state of emergency. As liberal rights and judicial oversight stand suspended, it becomes plain that the debate on modernity is not exhausted in the issue of human rights or the affirmation of the sacred centrality of the modern individual as subject and object of all rights. Equally, it becomes evident that the problem of security and the

⁹⁵ Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, *L'acteur et le système* (Paris, 1981).

⁹⁶ See the last chapters in Donzelot, *Invention du social* and Castel, *Métamorphoses de la question sociale*.

⁹⁷ Nehamas, ‘Foreword’, p. ix. See especially Luc Ferry and Renaut, *La pensée 68: essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain* (Paris, 1985).

state cannot be reduced to that of the protection of individual rights. The fault lines of modernity run much deeper. Today it becomes ever more pertinent to inquire into the historical origins of our institutions and beliefs. To do so is to carry on a conversation begun by the generation in France that experienced the previous state of emergency from 1961 to 1962.

Freedom and repression.

Many of the typically Foucauldian themes of marginality and deviance have been touched upon in the main part of my thesis. The notable exception is the topic of incarceration. This is not because prisons were not important in the processes that concern this thesis. In fact, prisoners were the testing grounds of individualizing techniques, such as the normalizing effect of meditation and rumination, which required isolation and private cells; 'each cell forms a separate and complete prison, where the detainee ignores the name and even the existence of his neighbour'.⁹⁸ A new type of privatizing isolation, the old monastic arrangement of the private cell now served re-socializing rather than contemplative ends. Private cells were being promoted in the 1840s, particularly in Belgium and the United States, well before private rooms or indeed private space had become a common practice in the rest of society.⁹⁹ However, my aim has been to focus on the positive and productive aspects of power, rather than on its negative and punitive

⁹⁸ Émile van Hoorebeke, *De la récidive dans les rapports avec la réforme pénitentiaire* (Ghent, 1846), p. 196.

⁹⁹ Michelle Perrot, *Histoire de chambres* (Paris, 2013); Alain Corbin, 'Coulisses', in: Ariès and George Duby (eds), *Histoire de la vie privée*, 4 (Paris, 1999), pp. 407-408.

dimensions.¹⁰⁰ While social historians have for many decades explored the government of deviance and marginality, my concern is with the government of the general population and normality.

These positive aspects of power were the foundation of modern governing. The world that emerged in the nineteenth century, as Patrick Joyce has shown, was to be governed *through* freedom. This focus on freedom as the technology for government, both of oneself and of society, is what Foucauldians understand as 'liberalism'. Liberalism in this thesis will thus mean the theory behind the notion that modern individuals and society must be government *through* freedom. This stands in contrast to Cameralism or 'police sciences', an eighteenth-century theory or 'art' of government that preceded liberalism, and which posited the state's ability to know and act upon transparent territories and inhabitants with the end of subjecting all domains of life to minute scrutiny and control. Conversely, for Joyce,

'liberalism' ceded governance to an unknowable, and now opaque, object of rule, that of the liberal subject.[...] Liberalism therefore depended on cultivating a certain sort of self, one that was reflexive and self-watching. Yet this self, as it were, also watched liberalism, in the sense that liberal governmentality depended, and depends, upon cultivating persons who could, and can, practice freedom by constantly questioning its limits. In liberalism rule is ceded to a self that must

¹⁰⁰ The best recent historical work on justice and criminology is that of Martine Kaluszynski, 'Ordre(s) et désordre(s) en République: Contribution à une socio-histoire politique de l'État, des sciences de gouvernement, du droit et de la justice', Habilitation thesis, Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Grenoble, 2005); *La République à l'épreuve du crime: La construction du crime comme objet politique, 1880-1920* (Paris, 2002).

constantly monitor the very civil society and political power that are at once the guarantee of freedom and its threat.¹⁰¹

Therefore, instead on focusing on the punitive aspects of government, the topic of welfare and social reform will serve to throw into relief the discourses and practices that governed the general population through freedom.

My main claim is that government was one and the same as self-government. Rather than emphasising institutions of outside constraint, I argue that self-government was inseparable from the liberty of agents that, in each domain of influence they had, acted out of autonomous choices. But these choices would be conditioned and delimited from the outside. This was largely the dream that was born in 1789, to eliminate oppressive powers to leave way for free, moral individuals who would choose and be educated to choose to comply with the regime. The ideal was to govern, not through repressive laws, but rather *gouverner les mœurs*. This would not only shape and moralize collective and individual thinking, but also bring into being the very experiences we call common opinion and the self as a necessary pre-conditions for modern life.

After the First World War, the apparatuses and technologies used to govern subjectivity were much more refined and saturated than in the period considered here.¹⁰² Even if the nineteenth century would seem too disciplinary for our standards, there was nothing akin to the precision of medical, psychological, technological or administrative interventions that were later developed to shape

¹⁰¹ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), p. 4.

¹⁰² Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London, 1989) and *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1999).

individuals. In comparison, the grips of the state seem much looser in the nineteenth century, if not inside the poorhouse or prison, at least in society at large. This was the case even among those who encountered the state in all its brutal severity. Vagrants were among those who faced the most illiberal disciplining policies, and few men in turn personified the vagabond better than Victor-Eugène-Adrien Estellé. The son of an accountant, he was born in 1827 in Morlaix (Finistère). Locals only remembered that long ago young Estellé and his brother Hercule had left for Paris, where they each squandered a fortune worth 12,000 francs. In Paris at age 26 he served 1 month, the first of 33 known prison sentences, for the crime of 'port illegal de décoration' or unlawfully displaying a civil or military distinction. However, his long career as a tramp was to begin at age 33 with his first sentence for vagabondage.¹⁰³ The day his last prison sentence finished in May 1889 in the town of Chinon (Indre-et-Loire), Estellé, aged 62, was completely paralyzed and mentally infirm. Contravening the regulation on the subject, the prison guards carried him outside and placed him on the pavement where he was found by the local police officer, who transported him to the municipal hospice on a wheelbarrow, in the midst of the town's celebrations for the Centenary. No responsibilities were sought. A hundred days later, Estellé died in the hospice leaving behind a debt of 126 francs for his hospice sojourn and 12 francs for his burial, which the mayor of Chinon and the prefect frantically tried to claim from all the places where Estellé could have had his legal *domicile de secours* to no avail. The case of Estellé illustrates the limits of repression. His itinerant life spanned no fewer than 29 years, of which he spend only four and a half, or fifteen per cent, in prison. In a fourteen-year span he was detained only once. His

¹⁰³ Archives Départementales d'Indre-et-Loire. 3X141.

sentencing had even been harsher than usual —the average sentence for vagrancy was 18 days detainment in nineteenth-century Brittany, 50 days for Estellé.¹⁰⁴ There existed no unified approach to the problem, and localities often just gave the vagabond a coin and sent the nuisance off to the next town. Since the capacity of the state to shape subjectivity was still relatively weak, nineteenth-century France serves as a case study that emphasizes the importance of personal freedom and self-government in the rise of modern subjectivity and the modern state.

Medicalization and freedom.

The focus is therefore on freedom, despite the fact that this work focuses on institutions of control, and in particular medicine. The second chapter shows that the gradual changes from a moral to an impersonal and functional understanding of poverty, public assistance and motherhood were heavily mediated by medical discourse. Medics will also feature prominently in the third chapter. Medical discourses about ‘man’ necessarily changed along with the developing understandings of ‘man’. In the first half of the century, health was poorly distinguished from ‘moral behaviour’ more broadly, so that wellbeing affected and reflected the moral quality of the *moi*. ‘[P]hysical health results from moral health’, wrote Joanny Perier in his doctoral thesis in medicine.¹⁰⁵ In the second part of the century, we will see how the previously unified self gradually became fragmented. There was an internal and an external *moi*. Affecting the latter alone, illness no longer referred back to the ‘moral’ essence of the self, but was rather one more condition that was susceptible of being governed from the social outside. As

¹⁰⁴ Guy Haudebourg, *Mendiants et vagabonds en Bretagne au XIXe siècle* (Rennes, 1998), p. 339.

¹⁰⁵ Joanny Perier, *Aperçu critique des théories sur les idées et les facultés humains* (Paris, 1836), p. iii.

poverty, illness came to be seen in an impersonal light. Instead of morality having to spring from the depths of the subject, the multiple facets of the self could each be subject to social education and treatment by a new diversity of experts and authorities. The way of producing normative individuals thus changed. The heavy focus on disciplining selves and families of the first half of the century gave way to the faith in the regulating faculties of organized sociability. Experts were to intervene not only in cases of pathology. In schools, for example, teachers were to implement pedagogical techniques capable of producing self-governing individuals in ways that had earlier been thought as belonging in the privacy of the self or the home, as we will see.

The importance of medicine and expertise is a recurring theme in Foucauldian literature. The terms ‘medicalization’ or ‘biopower’ commonly signify the existence of hidden coercive powers that seek to shape individuals from above, especially medicine and psychiatry. Foucauldian works have explored these themes through the theory of social control (Donzelot, Isaac Joseph and Philippe Fritsch) or of governmentality studies (Procacci, Dean, Nikolas Rose and Donzelot).¹⁰⁶ Both currents study social issues mainly through the rationalities, knowledge apparatuses, and discourses that make them possible, which are documented through published books. These works conflict with the most compelling archival research. Historians have shown that Foucauldian ‘discipline’, ‘normalization’, ‘the government of the poor’, ‘a globalizing and totalizing power’, ‘bio-politics’, and so on, at any meaningful scale, cannot be borne out by the archives in our period. For

¹⁰⁶ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*; Dean, *Constitution of Poverty*; Donzelot, *L'invention du social* and *La police des familles* (Paris, 1977); Isaac Joseph, Philippe Fritsch and Alain Battegay, *Disciplines à domicile* (Fontenay-Sous-Bois, 1977); Rose, *Inventing Our Selves* (Cambridge, 1996); *Governing the Soul*; and *Powers of Freedom*.

Catherine Duprat, the leading authority in social action in the first half of the nineteenth century, the discourses and practices she has documented 'are often far from confirming those interpretative hypotheses' of medicalization. It would be reading too much into the weak, small, often archaic and always underfunded private and public initiatives of the early nineteenth century, as well as into the intentions and ambitions of even the most interventionist governmental and philanthropic elites.¹⁰⁷ *L'hygiène dans la République*, the exceptional work on hygiene and health by Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, closes with the question of whether bio-politics 'resists empirical analysis'. Despite having studied the period from 1870 to 1918, when state spending and interventions increased considerably, they have found 'no trace' of bio-power, only a long list of frustrated medical utopias. Murard and Zylberman tactfully avoid criticizing Foucault, and find nothing to object to the notion of bio-power itself, 'provided that no positivity is attributed to it, no observational contents; in short, that it be understood as an idea (interpretation of ends) and not as a concept (explanation of facts by their causes)'.¹⁰⁸

It seems that trying to confront ends and facts, or the discourses and practices pertaining to the poor and social government in the long nineteenth century leads to an impasse in which the former emerge as ambitious fantasies and the latter as lethargic realities. Consequently, the connection between ideas and actions becomes less, not more intelligible. Historian Robert Nye points the way out of this gridlock by focusing on the individualizing effects of medicine. Nye has argued that Foucault placed his focus increasingly on powers that depended on independent

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Duprat, *Usage et pratiques de la philanthropie*, I (Paris, 1997), pp. 583-587.

¹⁰⁸ Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, *L'hygiène dans la République* (Paris, 1996), p. 584.

subjects who freely 'embraced their social duties as individuals' rather than tyrannies compelling them by force. 'Medicalization', Nye argues, 'is no longer understood as a nefarious collaboration of experts and state authority imposed from above, but a process whereby medical and health precepts have been embodied in individuals who assume this responsibility for themselves'. He points out the irony in the fact that the aim of 'a perfectly healthy population' that consisted of 'natural' and 'unmedicalized' bodies, could 'only be achieved by the individual internalization of a totally medicalized view of life'.¹⁰⁹ Therefore the dichotomy between high aims that could lead straight to tyranny and disappointing results that threatened anarchy loses sight of the fact that what mediated both these extremes was a concern with free and voluntary compliance, not force; by the very fact of their contrast, both poles pointed to a programmatic need for observant subjectivities. The point was not blind obedience, but the internalization of norms. Following the work of Roddey Reid, I will also read the gap between grand discourses and limited practices as generating a sense of lack, itself programmatic, productive and mobilizing of new forms of agency and subjectivity, as is documented throughout this thesis.¹¹⁰ This thesis therefore places subjectivity at the heart of the very profound governmental changes that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Rather than confronting ideas and practices, this thesis aims to tease out how both the narratives about the self and 'others' in a wide range of disciplines and charitable and state practices, especially in the interrelated fields of beneficence

¹⁰⁹ Robert Nye, 'The evolution of the concept of medicalization in the late twentieth century', *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 39/2 (2003), pp. 117-119.

¹¹⁰ Roddey Reid, *Families in Jeopardy* (Stanford, 1993).

and schooling, spelt out rationally a shared problem of governing autonomous selves and others. The focus will be on the ways in which the individualizing and voluntary internalization and embodiment of a greater moral order or social organization were made thinkable and practicable in nineteenth-century France. In other words, I will explore the many and shifting concepts and technologies that sought to render the self-government of each individual both possible and meaningful. While a polity of perfectly self-governing subjects may have been the utopia within all the utopias of nineteenth-century France, I nevertheless seek to shine an historical light on the logics, tactics and pedagogies for self-rule that were available to contemporaries, both in the form of technologies of the self and through state policy. I thus wish to show how the ideal of a perfectly ordered society went hand in hand with the dream of faultless self-command, while it was in the sharp, necessary and irreducible contrast that separated both from reality that the modern need for governing the self and others was posed as an historical problem. Because of my research questions and sources, I have very little to say on how actual individuals translated all of this into lived experiences, since this has not been my aim.

Sources.

I have used both printed and archival sources for this study. Since I have sought to analyse the interrelationship between self-government and the state, the contemporary authors selected are usually close to the structures of state power, and more specifically the broad family of liberals in the first and that of republicans in the second half of the nineteenth century. As will be detailed in each

chapter, these include very well known alongside obscure figures. In the second chapter I balance these views with those of Catholics and conservatives in order to show how both were very creative partners in an on-going conversation. I have consulted very large bodies of published texts for the period studied. Gustave Flaubert once famously said that writing history was like drinking an ocean and pissing a cupful. If that were to be the case, then a genealogy reduces the researcher's yield to a single drop. The Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) was an invaluable source for printed sources. Some publications not available in the BnF I was able to locate in collections in the UK and Spain or in the local libraries or archives of the French cities I visited —the latter were especially important in order to document very local debates on social reform and obscure technical texts. However, the main source of texts has been the enormous digital collections housed especially by Google Books, the BnF's Gallica or Archive.org, among others. The ready availability of such overwhelming collections in the public domain and their keyword-search functionalities may well represent an epistemological earthquake for the student of the out-of-copyright past, and of the American and Western European nineteenth century in particular. Despite the many decades of experience with computers and databases, researchers have never been confronted with a ready-made, immediately accessible, open-ended and inexhaustible body of sources for which no categorization or indexing is possible, no hierarchy of value feasible. The logic governing what is digitized and what is not remains always opaque and elusive with no respect for boundaries, while the collections themselves keep growing exponentially with no order or end in sight. The full epistemological and methodological implications for the discipline of history and its understanding of 'historical source' implied by this shift still remain

to be assessed. Yannick Maignien, in identifying the 'nouvelle conception de l'encyclopédisme' and a 'nouvelle économie de l'information' implied by digitizing projects back in the mid 1990s, spoke of a shift from the boundary-policing 'Ordre du discours' that Foucault found to be integral to the constitution of scholarly disciplines, to an 'ordinateur du discours', that is, a new mechanized way of (dis)ordering discourse itself and 'dematerializing' thought in which such disciplinary limits were becoming blurred.¹¹¹ Be it as it may, it is clear that without these technologies access to the range and volume of printed sources used for this thesis would not have been possible. The same would be the case of one part of my analytical approach. Through advanced keyword-search functionalities, I was able to trace specific ideas or concepts, such as 'normal criminal', 'self-mastery' or 'voluntary discipline', from the time when they started to appear in print in these collections to their simultaneous development across disciplines or genres. Accounting for the technical limitations of text-recognition technology and having no control or even clear knowledge of what is included and omitted in these collections, I found myself at times on an uncertain methodological and epistemological ground when trying to date the rise and demise of ideas, assess their currency and analyse how they crossed disciplinary lines. However, if I had relied only on hardcopy sources in the BnF as earlier Foucauldian archaeologies and genealogies had done, it is unclear that this problem would have been avoided altogether.

¹¹¹ Yannick Maignien, 'La constitution de la collection numérisée de la Bibliothèque nationale de France: Vers un nouvel encyclopédisme?', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 10/1 (1995), pp. 51-57; and 'La bibliothèque virtuelle ou de l'Ars memoria à Xanadu', *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France*, 40/2 (1995), pp. 8-17.

For my archival research, I selected archives from cities that preferably had towards a hundred thousand inhabitants before the end of the century, since urban centres served as the laboratories in which new ideas of social assistance were explored. Logistical reasons, pertaining to time, funding and online availability of inventories, restricted my selection to western France, namely to Angers, Bordeaux, Limoges, Nantes, Rennes, Toulouse and Tours. These cities make up an exceptional sampling of the social reform initiatives carried out by the different ideological traditions in nineteenth-century France. Except for Bordeaux, where the city's archive was closed at the time, in each city I visited both the municipal and the departmental archives, and through the latter was also able to take into account the policies at play in these departments as a whole and in smaller cities, towns and villages. I found little of interest in Toulouse, while the municipal Archives de Paris and the Archives nationales house only patchy information for public assistance from the later decades of the nineteenth to 1914. The documentation consulted is listed at the end of this work.

At these archives, I sought to gather sources that would document the full range of nineteenth-century local initiatives that contemporaries considered social assistance, and which often overlapped with subjects such as schooling, health and repression. My original aim was to uncover the underlying logic that led France to shift at the end of the nineteenth century from restrictive and repressive approach to social problems, to a modern and more inclusive focus on social rights in the twentieth century.

For most of my life I have been trying to find clear-cut answers to the problem of poverty and modernization, not just at the material level, but also more broadly as a gradual process in which human beings come to be seen as valuable elements in society. In my mind, the welfare state epitomized this humane shift, so I wished to uncover the types of reasoning that made such developments possible and desirable. This was not a process that took centuries of painstaking maturity as the narratives of underdevelopment suggest, but rather a shift that took place in the industrialized world in the course of a few decades around 1900. I grew up in the 'third world', in what was at the time the sleepy and impoverished first city of the New World, Santo Domingo, and my first memories are inseparable from concerns about development and social betterment. This was therefore not a purely intellectual pursuit. In my research, I sought to find tangible and programmatic responses to the denigrating destitution of the many, the real suffering and pressing problems to which I was a privileged witness.

In my archival sources, I expected to find a clear discursive thread that would enable me to make sense of the shift in logic that took place at the fin de siècle. Instead, the vast mosaic of local policies and institutions offered little overall coherence, while the administrative documents had little to say or muse about the measures being implemented. I found that the discussions in municipal and departmental bodies offered a very necessary context for the initiatives officials were implementing, although they often just repeated national debates. In Paris social issues were bitterly debated at length, but these disputes did not pivot upon hardship and how to remedy it, but rather dealt with profound and very abstract reflections on the nature of the individual and the social body. Social problems

made little sense without considering what made them specifically *social*, and the social was a tangled mass of problems that were inseparable from the wider, lingering questions of modernity, the nation and the responsible individual. The straightforward answers I hoped to find in local and palpable actions kept pointing away from themselves to ever more inclusive and elusive contexts. This made me rely heavily on printed texts. Recent scholarship has arrived at similar findings, concluding that discourses about poverty reflected wider concerns with differences or collective lacks, as we will see. Unable to make sense of the topic that had occupied me for many years, faced with over a hundred thousand documents of opaque material and with a thesis to complete, I ‘discovered’ Foucault who offered me a framework that would enable me to make sense of the process that I have just described and link local initiatives with the slippery and receding intellectual and discursive structures that gave them meaning. In the end, the answers I have struggled to find point to the modern self, as a site of government and the ultimate reference point of all these debates.

Methods.

Over the years, I had considered the state from many different angles. In my time in Durham I have focused on the more cultural and intellectual angles of the matter. For my doctorate, I sought to understand the state through the study of welfare programmes and reformist thought, and via Foucault, my research slipped into the wider issue of ‘government’, then to the family, then to the self that sustains the political construction that is the modern individual, which in turn is the very foundation of the modern state. If this work shifts frequently between these

objects of study, it is ultimately because they are all, in my mind, part of the same question. I therefore adopt a Foucauldian approach that has a very broad understanding of what the state is.

I am a historian by training. And I spent my many years of higher education within the disciplinary boundaries of history, leaning towards materialist and structuralist approaches. The research questions that drove my thesis forward, however, pushed me far from my comfort zone. The level of my unease will be plain to any historian reading these pages. Having no previous interest in Foucault or philosophy, I was most often quite out of my depth. The full profundity and complexity of the cultural shifts that my findings indicate were a challenge for the analytical and conceptual tools I was equipped with as a historian. In order to make this complexity as understandable and expressible as possible both to myself and other historians, when possible I have chosen texts through which I can draw out the greater intricacies contained in the public debate of an issue, texts which helped me throw into sharp relief the occurrence of an intellectual event in the ongoing process of defining the meaning of governing. Such 'explication de textes' made more manageable for me the difficulties of articulating my findings. In the Complutense University in Madrid, when I spent my undergraduate years there, history was taught with a strong philological bend and revolved heavily around a dated methodology of 'text commentary' known as *l'Explication française*, developed by French linguists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Imported and applied to history during the dictatorship, it was a carefully layered analysis that sought to extract the full historical implications from one textual fragment, drawing out in turn the internal context, such as authorship, target

readership or intention, and the external context, ranging from its local and circumstantial to its global and epochal backgrounds. Two lines from a medieval manuscript was often the exam question or the excuse for a twenty-page essay. From this experience, I have taken an inductive approach in which a key and meaningful text or author helped me to put into words and frame problems of a more general nature. This means of simplification made it possible to express my overall findings in a more manageable narrative form and to limit the density of each section topic, since many of these would merit being the subject of distinct postgraduate research. Instead, I have focused on only a few pivotal figures and references to simplify the topic. Cousin and Guizot in the first chapter give way to Durkheim and Bourgeois in the third. These men enable me to document how a new paradigm is imagined as being clearly thinkable and practicable. The first and third chapter then focus on practices of the self (tracking the passage from moral deliberations to self-mastery techniques) and techniques of the state (the change from educational emulation to personality-developing pedagogies in the army and schools) through which the theorizations of a model of subjectivity were meant to be used to shape reality. There are therefore clear symmetries and continuities. The second chapter equally simplified the complex issue of social assistance and the family by focusing on the key programmes related to abandoned children, through which I document the key changes in actual policy that were taking place in the shift from one paradigm to the other, while the figure of the mother will be used to cast light on the much broader issue of how social functions were to be embodied. I therefore take a somewhat minimalist approach to very broad questions, but I trust that my choices will serve to make intelligible the rather elusive and abstract question of how there came to be modern selves in France.

To study the state and the individual without reifying them has been a challenge throughout my research on this topic. Historian Nicholas Green offered a way forward in his study of an equally elusive topic: the understanding of nature in nineteenth-century bourgeois culture in France. In *The Spectacle of Nature*, his approach was to focus not on ‘a set of objects and themes’, but rather on nature as ‘a structure of experience’, one which was mediated through ‘a shared cultural language’.¹¹² I have followed this approach, meaning that this thesis will explore many disparate objects and themes as an attempt to understand the underlying shared cultural language that made possible the individual and the state as a structure of experience. My approach equally owes a debt to how historian Christian Topalov, through a sequence of fragmented cases, was able to shed light on the overall logic and complexity of what he called *la nébuleuse réformatrice*, a dense network of thought and practices behind the turn-of-the-century reformist movement in France, ‘a universe that is finite but whose contours are imprecise’.¹¹³ I intend to further historicize the individual, the family and the state through *la nébuleuse* of thoughts and practices that sustained them in the nineteenth century. Finally, in organizing my material, I have been influenced by the work of the historian of political thought Pierre Rosanvallon.¹¹⁴ After having attended Foucault’s seminars at the *Collège de France*, Rosanvallon was able to adapt the genealogical method to the discipline of history, stripping it of Foucault’s

¹¹² Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester, 1990), p. 184.

¹¹³ Christian Topalov, ‘Les “réformateurs” et leurs réseaux: Enjeux d’un objet de recherche’, in: Topalov (ed.) *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle: La nébuleuse réformatrice et ses réseaux en France, 1880-1914* (Paris, 1999), p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Rosanvallon, *La démocratie inachevée: Histoire de la souveraineté du peuple en France* (Paris, 2000); *Le peuple introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France* (Paris, 1992); *Le sacre du citoyen: Histoire intellectuelle du suffrage universel en France* (Paris, 1992); *The Demands of Liberty*.

characteristic flair and adding more footnotes. The result has been some of the best historical studies of political thought and 'the political' in nineteenth-century France. Instead of relying on key political thinkers alone, Rosanvallon weaves together masses of texts ranging from obscure provincial pamphleteers, moralists, and experts in a wide range of fields to the important statesmen and philosophers of the time. The focus is on what became possible or impossible within political discourse at a given time, rather than on the question of specific utterances and their authorship. What emerges is a dense tapestry that renders comprehensible the very fabric of political culture. I have attempted a similar kind of approach to exploring the rather 'big questions' of the individual self in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵

Discourse and context.

This inquiry developed its own intellectual momentum. I only realized how far it had led me when it was completed and the examiners offered the following remark regarding this thesis: 'the underlying logic is that the context *is* the discourse'. This is a very intelligent observation that I had not considered, but one problematic assertion with which I do recognize as my own. It means that I have taken a much more radically historicist approach than Foucault himself, and that demands explanation. In the end, Foucault always referred back the discourses he studied to an external, extra-discursive context or reality, usually capitalism, urbanization, industrialization, the rise of the state, proletarianization, and so on. While he deconstructed many disciplinary claims to truth, he kept relying on sociological

¹¹⁵ Lloyd Kramer, 'Robert R. Palmer and the history of big questions', *Historical Reflections*, 37/3 (2011), pp. 101-122.

commonplaces derived from modernization theory. The basic premise of modernization theory is that unrelenting social, technological, economic, cultural and political change, everything from railways and rural exodus, to the freeing up of the press and industry, have destroyed and traditional and local forms of life so that the national level emerged as the only site for meaningful belonging, action and thought. More broadly than mere nationalization, modernization means concentration and centralization, in everything from finances, production and knowledge to loyalties and desires. Modernization theory is part and parcel of the evolutionary view of modernity and the Western present as the climax of human development.

Since my arrival at Durham University, I have specialized in the study of local France and wrote my M.A. dissertation on the centralisation-decentralisation debate in the nineteenth-century. The point of departure of the relevant literature is a critique of modernization theory as ‘the inexorable unification of the nation — as state, market, and cultural entity— [that] subordinated local to national loyalties’.¹¹⁶ These fragmentary local studies typically nuance tales of national concentration by pointing to the complicated nature of changes at the local level, where modernization seldom resembled theory. While it is difficult to dispute the rise of urbanization or industrialization at the global or national scale, these changes had to be taking place in actual localities. When studying these sites of modernization, it is equally difficult to ignore the challenges, resistances and continuities posed at the local level, where the old and the new often supported each other in unexpected ways rather than compete. In particular, recent studies

¹¹⁶ Stéphane Gerson, ‘Une France locale: The local past in recent French scholarship’, *French Historical Studies*, 26/3 (2003), p. 554.

had interrogated the inherited truths of the 'industrial revolution'.¹¹⁷ In 1906, at the height of the 'second industrial revolution', more than half of the industrial workforce worked in small firms with fewer than five employees, and only ten per cent in factories occupying more than 500 workers.¹¹⁸ For the nineteenth century, it seems clear that the experience of a small minority of French men and women and specifically the French industrial workforce has received an inordinate amount of attention. The numerical exception came to stand for the whole socio-economic system. Modern scholars have not created this distortion, but rather inherited it intact from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the debate on industrialism occupied centre stage. The importance that industrial society held in the works of all the great nineteenth-century French thinkers who either defended or condemned the new system derived from the qualitative changes it implied rather than the quantitative effect it had on French men and women. But both dimensions seemed to get constantly mixed up, leading to very optimistic or pessimistic readings of social problems. Instead of seeing in this an overreaction, students of governmentality have argued that this debate was very productive, since it gave rise to the modern notion of the state, society and politics. I argue that these debates should also be explored to shed light on the rise of modern selfhood. There is a very large gap between the discursive importance that contemporaries and modern-day scholars have given the themes of industry and modernization, and the realities on the ground. The approach I take in this thesis is to exploit these paradoxes to reveal the positive and creative effects they had in generating templates for selfhood and governing. This implies interrogating both

¹¹⁷ For a historiographic review, see the second chapter in: Fureix and Jarrige, *Modernité désenchantée*.

¹¹⁸ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *Histoire sociale de la France depuis 1789* (Paris, 1993), p. 223.

discourses and practices to uncover the logics and rationalities producing such generative effects that underpinned both. While this may destabilize the difference between ideas and practice, it sheds light on the shared ideal that sustained both: in this case, the positive, normative templates for being counted as a worthy member of society. Having a clearer picture of such an ideal, future research would be able to interrogate the lived experiences of actual people to see how they appropriated, negotiated and interacted creatively with these programmatic models. Such inquiries are not the goal of this thesis. I focus on the inner logic of the ideal as it was presented in thoughts and practices designed to make intelligible and practicable the governing of the self and others.

What socialist Louis Blanc called the 'religion of industrialism' served, I argue, as an idiom signifying modernity, its promises and failures.¹¹⁹ The factory, and its superhuman productive efficiency, underscored the ideals and frustrations of modern peoples and selves. In other words, modernization theory is part and parcel of the evolutionary reading of the world brought about by Western modernity in the eighteenth century, which has also become the foundation for academic approaches and disciplines. In my eyes, industrialism, especially in the 1830s, was a totem, a fetish, a symbol, a discursive edifice that, to paraphrase Murdoch, offered a picture of reality which reality endeavoured to resemble. The factory ideal of pure, relentless and impersonal productivity and efficiency at a totalizing scale has proved very long-lived. Everything would be better if it worked like a machine, it seems. If industrialism can be seen as an ideal, idea and ideological construct, then it a belief which is shared, reinforced and reproduced

¹¹⁹ Louis Blanc, *Organisation du travail* (Brussels, 1848), pp. 260-261.

not only by bourgeois ideology, but also by anarchism, Marxism, socialism and communism, and equally invigorated by the lamentations of the political Right. The industrial fantasy unified both sides of the iron wall.

What does all of this mean? That there are no viewpoints from where to know reality that are placed outside or above history. That what we may define as historical context may also be mediated by human interpretation and discourse. There are of course historical facts, but in order for a series of events of factory life in Mulhouse to say something about the larger process of industrialization, a discursive translation needs to take place, necessitating key concepts such as society or market that are themselves not extra-discursive or supra-historical. When dealing with the vast abstractions of modernization theory, the context is definitively not external to the discourse. This radicalizes Foucault, who placed universal 'man' inside history but somehow modernity theory outside of it. Furthermore, as Seigel has argued, the problem with Foucault's programmatic view of selfhood was that it proposed the ideal of creative self-creation as a developing of a higher form of aesthetic self who would then be finally emancipated from constraints.¹²⁰ It therefore reinforced the ideal of an absolute and immediate outside from where reality could be grasped unaltered once and for all, further reinforcing the dream of absolute emancipation that has been floated since Descartes. Foucault's same insistence on finding a limit-experience or absolute outside is typical of the French and Anglo-European generation of 1968. In its most radical and poetic expression, Lacan defined the *real* as that which could not be put into words, but there remained a longing for a transcendental

¹²⁰ Seigel, *Idea of the Self*, chapter 18.

reality placed, in this case, beyond language, rationality or social conditioning, a search for the *raw*. In contrast, the Latin American generation of 1968, with its critique of the 'coloniality' of power proposed by authors such as Enrique Dussel, mixed the promises of revolutionary Marxism with the Catholicism of the 'Teología de la Liberación' to propose not an *outside* but rather a *way out* of modernity by rendering meaningful the local agency of persons and communities. To Anglo-Europeans, the best-known thinker of this generation was Ivan Illich, who exposed the enormous contradictions between the rhetoric and ideals that legitimate modern institutions and the fact that these materialize realities that produce the opposite results, further entrenching the need for more of the ideal. But rather than proposing an escape from this by finding a higher perspective, he suggested simplification, de-institutionalization, de-medicalization, de-schooling and so on, in short, a devolution of agency to actual people at the local level. This would mean not an *emancipation*, but rather a *disenchantment* from the faith in the discourses that sustain the structures of modernity. The same process whereby the modern mind became secularized is thus proposed in order to de-modernize and de-colonialize it. What comes after such a disenchantment is the realization that there is an endless plurality of viewpoints that have inevitably, always and already been there all along. Consequently, there is nothing to be emancipated from, nothing transcendental, no New World to reach and conquer.

The fact that there is no outside grounding an objective gaze and that perspectives are inexorably plural does not render knowing impossible, and I hope that the many pages that follow testify to this claim. It simply means that my perspective is both personal and conditioned by what culture and present-day scholarship define

as possible and thinkable, as was the case for the thinkers that I study. It does however reframe the relationship between the past and the present, and only in this sense may it be considered a 'history of the present'. The viewpoint of the present would not be a firm patch of land outside or above the past, whose truths and structures are stable and given once and for all. These are also historical and subject to be changed by human agents. I have applied this a very personal view throughout this thesis. The reader will judge whether it is reasonable, valid and coherent.

Structure of the thesis.

The first and third chapter focus on ideas, or rather their weaving together into a logical fabric from which a new understanding of self and government could emerge. Even in the cases when these logics informed state policy and structural reforms, these chapters have little to contribute to our understanding of the actual impact these rationalities had on the lives, practices and self-understanding of contemporary persons and collectives. The second chapter makes a limited attempt to address this omission. Yet it is worth noting as a general point that there was a significant lag, often decades, between the idea and practices of this psychological paradigm, whose maturity seemed to coincide with its crisis towards the mid century. As we shall see, the sociological paradigm, rooted as it was in specific kinds of collective and associative practices and identities, seemed to have a much more immediate impact starting in the 1890s.

The discourses on poverty serve as a gateway to the study of subjectivity because they highlighted normality by signalling its 'other'. The tension between the self and the 'other' will be used to shed light on the framework of experience of the modern individual. This experience was centred on governing the difference between the self and the 'other'. The first chapter will trace this process until 1848 and will explore the psychological paradigm of the self from its rise towards 1800. The third chapter will follow on until 1914, and will track the gradual development of an alternative paradigm of government of the self and others. Both chapters will develop a wide-ranging discussion of philosophical, sociological studies, alongside more detailed texts, such as writings by moralists, hygienists, philanthropists, publicists, theologians, politicians, as well as some literary texts. These establish broad lines of analysis across an approximate period of 130 years, allowing us to explore the complex nature of the modern self as it was thought, debated and — critically— as it was applied in France, across a wide period. From school practices or military discipline to medical debates on the soul and techniques of the self and other detailed elements, these two chapters merge the study of 'high ideas' with 'social thought in practice'. They aim to bring out the structure of experience of the modern individual by building on and moving beyond well-established arguments about childhood, masculinity and gender. The nineteenth-century discourses of poverty and social reform will be a lens for the more subtle level of social thinking and social reform in which the experience of the self was structured.

While the discourses of poverty focused on individuals and their lacks, social assistance policies targeted the individual through the family and its lacks. Thus the family that welfare policies sought to promote and govern served as an

intermediary platform between the individual and the state. In the second chapter, the domestic sphere and the assistance policies that sought to shape it will point to the grammar of power underpinning the fluid language of authority and responsibility which generated and maintained the status quo between the individual and the state. The focus will be on parenting and the discourses linking fatherhood and authority, on the one hand, and motherhood and function on the other. The figure of the mother will serve as a window onto the fin-de-siècle understanding of the individual through its fragmented social functions and roles. As in the other two chapters, the works of varied writers will throw into sharp relief the discourses of fatherhood and authority that underpinned the understanding of government and the practices of guardianship. The confrontation that opposed Catholics and liberals in the middle of the century will help us track the evolution of these discourses on authority and practices of guardianship. In turn, administrative sources from municipal and departmental archives in western France will document the rise of the mother as a social function.

A particular focus of the second chapter will be the policies that, from the 1830s to the 1880s, targeted foundlings and offered aid to poor single mothers in exchange for not abandoning their children. These mothers became objects of administrative surveillance involving one of the most aggressive moralization initiatives of the century. This extended case study will further deepen the discussion on authority and guardianship. These welfare policies became the laboratory for an understanding of mothering, itself broken down into social functions such as cohabitation, intense care or breastfeeding. Thus chronologically and analytically, the second chapter will anchor the wider discussion on the self throughout the thesis.

Liberal politics in France was inseparable from philanthropic concerns and the social question, just as liberal economics was intimately tied to the issue of labour and scarcity. If Marx removed the veil that separated the economy from the state, the Foucauldians (Procacci, Donzelot, Dean, Ewald and others) showed that the state and the social were conjoined. Rather than narrowly understood as pauperism or the labour problem, the social was revealed to be a whole domain of knowledge-power engaged in the making of a social body. Poverty was no less the unintended consequence of liberal government than proletarianizing was of liberal economics. The social was the very condition, object, and child of modern government, political or otherwise.

But in her 1934 'Analysis of Oppression', philosopher Simone Weil launched a strong criticism of Marx, which can also be applied to works on governmentality and social control. 'Above all', she wrote, 'Marx omits to explain why oppression is invincible as long as it is useful [or] why the oppressed in revolt have never succeeded in founding a non-oppressive society'.¹²¹ I believe it is the study of subjectivity that is able to correct this omission. Scholarship on governmentality and the social never was in dialogue with Foucault's work on the government of the self that he was developing in his final years. This is the gap I seek to explore, by seeing the social as a form of governing how others govern themselves, as the site where modern subjectivity emerged through its constituent parts: the modern individual and the modern state.

¹²¹ Simone Weil, *An Anthology* (London, 1986), p. 150.

Chapter 1

The Politics of Interiority:

The Psychology of Self and Other, 1780s-1848.

Introduction

Happiness, argued the liberal philosopher Philibert Damiron in 1832, was the immediate consequence of the good, understood as acting with order. For this member of the Victor Cousin school, it was but 'le sentiment du bien'. Unhappiness signalled bad judgement, inner struggles against the good or, in any case, lack of resignation, for happiness was but a modest and transitory pleasure that followed rightful acts. '[T]here is no pure happiness for a weak, finite being, but only for the Infinite, the All-powerful [and] the Eternal. If therefore the virtuous man is unhappy, it is because he is a man, he has the destiny of a man[...], and considered only in the act of virtue he exercises is he happy, because he has the awareness of being strong and good'. If this was no consolation, the alternative was to suffer the fate of the bad and the guilty. These, tormented by fear and remorse, could never be happy.¹ But, he asked, could there be souls that were 'so depraved and so

¹ Philibert Damiron, *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au dix-neuvième siècle* (Bruxelles, 1832), pp. 424-427.

monstrous that they were criminals without remorse and without pain?' 'It is possible', he replied,

but then we must suppose that they have lost the moral sense: because, if they had conserved it, they would see themselves as they are, and would be deeply afflicted by this. If they have lost it, it is quite simply that they don't suffer because of the acts they commit; they don't have the sentiment. *It's as if one is ill or poor and didn't know it: what sorrow would one feel?* But give these souls back the *conscience* they do not have, give them the moral sense [and] as soon as vice shows itself to them, they will perceive it as it is, and will only see it with disgust.²

This short quotation takes us to the crux of the nineteenth-century social question and poverty. The problem was not that of the good and the bad, since moral conscience as a set of internalized norms was able to pay the virtuous with happiness and the wicked with remorse, in the same manner that merit distributed success in wider society. Rather, the difficulty was posed by those who were unaware, ignorant or oblivious to the whole question of good and evil, at least by liberal standards; in other words, those who were poor and vicious and did not know it. Poverty and marginality thus functioned first and foremost as a psychological discovery, a self-discovery, a 'seeing oneself as one is', a founding event of conscience and consciousness, one that instituted a vital lack, a vast hole filled with self-disgust. The march of progress which our modern age inaugurated was inseparable from the self-awareness of misery, backwardness or ignorance. Indeed, the knowledge of falling short marked the passage from the fixed remoteness of the past into the pregnant fluidity of modernity; it acted as the

² Ibid., p. 426.

simple piece of information that 'liberated' every remote community which a new road or railway had annexed to the world. Even when material conditions stayed the same, with the arrival of new awareness, possibilities and identities, something had changed forever. The long exodus to the future had begun.

As Philippe Sassier has documented, the concepts of poverty and the poor are discontinuous through time; each age has signified these terms differently. Of direct relevance to our discussion are the two different concepts of poverty that succeeded each other in the period considered in this thesis, one towards 1800, and the other towards 1900. The first concept acknowledged poverty as 'subjective and relative'.³ 'I do not dispute that poverty and wealth are very relative things for nations as for individuals', argued François-Emmanuel Fodéré in 1825, since 'everyday one sees men who are happy and believe themselves to be rich who only have what is strictly necessary; and others, having even what is superfluous believe themselves poor because of their insatiable desires'.⁴ Writing in 1834, le baron de Morogues found that in his time

if there is more wealth and more wealthy people, there are perhaps ten times more poor in whom the sentiment of misery has multiplied (*décuplé*). I refer to those in whom the sentiment of misery has multiplied, because it is in effect rather the sentiment of their misery and the great and ever growing inequality of their social

³ Philippe Sassier, *Du bon usage des pauvres: Histoire d'un thème politique, XVIe-XXe siècle* (Paris, 1990), p. 205.

⁴ François-Emmanuel Fodéré, *Essai historique et moral sur la pauvreté des nations...* (Paris, 1825), p. 46.

position that afflicts the poor today, than the lack of the most indispensable things for their existence.⁵

The problem for the poor then, was the 'pain of an increasingly dependent situation' and the growing gap separating them from wealth.⁶ As contemporary Eugène Buret put it, misery 'is not distinguished by a greater degree of destitution in their body', but rather it was an emotional process whereby unmet needs were experienced as suffering.⁷ The key was a process of psychological reckoning whereby, as Sassier commented, 'misery will be the realization (*prise de conscience*) of poverty, of need, of lack'.⁸ Hence the importance of self-perception that Damiron emphasised; by *seeing* oneself as destitute, a twofold awareness would emerge: first the pain and disgust of *being* poor, then the *desire* for improvement. Not only was the 'passage from penury to comfort' and continuous expansion of needs and desire necessary for the new-born market economy, but the same process also meant an acceptance of the moral framework which regulated social participation and advancement.⁹ It was necessary then to consider 'moral well-being, or order, and material well-being, or comfort, as inseparable'.¹⁰ It was equally difficult to keep apart individual waywardness, and the chaotic threat it represented for the whole of society. Consequently, poverty in the early half of the nineteenth century was a new way to aggregate very disparate social types whose common characteristic was some sort of disordered way of being,

⁵ Pierre Bigot de Morogues, *Du pauperisme, de la mendicité et des moyens d'en prévenir les funestes effets* (Paris, 1834), p. 21; for a similar argument on the relativity of poverty, see: Ambroise Clément, *Recherches sur les causes de l'indigence* (Paris, 1846), pp. 77-78.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Quoted in: Sassier, *Bon usage des pauvres*, p. 205.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Giovanna Procacci, 'Social economy and the government of poverty', in: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, 1991), p. 155.

¹⁰ Quoted in: Ibid., p. 157.

without it being possible to separate the voluntary from the involuntary or the moral from the material aspects. Pauperism referred to 'poverty intensified to the level of *social danger*: the spectre of the mob', 'a magma in which are fused all the dangers which beset the social order'.¹¹

As we will see in the third chapter, the focus had shifted dramatically a century later. The birth of modern forms of public assistance and insurance in the last years of the nineteenth century extended impersonal state protection to new social categories. After the hesitant experiences of the interwar years, social policy came to encompass virtually all workers through full employment and a mixed system of insurance, and nearly all categories of non-workers through a mosaic of assistance schemes. This shift went hand in hand with a change in selfhood. Discourses on poverty tended to be very explicit on what was expected of the individual in society. Discussions about merit, effort or self-interest, for example, offered very clear behavioural guidelines that changed dramatically from 1800 to 1900. For instance, the concept of *prévoyance* or foresight in the 1820s was understood as the main attribute that the poor lacked. It had the ability of explaining the full catalogue of the vices of the indigent, such as their lack of responsibility, temperance, thriftiness, industriousness, discipline, cleanliness, respectability, chastity, stability and domesticity, together with the tendency to have too many children and abandon them. An idea that could explain so much inevitably fell into grave contradictions, and these can be found on every page written on the subject. But behind the apparent incoherence, there was more or less a clear normative intention that drew up a positive model of selfhood in which there was a grave

¹¹ Procacci, 'Social economy', p. 158.

concern for the future. In short, *prévoyance* explained poverty and pointed to the only way out of it. It was considered the main feature identifying the liberal individual and thus the bedrock of the government of a society of 'equals', the market economy, the family and the self. A hundred years later, *prévoyance* no longer identified a lack of moral behaviour; it had become the name of a ministry. A technocratic *prévoyance* became the legitimation of the new administrative state.

As we will see below, Procacci understood pauperism as a wider condemnation of *difference* in society. In turn, Sassier concluded his study by stating that 'Ultimately, the gaze projected onto the poor only ever lands on that which one thinks the community lacks'.¹² By emphasizing difference and collective lack, Procacci and Sassier, two of the key experts in the French discourses of poverty, argue that indigence simply pointed away from itself. Discourses about misery were really about something else. But where do these point? I am unsatisfied with the responses of governmentality or politics, which remain shrouded in the same mystique that was being woven by the very discourses they study. In other words, these very the very intentions expressed by contemporaries; the main target of discourses about poverty was to constitute multiple fields of government and the political sphere, which in turn was the source of such discourses. So the inquiry remains immensely informative, but circular, deconstructing misery, but further entrenching government and politics. The approach that can move things forward is that of subjectivity, which moves beyond the opposition between the governors and the governed. This chapter seeks to avoid this circularity by analysing the

¹² Sassier, *Bon usage des pauvres*, p. 380.

importance of poverty —as discourses and policies addressing undesirable differences and lacks— within the rise of the psychological subjectivity in France.

The discourses relating to pauperism simplified and organized the complex plurality of the social body along new lines, namely, a split between moral and immoral. Socioeconomic rank and one's relation to property and labour come to be understood as a consequence of behaviour, which in turn reflected one's moral, intellectual and personal worth. In other words, class became intimately linked with the self. By embodying the lack of necessary self-rule and vigilant discipline, the pauper exemplified the strong ties established between social advancement in a meritocratic society of 'equals' and practices of the self. The hierarchy separating the socially marginal from ideal individualities was equated with a moral and intellectual grading found within every subject and dependent on self-control as a learned behaviour. Therefore, I will show how the debates on social government defined certain ways of being and behaving as differences and lacks that needed to be remedied through individual self-government.

An effect of economic conditions that affected the lower classes, poverty in the Old-Regime had been a problem to be addressed through the material and spiritual relief of public and private charity, much of which centred on alleviating families in times of hardship by interning non-productive relatives in the hospice. The state in the Old Regime, which Tocqueville qualified as 'prodigiously active', also addressed its attentions to the destitute.¹³ Shelby McCloy has shown that 'The French government in the eighteenth century engaged in charitable activities and

¹³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (New York, 1856), p. iii.

administered a measure of relief to almost every form of human need'.¹⁴ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, traditional forms of charity had come under attack. It was shown that by offering individuals undue assurances in times of hardship, beneficence made them dependent, damaging their ability to rely on themselves in the future. Hence, indiscriminate welfare policies aggravated the problem they sought to alleviate; largesse, be it private or public, bred personal irresponsibility and consequently undermined the social order. The end result was increased misery and poverty. In the early nineteenth century, pauperism came to signify a collective problem that threatened the social order but that originated in individual immorality, irresponsible habits and asocial relationships.¹⁵ In a letter to the prefects in 1840, the minister of the interior Charles de Rémusat remarked this 'transformation that has in recent years taken place in this regard in the charitable spirit in France'. 'If one examines the old foundations established to aid the poor, one sees that they hardly deal with other than the material needs of the indigent'. After having recognized that easy relief rendered indigents incapable of work, private charity had implemented practices that 'make aid conditional to work, and their end is less to receive the poor permanently, than to help him leave behind his state of poverty.'¹⁶ A state no longer defined by 'material needs', misery became inseparable from immorality. Throughout the whole century, beneficence required meditations on the possible moral or psychological effects of any form of aid, and even then, it was to be temporary and favour advice and supervision over material relief. Poverty was therefore a psychological problem needing

¹⁴Shelby McCloy, *Government Assistance in Eighteenth-Century France* (Durham, N.C., 1946), p. 447.

¹⁵ This view can already be found among eighteenth-century philosophers. For example, John Locke had already attributed the lot of the poor largely to the 'the relaxation of discipline and corruption of manners'. *Political Writings* (Indianapolis, 2003), p. 447.

¹⁶ 'Circulaire du 6 août 1840 sur le paupérisme et la charité légale', in: Adolphe de Watteville (ed.), *Législation charitable* (Paris, 1843), p. 601.

psychological solutions in order to govern not the subjects themselves but rather their subjectivities. Misery and social disorder were mere effects whose causes had to be sought inside the self. On the one hand, this meant that public and private assistance and interpersonal solidarity had to be as restrictive as possible in order to promote self-reliance and responsibility. On the other hand, it meant that by understanding the mechanisms of the human psyche, positive habits and relationships could be promoted through public policy. In the first half of the century, the liberal reforms of the welfare system thus sought to limit spending to the minimum while fostering proper relationships of dependence organized around the nuclear family. This 'reform of parent-child relations' and 'family mores' would produce adults who engaged in the labour market in order to exercise their responsibility for themselves and their dependants.¹⁷ By the late 1830s, minister of the interior Tanneguy Duchâtel argued that 'experience increasingly shows that an excessively attentive charity towards certain indigents destroys familial sentiments.' The 'question of public morals' thus posed, led him to propose a strict separation of indoor and outdoor relief in which families would receive aid in the latter form whenever possible. Although the sharp distinction would never be fully applied, he argued that besides being more economical, it 'would also have the advantage of conserving the family spirit by leaving the sick, the old and the infirm in the care of their relatives'.¹⁸ This new use of outdoor relief and charitable home visits meant that 'the family habitat becomes generalized as an instrument for assistance' as 'as a means to intensify the weak family ties of the

¹⁷ Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology*, p. 12.

¹⁸ 'Circulaire du 6 août 1839 relative aux économats dans les hospices civils' and 'Circulaire du 31 janvier 1840 portant réglemens pour le service intérieur des hospices et hôpitaux', in: Watteville (ed.), *Législation charitable*, pp. 516, 532, 536

lower classes'.¹⁹ In turn, indoor relief functioned precisely by severing family ties, and became a mechanism that could operate to modify or dissolve family bonds when necessary. From 1823, families could not reclaim children they had abandoned unless they were able to provide evidence of their moral and financial suitability. While the administration was not legally able to deprive parents of their parental rights before 1889, in practice 'administrative practice had got ahead of legislation', since, as Armand Mosse noted, before 1889 'the Conseil général de la Seine had obtained from the parents of those children whose guardianship it wished to acquire the commitment [either] to renounce their parental authority or to reimburse the costs the administration had incurred'.²⁰

In practice, this meant there was a very large discrepancy between the enormous visibility of pauperism and the 'social question' in public debate and the increasingly restrained social policies put in place. If much more was said about poverty than before while less was done to remedy it, it was because it was not seen as an objective problem. Instead, these narratives touched upon a 'moral sense' that constituted all 'men' as normative subjects within the social order. Procacci has written that the 'moral objective' of the philanthropic analysis of pauperism, 'ultimately consisted in making sure that the new social order in its entirety be lived subjectively as a new ensemble of moral obligations'.²¹ If these moralizing narratives seem to have had little impact among the lower classes, my claim is that they helped provide a coherent view of the world to the almost exclusive consumers of these discourses, *la bourgeoisie*. The fear of destitution,

¹⁹ Pedro Carasa-Soto, *Historia de la beneficencia en Castilla y León* (Valladolid, 1991), p. 183.

²⁰ Quoted in: Philippe Meyer, 'La correction paternelle ou l'État, domicile de la famille', *Critique*, XXXI/343 (1975), p. 1274.

²¹ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère* (Paris, 1993), p. 179.

deviance and crime, and the love of social betterment, order and charity, all served to produce an experience of interiority that was highly socialized. As Barbara Cruikshank has argued, 'The ability of the democratic citizen to generate a politically able self depends upon technologies of subjectivity which link personal goals and desires to social order and stability, which link power and subjectivity.'²²

This chapter will read the discourses about poverty as a window into the wider issues of the self and governing that framed and signified them. It will thus explore the intimate correspondence between how selfhood posed problems of collective government, while social problems came to define the stakes of self-government. If the discourses about pauperism will now serve to illuminate the production of the self, the next chapter will consider actual social policy and the family reform which was its focus as a means of uncovering the mechanisms whereby this self was reproduced. The reform of self and family will thus be shown as the objects of ideas and practices of social assistance.

In this chapter, I will explore the first of two different paradigms of the modern individual that existed in the nineteenth century. It will trace what I have called the 'psychological' paradigm from its antecedents in the eighteenth century to its gradual development between 1800 and the 1830s. In doing so, this chapter will explore how the problem of government in the nineteenth century was inseparable from the production of a normative self. This will enable me to show how the rise of a sense of *moi* was inseparable from the profound governmental transformations taking place in post-revolutionary France. In order to do this, this

²² Barbara Cruikshank, 'Revolutions within: Self-government and self-esteem', *Economy and Society*, 22/3 (1993), p. 327.

chapter carries out a *genealogy* of the paradigm of subjectivity and government that I have termed 'psychological'. It will adopt the approach and focus of similar Foucauldian genealogies and accounts of governmental rationalities. Such studies are most akin to intellectual histories or histories of ideas, but with a focus on how the very logics and rationalities through which ideas are ordered and categorized have changed. In other words, this chapter carries out a history of intellectual events, of the posing of problems, which taken together make it possible to envisage the contours of a complex and often paradoxical but nonetheless intelligible paradigm for the governing of individuals and groups.

In line with this type of genealogy, the primary sources used are published texts. This chapter builds upon key writings dating until the middle of the nineteenth century and covering a wide range of fields from philosophy and political economy, medical and administrative texts, parliamentary debates and moral tracts, to political and pedagogical thought and literary contests in the style of the old *donneurs d'avis*. The point of departure is a brief consideration of modern philosophy, which I take to be the diverse European tradition spanning from René Descartes to Immanuel Kant, that is, from the mid seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, and characterized by its focus on the separation from the rest of creation as the specificity of the human individual. Such a discussion is central to understanding the logic of emergence of the modern self and the basic premises behind a 'psychological' understanding of 'man', as the first section will show. Since there are detailed studies on the early-modern conceptualization of the modern individual, I will only focus on some key aspects in order to then explore

how these theorizations were converted into technologies for the governing of the self and others from 1800 to 1848.²³

While this chapter seems to remain under the lingering shadow of both Descartes and Kant, two of the key minds shaping nineteenth- and twentieth-century French thought, it is three other philosophers belonging to the tradition of modern philosophy that will be considered in greater detail. A posthumous work by Dutch-born French Huguenot Elie Luzac will serve to elucidate the workings of the 'science of morality' being developed during the 1790s and the Consulate in France. The other two are better known figures. Given their importance within modern philosophy, their clarity of expression, authority and, more specifically, their impact upon the early psychological understandings of self and government, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith will recur in the chapter. Both of these authoritative thinkers were central in shaping the notions of subjectivity and governing within two distinct but intertwined French political traditions, those of republicanism and liberalism.²⁴ Indeed, Smith was not alien to the specifically French developments being considered. While in his own work he engaged closely with the thought of Jean-Jacques, the manner in which his intellectual legacy came to be interpreted internationally after his death owed much to his French translators and commentators of the early 1800s, and especially to political

²³ Jean Perkins, *The concept of the self in the French enlightenment* (Geneva, 1969); Michael Moriarty, *Fallen Nature, Fallen Selves: Early Modern French Thought II* (Oxford, 2006); Jari Kaukua and Tomas Ekenberg (eds), *Subjectivity and Selfhood in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (New York, 2016); Vivien Thweatt, *La Rochefoucauld and the Seventeenth-Century Concept of the Self* (Geneva, 1980); Craig Brush, *From the Perspective of the Self: Montaigne's Self-portrait* (New York, 1994); Charly Coleman, 'The value of dispossession: Rethinking discourses of selfhood in eighteenth-century France', *Modern Intellectual History*, 2/3 (2005), pp. 299-326.

²⁴ Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, 2008).

economist Jean-Baptiste Say.²⁵ Intellectually, Say existed somewhere in the interstices between republicanism and liberalism.²⁶ As the surge in recent studies has shown with increasing nuance, besides being a significant thinker in his own right, he played an important role in interpreting the work of both philosophers, particularly of Smith, by presenting himself as their popularizer. Say was also a crucial figure in sustaining the prestige of his discipline in post-revolutionary France by severing the intellectual entanglement political economy had once had with revolutionary republicanism.²⁷ Once the liberal regime was implanted after the July 1830 Revolution, the diverse group of liberals that had opposed the Bourbon monarchy came to power. For decades they had been redrafting the legacy of 1789 in the light of post-revolutionary experience in order to strip it of its most radical and destructive implications. As we will see, they arrived to power in 1830 with an elaborate project of a pedagogy of the self, owing to the work of Victor Cousin, and a pedagogy of ‘democracy’, to which the thought of François

²⁵ There has been a recent rise in scholarly interest in intellectual cross-fertilization between France and the UK or the English-speaking world, see: Samuel Hollander, *Jean-Baptiste Say and the Classical Canon in Economics: The British Connection in French Classicism* (New York, 2005); Rachel Hammersley, *The English Republican Tradition and Eighteenth-century France: Between the Ancients and the Moderns* (Manchester, 2010) and *French Revolutionaries and English Republicans: The Cordeliers Club, 1790–1794* (Rochester, 2005); Richard Whatmore, ‘Adam Smith’s Role in the French Revolution’, *Past & Present*, 175 (2002), pp. 65-89; Emmanuelle De Champs, *Enlightenment and Utility: Bentham in French, Bentham in France* (Cambridge, 2015); Evelyn Forget, ‘J.-B. Say and Adam Smith: An essay in the transmission of ideas’, *The Canadian Journal of Economics*, 26/1 (1993), pp. 121-133; Gilbert Faccarello and Philippe Steiner, ‘The diffusion of the work of Adam Smith in the French language: An outline history’, in: K. Tribe (ed.), *A Critical Bibliography of Adam Smith* (London, 2002), pp. 61-119; André Tiran, ‘De l’Angleterre et des Anglais: L’expertise de Jean-Baptiste Say de l’industrie anglaise’, *Innovations*, 45/3 (2014), pp. 77-96; Pierre Force, ‘First principles in translation: The axiom of self-interest from Adam Smith to Jean-Baptiste Say’, *History of Political Economy*, 38/2 (2006), pp. 319-338 and *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge, 2003).

²⁶ R.R. Palmer has highlighted Say’s liberal and utilitarian leanings in *J.-B. Say, An Economist in Troubled Times* (Princeton, 1997), while Whatmore has focused on his republicanism in: *Republicanism and the French Revolution: An Intellectual History of Jean-Baptiste Say’s Political Economy* (Oxford, 2000).

²⁷ Many important studies on Say have appeared recently, other than the ones mentioned above, see: Forget, *The Social Economics of Jean-Baptiste Say: Markets and Virtue* (London, 1999); Evert Schoorl, *Jean-Baptiste Say: Revolutionary, Entrepreneur, Economist* (London, 2003); Jean-Pierre Potier and Tiran (eds), *Jean-Baptiste Say: Nouveaux regards sur son oeuvre* (Paris, 2003); Tiran (ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Say: Influences, critiques et postérité* (Paris, 2010).

Guizot was instrumental. They were among the most notable figures of the new elite that sought to use the state in order to implement a new paradigm of subjectivity and government. The case study of founding policy in chapter two will in turn explore the implementation of this new governmental shift. This chapter will present the basic blueprint of their architectural project of reform. Jan Goldstein has explored Cousin's theory of the *moi* in great detail.²⁸ Since Cousin's texts tend to be densely philosophical and technical, I have outlined his theory of the *moi* through the work of some fellow philosophers, significant in their own right and well placed in the academies of the July Monarchy, who were close collaborators of Cousin and popularizers of his new *moi*, namely Philibert Damiron and Théodore Jouffroy. Their texts are also more explicit than I found Cousin himself to be about the yet unstudied governmental implications of his *moi*. Guizot, as we will see, was central in linking the new *moi* and the new liberal governmentality, an aspect of his work that remains to be explored.²⁹

Other authors considered, such as Tocqueville, economist Frédéric Bastiat or lesser-known figures, shared the same broad ideological lineage of those above. Consequently, this chapter limits its scope to the consideration of the broad and plural political 'families' of republicanism and liberalism, putting much more weight on the later. Or better yet, I am considering 'liberalism' as a rationality of government characterized by the rule *through* freedom, which political liberals shared with republicans, and to some extent with the militant working classes.

²⁸ Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008); W.M. Simon, 'The "two cultures" in nineteenth-century France: Victor Cousin and Auguste Comte', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26/1 (1965), pp. 45-58, Patrice Vermeren, *Victor Cousin: Le jeu de la philosophie et de l'État* (Paris, 1995), and Seigel, *Idea of the Self*, chapter 14.

²⁹ For a study that engages fully with the complexity and contradictions of Guizot's contributions to liberal governing, see: Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le moment Guizot* (Paris, 1985).

Even if the work of Jacques Rancière has made clear that the new opportunities and challenges of the modern self were personified and thought of in radically empowering and creative ways among workers, *le monde ouvrier* also falls beyond the scope of this chapter.³⁰ Since my aim is to link the conditions of development of subjectivity with wide-ranging governmental changes being applied from the top, most of the thinkers I discuss in this chapter are indeed never far from the infrastructures of state power. I am therefore also leaving aside the geniuses, literary figures and intellectual mavericks that have so much to add to our knowledge of the nineteenth-century self.³¹ Equally, I have omitted the complex universe of royalists, Catholics and conservatives, and therefore some of the sharpest minds of the time to conceptualize self and government. These currents are taken into account in chapter two. As will be seen then, they struggled to find a coherent model to oppose to political liberalism and the broader governmental model of 'liberalism'. This was not a matter of intellectual weakness. One finds in the work of the legitimist sociologist vicomte de Bonald a total and vigorous

³⁰ See especially Jacques Rancière, *Proletarian Nights: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (London, 2012) and *Staging the People: The Proletarian and his Double* (London, 2011).

³¹ Gordon Shenton, *The Fictions of the Self: The Early Works of Maurice Barrès* (Chapel Hill, 1979); Hilary Nias, *The Artificial Self: The Psychology of Hippolyte Taine* (Oxford, 1999). There are numerous studies of the self in nineteenth century French literature, see: P. Bray, *The Novel Map: Space and Subjectivity in Nineteenth-Century French Fiction* (Evanston, 2013), I. Pitteloud, 'Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert: la théorie romanesque des émotions', Ph.D. thesis, University of Geneva (Geneva, 2012); S. Thornton, *Advertising, Subjectivity and the Nineteenth-Century Novel: Advertising, Subjectivity and the Walls* (Basingstoke, 2009); M. Lucey, *Never Say I: The First Person in Colette, Gide, and Proust* (Durham, N.C., 2006); D. Zanone and D. Zanone, *Le moi, l'histoire, moi, moi, l'histoire*; P. Gifford and P. Gifford (eds), *Subject Matters: Subjectivity in French Literature from Descartes to the Present* (Amsterdam, 2000); G. Schultz, *The Gendered Lyric: Gendered Lyric Difference in Nineteenth-century French Poetry* (West Lafayette, 1999); L. Blair, *George Sand's Nouvelles: Reflections, Perceptions, and the Self* (New York, 1999); D. Moutote, *Le Journal de Gide et les problèmes du moi, 1889-1925* (Geneva, 1998); J. Lawler, *Rimbaud's Theatre of the Self* (Cambridge, 1992); E. Howe, *Stages of Self: Dramatic Monologues of Laforgue, Mallarmé and Valéry* (Athens, Ohio, 1990). See also D.J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760-1820* (Cambridge, 1994) and N. White, *The Family in Crisis in Late Nineteenth-Century French Fiction* (Cambridge, 1999).

counter-model to liberal individualism.³² Steven Kale has shown that the depth and originality of legitimist thought continued well after the death of Bonald in 1840.³³ Equally, the conservative sociologist Frédéric Le Play, a paramount figure of the Second Empire, would also have a lot to say about what concerns this thesis, for Le Play was among the very few thinkers in nineteenth-century France to have devised a completely *ex novo* and radically alternative model of society, a *familiocracy* of sorts, in which all social governing could be delegated to and absorbed by strategically neo-authoritarian extended families.³⁴ The substantial contributions of these authors to the field of thinking the governing the self and others have yet to receive scholarly treatment. Unfortunately, since I have tried to link as much as possible intellectual developments to implementations of governmental policies, I have not been able to give these thinkers and models the attention they deserve.

In any case, and despite the intellectual stature of their thinkers, I have found that conservatives were unable to resist the advancing logic of an individual, self-conflicted self, one which I would argue was internalized, not only through things such as travelling, writing autobiographies and diaries or reading novels, but

³² David Klinck, *The French Counterrevolutionary Theorist, Louis de Bonald, 1754-1840* (New York, 1996); Flavien Bertran de Balanda, *Bonald: La réaction en action* (Aix-en-Provence, 2010); Giorgio Barberis, *Louis de Bonald: Ordre et pouvoir entre subversion et providence* (Paris, 2016); Michel Toda, *Louis de Bonald: Théoricien de la contre-révolution* (Paris, 1997).

³³ Steven Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of French Society* (Baton Rouge, 1992).

³⁴ On the family see: Alan Pitt, 'Frédéric Le Play and the family: Paternalism and freedom in the French debates of the 1870's', *French History*, 12/1 (1998), pp. 67–89. Although much work remains to be done on Le Play, see the following works. Laetitia Guerlain, 'Droit et société au XIXe siècle: Les leplaysiens et les sources du droit, 1881-1914', Ph.D. thesis, Université de Bordeaux IV (Bordeaux, 2011); J.I. Garrigós Moneris, *Frédéric Le Play: Biografía intelectual, metodología e investigaciones sociológicas* (Madrid, 2003); Robert Beum, 'Ultra-Royalism revisited', *Modern Age*, 39/3 (1997), pp. 290–322; Antoine Savoye, 'Les continuateurs de Le Play au tournant du siècle', *Revue française de sociologie*, 22 (1981), pp. 315–344; Michael Brooke, *Le Play, Engineer and Social Scientist: The Life and Work of Frederic Le Play* (Harlow, 1970); S. H. Beaver, 'The Le Play society and field work', *Geography*, 47/3 (1962), pp. 225–240; Mary Healy, 'Le Play's contribution to sociology: His method', *The American Catholic Sociological Review*, 8/2 (1947), pp. 97–110.

through specifically governmental techniques.³⁵ As this chapter will show, isolated techniques such as emulation in schools or moral self-analysis over lunch fostered a certain type of ethical and social form of self. These techniques gradually came to form a complex technological apparatus, promoted by state elites particularly between 1830 and 1848, which tied together the problems of governing the self and others so as to carve out the space for the modern state and the modern individual to emerge in tandem. Since, ideally, these technologies were to function independently of personal will, as a series of logics that were internal to social existence, they did not depend on the value of philosophical argument or the commitment to ideological positions. In fact, conservatives did not tire in their efforts to demonstrate that the philosophy, logics and policies of their opponents led to contradictory conclusions and paradoxical results, as well as a number of lingering and unsolvable dilemmas opposing freedom and security, liberty and equality, public and private, right and duty, wealth and misery, and so on. However, the strength of liberalism as a system of governing through freedom depended precisely, I argue, on these systemic incongruences, which the psychological framework of the modern self assumed and internalized in the form of an inner, governmentalized conflict between self and other. Conservatives seemed to be at a loss before these changes in post-revolutionary France. They however played a significant intellectual role in the long crisis of the psychological paradigm that started towards 1848. As the next chapters will elucidate, and despite their political confrontation, the half-century leading up to 1900 saw a gradual blurring of the trenches that had opposed liberals and republicans to

³⁵ Roy Porter (ed.), *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London, 1997); Peter Heehs, *Writing the Self: Diaries, Memoirs, and the History of the Self* (New York, 2013); Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker and Michael Mascuch (eds), *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self: Developments in Autobiographical Writing since the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, 2011).

Catholics and conservatives, as both traditions converged by coming to share a new paradigm of sociological governing of the self and others as the old, revolutionary paradigm of psychological subjectivity and government that had confronted these factions, so to speak, 'came into port'.

Defining and governing the psyche of 'man'.

Psychology was the founding framework of modern subjectivity. Modern philosophy, from René Descartes to Immanuel Kant, rested on the premise of the specificity of 'man', which had to be understood in his own terms rather than explained through the common laws or divine will governing the cosmos. What made humans exceptional in creation was their consciousness or the *psyche*, hence the *psychological* nature of their approach. All human psyches were understood to function in the same manner. This consciousness which was seen as quintessential to humanness was both the distinct ability to think and reason and the whole interplay and taxonomy of sensations, emotions and passions that constituted specifically human drives and repulsions. Equally, consciousness also necessitated self-consciousness, since the perception of an object implied the reflexive awareness of a subject that perceived the object.³⁶ Consciousness thus generated and indissolubly linked an object and a subject, but the link was an imperfect one. There was understood to be a strict separation between the inner and outer world, between human consciousness and the cosmos. The mind's knowledge of the world could never be immediate and direct. Within this understanding of the psyche, humans only knew the world through the psychological impressions,

³⁶ Klaus Brinkmann, 'Consciousness, self-consciousness, and the modern self', *History of the Human Sciences*, 18/4 (2005), pp. 31-36.

perceptions or representations derived from either sensations or ideas that the external reality caused upon us. Consciousness was thus explained within a 'theory of representation' of the world in which the mind emerged as the more or less reliable intermediary between 'man' and the world.

This was a rejection of the complex and fluid image of human experience offered by those, who as Michel de Montaigne and Blaise Pascal, built on the biblical tradition of an irreconcilable and volatile dual nature of 'man', one part temporal and earthly, one part spiritual and tied to the divine Logos. Instead, Descartes modernized this split along the Earth-bound lines of the body and the mind. And it was the mind that characterized us as a species. He sought to 'define the human body and the physical world in such a way that the body becomes identical to the physical world and no longer contains anything human, so that both may be equally accessible to the physical science'.³⁷ The rest of us belonged to our immaterial dimension. 'The soul thinks, dreams, feels, desires, wants, hopes, and fears. All these spiritual activities can be joined together, at least in the framework of Descartes' philosophy, under the term: *thinking, Penser*'.³⁸ The old notion of the soul as the animating and constituting element of the person thus became indistinct from the mind, whose irreducible essence was thought. As any essence, this one could never be absent. Thus Descartes postulated that the mind never stopped thinking, even before birth in the womb, even in the unconsciousness of sleep. *L'ame pense toujours*; mind never stopped, and precisely because of its

³⁷ J.H. van den Berg, *Divided Existence and Complex Society: An Historical Approach* (Pittsburgh, 1974), p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

abundance of activity it was not possible to recall and remember all thinking, but indubitably it always existed.³⁹

A rudimentary sense of self emerged along the lines of the mind-body split. The thinker was also inevitably the witness of his or her thinking. Klaus Brinkmann has argued that this ‘adds a typically modern nuance to the concept of self-consciousness. As a witness of my thoughts, I am not just aware of them as my own. I am also viewing them like a critical observer’.⁴⁰ It was this capacity to observe oneself that grounded the notion of moral responsibility over one’s thoughts, beliefs and actions, but equally the ownership of the less rational and calculated aspects of experience. By 1740 and increasingly as the eighteenth century progressed, the mind came to mediate emotions; no longer an enveloping surge of affects, feelings became susceptible to the radical novelty of being observed, named, verbalized, described and commented upon even as they occurred. ‘[T]he sentiments disintegrate and become subject to a *sentimental analysis*’.⁴¹ It was this capacity for self-analysis —of reflexive mental rumination tied to an objectifying gaze— served as the foundation for a nascent sense of self.

However, Kant introduced a significant fracture between consciousness and knowledge, between empirical perception and transcendental reason. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, first published in 1781, he wrote that ‘I have no *knowledge* of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself. The consciousness of self is thus

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Brinkmann, ‘Consciousness’, p. 39.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 140-145. On this point, van den Berg analyses especially *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, the ‘first novel of sentimental analysis’, written in 1740 by one Samuel Richardson.

very far from being a knowledge of the self.⁴² The previous unity of human consciousness was thus split between the empirical and the transcendental, appearances and knowledge. It was in this opaque gap that that then opened up within consciousness at the time that the modern subject seems to have emerged. Foucault situated the shift from a 'theory of representation' to an 'anthropological' model at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, and argued that only then did our present understanding of 'man' become possible. Or put more forcefully, it was then that 'man enters in his turn, and for the first time, the field of Western knowledge'.⁴³ As Jan Goldstein has shown for France, this was the historical juncture at which the modern experience of self or the *moi* gradually emerged, while only a 'pallid and passive' sense of self could be found in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴

In 1789, problem of individuality and consciousness ceased to be the exclusive domain of philosophical dispute. The French Revolution quite dramatically posed the question of how to derive a form of government from these theories of the individual. It is on the responses to these challenges, which emerged around 1800 and occupy the whole nineteenth century, that my work focuses.

My argument is that the changes in the understanding of the individual that occurred around 1800 opened up two seemingly contradictory avenues through which to render societies governable, both of which will be analysed in turn. The first sought to find hierarchical differences within the universal category of 'man'

⁴² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 169.

⁴³ Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London, 2005), p. xxv.

⁴⁴ Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), p. 11.

by identifying increasingly nuanced evolutionary stages separating bare awareness from transcendental reason. This explained and justified the inequality of fact within formally equal societies. The second derived techniques of governing from the understanding that all minds responded the same to given psychological stimuli, such as shame, prestige or desire. In its most radical utilitarian reduction, this meant simply that everyone sought out pleasure and avoided pain. The behaviour of individuals in society could thus be predicted and conducted indirectly towards desired ends by generating the necessary psychological conditions.

The lingering and burning question the French Revolution imposed on posterity was how to harmonize and render governable the enormous gap between formal equality and actual inequality among 'men'. The serial, interchangeable psyches of 'men' needed to be anchored in a wider human order that governed them. From the early nineteenth century, psychology became integrated into a wider framework of what Foucault termed 'an "anthropology"'.⁴⁵ With this shift, eighteenth-century notions of mental 'representation' gave way to a more complex focus on human experiences beyond 'the sovereignty of the "I think"'. Thus 'the pre-critical analysis of what man is in his essence becomes the analytic of everything that can, in general, be presented to man's experience'.⁴⁶ The cognitive or psychological essence of 'man' was not abandoned, but the focus shifted from mind to experience, and thus to how 'man' existed in the world. The way I understand this is that the theory of representation focused on cognition as the

⁴⁵ Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. xxv.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 371-2.

condition of being. The anthropology that substituted it turned this around. It was being that determined cognition. Being, in turn, was determined by an essentially *social* order, an order reflecting the hierarchy separating mere consciousness from knowledge. Thus, the inequality of intelligences (as the basis of all social and actual inequality) was legitimated, without undermining the universal assumptions that underpinned the modern individual. The first took us to Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum*, the second, to its reversal, which would remain unstated until Nietzsche: *Sum, ergo cogito*.⁴⁷

It was therefore within the modern individual that all inequality and hierarchies had to be grounded. The finite and serial universal individual, then, started to house the multiplicity of its own variations. The horizon of full humanness, now identified with knowledge and reason rather than cognition and perception, kept receding from the immediacy of its own experience, as it made way for 'an anthropology dealing with a man rendered alien to himself'.⁴⁸

While many scientific disciplines were inseparable from the process of emergence of a new modern subject in the eighteenth century, there was one that brought home like no other the intimate experience of the new individual: medicine. The reason for this, as Foucault's early work showed, was that medicine grounded a distinctively anthropological view of man, in other words, the medical gaze had as its object the individual as such. In order to diagnose a patient, a calculus was needed that could both account for and distinguish, on the one hand, personal,

⁴⁷ Aphorism 276 in *The Gay Science*. Jonas Mont, 'Sum, Ergo Cogito: Nietzsche Re-orders Descartes', *Aporia*, 25/2 (2015), p. 13.

⁴⁸ Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 245.

local symptoms and situations and, on the other, the global truths to which they pointed. For such an operation to be feasible, an a priori belief was necessary in the radical equality and interchangeability of men, at least in their biologies. The materiality of 'man' in the abstract could thus be known and plotted in taxonomies, so as to deduce causes and effects operating on particular men. Medicine was consequently able to grasp the individual at once in its duality of personal uniqueness and embodied generality.⁴⁹

In the first years of the nineteenth century, owing to the work of doctors such as Jean-Noël Hallé, Napoleon Bonaparte's physician, the age-old theme of 'the ages of man' was recast as a set of scientific categories measured precisely in years. In each of the stages —early infancy, late infancy, adolescence, virility and old age— 'man has a special physical and moral physiognomy, his own health and illnesses'.⁵⁰ This made it possible to fragment the category of man into subsets of distinctness without rupturing the individual's universal unity. Child and adult were at once the same and different. The key to solving the problem of locating hierarchical diversity within sameness, then, was found within the endless repetition of biological time, always tiered, serial and impersonal.

While human biology became in the 1800s the anchor for unity-in-diversity, the theme had been central to the Enlightenment as well, albeit in a more rudimentary form, finding its most typical expression in the opposition between savagery and civilization. When contrasting *l'homme sauvage*, or the natural state, with *l'homme*

⁴⁹ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* (London, 1986).

⁵⁰ Nicolas-Philibert Adelon, *Physiologie de l'homme*, 4 (Paris, 1824), p. 521.

police, the common Old-Regime term for the civilized, Rousseau and his 'attentive Reader cannot but be struck by the immense distance that separates these two states'. For 'what constitutes the supreme happiness of the one would reduce the other to despair'. The first 'wants only to live and to remain idle'; the other 'works to the death'. In short, 'the Mankind of one age is not the Mankind of another age'.⁵¹ And an irresolvable difference thus emerged, but only a relative one, for they were only two ages of the same 'Mankind'; thus, there remained a single humanity simultaneously united and separated by different states or stages. Therefore, as soon as the category of 'man' was imaged as universal, applying to all humans everywhere, regardless of particularities and history, at the same time were differences sought *within* 'man'. Evolutionary stages made it possible to unite, organize and explain all human differences as differences *in time*. In the 1800s, biological time offered a more nuanced state-by-stage model through which to read all evolutionary differences as levels of maturity.

However, not only did the universality of the mind remain unchallenged and revered in the first half of the century, but it also became central to the functioning of governing. Psychology grounded an epistemological assumption that may strike the modern reader as decisively subjectivist. Since things could not be known in themselves, but only through the patterns of mental representations which the mind created of them, and since all human minds functioned the same in every place and time, then the best way of knowing the world was through the study one's own mind, that is, by looking within. This method, followed by the modern

⁵¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau: 'The Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 186-187.

philosophers, remained common in the first half of the nineteenth century. As one American commentator on the French psychological theories in the early nineteenth century pointed out, 'ontology must have its root in psychology, since we must attain to the reality existing out of us, by a careful analysis of the facts which exist within us'.⁵² Therefore, things could not be apprehended as what they were in themselves (ontology), but rather in how they were perceived from and represented within the one universal perspective of the human psyche (psychology). Psychology was thus a scientific and philosophical method of inquiry that made it possible to know the world based on methodical observations carried out on oneself. These would also become a crucial tool for modern socialization and self-government in a shifting social world; if all minds followed the same patterns of drives and repulsions, then those who were familiar the laws of the psyche could adapt their own conduct while predicting and anticipating the motivations, judgements and action of other social actors, so as to gain advantages over them in society. The effects would have been akin to what Norbert Elias termed 'a "civilizing" change of behaviour', which included the 'moderation of spontaneous emotions, the tempering of affects, the extension of mental space beyond the moment into the past and future, [and] the habit of connecting events in terms of chains of causes and effect'.⁵³

This imagined sameness in the workings of all psyches necessitated an equally universal social order, placed above the particularities of time and space. In January 1848, as this belief entered an irreversible crisis, political economist

⁵² Anonymous, 'Eclecticism-ontology [Review of Victor Cousin's 1818 *Cours*]', *Boston Quarterly Review*, 2 (1839), p. 169.

⁵³ Norbert Elias, *Power and Civility* (New York, 1982), p. 236.

Frédéric Bastiat launched a desperate plea in favour of 'the current social order, in which humanity has lived and developed from its origin until the present'. To question the status quo would be like telling one's fellow men that 'After five thousand years [the reputed age of the planet at the time] there has been a misunderstanding between God and humanity; from Adam until today, the human species has been on the wrong track'. It meant 'rejecting the social organization that God gave' humanity. Any modification of the social order would amount no less than to 'change the mode of work, exchange, [and] domestic, civil, and religious relations, in one word, to *alter the physical and moral constitution of man*'.⁵⁴ The constitutional monarchy was one and the same as the very the physical and moral constitution of its citizens.

Only a few days later, with the start of the revolutionary cycle in February 1848, the innocence of Bastiat's view would be relegated to history. But it was nonetheless a remarkably coherent view. This can be appraised in the 1839 parliamentary commission on the abolition of slavery in the French colonies, a measure that was not passed until April 1848. After discussions with plantation owners, the commission reached unanimous conclusions contained in a report penned by Alexis de Tocqueville. It was widely accepted that Negroes were somehow inferior, and yet the 'fact' of their 'indifference and natural apathy' did not mean that their psychology and governing was to be any different from that of Europeans. A twofold approach emerged from the discussions. First, there were to be structural reforms whereby the personal bonds between masters and slaves

⁵⁴ Quoted in: Ramón de la Sagra, 'Examen des doctrines économiques', *La Phalange*, XVII/VII (1848), pp. 186, 188.

would be broken. The French state would mediate impersonally between them, guaranteeing the collaboration and dependence of both parties by means of 'new maxims of government, a new police, new civil servants, [and] new laws. As these laws apply to everyone, nobody feels particularly hurt or resists'.⁵⁵ As a result of this change, the hope was that the Negro 'no longer sees in the magistrate a master, but a guide and liberator. This is when it is easiest for the Government to found its control over the mind and habits of the Black population, and to acquire the salutary influence which it will need in order to direct them towards a complete liberty'.⁵⁶ The governing *through* freedom, then, applied in both metropolis and colonies, since 'only the experience of liberty, a liberty for a long time contained and directed by an energetic and moderate power, can suggest and give men the opinions, virtues, and habits that are convenient for a citizen of a free country'.⁵⁷ The key to this freedom, exactly as in France, was the 'freedom' to work.⁵⁸ 'The metropolis must[...] act upon the slave through a firm and prudent legislation which first familiarizes and then subjects him, if need be, to the laborious and virile habitudes of freedom'.⁵⁹ The disincentives for work were carefully considered. The tropics were a land of easy living, for 'in these countries, the exterior circumstances will not force these men to work. One has no need for clothes or housing, nearly any for food. One may, as it were, live without working'.⁶⁰ But that was easily solved, as in Europe, by coercive labour and

⁵⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Rapport... relative aux esclaves des colonies* (Paris, 1839), p. 12. The document includes committee proceedings and has typos in pagination which I have corrected.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ See: Robert Castel, *Métamorphoses de la question sociale* (Paris, 1995).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

vagrancy laws, restricting land ownership and self-employment opportunities to below survival levels, and high taxes on foodstuffs.

Secondly, former slaves were to be governed *through* their psychology, which as with all men, rested squarely on desire. In order 'to initiate the emancipated slave into liberty, fashion him for social life, teach him how he must satisfy, through work, the needs of civilized man', the same triad that was used to discipline the European poor would 'vanquish the natural sloth and apathy of the Negro. One will only overcome these obstacles by creating new needs, the formation of families, and moralization'.⁶¹ New needs and desires were key, as an impatient vicomte de Panat demanded to know:

Is it true or false that the slave would be content, without any desire, to lie on the ground and eat whatever he can find? Or does he rather have other desires? Does he desire to obtain any pleasure? In short, the slave, is he a brute beast that does not desire to improve his lot? Or does he rather have desires, tastes for spending, needs?⁶²

The commission was assured that 'They have a penchant for luxury. There is hope here. If these people could have luxurious needs, that would be the best guarantee for work; if they wanted beautiful clothes, they would feel the need to work'.⁶³ Indeed, 'negresses are almost always well dressed'. 'I have seen', Tocqueville added, 'in almost all Negroes a childish, but very lively taste for clothing, luxury, [and] jewellery. I have seen slaves with very expensive clothing'. Charles de Rémusat opined that 'Blacks may spend whatever little they earn, but the taste for

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 62, 74.

⁶² Ibid., p. 86.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 77.

spending is an equally powerful stimulant than saving. One cannot say then that they are foreign to all need to earn, to procure themselves pleasures'.⁶⁴

Family, morality, the penchant for vanity and luxury, and the tendency to emulate and imitate each other, was for the former slave as for the French lower classes, the best guarantee of an eventual arrival into civilization. In 1839, Whites and Blacks shared the same cognitive and mental predispositions as all humans. A century later, this assertion would have been much more problematic. The infamous 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica entry on the Negro, for example, emphasized the environmental, 'psychological and cultural differences' distinguishing 'the dark races'.⁶⁵ Racial and societal differences had become much more determining than any underlying universal substrate likening all 'men'. Thus, when modern forms of social assistance were implemented in metropolitan France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the colonies, and particularly Algeria, were excluded from any modern welfare policy. In fact, from the late nineteenth century, at the time when child saving campaigns were at their pinnacle in *l'Hexagone* (metropolitan France), when women and children were being excluded from the labour market, and the division of labour within the home was being promoted through a vast network of policies in the metropolis, the French colonial authorities, much like their British counterparts, were implementing more demanding taxation, in cash and kind, whose impact drew an unprecedented number of colonial women and children into the labour market. In her study of interwar Cameroun, Jane Guyer found that this had 'profound

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁵ Thomas Athol Joyce, 'Negro', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIX (Cambridge, 1911), p. 344.

implications for the internal organization of the family. The overwhelming impression given by the documents of this period is that women and children were drawn into the colonial economy to a much greater extent than previously, both in the domestic cash economy and in unpaid work for the government'.⁶⁶

In the first half of the nineteenth century, then, racialized and gendered colonial subjects or the French working classes were imagined as sharing the same psychological makeup, drives and disgusts as the normative and elitist category of universal 'man'. While the universal workings of the human mind were believed to equalize all individuals, it was also able to accommodate within this universality a hierarchical plurality of different categories of persons. Individuals were identified with one of the multiple evolutionary stages separating nature from civilization, perception from reason or infancy from mature age. A century later, as we shall see in the third chapter, sameness and difference came to be organized along very different lines. The universality of 'man' as the cornerstone of governing would collapse by 1900, giving way to an increasingly socialized definition of the individual. Blacks and Whites were no longer imagined to share their psyches because evolutionary stages and timelines came to define the hierarchy of societies, 'races' or peoples rather than that of individuals alone. The new 'essence' of 'man' in 1900 rested with institutionalized imagined collectives.

This section has underscored that with the belief in the universality of 'man' across time and space there emerged the paradoxical categorization of persons as both

⁶⁶ Jane Guyer, 'Head tax, social structure and rural incomes in Cameroun, 1922-1937', *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 20/79 (1980), p. 318.

equal and unequal, a dualism that has proved long lived. But rather than as a paradox, equality-inequality can be read as a mutually supportive pair, since, after all, rankings and categorizations require an ontological sameness on which to ground comparability. The rise of the modern self can be situated at the historical juncture in the late eighteenth century at which philosophers proclaimed both the psychological equality and intellectual inequality of 'man'. As a problem of government this opposition found its best expression in the legal-symbolic equality and the socio-economic inequality of citizens. In the ideal of a meritocratic society, intellectual hierarchies would coincide exactly with the hierarchy of wealth, serving as a giant taxonomy plotting the possible pluralities contained in 'man' along a single vertical axis. Therefore, those at the bottom of the ranking, the problem of the poor and downtrodden which social assistance policies sought to address, played a structural role within the emergence of modern subjectivity, as this thesis shows. As the next section will explore, the poor in France did not serve as the 'other' standing *opposite* the ideally male, bourgeois and imperial notion of the universal 'man', as some grotesquely deformed mirror image. Instead, the whole panoply of non-normative subjectivities came to populate and be located *within* the very concept and experience of the modern self, thus posing an internal problem of government and disciplining of the self that mirrored the broader societal conflicts.

'The child is the father of the man': Civilization and its 'other'.

From the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was inherited the concept of the modern individual as a solitary entity. As philosopher Iris

Murdoch pointed out, 'this individual is seen as alone[...], that is: not confronted with real dis-similar others'.⁶⁷ Indeed, the problem of the 'other', the ease with which human beings may be reduced to simple objects or means, remains one of the key questions in modern thought and the source of the darkest pages in modern history. When difference occurs, it becomes an ontological difference that virtualizes and reduces the 'other' to a seemingly un-real, non-human status. At the collective level, this takes us back to an understanding of difference that has much recurred since the French Revolution. As Eugen Weber has argued,

Diversity had not bothered earlier centuries very much. It seemed part of the nature of things, whether from place to place or between one social group and another. But the Revolution had brought with it the concept of national unity as an integral and integrating ideal at all levels, and the ideal of oneness stirred concern about its shortcomings. Diversity became imperfection, injustice, failure, something to be noted and to be remedied.⁶⁸

Difference thus posed a conceptual problem in the way of imagining both the individual and the collective. If indeed the abstract, universal individual had been thought of as 'solitary' following Murdoch, it could be argued that the collective bodies made up of such individuals were also imagined as being 'alone' and 'not confronted with real dis-similar others'. In commenting the work of philosopher Karl Jaspers, philosopher Giacomo Marramao noted that:

the European exception lies in the fact that while most other civilizations characterise themselves as 'the centre of the world', Europe constitutes itself

⁶⁷ Iris Murdoch, 'Against dryness: A polemical sketch', *Encounter* (January 1961), p. 16.

⁶⁸ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford, 1976), p. 9.

through 'an inner polarity of Orient and Occident' [...] It is a typical Western dualism that is not met with in other cultures.⁶⁹

For Jaspers, it was the *internalized* battle between 'us' and 'them' that characterized the very emergence of the West. He saw 'the antithesis of West and East as an eternal antithesis that is for ever reappearing in fresh shapes'. Historically, the West only became intelligible through this separation, but it was a separation that turned the Orient into a 'mythical principle' whose conflictive presence could always be felt within. Despite all of the West's achievements and self-claimed superiority, Jaspers saw a profound sense of lack, 'an *incompleteness* and *deficiency* in the West', a persistent doubt as to on which side of the divide universality was truly to be found, a fear of being reabsorbed into the 'matrix of Asia', thus begging the question: 'What is the cost of our paramountcy?'.⁷⁰ In other words, dissimilarity could be recast as ontological 'solitude' only if the 'other' could be assimilated *within* the self.

Through his reading of difference as an internalized tog of war, Jaspers captured something that may apply, writ large, to the characteristically Western experience of a self that is confronted with a 'mythical' and 'unreal' other, that 'eternal antithesis that is for ever reappearing in fresh shapes'. Inner polarities then, that, as such, were embodied contradictions, contained and located within the self, which was thus left to waver between paramountcy *and* incompleteness, a longing for separation *and* merger, a supremacy that had to subdue and dominate and a deficiency that yearned for the purity, innocence or naturalness imagined in the

⁶⁹ Giacomo Marramao, *The Passage West: Philosophy After the Age of the Nation State* (London, 2012), pp. 50-51.

⁷⁰ Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven, 1965), pp. 67-70.

'other'. In short, 'otherness' could be understood as the characteristic process of internalizing the 'other'. It was consequently not the unbridgeable distance but rather the unsettling proximity between self and 'other' which accounted for how dissimilarity came to be mobilized historically within modernity as the constant presence of a persistent threat, the fear of the alien within, disturbing much more because of its familiarity than because of its difference.⁷¹

The evolutionary stages we encountered in the previous section, between savagery and civilization or infancy and maturity, were crucial in this pattern of negating difference by internalizing it. While critiquing Max Weber's 'idea of rationalisation and disenchantment of the world[...] as an unstoppable process dissolving traditional forms of life', particularly in non-Western cultures, Murrain has written that 'Weber is able to understand tradition only as the *antecedent* to Modernity, not as its *counterpoint*'.⁷² In other words, when the category of 'tradition' was applied to any culture or way-of-being branded as 'other' it conceptually became reduced to something that simply came *before* Western modernity, that is, to a developmental stage of Western history itself, to something *internal* to the West, instead of standing for something actually outside or different from it. Thus the distance between self and 'other' could be read as chronology, as the same separated through time, as different chapters of a unified historical development. Reduced to 'the past', 'our past', dissimilarities collapsed into *time*. In this way, the ideology of progress was able to account for and annul 'real' differences by plotting them in time, in a single universal timeline of human

⁷¹ See: Harvie Ferguson, *Modernity and Subjectivity: Body, Soul, Spirit* (Charlottesville, 2000), who places 'alterity' at the heart of modern subjectivity.

⁷² Murrain, *Passage West*, p. 58.

evolution, whose avant-garde the West represented, serving as the end point toward which all differences would eventually converge and become neutralized. At best, the 'other' stood for a remote, recalcitrant or vestigial origin that was doomed to yield before the relentless passage of time; at worst, dissimilarity became the very obstacle impeding such historical advancement. 'Otherness' therefore remained so mobilizing and destructive because it relied on an *internal* struggle that doubled as a conflict between past and present, the stakes of which were 'progress' at the collective and the 'perfectibility of man' at the individual level.

If we now consider the many 'others' that were dreamt up for the modern self from Descartes to 1848, and beyond, we will find that they pivoted around a very familiar category that confirms our broader reflections about the unsettling proximity of difference in Western modernity. For indeed my argument is that defining and primary 'other' confronting the modern subject was the category of the *child*, the universal antecedent of every individual self. While the soul had once been understood as grounding and unifying human existence on Earth and beyond, modern philosophy's own 'discovery' of childhood relied on the premise that there existed a more or less essential discontinuity between the child and adult.⁷³ As human distinctness came to rely increasingly on reason, on self-sufficient and autonomous bodies and minds, the contrast between manhood and infancy came

⁷³ Philippe Ariès famously argued that there was a very gradual discovery or invention of childhood from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century: *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of family Life* (New York, 1962). I largely agree with Ariès, but will specifically explore this process as one of conceptual discovery within the broad conceptualization of 'man' in modern philosophy and thought. In doing so I follow David Kennedy who understood the 'invention of childhood' in its conceptual radicalism as 'the reification of the child as a special life-form separated from adults'. David Kennedy, 'The hermeneutics of childhood', *Philosophy Today* 35/4 (1992), p. 45.

to stand for the very 'antithesis between man and beast, reason and instinct', self-reliance and shameful dependency.⁷⁴ 'We are born weak', Rousseau wrote, 'we need strength; we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgment'.⁷⁵ The intellectual project of modern philosophy that elevated reasonable, self-sufficient 'man' to new heights, was therefore inseparable from the denigration to new lows of the category of the child. 'The growing perception of this vulnerability of the child' in the early eighteenth Century, Richard Sennett has argued, united the savage and the civilized, since it 'produced a more concrete, experiential idea of what a state of nature consisted of. It was not a hypothesis. It was a fact in every human life'.⁷⁶ Every civilized 'man' had started off as a savage.

But these discussions placed infancy and manhood within a symbolic and conceptual domain that no longer mapped on to actual personal biography. Instead of being dictated by time and 'nature', the moment of 'coming of age' for the abstract 'man' became a permanent struggle that came to ground modern government as an *ongoing* problem; for the modern individual, self-government stood for the policing of the never-ending slippages between these competing inner categories. 'The long and helpless infancy of man', as David Hume put it, represented the diametrical opposite of how 'man' was understood, and one became a 'man' only insofar one excluded the child within, and managed to avoid relapse into childish behaviours.⁷⁷ The drive to govern one's thoughts, emotions and impulses was often represented as a struggle between an inner adult and an inner child, across time and space. Philosopher David Kennedy has underscored

⁷⁴ C.A. Rhys Davids, 'Introduction', in: Kant, *On Education* (Boston, 1900), p. xiii.

⁷⁵ Rousseau, *Emile* (New York, 1979), p. 38.

⁷⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London, 1993), p. 95.

⁷⁷ David Hume, *The Essential David Hume* (New York, 1969), p. 183.

the importance of this opposition of ages for ‘the development of ideas about selfhood, about the meaning of the human life cycle, and about human forms of knowledge’. He wrote that:

the adult-child economy is a central, continuously shifting balance in the ecology of the self, and of primary importance to any model of self-construction in which our maturity is always in question, and never there as a matter of course, or fixed once and for all as an end-point.⁷⁸

So central was the divide between infant and ‘man’, he argued, that to speak of the so-called ‘invention of childhood’ must also imply the ‘invention of adulthood’.⁷⁹ Indeed, in the writings of early nineteenth century experts on the self, such as Jouffroy, who was one of the leading ‘official’ philosophers of the Cousin school of the July monarchy, selfhood was constructed in explicit terms as a productive and unstable struggle between the mutually constitutive couple of adult and child. In 1835, Jouffroy explained that while humans had a primitive compulsion to act, not all action implied the use of one’s will.

[N]ot only do we not govern our faculties in the first years of life, but we often cease to govern them at all ages: it can happen and it often happens in the formed man that no intermediary is placed between the passionate part of our nature, or the motive, and the part of our nature that executes, or the faculties, so as that the first acts immediately and without intermediary upon the second.⁸⁰

This was the case especially when the will was swept away by strong passions or when ‘our will, tired of governing, rests, and momentarily suspends the surveillance it exercises over them. The will is thus an intermittent power, while

⁷⁸ Kennedy, ‘Hermeneutics’, p. 44.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Jouffroy, *Cours de droit naturel*, pp. 72-73.

the faculties act incessantly with different degrees of energy or weakness'.⁸¹ Thus, the state of inner struggle between 'the formed man' and the child necessitated an incessantly governing 'intermediary', the self, just like modern philosophers since Thomas Hobbes had posited the need for the state and the law as a result of the natural warring tendency among equals. The main task of this intermediary was to ceaselessly tame the 'continuous and infinite mobility' of children, evident in their determinations, passions, 'in their traits, movements [and] ideas'.⁸² But this was a task that at best was carried out intermittently, such that the governing self was both a need and a lack. In other words, the self emerged as a response to a problem of self-government, one that required the constant effort of sustaining an intermediary who could promise to neutralize unacceptable inner diversity. And if such an emergence is to be found somewhere crystalized into an event, then it is to the French Revolution we must look, as the historical eruption of the belief in 'unity as an integral and integrating ideal'. For, I argue, it was the *problematization of diversity* served as the foundation for the government of both society and the self. Consequently, each individual became 'a miniature of the larger self-governing society'.⁸³ Or as Elias expressed it more explicitly: 'The controlling agency forming itself as part of the individual's personality structure corresponds to the controlling agency forming itself in society at large'. Both served to regulate behaviour and emotional fluctuations.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p. 74.

⁸³ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, 1995), p. 33.

⁸⁴ Elias, *Power and Civility*, p. 240.

But since the concept of childhood had been depreciated as 'nature', unreason and helplessness, it paved the way for a vast range of equally vilified categories to be internalized. Thus beyond the danger of childhood, 'man' faced more numerous enemies, as Jean-Baptiste Say, France's most important political economist, showed in his small volume on morals. The line between animals and humans was feeble. 'One would say that the monkey was made to humiliate man and remind him that between him and the animals there are but nuances'.⁸⁵ And so were the distances between the genders. 'Men have illusions when they are young; women have them at all ages; and everybody has them in the times of factions'.⁸⁶ Age, gender and class could serve to name and map out the spaces between illusions and proper thinking. 'As intelligence grows, the considerations relative to persons taken individually are less important, while generalities are more. A child, a little cultivated mind as one finds among the beautiful sex, only pay attention to individuals'.⁸⁷ What Say was spelling out was an entire pedagogy of normative selfhood, and one that required categories to be very porous and 'others' very proximate, as can be seen in the following discussion of madmen.

The best treatment for the insane and the best education for children are based on the same principles. Children, as madmen, do not have access to all their reason; they need to be made to feel the need to be conducted and that one does not wish to be a victim of their insanity. If they want to be emancipated from this, they need to know that it will only happen when they learn to reason, that is, to link causes with their effects, to know where a fact comes from and what will be its consequences. To treat madness is to remake an education. To educate is to give

⁸⁵ Jean-Baptiste Say, *Petit volume contenant quelques aperçus des hommes et de la société* (Paris, 1839), pp. 28-29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

reason to the senseless. The latter task is easier, because the weakness of infancy render us masters more easily.⁸⁸

These slippery analogies that generate 'others' through a parallel with childhood could also be found in administrative texts, such as when the prefect of La Corrèze in 1869 cast old age as an 'other' in saying: 'The start of life is, like its end, marked by weakness, and in more than one way the madmen and the elderly resemble the child'.⁸⁹

At the time when the categories of animal, gender, mental health or childhood seemed more fixed and 'incommensurable' than they had ever been, the possibility and risk of analogical slippage grew exponentially for the self. It was because the process of mapping and setting boundaries of concepts could very readily, as in the case of Say, be tied to a normative behaviour on which those symbolic borderlines relied. To have illusions or pay attention to individuals at the expense of generalities could be discursively constructed as a boundary crossing, in this case, away from normative male conduct. On the one hand, these pervasive analogies between the self and the child, animal, woman or madman meant the contour and boundaries of the self always remained open to challenge, discontinuities and slippages. 'Otherness' loomed as a permanent and *necessary* threat, since it were precisely such dangers posed by inner multiplicities that made necessarily the rise and endurance of an intermediary, governing agency which came to be experienced as a self. On the other hand, while these quotes generated a lack or anxiety, they simultaneously pointed to the answer: not having illusions, a generalizing intellect or an understanding of the world through efficient causality.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 44-45.

⁸⁹ Conseil Général de la Corrèze, *Session de 1869* (Tulle, 1869), p. 203.

Thus, the 'other' as a reference point for behaviour and being had a *pedagogical function*, or at least tried to point to the problem and solution in the same breath. The danger of being like a woman or the poor could be exorcized through the deliberate steering of one's behaviour away from that of such fictionalized collectives. In this regard, the issue of right reasoning and thoroughly questioning one's thinking was consistently emphasised: 'The vulgar, meaning almost everyone, receive their ideas ready-made.[...] We are still living largely off opinions fashioned in the times of barbarism; we use them to a certain point'.⁹⁰ As important as proper thinking was having the dominion over one's will. For philosopher Paul Janet,

The savage and primitive races, as well as children, hardly obey other than instinct: their instincts are sometimes generous, sometimes barbaric; but both command them in a imperious and absolute manner; it is not that they do not have free will; but they only exercise it in a very restrained sphere, as do children.⁹¹

In short, to be a 'man' was to act and reason like a 'man', which required a complete self-control over the mind and body in order to repress alternative ways of behaving and thinking that were explicitly branded as 'other', and imagined to be embodied by specific social categories of people. Consequently, that social mindscape populated by a growing number of 'others' and minorities, such as was depicted by Say and with much more grace by contemporary literary figures, taken together served as a roadmap of normative behaviour.

However, two registers were possible when speaking about these 'others'. The prefect of La Corrèze in 1853, for whom mental health services were but a subset

⁹⁰ Say, *Petit volume*, pp. 90-91.

⁹¹ Paul Janet, *Lectures variées de littérature et de morale* (Paris, 1890), p. 255.

of child services, said that 'as the child, the madman is incapable of work and discernment; as the child, he needs a refuge, he needs to be protected from himself; but it is also necessary to protect society against the madman'.⁹² In ascribing them a helpless inferiority, the child, the animal, the woman, the madman or the vulgar could inspire a certain patronizing benevolence or guardianship. But they could also 'victimize' others with their 'insanity' and endanger the social order.

Although contemporaries never consistently distinguished both, Foucault made a useful analytical distinction between the images of the savage and the barbarian making up the 'natural man' that jurists, theorists of right and economists 'dreamed up' as the man who lived before society and history. The savage, he argued, was 'always the noble savage'. He was the one who led the way to civilization by engaging in exchange. Exchanging rights, he founded society, sovereignty and law, exchanging goods, the economic body. But the barbarian was his antithesis, since he could only exist outside and at war with civilization. Instead of exchange, the barbarian represented domination. His freedom was never surrendered and only exercised through plunder and conquest at the expense of others.⁹³

The spectre of barbarism was put to many uses in the nineteenth century. While the savage or the helpless other were the photographic negative of the appropriate use of reason and will, the barbarian resisted authority, refusing the discipline and

⁹² C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1853* (Tulle, 1853), p. 138.

⁹³ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (London, 2003), pp. 195-196.

loss of liberty needed for social and economic life. The barbarian was also naturalized in the modern child who, attributed an innate taste for domination, was in relentless need of being disciplined. 'The hand is the sceptre of this little tyrant', said writer Jules Champfleury, 'he believes that everything belongs to him, that a desire is an order[...] One refuses him anything, he revolts, a mutiny escalates and objects are thrown with rage'.⁹⁴ Adam Smith also depicted children in terms of angry attackers. 'A very young child[...] endeavours always, by the violence of its outcries, to alarm, as much as it can, the attention of its nurse, or of its parents.[...]ts anger is the first and, perhaps, the only passion which it is taught to moderate[...] and the passion which incites it to attack, is restrained'.⁹⁵

But the nineteenth-century barbarians par excellence were the lower classes. When Jeremy Bentham framed social assistance in terms of 'persons *maintained* without property *by the labour of others*', a notion that became popular in France and in liberal orthodoxy, he provided a definition that could apply just as well to a beggar or a thief, a poor widow or a prisoner.⁹⁶ By a sleight of hand, he had united the lethargy of the savage and the plunder of the barbarian in the figure of urban poor. Any refusal to participate in the market economy could then be cast as laying claim on the property of others and an attack on the social order. The intense moral panic surrounding the *classes dangereuses* in the 1840s came from the joining of this discursive blurring of the lines between crime and poverty with a theory of moral contagion whereby habit and milieu *determined* behaviour. Such ecological theories of behaviour went hand in hand with the belief in pedagogy and

⁹⁴ Jules Champfleury, *Les enfants* (Paris, 1872), p. 16.

⁹⁵ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 167.

⁹⁶ Quoted in: Mitchell Dean, 'A genealogy of the government of poverty', *Economy and Society*, 21/3 (1992), p. 239.

of childhood as a blank slate. The writings of administrators, journalists, social reformers, and novelists, very especially Eugène Sue's wildly popular *Les mystères de Paris*, magnified, sensationalized and popularized the dire conditions of *la racaille* or 'urban residue' and their infamous habitats. Potentially, the whole of the working classes were indigents-criminals.

The problematic poor were then born as a new category of 'otherness'. While the Old Regime had considered that moral leprosy had to be veiled away at all costs, now its visibility was granted a pedagogical value. Say argued that 'the perversity of men' should not be hidden from children. Witnessing social vices had a salutary effect, while to hide them was just to dupe them.

I'm not telling you to teach them the vices, but don't dissimulate them. Presented in this manner, vices are a salutary spectacle, which shows the deformities side by side with the appeal, and the deplorable consequences next to the enticing preliminaries.⁹⁷

There was appeal and enticement in vice. Thus the vicious and the poor were not an alien, incommensurable 'other', but responded to the same human chain of drives and impulses as the rest of their more honourable counterparts. The wall separating good society and the infested *garnis* of Paris, the bourgeois and the *chiffonnier*, was reduced to a simple choice between what one *should* and *should not* do, that is, a moral determination. The social boundaries between the correct and deviant were thus drawn *within* the choosing self. Social difference could then become seen as a simple matter of behaviour and its consequences. With it, a new

⁹⁷ Say, *Petit volume*, pp. 49-50.

domain opened to the risk of what could go wrong if 'our will, tired of governing, rests, and momentarily suspends the surveillance it exercises over' us.

Indeed, the poor were the living and visible catalogue of unacceptable behaviour. The purpose of the discourse on pauperism, as Procacci has shown, was 'not the elimination of inequality, but of *difference*', itself imagined as incompatible with the social order. What the concept of pauperism threw into sharp relief was the existence of 'a series of *different forms of conduct*, namely those which are not amenable to the project of socialization which is being elaborated: "Indigence is a set of physical and moral habits". Procacci argued that the pauper represented difference on four accounts. The first was *mobility*. Pauperism was the world of vagabond and nomadic ways that were 'impossible either to control or utilize', a shifting and promiscuous universe that favoured 'spontaneous solidarities which elude "legal" or "contractual" definition'. The second was *independence*. Pauperism meant the refusal of restraints, 'organic ties of subordination', market contracts, and the needs and desire on which the new social system was being erected; fostering instead reliance in the old systems of alliances, refusing 'to relinquish control of the organization of their survival'. The third was both *improvidence and frugality*. Pauperism was a refusal to sacrifice the present to the future and to expand one's needs. The fourth was *ignorance and insubordination*. As one contemporary put it, it was above all 'ignorance of duty and its usefulness', which 'deserves to occupy the foremost place among the causes of indigence, since it leads to idleness, immorality, uncleanness, improvidence, as well as to many

diseases and infirmities'.⁹⁸ In short, on all these fronts, the poor symbolized and embodied the unacceptability of differences that called to be eradicated.

And yet, the discourses and policies pertaining to pauperism were remarkably unsuccessful in 'eliminating' the four forms of difference Procacci has identified; if anything, they publicized and multiplied the awareness of deviance as never before. If we were to focus on the *effects* rather than the *purposes* of these narratives and practices, a new light could be cast on their agency. The debate on pauperism conceptualized, named and identified difference, but also gave individuals the tools to understand and judge these aberrations independently, in themselves and others. If the psychological subject had the keys to identify and predict the 'physical and moral habits' of other normative psychological subjects, the same was true of the actions and motives of monstrous 'others', since both sprung from the same sources. Rather than the socialized egotism of modern selves, what characterized paupers or savages was their *asocial* egotism, that is, they inflicted a voluntary or involuntary damage on society by shunning the productive and reproductive responsibilities and duties that they owed to the order of things. The discourses on pauperism thus educated the public that consumed them in the psychological differentiation and understanding of same and different, self and 'other'. And this was not only the case for the wealthy. The pauper was perhaps even more crucial for the self-definition of the militant working class, only that Marx and Engels used a term for them of their own invention dating from the 1830s: the *lumpenproletariat*. These were a despicable lot, consisting of

⁹⁸ Procacci, 'Social economy', pp. 160-162.

vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, swindlers, charlatans, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, procurers [pimps], brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, rag-pickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars: in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French call la *bohème*.⁹⁹

Between 1848 and 2 December 1852, this view would become commonplace among workers.¹⁰⁰

While the phenomena of pauperism has been depicted through the lens of disciplining of the poor, such a characterization left out the primary objects of discipline in the nineteenth century. Foucault argued that, in writing a history of sexuality, one could imagine that ‘sexual controls were the more intense and meticulous as they were directed at the poorer classes’, but this was not the case. ‘On the contrary, the most rigorous techniques were formed and, more particularly, applied first, with the greatest intensity, in the economically privileged and politically dominant classes’. They only became disseminated much later in a simplified form. ‘What was formed was a political ordering of life, not through an enslavement of others, but through an affirmation of self’.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the common experience well-off men in nineteenth-century France shared was of never having been unsupervised until marriage; and after that point, if they were anything like their counterparts in the Chicago of the 1860s that Sennett studied, they had a marked preference for domestic isolation.¹⁰² Discipline was understood

⁹⁹ Quoted in: Robert Bussard, ‘The “dangerous class” of Marx and Engels: The rise of the idea of the *lumpenproletariat*’, *History of European Ideas*, 8/6 (1987), pp. 685-686.

¹⁰⁰ See: Raymond Huard, ‘Marx et Engels devant la marginalité: La découverte du *lumpenproletariat*’, *Romantisme*, 18/59 (1988), pp. 5-17.

¹⁰¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: The Will to Know* (New York, 1978), pp. 120-122.

¹⁰² Sennett, *Families Against the City* (New York, 1970).

as an unrelenting supervision, to which punishment was but a means. At the heart of the early-modern family stood a 'harsh parental discipline' aimed at 'the crushing of the supposedly sinful will by brute force at an early age'.¹⁰³ It was especially marked among the higher classes, who needed to learn to obey before commanding. This patterned continued in the eighteenth and largely in the first half of the nineteenth century, even when the concern with self-interest and reason substituted that of sin. Towards 1715, the marquise de Lambert insisted with a severe tone on the need to root out in children 'the right they think they have of doing what they wish'.

It is necessary to break children's wills, to render them ductile, and make them yield under the authority of reason, teaching them not to give in to their desires.[...] One must distinguish in them the natural needs from those of fantasy, and only allow them to ask for their true needs.[...] When one is not accustomed to submit one's will to the reason of others in youth, one will have many difficulties to listen to the council of one's own.¹⁰⁴

In the nineteenth century, authors such as the marquise de Lambert were considered to be excessively harsh. But the difference in tone may well escape the modern reader of the following lines written by Inéis Monmarson in 1851: 'Absolute and in some way blind submission must become the habitude of childhood', one that was arrived at through repression.¹⁰⁵

What repulses children the most are pressure, discomfort, [and] constraint; it is therefore through these that one arrives at discipline and habitudes that make it possible to expect the development of reason and judgment. Children, having no

¹⁰³ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1979), p. 653.

¹⁰⁴ Marquise de Lambert, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1808), p. 357.

¹⁰⁵ Inéis Monmarson, *De l'éducation et de l'instruction des enfants par la mère de famille* (Paris, 1851), p. 118.

personal reason, only have as guides the reason and foresight of others and as fireguards, very precise good habits.¹⁰⁶

In the second half of the century, as we shall see, totalizing discipline gradually gave way to more discerning means of governing, namely the concepts of normality and abnormality, which were non the less equally founded upon the vilification of childhood. In the most rushed of his *Les anormaux* lectures, Foucault offered a sketch of how childhood became a ‘the central and constant point of reference for psychiatry’ between 1850 and 1870. He defined an abnormal person ‘as an individual who can be psychiatrized’, while it was the ‘immobilization of life, conduct, and performance around childhood that essentially makes psychiatrization possible’.¹⁰⁷ ‘Childhood as a historical stage of development and a general form of behaviour becomes the principal instrument of psychiatrization’. Foucault argued that it was ‘through childhood that psychiatry succeeded in getting hold of the adult and the totality of the adult’.¹⁰⁸ The result was a ‘trap’ for adults; the naming of behaviour as childish and childhood as pathology meant that ‘Any kind of disorder, indiscipline, agitation, disobedience, recalcitrance, lack of affection, and so forth can now be psychiatrized’.¹⁰⁹

By 1899, the denigration of the child had not ended, but perhaps only acquired a more modern ring. Children needed to be taught that ‘our importance is measured by the usefulness of the actions we exercise’.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

¹⁰⁷ Foucault, *Abnormal* (London, 2003), pp. 292, 301, 304.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 304.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

If [the child] well occupies the first place in the hearts and thoughts of his parents, he is bound to settle for the second place in family life proper. Everything imposes this on him, his age, inexperience, the need for a hierarchy, and also the fact that, having no responsibility, he can have no ambition to dominate; his opinions and ideas, not having matured, have no practical value.[...] But parents are bound to bring them to the just appreciation of everything they lack in order to be someone (*pour être quelqu'un*).¹¹⁰

The reading of childhood as negativity, as the lack and emptiness from where being had to emerge, therefore proved long lived. This section has shown how the split between child and adult, this inner parental axis that served as the wellspring of internalized 'otherness', was crucial in posing the problem of self-government to which the modern self was a response. The self emerged as an intermediary in an internal struggle that took on the many guises of disowned social diversity, and that in so doing tended to internalize broader social conflicts. Despite the violence of the modern age, Elias showed that the degree of aggression in society has been consistently diminishing since the Middle Ages. And he argued that this social conflict did not disappear, but was internalized in the individual, the 'battlefield is, in a sense, moved within'. Thus the old 'struggle of man and man, must now be worked out within the human being' through a intermediary self that sought to 'control, transform or suppress his affects in keeping with the social structure'.¹¹¹

Instead of merely privatizing societal conflicts, the process of individuation internalized and confirmed the very historical teleology of Western modernity. If

¹¹⁰ Thérèse Bentzon, *Causeries de morale pratique* (Paris, 1913), p. 20.

¹¹¹ Elias, *Power and Civility*, p. 242.

the path from childhood to maturity retraced in each human being the passage from savagery to civilization, then it contained within it the very promise of emancipation that civilization had to offer; from the slavery of childhood and the many 'others' it housed, would emerge the liberty of manhood as positive historicity. In his analysis of slavery, German philosopher Georg Hegel articulated this process with great clarity. In writing beyond the 1800 paradigm shift explored in this chapter, whereby the self was socialized and collective predicaments were personalized, he was no longer able to disentangle the problem of personal and collective government. Hegel wrote that 'It was not so much *from* slavery as *through* slavery that humanity was emancipated'.¹¹² The very 'basis of slavery' was 'that man has not yet acquired an awareness of his freedom and hence is degraded to an object, a valueless thing'.¹¹³ The self-realization of freedom meant both 'liberation from *outward* control' and 'emancipation from the *inward* slavery of lust and passion'.¹¹⁴ Freedom could not be granted from above; it had to be earned by each individual. It had to be won by the self and from the self against its innate worthlessness and thingness. And only inner conflict could break those chains. The emancipation of humanity therefore required and was inseparable from individuation, from the construction of human subjects as modern selves, from the successful transition of each individual from child to 'man', 'nature' to civilization, slavery to emancipation.

¹¹² Georg Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Kitchener, 2001), p. 426.

¹¹³ Quoted in: Maria Mies, 'New reproductive technologies: Sexist and racist implications', in: David Inglis, John Bone and Rhoda Wilkie (eds), *Nature: Reconfiguring the Social/Natural Interface* (London, 2005), p. 95.

¹¹⁴ J. Sibree 'Translator's Introduction', in: Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 10.

Every human lifecycle therefore contained a chasm, and one upon which a new emancipatory model of society and subject could be built. The analysis of the conceptualization of childhood thus throws into sharp relief how the government of the self and of others came to be framed as a problem towards 1800. In the previous model of a society that had organized dissimilarities by means of an aristocracy, birth had served as the very wellspring of privilege and of ordered difference. The beginning of human life in this Old Regime was thus saturated with meaning and quality; it offered the raw materials out of which a sense of individuality was to be forged throughout a lifetime. Birth had been the key source and legitimation of inequality and social diversity. In turn, in the new readings of childhood that were slowly gestated in the century and a half before they erupted onto the historical stage in 1789, humans were born into a blank slate, into the void of 'otherness'. Birth now made all persons equal and interchangeable in their crucially universal equality of lack and potential. With innate 'nature' degraded to the tabula rasa of animal instinct, humanness came to depend on 'nurture'. In the radical simplicity of Kant's words, this meant that 'Man is nothing but what education makes of him'.¹¹⁵ The more human birth could be identified with a blank slate, the more education became a problem of government and the more governing became the perusal of an ideal. As philosopher Paolo Virno has argued, such a view of infancy has led revolutionaries and reformists since the eighteenth century to focus on *pedagogy*, 'the attempt, that is, to make the infant's training conform to the ideal of a more just society'.¹¹⁶ Born into a state of undetermined nothingness, the very existence of 'man' could only but pose the problem of educating, fashioning and governing the self and others.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Paolo Virno, 'Childhood and critical thought', *Grey Room*, 21 (2005), p. 7.

In summary, the individual could continue to avoid being confronted by real, dissimilar others so long as it managed to internalize difference and then struggled to neutralize it within. In turn, this inner struggle made of individuality a universal, psychological experience. I argue that the experience of modern individuality would not have been possible without 'otherness'. And 'otherness' would not have been possible if childhood had not been conceptualized as a humiliating but well-deserved deficit of power (meaning an incapacity for self-awareness, self-preservation and desire satisfaction), shared by everyone, and to which, if careless, one could at any moment relapse. Faced with a constant danger, that very hyper-vigilance that was necessary in the internal relationships of the psychological self would also come to structure inter-personal and social relating, as we will see next.

Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas: The motives of human action.

While the previous sections have explored the broad foundations of a psychological understanding of governing the self and others, this section will focus on how such understandings came to be translated into specific behavioural habits capable of generating the type of experiences that made up the psychological self. Such a process of translation will be gauged through the discussions on human 'nature' that focused specifically on the question of which where the most primary and dominant drives and motives that led humans to act. The section will especially consider two authors, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith, who were key participants in such contemporary discussions and whose

normative-descriptive observations of human conduct had considerable long-term influence in shaping the psychological understanding of the self.

Both Smith and Rousseau opposed the notion that self-interest was the first principle of human behaviour. Instead, they postulated that two essential drives, one selfish and the other altruistic, drove our actions. Thus Rousseau spoke of *amour de soi* (love of oneself) and pity, while for Smith, who followed Rousseau closely in key presuppositions, self-love and sympathy were the first principles of our conduct. These were the wellsprings of the actions of universal 'man' in the abstract, unaffected by time and space. However, both authors immediately qualified such a view of human nature by historicizing it, without seemingly contradicting the universality of 'man'. As we saw in the previous two sections, evolutionary stages were used to introduce difference within abstract sameness — thus taking 'man' out of history, while putting the cleavages of history inside 'man'. Their argument was simple: the two timeless sources of human conduct had been affected by the changes brought about by civilization. Following the division of labour in modern commercial societies, natural drives had changed. Men were no longer driven by the satisfaction of their needs, domination or pleasure, but by 'the desire of bettering our condition', in other words, by vanity or *amour-propre*.¹¹⁷ For Rousseau, savages responded only to 'present and perceptible interest'; 'foresight meant nothing to them, and far from being concerned about a distant future, they did not even give thought to the next day'.¹¹⁸ The savage was a creature of leisure, while the citizen toiled until his death, which would not have

¹¹⁷ Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 44-47.

¹¹⁸ Rousseau, *The Discourses*, p. 163.

made sense unless 'power and reputation' had 'some meaning in his mind'.¹¹⁹ And the thirst for approval in civilized man, as Rousseau saw it, was the very wellspring of civilization. 'We seek to know only because we desire to enjoy; and it is not possible to conceive why one who had neither desires nor fears would take the trouble to reason'.¹²⁰ Reason, as an awareness of cause-effect, meant that civilized 'man' was always calculating his interests so as to postpone satisfaction in the present in order to attain grater pleasures in the future. The 'interested man', argued Jean-Jacques, 'thinks less of enjoying than of multiplying for himself the instruments of enjoyment'.¹²¹ Thus, saving rather than consumption, sacrifice rather than pleasure, in other words, the accumulation of wealth became a crucial means of attaining the respect of others. 'In that sense, rational calculation is what gives all its content to the concept of self-interest'.¹²² Unfortunately, as historian Pierre Force has argued, within such a view:

gratification never comes, because the object of desire is no longer the satisfaction of physical needs, but rather the satisfaction of one's vanity. We want to be admired and esteemed by others. Since the source of happiness is now outside of ourselves, we are engaged in a quest without end.¹²³

For Rousseau, it was to 'this ardour to be talked about' and 'this frenzy to achieve distinction' that could be attributed 'what is best and what is worst among men'. He therefore held a neutral view of vanity, even if he often emphasized its negative

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 142.

¹²¹ Quoted in: Force, *Self-Interest*, p. 245.

¹²² Ibid., p. 134.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 124.

aspects.¹²⁴ Smith, in turn, saw vanity in a positive light. He saw that in explaining modern man ‘almost everything can be reduced to vanity alone’, but he grounded vanity in reason and reflection.¹²⁵ He argued that all the toil and sacrifice in the modern world could not be justified by the need for survival. ‘The wages of the meanest labourer’, he wrote, ‘afford him food and clothing, the comfort of a house, and of a family’.¹²⁶ He could even indulge in superfluities. Material needs were very easily satisfied. Rather, the purpose of toil was simply the esteem of others, or the need ‘To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation’. This was the strongest of human desires. In other words, ‘It is the vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure, which interests us’.¹²⁷

Rousseau claimed that vanity, ‘a sentiment which originates in comparisons’, could not exist in ‘the genuine state of nature’. In such a condition everyone ‘views himself as the sole Spectator to observe him, as the only being in the universe to take any interest in him, as the only judge of his own merit’.¹²⁸ In Rousseau, therefore, the historical emergence of vanity implied the multiplication of points of view, spectators and judges, while this process of internalizing external viewpoints itself marked the birth of the modern self, and indeed of civilization. ‘[T]he savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, cannot live but in the opinions of others, and it is, if I may say so, from their judgment alone that he

¹²⁴ While there is no consensus on this neutrality claim in Rousseau scholarship, it has been the source of a revisionist view following the work of N.J.H. Dent, *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Psychological, Social and Political Theory* (New York, 1988). See: Michael McLendon, ‘The limits of amour-propre: Rousseau and the minimal self’, conference paper (2012), Available Online at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2141419>.

¹²⁵ Force, *Self-Interest*, pp. 45, 122, 246.

¹²⁶ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 61.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Rousseau, *The Discourses*, p. 218. I changed ‘only Spectator’ for ‘sole Spectator’ (*seul spectateur*).

derives the sentiment of his own existence'.¹²⁹ Thus in 'the man of society' Rousseau found a tight correspondence between his inner knowing or cognizance (*connaissance*) and his external acknowledgement or recognition (*reconnaissance*).

However, it was Smith who would further expand on the issue of judgement and develop it into a theory of conscience. What he called the 'moral looking-glass' or the 'impartial spectator' explained how vanity and self-comparison served to internalize the self-'other' split and build a sense of self as an entity tasked with governing inner diversity. Going beyond the Rousseauian criticism of the excessive weight of public opinion upon the civilized, Smith's innovation was to place the judgements of others at the centre of the relationship with oneself. He built on the figure of the 'impartial spectator' that philosophers Francis Hutcheson and David Hume had developed. As philosopher David D. Raphael has shown, while his two fellow Scotsmen had deployed a spectator theory to assess the past actions of others, Smith used it to 'explain the judgements of conscience made by an agent about his own actions' as well to decide on future behaviour.¹³⁰

Smith proposed that individuals were spectators and judges of the actions of others and were in turn judged by such observers. Eventually one gained awareness of being judged by them and became able to judge one's own actions by imagining whether an external observer would approve or disapprove of them.¹³¹

'This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct'. This was a form of self-

¹²⁹ Rousseau, *The Discourses*, p. 187.

¹³⁰ D.D. Raphael, *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy* (Oxford, 2007), p. 31.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

knowledge that relied on comparison with others; to examine one's 'own passions and conduct', Smith argued, was inseparable of imagining how others would judge these.¹³² This was not an interpersonal process between isolated persons, but one that would be impossible 'If we had no connexion with society'.¹³³ In other words, it was a social process because it relied on the knowledge of collective, impersonal standards of conduct, which one could have used to anticipate the judgements of others, or at least imagine that these could be foreseen.

Through this operation of the imagination, the other became internalized and incorporated as a split within the self. In order to assess one's own behaviour, Smith argued, 'I divide myself, as it were, into two persons'. One 'I' was 'the examiner and judge' or 'the spectator'; the other 'I' was 'the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of' or 'the agent'. Once established, the division somehow became absolute: 'that the judge should, in every respect, be the same with the person judged of, is as impossible as that the cause should, in every respect, be the same with the effect'.¹³⁴ The hierarchy between self and 'other' could thus not be breached, since it was but the internalization of a pre-existing hierarchical relationship. Initially, the agent of behaviour required an actual, external spectator. Children and men of weak character only controlled their emotions in the physical presence of others, thus self-government was imposed from the outside. Those with a constant and firm character, in turn, permanently placed themselves under the gaze of an imaginary observer.¹³⁵ Men of character were able to fully internalize and police the boundary between self and 'other',

¹³² Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 131.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹³⁵ Raphael, *Impartial Spectator*, p. 40.

agent and spectator, while externalizing in what they imagined 'public opinion' to be the measure of their own approval and disapproval. Philosopher Gilbert Harman has pointed out that in proposing a system of morality that devalued the agent in favour of the spectator, Smith reduced the morality of the agent, his or her desire to do what is right, to little more than pleasing spectators.¹³⁶ Such a decentring and externalizing would also come to govern the self's relationship to itself. 'Self-command' in Smith, as Raphael has argued, 'is essentially to feel for ourselves only what we see others can feel for us'.¹³⁷ Only this internal spectator using imagined external standards could dictate when the self was 'To be amiable and to be meritorious; that is, to deserve love and to deserve reward' or 'to be odious and punishable'.¹³⁸ But favouring the viewpoint of the spectator over that of the agent was crucial, Smith sustained, in order to gain an objective understanding of the correct proportion of things. In this way, a man would come to understand that an earthquake in China was a greater calamity than the loss of one of his fingers.¹³⁹ Such impartiality was indispensable for social life.

Smith's imaginary judge was a simple bystander, an unbiased and disinterested stranger, 'an impartial spectator who considers our conduct with the same indifference with which we regard that of other people'.¹⁴⁰ This meant that we could see ourselves objectively 'in the light in which others see us' or rather, he added, how 'they would see us if they knew all'.¹⁴¹ We were to be judged, that is, as

¹³⁶ Gilbert Harman, *Moral Agent and Impartial Spectator* (Lawrence, 1986), p. 4.

¹³⁷ Raphael, *Impartial Spectator*, p. 34.

¹³⁸ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 132.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in: Raphael, *Impartial Spectator*, p. 34.

'if the whole circumstances of our conduct were known'.¹⁴² This was thus a judge more implacable and infallible than any in the flesh, since we were fully transparent to this privileged and callous spectator who had access to all our internal and external experience. Incapable of deceiving or misleading this frigid and perfectly informed magistrate, agents would not be able to prevent 'seeing themselves in that despicable point of view in which their own consciences must tell them that they appear to every body, if the real truth should ever come to be known'.¹⁴³ Smith referred to his impartial spectator as 'this inmate of the breast, this abstract man, the representative of mankind, and substitute of the Deity', a proxy, that is, for a God he often referred to as 'the all-seeing Judge of the world'.¹⁴⁴ A new technology for the government of self and others fuelled by vanity, Smith's notion of conscience relied on a hyper-reflexive but decentred relationship with oneself which was an odd secular caricature of the Christian notion of an omniscient God and the ethical reversibility of subject and object exemplified in Luke 6:37 ('Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven'). But this conscience and its 'despicable point of view' were not effective because they were accurate. 'Unfortunately', Smith added, 'this moral looking-glass is not always a very good one'.¹⁴⁵ The impartial spectator had its limits. But even when the 'demigod within the breast' could be error-prone and unreliable, the enlisting of the imagination as an instrument of self-judgment, behaviour comparison, inner division and internalizing of 'otherness' established a type of ethical relation with oneself on which a new society of free, self-governing individuals could be built.

¹⁴² Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁴³ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 134.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

In Rousseau and Smith, there was a correspondence between individual and collective government. While the self depended on external standards with which to distinguish right from wrong behaviour, so did political governors depend on an exterior —‘public opinion’, the ‘Collective Will’ or an ‘invisible hand’ mechanism situated beyond the will and agency of statesmen— that defined the correct course of action and could only be ignored at their peril. The key for a free society was not a political will that imagined itself capable of moulding social reality through the action of legislation or any voluntarism laying claim to the good. Rather than given and ready-made answers, the good involved an always tentative and error-prone process of comparing an interior and an exterior, feeling and knowledge, immediate facts and transcendental reference-points. This required a freely self-governing intermediary —whether the self or the state— capable of translating the contradictory pushes and pulls of the interior and exterior into a deliberate course of action for which it was accountable.

The liberal and republican traditions, whose views Rousseau and Smith expressed, refuted the competing view of governing espoused by utilitarianism, a parallel current of thought within the French Enlightenment. France has its own tradition of utility that predated that of Bentham and the English tradition by a quarter of a century. Philosopher Isaiah Berlin’s remark that ‘Bentham was a complete disciple of [French philosopher Claude-Adrien] Helvétius’ had been acknowledged by philosopher Henry Sidgwick in 1877, who asserted that ‘the premises of Bentham

are all clearly given by Helvetius'.¹⁴⁶ While utilitarians equally proposed a correspondence between individual and collective governing, they understood both to be driven by self-interest, a force as inescapable as their opponents claimed vanity to be. Self-interest was self-evident, rational and already there, everywhere and in everyone. If an individual inevitably judged things and persons depending on how they promoted his or her self-interest, so did the public call virtue only the behaviour that was useful to collective self-interest.¹⁴⁷ If all 'men' were presumed capable of making rational choices, it was only because the essence of rational behaviour had been reduced to a mechanical or behaviourist understanding of human drives and conduct: self-interest meant seeking the pleasurable and avoiding discomfort. The function of those in political power was to use this understanding of human nature to bring about a virtuous society. Meant to directly govern human nature, law ought to make pleasurable the good and bothersome the bad. 'Moralists ought to know', Helvetius argued, 'that as the sculptor fashions the trunk of a tree into a god or a stool, so the legislator makes heroes, geniuses, virtuous men, as he wills'. With proper laws, 'none but madmen would be vicious'.¹⁴⁸ The totalitarian dangers of this political dream were fully played out during the French Revolution. In this utilitarian ideal there was little room for selfhood, without which a society governed *through* freedom could not exist. In order to emerge, the self required enough uncertainty and conflict in order to generate the need for an intermediary entity tasked with neutralizing and synthesizing the inherent uncertainties and conflicts of the overall system, as we shall see next.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in: De Champs, *Enlightenment and Utility*, p. 8; Henry Sidgwick, *Miscellaneous* (London, 1904), p. 151.

¹⁴⁷ Sidgwick, *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 152.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, utilitarianism, liberalism and republicanism were drawn together by the horror of the revolutionary excesses. This led to personal syntheses; Jean-Baptiste Say belonged to all three traditions. In thought, it now seemed, self-interest and vanity did not necessarily conflict. After all, did not public disapproval cause pain and public approval pleasure? The power of law and state institutions could also play a key role in establishing mechanisms that could govern *through* vanity, by linking the psychological standards of right and wrong behaviour to principles defined by centralized authorities—an example of which we will encounter in the sections on emulation.

But the key to a society governed *through* freedom remained the freely choosing individual, who could not be crafted out of legislative will. Laws established only the boundaries of freedom, demarking a territory within which subjects were to determine their own path. These subjects were to be personally responsible for their conduct, which meant that they were imagined as acting only after having undertaken a self-reflexive deliberation about their behaviour and how a third person would judge it. The shared ideal that emerged for such a judging self was that of somehow finding a point of equilibrium at which thoughtful actions could at once serve and defend without contradiction both individual and collective interests. This ideal was expressed in the term *intérêt bien entendu*, which served as an ideological point of convergence for various post-revolutionary political traditions. It can hesitantly be translated as 'self-interest properly understood' or

'enlightened self-interest'.¹⁴⁹ The expression is well known given the importance it is awarded in 1835 in the first volume of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. In the later eighteenth century it already had the meaning Tocqueville gave it, that is, a position capable of upholding at the same time particular or immediate interests and the general or transcendental interest, be it out of duty or utility.¹⁵⁰ Of this enlightened self-interest, Say wrote:

When virtue prescribes to us the sacrifice of a *minor* to a *major* interest, the sacrifice of a *momentary* for a *durable* interest, of a *precarious* and doubtful to an interest *assured* and exempt of trouble, it is but another word for our *intérêt bien entendu*.¹⁵¹

For the self, virtue demanded the balancing out deep, structural contradictions. But what exactly did that mean? How did one identify interests that were major, durable and assured? The next section will draw out the subjectifying implications of the types of mental operations required to make such distinctions. We will explore in what ways *mœurs* were imagined as helping identify virtues from vices by analysing the 'science of morality' in its inception towards 1800. This discipline studied the mental war that broke out between self and 'other' in order to harmonize polarized inner drives with increasingly unclear social norms. 'Thus the terrain of moral determinations', argued philosopher Théodore Jouffroy in 1835, 'is a battlefield where eternal combats are fought. These combats are life itself,

¹⁴⁹ Arthur Goldhammer discusses in some length the difficulty of translating this term, see: 'Translating Tocqueville: The constraints of classicism', in: Cheryl Welch (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Tocqueville* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 144-151.

¹⁵⁰ Cyrille Ferraton, 'L'idée d'association, 1830-1928', Ph.D. thesis, University of Lyon 2 (Lyon, 2002), p. 180; De Champs, *Enlightenment*, chapter 15.

¹⁵¹ Say, *Mélanges et correspondance d'économie Politique* (Paris, 1833), p. 429.

with its varied pains and its great and fundamental pain: the struggle of man against that which is not him'.¹⁵²

Le sens moral: A conscience for troubled times.

While correct behaviour in the Old Regime was dictated by a wealth of repressive regulations ranging from tradition, public law and revealed religion to local, community and corporate regulation, the French Revolution and the structural changes that accompanied it weakened traditional sources of coercion and separated law from morality. We have seen that for Rousseau, the law was 'psychologically ineffective' in producing a virtuous society, since it only affected external conduct.¹⁵³ The limitations of law were further emphasised in post-revolutionary France. The vicomte de Villeneuve-Bergemont was a Catholic economist and staunch opponent of the new of the modern economy or 'English system', whose devastating effects in France he was among the first to document after having served as the prefect of the heavily industrialized and pauperized department of the Nord. In this region, the factory system generated 'excessively corrupted' mores.

Unheard of disorders are revealed every day. Marriages are precocious and illegitimate unions very numerous. A large part of the population engages in contraband. Mendicancy is exercised publicly by numerous bands who alarm isolated property owners. No repression exists against this scourge. It is, in effect, impossible not to tolerate it where there is no work and adequate salaries for the valid indigent, or relief and asylums for those who are unable to work.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Théodore Jouffroy, *Cours de Droit Naturel*, I (Paris, 1835), p. 83.

¹⁵³ Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, p. 156.

¹⁵⁴ Vicomte de Villeneuve-Bergemont, *Économie politique chrétienne* (Paris, 1837), p. 221.

Coercion was useless, while handing out these needed benefits was problematic. The new economic understanding of population introduced by Thomas Malthus created a strong fear that public assistance very dangerously worsened the problems it sought to address and provided profound arguments against living wages and employment policies.¹⁵⁵ This doubt about welfare became widespread in France, even among supporters of Christian charity such as Villeneuve-Bergemont, who wrote: 'One will easily appreciate that, powerless to alleviate such a profound and ingrained misery, most beneficent administrations dare not embark on any attempt of new ameliorations in the fear of indisposing, by unsuccessful innovations, a multitude to fall pray of all the horrors of need'.¹⁵⁶ The effect on government was paralyzing. Laws and policies were ineffective, if not counterproductive. Collective improvement depended on the slow-changing domain of mores and custom. Within this aggregate of individual moralities, national betterment relied on each moral subject who, rather than see the straw in his brother's eye, was to engage in responsible self-reform. Towards 1800, this became the subject matter of a new scientific domain.

One of the earliest treatises on the 'moral sciences' was written in 1796 by the Dutch-born Huguenot philosopher Elie Luzac, who in the previous decades had been well known in France as a staunch critic of Rousseau and promoter of Montesquieu.¹⁵⁷ Part of a larger, unfinished project, his *Du droit naturel, civil et*

¹⁵⁵ According to Yves Breton and Gérard Klotz, 'Malthusianism was exceptionally popular in France in the first half of the nineteenth century'. Especially from the late 1820s until the mid 1860s, this was the case across much of the political and ideological spectrum. 'Jules Dupuit, Société d'économie politique de Paris and the issue of population in France, 1850-66', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 13/3 (2006), p. 339.

¹⁵⁶ Villeneuve-Bergemont, *Économie*, p. 220.

¹⁵⁷ See: Wyger Velema, *Enlightenment and Conservatism in the Dutch Republic: The Political Thought of Elie Luzac, 1721-1796* (Assen, 1993).

politique was written only a year after the ‘moral sciences’ were first invented and institutionalized in France through the Académie des sciences morales et politiques, which was part of the Institut national.¹⁵⁸ Hence he wrote in French for the French audience. Published only posthumously in 1802 due to the state of war, his work dealt with ‘*la Science des Mœurs*, or in other words, *la Morale*, Natural Law, and all parts of our knowledge relative to the duties and rights of men’.¹⁵⁹ Structured as a dialogue in three volumes between a teacher, L’Oiseau, and his student Maurice, the book covers a surprising range of topics, from human needs, education, cognition, conduct, sociability or marriage, to contract law and political economy. But all topics were covered from the distinct viewpoint of the new ‘science’, which was entirely devoted to engendering a self.

His first premise was that ‘the true does not depend at all on the judgement of men, and that their actions are [either] good or bad in themselves, whatever the character men attribute to them’.¹⁶⁰ Relieved to hear this, Maurice, who ‘float[s] amidst continuous doubts’, asked about the French Revolution and the execution of the king, demanding clarity in ‘untangling this chaos’.¹⁶¹ L’Oiseau repeats that the objects of our knowledge ‘are always certain and invariable; regardless of how a being endowed with reason sees it, truth is immutable, regardless of the idea one has of it: and despite the diversity of opinion, it will always be true or false, that those who in France rose up against the Royalty and who put their King to death on the scaffold, either had or did not have the right: either acted well or badly’.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ See: Leterrier, *L’institution des sciences morales*.

¹⁵⁹ Elie Luzac, *Du droit naturel, civil et politique*, I (Amsterdam, 1802), p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 6.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

But then he admits that no verdict is possible, and that opinions would inevitably remain divided.

A confused Maurice then learns that morality does not offer answers about the world, since our understanding is too limited, but rather ‘the main point of our science must be to know oneself’.¹⁶³ ‘It interests you with respect to yourself, and independently of the opinion of all other men, to know that which is *good* or *bad*, *just* or *unjust*, *true* or *false*’, for the health of the soul depended on it.¹⁶⁴ This was a personal undertaking in one’s own interest, a private matter. But the aggregate effect of large numbers of individuals failing to know themselves was public disorder. ‘[I]t is very rare to see men occupied with the knowledge of their Being and its faculties: hence the vices, the errors and the amorality in life. If man observed himself in order to learn what he is, surely he would not abandon himself to debauchery, which alters his health and destroy his wellbeing’.¹⁶⁵ In over a thousand pages, an increasingly bewildered Maurice learned about the uncertain art of incessant individual self-analysis, the opposite of which was collective immorality, crime, vice and debauchery.

While since Hobbes the good and the bad had been reduced to a matter of personal preference or desires, Luzac put them to the service of an endless project of betterment: the good was that which tended to perfection, while the bad was the rest. What tended to perfection was undivided; it implied all elements or faculties (body and mind) working towards the same end, and the personal motives (final

¹⁶³ Ibid., II, p. 64.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., I, pp. 10-11.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., II, p. 65

reason) coinciding with the 'natural' reasons. The example he gave is telling: 'if you eat and drink to conserve your life, your action is determined by the same final and natural reasons, namely digestion, in this case it is *good*, you will do a *good action*; but if you eat and drink for the pleasure of eating and drinking, you will do a bad action, because it will be determined by final reasons [pleasure] different from the natural ones [digestion]', and this 'should inspire repugnance [and] aversion'.¹⁶⁶ Morality then, was an excruciating process of permanently weighing one's motives, which meant 'in Morals and in Jurisprudence *the quality of a fact*'.¹⁶⁷ It was a matter of examining all one's actions and weeding out those which were not deliberate and conscious. Indeed, while morality was subjectively an impenetrable and messy process of inner negotiation, its target was to govern one's behaviour. In its objectivity, morality was hence reduced to conduct. One Catholic author wrote '*le moral* (that which is moral) must manifest itself in actions, as life manifest itself in functions'.¹⁶⁸ Murdoch was more explicit on this point.

Since inner acts of the mind only have identity through their conventional connection with outer acts, we may say that morally speaking a man *is* what he observably does. As in the philosophy of Kant, we turn away from the chaos of empirical inwardness to the clarity of overt action. What a man 'feels' is of no interest to us, and even what he believes is of no interest except in so far as his beliefs are defined by his actions.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 81, 83.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁶⁸ L.-F. Jéhan, *Dictionnaire d'anthropologie* (Paris, 1853), p. 944.

¹⁶⁹ Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, p. 268.

The mental interiority of the psychological, self-steering subject therefore translated unproblematically into external behaviour and could only be known and assessed from the outside by means of these actions.

Repugnance, aversion and disgust were a key way of embodying intellect, instinct and emotions into a unified and visceral learned response. A well-developed moral sense thus implied the gradual programming of attraction and repulsion, totems and taboos, into the mind, body and emotions. When moral choices became integrated and embodied as a second nature, then one's instinctive leanings and consequently one's behaviour would be automatically moral. If, as the result of self-government, morality could be made to arise from a place that was anterior to beliefs, feelings and choices, then the individual could be seen as responsible not only for his or her actions, but also for the basic drives that originated conduct. The moral sense was thus how the modern subject freely constructed his or her very own *structure of desiring*. Bad behaviour spoke of uncontrolled desires, which evidenced an immoral self.

The way to achieve the ideal of a moral body-mind was through constant self-analysis and comparison against external standards. One was to constantly measure up one's ignorance and the possible validity of one's ideas, for 'if one must avoid to carry out actions which suppose knowledge we do not have, no less one must avoid acting upon false ideas'.¹⁷⁰ This constant search for 'rectitude of actions' through self-knowledge, however, was not only the way of avoiding vice, but also the only way of claiming any agency. 'Ignorance, being a simple privation,

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

cannot then produce any action, or act'. The more this self-exploration was carried out, the greater one's claims to truth, however limited, since 'a man whose mind has not been cultivated cannot be as sure of what is true or false in certain cases, as would another who has applied himself to perfect his Understanding'.¹⁷¹ While the self's inner motives were largely uncertain and required constant exploration, they remained obscure and undecipherable without external knowledge. The individual relied on the outside for self-understanding. Elias found that the individual was subjected to social compulsion and pressure mainly 'through the medium of his or her own reflection', a habit that typically took root in childhood.¹⁷²

While the chapter on 'De la moralité des actions humaines' stated, as we have seen, how any thoughtless snack may violate morality, natural law and the order of things, the following chapter was a painful analysis of the inescapability of error. 'Je n'ai donc pas besoin, mon cher *Maurice*, de vous dire, que nous sommes continuellement exposés à errer, et à commettre des erreurs', either because of the body or the mind.¹⁷³ The modern subject was thus simultaneously defined by the ideal of perfect self-knowledge, on which social progress depended, and the inescapable fact of self-deceit. Faced with such an anxiety-producing contradiction, the possibility of change did not point to revolutionary transformations of the body politic, but rather to the growing entrenchment of the mobilized and engaged

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 86-88.

¹⁷² Elias, *Power and Civility*, p. 239.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 85. The last text Foucault wrote echoed the same message. He reinterpreted human knowledge precisely through an appraisal of error (*errer* in French meaning both to err and to stray), concluding that 'life is what is capable of error', man is 'dedicated to "error" and destined, in the end, to "error"', while 'error is at the root of what makes human thought and its history'. Foucault, 'Introduction', in: Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (New York, 1991), p. 22.

self as a new type of subjectivity that internalized and neutralized systemic contradictions.

In morality, the psychological self was imagined as being completely isolated and separate from others and the broader society. Choices and actions implied resisting or contesting the exterior world in order to affirm the unity and centrality of the self-contained and self-referential individual who served as his or her own primary cause. But the knowledge needed to carry out and assess these operations had to come from outside the self. This exterior was not populated with the actual people with whom one interacted. Such real others were all the more opaque the greater their socioeconomic distance from the self. Thus it was not possible to exercise charity and help others, since one could never be sure of their *true* situation, and thus of not aggravating it.¹⁷⁴ Difference was unknowable. The truth of the condition of each person could only be deduced through *internal* moral analysis, while the knowledge needed to analyse and govern the self had to be drawn from the broader, abstract and social domain of 'public opinion', whose essence moral scientists such as Luzac were starting to synthesize and institutionalize. The more contained the self became in its interiority, the more it relied on the exterior.

A further paradox arose in making moral determinations or distinguishing good from bad. Modern philosophy ceased to think of the world as being deliberately signified and organized by a divine creator. The meaning and value of each fact or thing could no longer be determined through reference to the cosmic order.

¹⁷⁴ Luzac, *Droit Naturel*, pp. 14-20, 71.

‘Science in effect assumes the authority, previously held by the divine Logos, over both human thought and human life’.¹⁷⁵ Science and reason became ‘the arbiter of what counts as true or proper’.¹⁷⁶ However, neither science nor reason could establish what was morally right or wrong. ‘For modern thought’, as Foucault put it, ‘no morality is possible’.¹⁷⁷ While Hobbes and Helvetius made right or wrong relative and dependent on the sovereign’s rather than God’s will, later thinkers placed the individual in the place of both. Liberal theorist and statesman Francois Guizot argued in 1812 that ‘man has nothing in him that cannot be used to the benefit of good and evil: everything depends on the principles on which he is accustomed to act and judge’.¹⁷⁸ Acts and things in themselves no longer had a fixed value, but rather depended on the *intention* of the subject. The reference point was the psychology of a specific person rather than a godly or natural order. Morality was therefore not only subjective but essentially subjectifying: behind every right or wrong there was a self that had constructed itself as such, as Kant argued:

Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and could therefore be morally neither good nor evil.¹⁷⁹

Jerome Schneewind has shown that Kant postulated ‘a truly revolutionary rethinking of morality’. Individuals were sovereign and independent beings. ‘By this he meant that we ourselves legislate the moral law. It is only because of the legislative action of our own will that we are under moral law’. This marked a shift

¹⁷⁵ Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, p. 88.

¹⁷⁶ Kenneth Clatterbaugh, *The Causation Debate in Modern Philosophy, 1637-1739* (New York, 1999), p. 208.

¹⁷⁷ Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 357.

¹⁷⁸ François Guizot, *Méditations et études morales* (Paris, 1852), pp. 290-291

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in: John Silber, ‘Kant’s conception of the highest good as immanent and transcendent’, *The Philosophical Review*, 68/4 (1959), p. 477.

from 'morality as obedience' to 'morality as self-government'.¹⁸⁰ Therefore morality was entirely relative and subjective. And yet Kant postulated that there was a higher or transcendental good that was 'the necessary material object of moral volition'. The absolute moral goal, this higher good was 'at the same time a practical idea' that needed to be embodied by the will and used as a guide for its perfection.¹⁸¹ But it could be found nowhere stated. Simultaneously utopian and real, the higher good was objectively unknowable and necessary as a moral standard. Therefore, there was a structural inability to establish objective moral values and an individual need to act and judge according to an indecipherable but real higher good, a contradiction that was thrown back upon the self as a lack of moral will. Such a lack would have motivated the need for the moral deliberations Luzac proposed.

Sennett has identified a similar process in the functioning of the market economy in the nineteenth century. The new economy 'made the concepts of community and individual ambivalent, and ambivalent in a peculiar way. No human being, no human agent, could be held accountable for the disturbances in these realms'.¹⁸² Positions of dependence were rendered unstable, subject to continuous ups and downs. For Sennett, this had a powerful ideological effect: 'people began to feel personally responsible for their place in the world; they viewed their success or failure in struggling for existence as a matter of personal strength or weakness'. The contradiction was that participants were aware 'that they were in the grip of impersonal forces they could not control', and yet tended to internalize the

¹⁸⁰ Jerome Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 4, 6.

¹⁸¹ Silber, 'Kant's conception', pp. 469-470.

¹⁸² Sennett, *Authority* (London, 1993), p. 44.

problem of the economy in a specific way, taking 'their misfortunes as signs that they had not been strong enough to cope'.¹⁸³ A 'free' society was one where traditional constraints had given way to the emancipating forces of merit. But if merit explained the rise of all talent, then so did demerit account for all hardship. In other words, the French Revolution abolished privilege and established formal equality, giving rise to a meritocratic society. In such a system, individual's social position was both structurally unfixed and shifting *and* emotionally attached to their self-worth.

The same claim could be made about knowledge. The notions of 'public opinion' and reason hid the profound plurality of views they contained. With the rise of hypothetical methodologies in the nineteenth century, even the knowledge that enjoyed the consensus of scientists was but tentative and ephemeral, while the fragmentation of disciplines and rise in the volume of available data made everyone more and more relatively unlearned. This partitioning of the reasonable into an array of conflicting views contrasted with the claims to natural laws or a single and absolute truth on which the political, economic, social and state systems depended. By making of reason the goal and measure of humanness, the self interiorized as shameful ignorance this contradiction between competing truths and a single but ultimately unintelligible universal truth. The modern individual was free. But the price paid was unprecedented uncertainty in moral issues, in assessing self-worth and social station, in knowing what to do, be, or believe in.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 46-47.

The fact that moral behaviour is not really free, that the modern socio-economic mechanism is rigged in favour of some groups, or that the great apparatuses of knowledge-power have an undeniable effect in structuring our experience of the world must be recognized and acknowledged. But such facts, by uncovering hidden powers from which we need to be emancipated, fail to critically engage the liberal utopia from *outside* its own rationality. The foundation of that ideal is, as Claude Lefort wrote, that ‘the place of power is empty’; ‘the very principle of democracy’, according to Alain Renaut, ‘is that power belongs to no one’.¹⁸⁴ To argue that the place of power is not really empty is to fall into a trap. As Étienne Balibar has argued, ‘To confront the hegemonic structure by denouncing the gap or contradiction between its official values and its actual practice[...] is the most effective way of enforcing its universality’.¹⁸⁵ In other words, if the critique does not step outside the problem of power, which must necessarily be located within the master-slave or ruler-ruled dichotomy, then the liberal utopia is only being validated—the necessary conclusion will be that if only moral, socio-economic and intellectual powers withered away, if only the place of power were *really* empty, *then* we would be free. It would be much more productive and informative to map out this utopic world in which the sovereign’s throne was imagined to be vacant, and in thus doing further locate the self-governing individual at the heart of liberal rationality.

But what did a society in which ‘power belongs to no one’ look like? The most obvious response is the dream of the free market. While the principles of economic

¹⁸⁴ Both quotes in: Alain Renaut, *La fin de l'autorité* (Paris, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁸⁵ Étienne Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene* (London, 2002), p. 162.

liberalism had some currency in France in the last decades of the eighteenth century, it was to Jean-Baptiste Say that political economy owed its establishment as a scientific pursuit.¹⁸⁶ Say was also who articulated for the first time in France the dream that the market itself can produce a harmonious society, what Pierre Rosanvallon has termed *le capitalisme utopique of la société de marché*.¹⁸⁷ Say did so in writing a literal utopia, *Olbie*, submitted to the *Institut National* in 1799 for a competition on the topic ‘What are the most adequate institutions in which to found the morality of a people?’ According to Jean-Paul Frick, in this work: ‘Say emptied *la morale* of any metaphysical and abstract problem’. Instead, morality had to be derived from a study of human nature that did not depend on the will.

The implementation of morals did not depend on the capacity to create in men virtuous habits by appealing to the evidence of the ‘Enlightenment’, education, legislation or any other means of reforming customs (the organization of fêtes and exercises destined to educate the hearts of children or men, for example). It essentially depended on the implementation of an objective order that possessed its own logic and that pushed men, so to speak, to do what is morally good, without having their actions depend on their will alone or an institution guiding that will.¹⁸⁸

This was a moral ‘invisible hand’ that depended on the wills of neither governors nor governed. In 1817, Say wrote that any morality that did not take into account ‘the nature of men and things’ was ‘stupid, imperfect, [and] insufficient’. God had ‘given man an incurable vanity; it is a moral fact, as the need to breathe is a

¹⁸⁶ See: Steiner Philippe, ‘La Science de l’économie politique et les sciences sociales en France, 1750-1830’, *Revue d’histoire des sciences humaines*, 2/15 (2006), p. 15-42.

¹⁸⁷ Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le capitalisme utopique* (Paris, 1999).

¹⁸⁸ Jean-Paul Frick, ‘Philosophie et économie politique chez J.-B. Say: Remarques sur les rapports entre un texte oublié de J.-B. Say et son œuvre économique’, *Histoire, économie et société*, 6/1 (1987), p. 54

physical fact against which we can do nothing'. Vanity could never be destroyed and would only resurface, even in the 'austerity of monks'. But if the moralist

arranges things in such a way that one uses [vanity] to properly fulfil [man's] duties to his fellow citizens and family; to give a useful end to all his works, to scrupulously uphold his commitments, to not spend more than one has, to keep his person clean, [and] to give a pleasant and careful aspect to his home, what good would be done for the country! Herein lies the true moral science.¹⁸⁹

In its purest form, this was the utopia of a society without power. Here was a governmental order that promised to deliver dutiful, hard-working, dependable, thrifty, clean, domestic and responsible citizens without enthroning absolute dogmas or rulers, the will of one or the many. Public and private virtue would result from carefully managing the psychological levers of modern 'man', from 'arranging things in such a way' as to govern *through* vanity. If the subjective energies of psychological 'nature' could be directed, then power became vacant and redundant. The goal was to structure the possible field of action of the will and its desires, the options and incentives that presented themselves to the choosing subject. In other words, the aim was to conduct the conducting of conduct. The new liberal order generated structural insecurities in moral, intellectual or socioeconomic positions, while its paradoxical logics translated these uncertainties into individual lacks in worth that had to be remedied through ever-greater self-steering in accordance with external standards. By pointing to individual solutions, these instabilities and lacks turned the person into a *problem*, a problem of government from where the modern self sprang.

¹⁸⁹ Say, *Petit volume*, pp. 27-28.

Much of the proselytism for economic 'liberty' and the market met with harsh criticism in France. Self-interest, competition, and the shameless focus on the material over the moral, offended enlightened opinion and cast serious doubts on the economy's ability to generate the kinds of social and spiritual bonds that could sustain a post-revolutionary polity together. But the key to Say's vision was not competition, production or the economy, but rather the agentless and powerless mass production of a new subject, dutiful, useful and tidy. And this dream of an 'objective order', a moralizing domain beyond power and faith, remained highly seductive in nineteenth century France beyond narrow liberal circles. We will next consider the use of what was called 'educational emulation' as a governmental technology used to create the type of impersonal mechanisms behind Say's utopia.

Émulation: Governing through vanity.

In 1800, a year after Say's utopia was submitted, the Institut national opened a new contest, this time on a topic as seemingly obscure as it was bland: 'Is emulation a good means of education?' *L'émulation* had no conceptual status in France at the time, beyond the ambiguous sense of imitation the term implies. But the entries to the contest opened up a whole new domain from where to think social relations and government precisely by bringing about a new 'objective order' that promised to rule the affections.

The prize-winning entries responded the question in the affirmative and shared the same premises. Firstly, emulation was not the same as imitation. Imitation was common to all men, while emulation 'excites only those souls capable of elevation';

noble and pure, it was 'an energetic and elevated sentiment that only has hold in well-born souls'. Imitation 'is always a calculation of personal interest, and its end can lie with objects of all sorts; but emulation can only ever have a moral goal, and can only be a speculation of self-love' that took as its target always someone superior to us. Before the 'spectacle' of seeing another receiving praise, the soul became 'inflamed' by 'a movement of self-love excited by the success of another'. A resulting *désir de supériorité* and the *loi de l'honneur* made one try harder and aim for success. In the generalized model of Newtonian physics, emulation was 'the sting capable to get things moving and vanquishing at every instant the force of inertia, common to all beings'.¹⁹⁰

Secondly, while pride and vanity were tied to particularity, and 'will eternally impede us from setting down the true rules of reason and taste and from determining that just measure, that proportion, that in every thing constitutes the true good', emulation was essentially social.¹⁹¹ The 'system of human relations that grants such empire to the judgement of his fellows generates a first need within him of their esteem. It is because man is created for man, it is because everything is common among the members of the human family, that each of them feels subordinated to the opinion of his equals in whom he sees his natural judges'. For 'everything attaches man to his fellows, that he cannot become independent from them, that nature has placed within him the smallest part of his existence, and that it is only in others where the plenitude of his being is located'.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ George-Marie Raymond, *Essai sur l'émulation dans l'ordre social...* (Geneva, 1802), pp. 7-8, 10, 31, 40.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74-76.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 61-62.

The first prize went to L.-F. Feuillet, one of the librarians in the *Institut National*. For Feuillet and his competitors, the starting point was the same. 'Man is born in a state of dependence derived from the near invalidity of his instinct and the late development of his faculties, and consequently of the need he has for a longer and more complete education'.¹⁹³ This made the family necessary. 'This dependence', Feuillet argued, humbled the 'self-love' of 'the *human self* (*moi humain*) by establishing the primary social bond that upheld society.

It bends and accustoms the man who starts to live, to want, for his own good, that which is suitable to the reason of those who have lived; it creates an interest in him to conform to the will of those who govern him, it puts him in reach of collecting promptly the fruits of their experience and renders him proper to continue their work. But this modification of the *moi humain* leads straight to emulation; because, from the moment we are dependant, we feel our interest tied to the will of others, we experience the desire to become masters of that will, by any means possible, to determine it in our favour, and this desire must be shared by all who find themselves in our position.¹⁹⁴

This was a fact of 'human nature'. But as with all discussions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century of things considered 'natural', the approach was at once descriptive (outlining a universal fact) and programmatic ('nature' needs to be made to resemble itself, it needs to be governed). Thus Feuillet found that any inconveniences this instinctive tendency had could be dispelled if everyone adopted it; 'we have found that all the secret lies in making it *general*, and because of this, maintained by all possible means, this natural action of all over each that

¹⁹³ L.-F. Feuillet, *Mémoire [sur l'émulation] couronné par l'Institut national...* (Paris, 1801), p. 146.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146-147.

oblige each to consult the interest and subject himself to the will of all: this is what constitutes *civil liberty*'.¹⁹⁵

George-Marie Raymond, a Swiss teacher of mathematics and history who received an honourable mention in the contest, concurred with Feuillet. The 'sentiment of emulation is a law of human nature, impressed upon the heart of man by the same hand that shaped him, and that in effect, this sentiment has become the main motif behind human actions'. More specifically, Raymond considered that two things were capable of moving men: the search for self-love and that of the esteem of others. The first was reserved only for the sages, who could understand its complex import and not give in to pride. Public appreciation, in turn, 'has a stronger empire over the common man' and, by appealing to vanity alone, was the 'best means to develop the common passion and ordinary penchants of social man'.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, it was 'the basis of all moral order in human society'.¹⁹⁷ He asked, 'Where is the man who attaches no importance to the esteem of the good (*gens de bien*)?'.¹⁹⁸ In this tendency to mutual dependency, he claimed to have found 'a universal philanthropy, a mutual commerce of sentiments and succours, a mutual exchange of affections and esteem' capable of leading 'men to perfect and help themselves mutually'.¹⁹⁹ If the individual 'has ceaselessly come to take the opinion of others as the regulator of his actions', 'then here you will see the sentiment of

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁹⁶ Raymond, *Essai sur l'émulation*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 272.

emulation necessarily become generalized and powerful in society, spread in all classes, and become the most powerful goad of human actions'.²⁰⁰

Raymond was very critical of the free market, that 'system of incoherence' leading to 'the violent state of a daily and cruel struggle!'²⁰¹ And yet emulation was a completely different form of competition. Antagonism, jealousy, vanity, ambition, and other 'vices are the fruit not of emulation itself, but of the bad direction it is given and the disorderly applications it receives'.²⁰² Therefore, the presence of authority, whether in the classroom or society, was what made the system work. For 'one can conceive of a system of useful emulation founded upon a wise opinion, that only grants its sensible suffrage to those who merit it'.²⁰³ Emulation was both natural and the main driver of human action. But what determined its outcome and direction? '[W]hat will be the character of the results it will produce? This character will vary with the regulating opinion (*l'opinion régulatrice*)'.²⁰⁴ Understood as 'wise' or 'regulating opinion', authority seemed rather diffuse and divided into three tiers. One was born out of internal comparison. Happiness and contentment become conditional on one's attainment of what one believed to be one's absolute perfection: 'penetrated by his own grandeur, he will not be satisfied of himself until the moment when we will have acquired all the improvement (*perfectionnement*) that his faculties seem to promise him'.²⁰⁵ Another depended on authority figures: 'his satisfaction will not be complete until he has acquired the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 83-84.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 274.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 282.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 280.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

approbation of the masters of his art, who are like the custodians of the general opinion in this regard and of the proper rules to determine the true merit of productions'.²⁰⁶ And a further one extended to one's equals: 'man cannot be completely satisfied of his opinion unless it is confirmed by that of the greatest number, thus the sage must necessarily desire the suffrage of common opinion, and that his esteem will not seem founded and whole unless the opinions of other sages has granted him the proof of the justness of his own'.²⁰⁷ But what ultimately gave meaning to these three forms of judgement and made them come together fruitfully was the presence of authoritative superiors, providing clear rules for the contest among equals and a final verdict. 'The happy writer who has enlightened judges has just received the highest award only experiences a joy that is subordinate to the esteem received: it is in the superiority of his judges that he seeks above all everything that in his success flatters him; it is then in the very merit of his competitors that he finds the proof of his glory, because there is no honour in triumphing over idiots'.²⁰⁸

Regarding education, since emulation was in human nature, it could not be excluded from schools: 'despite efforts, precautions, and selected circumstances, it will re-establish itself alone'.²⁰⁹ Yet Raymond dismissed existing pedagogical approaches: 'directed liberty, the student's personal interest, a felt utility, direct advantage resulting from things, etc'.²¹⁰ None of these worked. Any attempt to awaken 'the gradual curiosity of the student, practices that suppose an unlimited

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 271.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 278.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 279.

amount of time, circumstances, means of all kinds', went down a dangerous path.²¹¹ Civilization could not endure if every man had to discover the world anew. This was 'a practice that in each man would make the sciences and arts slip backwards into their infancy', one 'that would thus restart in each individual[...] the long institution of the species', actions that would inevitably 'arrest all progress and all discovery'.²¹² In turn, and among both men and nations, 'Emulation is the only fuel for the flames of reason and genius; only it can perpetuate the reign of the arts and letters, and it is the only means we have left to conserve, in the midst of universal corruption, any trace of virtue among men'.²¹³

'In providing always a model for itself, emulation only seeks out those who have merit'.²¹⁴ But how did one discern merit? What were the conditions of its legibility? Raymond considered that no merit is absolute; 'we only perceive it through comparison'.²¹⁵ Thus, comparison, as the gap between one and the other, between the real and the ideal, was not only the mechanism of emulation, but became the grid through which we made sense of reality. 'We only judge what is beautiful in nature because we find imperfections there; we only know merit by the lacks (*défaut*) that have preceded it, or that can follow it'.²¹⁶ These 'lacks are more sensible when the absent qualities are more numerous'.²¹⁷ Equally, the contrasts are more readily apparent when the sample of individuals under consideration is greater, since 'it is only by comparing *many* individuals of the same species that

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 280-281.

²¹² Ibid., p. 281.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 287.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

what can discern he who surpasses the others in merit'.²¹⁸ Indeed, in Raymond comparison becomes the very theoretical key to human cognition in general. 'Everything is comparison in our judgments; everything in our knowledge is the fruit of comparison'.²¹⁹ This is especially the case among the unlearned, since 'contrast renders comparison easier and brings it to the level of understanding of the vulgar'.²²⁰ But comparison was also the only way to validate knowledge by comparing it with the 'collective reason that seems to dominate all the individuals'. 'The identity in organization, conformation, nature [and] the intimate bonds that bring together all men make them appreciate the exterior judgment as a sort of complement to his own, as the proof of its accuracy'.²²¹

Comparison, turned into never-ending computing, was also the basic duty and inescapable fate of the civilized. 'The social man thus must carry out a study to know himself and to become aware of all the consequences that, in the order of society, derive from the primitive laws of nature; and if he wants to arrive at a clear account of the place he occupies, of that which he has to do in society, he must cast his eyes towards his equals and measure himself up against them'.²²²

As Raymond's verbose prose unravel, it becomes clear that 'the measure of merit' was in fact a series of simple mathematical and measuring operations.²²³ Thus 'one can only determine a degree of merit by adding up the degrees that it has been

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 24. Emphasis added.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 36.

²²² Ibid., p. 27.

²²³ Ibid., p. 24.

necessary to transverse to get there, or by its distance to perfection, or, better yet, by both simultaneously'.²²⁴ In other words, 'in order to judge properly the merit of each thing, it is necessary that we have presented the mind with the common sum of qualities that are suitable to its nature and purpose; we have to tally (*nous rendions une sorte de compte*) those qualities that are missing, those that are present compared to what it could be'.²²⁵ Adding and subtracting were thus possible because the yardstick of perfection was so readily at hand. There was 'a sort of scale (*échelle*), a total sum of merit, which taken together is the result of the common measure of human forces; and it is upon this scale that each man will appreciate his own merit'.²²⁶ Each person's position, although constantly shifting in this scale, going up or down depending on good or bad actions, could be located precisely. The gap between the actual and the ideal was thus spatialized. It became a template that could be projected and mapped onto social reality, now converted, thanks to the prodigy of calculus, into an unmediated two-dimensional space where the exact coordinates of every individual's position in the scale of power, reason, and merit could be determined with precision.

In Raymond's time, this odd application of mathematics had been common for more than a century, when 'assumptions about the stability and uniformity of natural causes were controversially extended to the moral realm'.²²⁷ As Lorraine Daston has shown, 'Almost from the inception of mathematical probability [at the dawn of the eighteenth century], the classical probabilists had hoped that their

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

²²⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

²²⁷ Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1988), p. 296.

calculus would mathematize what were then called the moral sciences: jurisprudence, political economy, and other studies of social relations'.²²⁸ Based on the idea that 'every individual possessed a certain amount of *lumières* that determined the accuracy of his judgement on each and every occasion', the use of calculus in what the marquis de Condorcet would later term 'social mathematics' could thus rationalize and objectify a wide range of previously incoherent phenomena. One notorious application sought to determine the statistical probabilities of accurate testimony and of just judgments in the courtroom.²²⁹ However, by the 1840s, those looking back at the probabilists' work, were 'shocked by the insouciance with which their predecessors had quantified the unquantifiable: veracity, credulity, enlightenment, perspicacity were all assigned numerical values'.²³⁰ Although the mathematical methods and assumptions of men like Raymond were challenged by the following generation, the same was not so with the conclusions that had been arrived at through these. In particular, the use of mathematics for the unproblematic ranking and grading of merit, morality and performance in the classroom remained unchallenged.

One anonymous entry had responded the Institut's question with a resounding 'no'. The author decried that 'through emulation we habituate the minority of the students to surpass the rest, to think of themselves as their superiors; and, in turn, the large majority to seeing themselves surpassed and seeing themselves in some way is inferior!'.²³¹ It also disqualified the student in another way 'when in

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., pp. 296-298.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 305.

²³¹ Anonymous, *Mémoire contre l'émulation* ([s.l.], [1800?]), pp. 104-105.

education youth is accustomed to bend continuously its opinions, tastes, [and] reason before books, that is, before the written authority'.²³² At best, it was simply unnecessary. 'Do animals have emulation? No: yet they all have activity, self-love and carry themselves with ardour together or separately towards what brings them pleasure. Man, like animals, could thus, without emulation, exercise his activity, self-love, and embrace what he desires'.²³³ The educative task, even within a new economy of punishment and reward, could perfectly be imagined without it.

On the contrary, offer rewards to everyone who behaves well, and who has acquired a certain sum of knowledge: in order to arrive at the desired reward, he will not have to compare his conduct or knowledge to those of others, and be superior to them; but rather only acquire the demanded knowledge and conduct himself well.²³⁴

Everyone's activity could thus be directed 'without comparison to others', since success no longer depended on competition.

But emulation also had profound political consequences, the anonymous author argued. Emulation was 'in a ceaseless and open war against any idea of equality'. This meant that its exercise would 'ceaselessly attack and undermine' the very 'constitutional basis of Government'.²³⁵ But the solution offered by the author also depended on a mathematics of social bliss. The alternative 'organization of things and persons' he proposed would rest on examinations, which would signal out the social elites in each field: those with best marks. Having thus identified the indisputably talented, these would be carried to the vacancies reserved for them in

²³² Ibid., p. 104.

²³³ Ibid., p. 108.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 105-106.

‘marches triomphales’, ‘marches at least as glorious, political, and useful as those of the victorious ancient athletes’. The five best in each professional category (twelve in total) would be appointed to the senate.²³⁶ ‘As far as the students that were not chosen, they will feel that knowledge and merit alone give right to rewards. From then on, the desire to work, do good, [and] conduct themselves well will become the dominant desires since they will be the only ones prone to lead to the applauses, praise, and honours of the triumphs sought’.²³⁷ These wishes ‘will substitute advantageously the desire to surpass one’s equals, source of vices and public unhappiness’.²³⁸

The men who participated in the literary competition opened by the Institut national in 1800 defined the basic premises of a new pedagogy of competition that would remain unchanged into the next century. It was devised as a technology capable of instilling in individuals the new ethics, logics and techniques of psychological government of the self and others. While this discussion of emulation had no immediate impact, it would be revisited by the next generation. Among them was Guizot, who would place emulation at the heart of the French educational system he designed, a centrality that went unchallenged until the 1890s, when the rise of a new type of self required new pedagogical technologies.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 113-116.

²³⁷ Ibid., pp. 116-117.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

The effort of vanity.

The government of merit through emulation developed along two different paths in nineteenth-century France. The first, which Oliver Ihl has analysed for the Third Republic, concerned the production of social role models for others to emulate. It responded to the need, felt throughout the century, to generate a new aristocracy that would remain compatible with a democratic society. The means to do this was through prizes and honorary distinctions in all fields of school, social, economic and political life. Awarded by state institutions or private bodies alike, it encompassed from the *Légion d'Honneur* and the panoply of official and academic accolades available to statesmen or diligent rural wet-nurses, to the vast network of provincial *sociétés d'émulation* recognizing the merit of the most loyal servants and workers. It marked the transition from the Old-Regime sense of *honour*, derived from blood, body, and lineage, to the modern obsession with public *honours* and distinctions as proof of merit. 'Émulation honorifique', 'émulation premiale', or 'déférence démocratique', this was a vast project of social stratification and impersonal disciplining that operated through the institutionalization and socialization of the state-sanctioned means of merit and superiority that become tied to public utility.²³⁹ Distinguished men showcased as role models were the necessary representation and embodiment of a formally equal society founded on unequal merit. "The highest level of human wisdom and science is not for all to attain"; Raymond asserted, 'but it is important nonetheless for it to be before everyone's eyes, either to encourage those who think they can arrive, or to offer the measure of his own success to he who can only advance

²³⁹ Olivier Ihl, *Le mérite et la République: Essai sur la société des émules* (Paris, 2007); 'Emulation through decoration: A science of government?', in: Sudhir Hazareesingh (ed.), *The Jacobin legacy in Modern France* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 158-182.

towards it'.²⁴⁰ When great men were displayed in public, it could awaken the latent potential within some. 'A young soldier of the *Patrie*, destined to shock the world, carries within him the seed of all human greatness; he glances upon the heroes and the great men who have lived, he sizes up the whole carrier of glory, and breaks through to it with audacity'.²⁴¹ The rest of society found in exceptional men the proof of their inferiority and the justification to accept and resign themselves to their situation.

The second form of emulation, as we have seen in the previous section, was characterized precisely by the absence of any permanent marker of merit, the lack of any fixed positions, and the inability to possess distinction. It belonged to a new day-to-day tallying of individual worth whose efficacy derived precisely from *changeability*. Today's merit being no guarantee of future value, this practical form of emulation allocated social worth as a stock market, its ups and downs meaning that no-one could rest on his or her laurels, that no position was permanent.

One of Bentham's works to be originally published in French was *Théorie des Récompenses*, edited in 1811 by Etienne Dumont on the basis of manuscripts from the 1770s and 1780s. This work outlined the issue of punishments and rewards that was so central for Bentham's thought. For Bentham, individuals were always driven by egotistical calculations to maximize their benefit, which often came down to running from pain and towards pleasure. But the pain of loss was always greater than the joy of gain, and to lose honour or feel lesser than one's peers was

²⁴⁰ Raymond, *Essai sur l'émulation*, p. 26.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

as painful as monetary loss. For civil servants in particular, the text explored the issue of how to govern on the basis of reputation through an 'economy of emulation'. This was an 'economy' because it had to take carefully consider the right balance between individual pleasure and pain needed to generate the desired behaviour, and the allocation of scarce rewards among competitors. The point was to mobilize hope, 'the most precious of all goods', to generate competition for the limited reward of gains in reputation.²⁴² He compared it to a lottery, in which a limited and inexpensive reward was able to generate a huge volume of expectations. Hope was greater and more durable than the prize of the winner, as was the benefit of increased production. In turn, the painful frustration of loss could be avoided by continuous competition, so that there was always more hope ahead. 'Emulation also involves the management of the opposed motive of fear or "uneasiness" (*inquiétude*)'.²⁴³ Under fear alone, the person would carry out the task as needed, but would only aspire to finish it. Instead, by managing the hope of reward and the fear of not getting it, emulation could sustain continuous effort. The prize could not be fixed honours and distinctions, but rather the shifting benefit of reputation, implying a mobile and continuous competition for the rewards allocated by the 'Tribunal of Public Opinion', consisting of 'appropriate sentiments of love and respect' as well as in 'the special good will, good offices, and services, in whatever shape, tangible or intangible, naturally flowing from these sentiments'.²⁴⁴ This created a system in which behaviour approved of by 'public

²⁴² Quoted in: Marco E. L. Guidi, 'Bentham's economics of emulation', conference paper (1999) (available at: www.academia.edu/208499), p. 11.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁴⁴ Quoted in: Ibid., p. 24.

opinion', received a reward that was always 'strictly proportioned to the merit attributed to each individual'.²⁴⁵

In an essay on 'the means of emulation', Guizot, who as Rosanvallon has so brilliantly shown was the architect of the new liberal statehood that emerged in 1830, took up the theme of educational emulation in 1812, just a year after Bentham's work was published.²⁴⁶ He picked up the same threads of the 1800 debate, but already presented them in the form they would retain during the rest of the century. At the time, it was clear that the term emulation did not yet stand on its own conceptually. Guizot wished to go beyond its narrow sense of 'that type of envy that excites to equal or surpass someone in something that is laudable', instead

I will take the liberty to take the word *émulation* in a larger sense, and understand by *means of emulation* all the means that one can employ in order to excite the activity of children and hasten their progress; means among which one finds emulation itself, that is the rivalry among students. This meaning, I know, is not exactly in agreement with etymology or usage; but it is easy to grasp, and I know of no other word with this sense that can comfortably replace it.²⁴⁷

While not mentioning Bentham or including references, he theorized rewards and motivation along the same lines. '[U]ntil he can love it for itself, independently of its results', rewarding the child's accomplishment of duty had a positive effect on virtue, for it linked in the child's mind happiness and duty, with the latter as the cause of the former. This established duty as a habit rather than derive it from

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁴⁶ Rosanvallon, *Moment Guizot*.

²⁴⁷ Guizot, *Méditations*, pp. 281-282.

interest. To promise a reward or pleasure to a child killed the idea of duty by fostering self-interest. For

the task may be well performed, but he will not have learned to do well; the efforts of his will are to be only fleeting, and tomorrow, if you do not propose a new pleasure, you will run the risk of seeing him work very badly.

Instead it was necessary to teach the child that all happiness depended on duty. This would make dutiful conduct 'the object of free and sustained efforts of their will', their 'single end, the object of the student's desire'. The aim was 'to inspire in the child that good-will that drives him to do himself, constantly and with zeal, the efforts necessary to succeed and advance in his studies'.²⁴⁸ The means to do this was by managing the child's sense of self-worth and vanity 'without dispute the most powerful' motive to human action.²⁴⁹ Guizot wanted to harness for schooling the energy and 'disposition that works so naturally for the benefit of their play'.²⁵⁰ By attaching approval to a certain way of acting towards certain ends, *amour-propre* 'gives his efforts that spontaneity, that concentration of forces without which his progress will never be big, or sure, or quick. Shaken in all his being by a naturally active and restless sentiment, he moves by his own impulse, and deploys all he possesses in liberty and power in order to satisfy it'.²⁵¹ Parents and teachers were to abstain from repressing the child's vanity, since children had an even greater need for it than adults. Since children were 'devoid of opinions, often even of ideas on the merit and value of what they do and see', they relied entirely on the exterior. So, 'it is to the outside that they ask what they should think and do'.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 289-290.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 292.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 287.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 292.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 294.

This dependence on parental approval 'so well in accord with their situation and ignorance', had to become the instrument for their direction and to encourage them 'to do and love all that is good'.²⁵³ But for that it was necessary to know when to applaud them. Adults 'should never praise them for what has not depended on their will, what has not cost them effort or sacrifice', for what was not sustained and more or less difficult, even if it was virtuous. Men, after all, needed to learn to find their own motivation for the 'fruit of fatigues' requiring work and sacrifice. Therefore, no complements were to be given for spontaneous movements, good sentiments, surges of the heart, natural disposition, and talents. These had to be devalued, for 'they need to know that there is no merit other than in what costs something'; praise could only be bought at the price of effort.²⁵⁴ Instead, it was best to teach children to see their natural attributes as 'a portion of themselves'. His examples were a girl with a good heart and a generous soul or a boy with intelligence. Rather than celebrate the latter's intellect, it should be used to govern him, by saying 'a child who has intelligence should do this or that'.²⁵⁵

As a preparation for a productive adult life, school was meant to be a training in exertion. 'The work of learning costs the child', and he was not to be praised for natural superiority, progress, or success in schooling, but only for 'his efforts and hard work'.²⁵⁶ This would make the child focus on 'his superiors' rather than his peers; 'he expects only from them the reward he ambitions; and it is a good sentiment to desire the esteem and praise of his superiors'. Children 'feel that their

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 295.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 299.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 297.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 300.

parents and teachers are still well above them in reason and knowledge (*savoir*); in seeking their approval, it is to this superiority that they pay homage'.²⁵⁷

In fact, their *amour-propre* had to be *directed* towards seeking approval from their betters. With one's inferiors, success was too easy; with one's equals it degenerated in competition; 'with our superiors, we tend to constantly elevate ourselves, and this is always a noble tendency'. Since the latter case required the awareness and recognition of the other's superiority, pride and vanity were kept in check. Guizot thus very clearly rejected an emulation among equals that was nothing but rivalry. Instead, emulation should be the desire to compete with others and oneself in effort in order to gain the approval of those at the top. If the eyes were on the reward, then the goal could not be to vanquish another, 'but to attain rewards and honours offered equally to all, towards which they all march on the same path, and which excite vividly enough their desires to absorb their attention'. If their attention was on the prize, it could be stopped 'from fixing itself on the obstacles that the superiority of the strongest opposes to the success of the least advanced'. In other words, by fixating on the reward being offered to all equally, competitors would be distracted from the fact that it was not a fair game, since the naturally strong would always have an advantage. Only the participant's recognition of the superiority of the reward-allocator gave meaning to this new model of competition among equals that generated an actual experience of equality, but in the end only validated and magnified pre-existing inequalities, further reinforcing superiority. Authority was the starting and finishing point of the system designed to reproduce it in a very specific hierarchical fashion. 'The

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 301.

motive of all these exercises is the classification of students by degrees [or levels], a classification that nothing can replace and that is the very essence of the system. Not only must the students be ranked [by level], but they should also be among themselves'.²⁵⁸ Each student occupied a numerical place in the class, and would lose or gain places depending on behaviour or performance. One education manual read:

Here are the penalties to inflict:

1. The student who works without attention, who responds absentmindedly, descends one place.
2. The insubordinate student is placed at the queue of his division.²⁵⁹

In a way, all but the last-ranked participant gained a victory over someone in the competition. 'Édouard is forced to cede the first place to Alphonse, but he obtained the second place over Henri, he the third over Auguste, and so on; each feels he still needs to advance, and nobody is humiliated, because nobody is entirely on the ground, if not for the last one, who is not the one it matters to be concerned about most'.²⁶⁰ All were assigned a place and a value within the hierarchy, and the exclusion of the last one guaranteed a victory over someone for the rest.

Named after the then education minister and based on Cousin's reports on Prussian schooling, the 1833 Guizot law made France the second country to boast a modern education system. It was also the first liberal welfare law in France; it recognized a right to free schooling for indigent families. For the fifty years the law

²⁵⁸ A. de Rambures, 'Mémoire sur l'enseignement populaire et simultané de la lecture par la musique et réciproquement', *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation d'Abbeville*, 6 (1849), p. 280.

²⁵⁹ L. Lamotte, *Manuel des aspirants aux brevets de capacité...* (Paris, 1837), pp. 374-375.

²⁶⁰ Guizot, *Méditations*, p. 304.

was in force and beyond, emulation would feature prominently in the educational horizon of the nineteenth century.

The emulation of all.

Shortly after Guizot's text and immediately after the regime change in 1815, there emerged a bitter antagonism between two different pedagogical systems. Both methods were designed for large groups of students subjected to constant competition and military organization and discipline. The 'simultaneous method' was based on the methods that saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle had created in the late seventeenth century and was applied in the schools of some Catholic congregations. What was characteristic of this system was that it introduced schooling as we know it today: one class of students receiving lessons in common, simultaneously from one teacher. Its rival became the 'mutual method', invented simultaneously by Englishmen Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster towards 1800. Promoted by the Société pour l'instruction élémentaire, it became a rallying banner for French political liberalism under the Restoration. It used a complex system of pupils acting as monitors to teach and supervise their peers.

Thus the political confrontations of the time were channelled into a proxy war over pedagogy. The political triumph of the liberal Party in 1830 gave a fleeting advantage to the mutual model before the government's sympathy turned to its rival in 1832. From then 'the two methods tend to converge, get confused, in unequal proportions, into a mixed system, the result of a long emulation and of

experience'.²⁶¹ Both systems would end up merging towards the mid 1840s, constituting the basis of modern French pedagogy. While the partisans of both methods fought each other with the zealot vehemence of any factional dispute of the time, they constituted a united front in their defence of educational emulation and against all other pedagogical approaches. This included a rejection of foreign models and a vigorous attack on the two alternative French pedagogical traditions: first, schools following the 'individual method' and, second, the use private tutors in the home.

The notion of *enseignement individuel* was only coined as an umbrella term during the mutual-simultaneous debate in order to condemn every other method of education in existence in France and later became an official term as a result of administrative statistics and reports. 'Individual teaching is that which is practiced today [1837] in most of the French primary schools'.²⁶² As it was depicted, the 'individual' system involved a teacher receiving any number of students in a classroom, but giving no lessons in common to all. Instead, the teacher called to his desk one student at a time, assessing progress, correcting mistakes, and setting further work. Afterwards, the student would spend the rest of the time on the assigned tasks. This could happen some six times during the school day, depending on the number of subjects imparted and the length of the school day. The key advantage was being able to work with a heterogeneous group of levels and ages, often ages three to seventeen, in the same class. Each student could learn at his or her own pace, at their own level, taking in whatever knowledge they could, when

²⁶¹ Cayx, 'Exposé de la situation de l'enseignement por l'année scolaire 1850-1851...', *Journal général de l'instruction publique et des cultes*, 21/26 (1852), p. 194.

²⁶² Baron de Gérando, 'Enseignement mutuel', *Encyclopédie des gens du monde*, 9 (Paris, 1837), p. 564.

they could attend and for however long before their parents required them to work. The system was most compatible with the real differences of the students. But opponents depicted this system as a rural archaism and a waste of time. In his textbook for schoolteachers, L. Lamotte, a primary school inspector in the department of la Seine, estimated that in an average class following the individual method, each student received no more than nine minutes of contact time with the teacher.²⁶³ Another textbook calculated it was no more than two minutes per day.²⁶⁴ And that was in the optimistic scenario that no time was lost to discipline problems. Opponents said these problems were common since the rest of the six-hour school day was spent sitting still carrying out the work assigned, which most interpreted to be unsupervised idleness. The baron de Gérando, the leading French theorist of beneficence from 1820 until his death in 1842, agreed on this point, stating that 'each student, for a rather long time, remains abandoned to himself; deprived of all direction as well as of all surveillance'.²⁶⁵ One estimate stated that students 'are left to idle away at least two-thirds of their time, under the name of preparing their lessons'.²⁶⁶ Besides idleness and lack of supervision, this method lacked the advantages of emulation, in which 'Each child observes his equals, and is observed by them: at every instant he deploys every effort of which he is capable; he raises, descends, climbs back up again incessantly at the level of his merit'.²⁶⁷ The 1833 Guizot law would ban 'individual' schooling.

²⁶³ Lamotte, *Manuel des aspirants*, pp. 367-368.

²⁶⁴ M. Matter, *Nouveau manuel des écoles primaires, moyennes et normales* (Paris, 1836), p. 71.

²⁶⁵ Gérando, 'Enseignement mutuel', p. 565.

²⁶⁶ Robert Sullivan, *Lectures and Letters on Popular Education* (Dublin, 1842), p. 54.

²⁶⁷ Gérando, 'Enseignement mutuel', p. 565.

The supporters of mutual and simultaneous education equally attacked stay-at-home students. At home there was no emulation. Guizot argued that home education 'will not have the movement, variety or uncertainties of the emulation in the *colléges*'. Domestic emulation was either impossible because of physical differences among siblings, or dangerous. 'Parents should thus be very careful not to establish habits of comparison among their children, and especially make none themselves', since this could lead to bitter enmity. If competition was healthy at school, it was because 'rivalry gets lost in the number of competitors'.²⁶⁸ Then, it was argued that only men with mediocre minds, no ambition, and incapable of anything else could take on the position of private tutor. Men of any talent would get bored and be unable to supervise and inspire the child properly. But more importantly, it would cripple the child's ability for social life. At home, 'One sees a narrow horizon that shrinks ideas, leaving for the rest of one's life the fear of men and the disgust of society'.²⁶⁹ As Legitimist baron de Bonald argued,

Even in the most distinguished domestic education the child sees everyone taking care of him; a tutor to follow him around, domestics to serve him, sometimes the neighbour's children to amuse him, a mum to caress him, an aunt to excuse his faults. He will have experienced resistances on the part of his superiors, or baseness from his inferiors, but he will not have endured contradiction on the part of his equals, and because he never endured it, he will be unable to suffer it.²⁷⁰

The emotional habitat of the home was as necessary as it was insufficient for the upbringing of the citizen. Interacting with more than a hundred people at the *collège*, the child would learn 'not to fear the crowd'. But while domestic education

²⁶⁸ Guizot, *Méditations*, pp. 304-305.

²⁶⁹ Henri Gras, *Famille et collège: Leur rôle dans l'éducation* (Paris, 1861), p. 154. This paragraph is based on the fourth chapter of the abbé Gras' work.

²⁷⁰ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 148.

was insufficient to form the public man, 'it is also dangerous'.²⁷¹ Indeed, the home was no place for a child.

Domestic education is dangerous because children learn or become there everything that they should ignore; because it places a child in the midst of women and servants; if he learns to greet with grace, he builds the habit of thinking with small-mindedness; he is taught to eat properly, and an unjustified vanity, a curiosity without object, humour, bad-mouthing, devoting great interest to small things [and] grave discourses on nothingness.[...] He gets used to talking to valets, gossips with maids, all the things that make morality shrink to a point no-one can say.²⁷²

While family life was appropriate for small children, soon it became 'too sweet and too indulgent'. In the midst of tenderness, the child would not learn suffering, which was 'a law of humanity'. Therefore, while the family offered 'peaceful virtues', it could not initiate the child in 'manly and strong virtues'.²⁷³ School taught pain, suffering and privation, in particular 'the pain of separation [from his family], and the courage to make an effort to render useful that sacrifice'. The private tutor and family were too close to the child at all times and grew insensitive and indulgent to faults and weaknesses; while at school 'By measuring himself everyday, a child learns to know his forces and weaknesses'. There 'all made it a necessity to combat soft penchants and vanquish effeminate tastes. A happy necessity for the rest of his life!'²⁷⁴ The bishop of Orléans, Félix Dupanloup, concurred with these views and considered that school was necessary to learn unconditional obedience to a certain kind of impersonal authority.

²⁷¹ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁷² Quoted in: *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

²⁷³ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, pp. 168-168.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 168-169.

A bell rings, two hundred children march.[...] They cannot get irritated at the bell: it rung for all. There is no revolt; no answering back or reaction is possible here. All line up, off to work and silence. Nothing hurts the child's self-love; nothing is odious. It is justice, the general rule, public order; nobody retorts, no comebacks, for that would be senseless, unthinkable even.²⁷⁵

Philippe Ariès has shown how the modern family and the modern school ('or at least as the general habit of educating children at school') were born simultaneously in the seventeenth century.²⁷⁶ The family would become a protective and hyper-emotional domain closed off from the rest of society; while the school would evolve into a domain of impersonal order and disciplined socialization. But since the seventeenth century, long before any of these institutions resembled their own ideal, the argument has been the same: the defects of one necessitated the other. To promote schooling, the family has long been attacked for being too neglectful, sentimental and narrow. To promote the nuclear family, the school has been depicted as being too neglectful, cold and harsh. Neither on its own was imagined as being able to produce the required ideal of the citizen. This remains the case. Since the seventeenth century until the present, the debate on childrearing remains locked in the opposition of either school or home, a dichotomy that is irresolvable, since neither institution is imaginable on its own but rather have always sustained each other mutually.

But the meaning of childrearing changes through time, and by the 1830s schooling became the privileged means of deploying the ideal of social management through

²⁷⁵ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²⁷⁶ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 370.

emulation. It socialized children into a very strict social ranking meant to legitimize a hierarchical society, acquainted them with authority-mediated rivalry among equals and the new forms of impersonal authority. This use of education to buttress social inequality was a recent development. Schooling only became elitist in the moment it became seen as the key for human perfection and thus *the* solution to individual and social problems. In his study of education in Enlightened thought, Harvey Chisick concluded that 'the enlightened community' never proposed that more than basic literacy and counting skills be taught to the poor as a way of promoting economic utility and social stability. In contrast to their claims of human equality, 'members of the enlightened community looked upon people as fundamentally different from themselves in function and social standing'.²⁷⁷

Drawing on Ariès, it can be argued that rather than the 'enlightened community' being contradictory in both universalizing and restricting access to education, what was characteristic of this process was precisely that schooling came to be organized for the first time around class boundaries. Ariès showed how social classes and ages mingled in the Ancien-Régime school. 'In the seventeenth century, schooling did not necessarily go with good birth' and 'was not yet the monopoly of one class'.²⁷⁸ 'On the one hand, there was the school population, on the other there were those who, in accordance with immemorial custom, went straight into adult life as soon as they could walk and talk. This division did not correspond to social conditions'. Although the benefit of one gender, educational institutions were not class or age exclusive, and 'until the eighteenth century, the ancient regime knew

²⁷⁷ Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes toward the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton, 1981), p. 278.

²⁷⁸ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 331.

only one school.[...] This may seem surprising when one considers the rigidity and diversity of the social hierarchy under the ancient regime: educational practice differed less according to rank than according to function'.²⁷⁹

My argument is that in the nineteenth century schooling became the most representative template for society: that of a single standard against which all could be located and ranked. It responded to the social dream of each having a very clear and indisputable place in the social hierarchy. As we will see, this model of schooling and emulation would collapse shortly before the end of the century. But now we will focus on Cousin's *moi*, the most coherent theorization of the psychological paradigm in France. This *moi* was a subject that would not only encounter hierarchy and emulation in the school, but that had internalized as a psychic structure the same type of school ranking we have seen.

Moi

From 1830, Guizot and Cousin would develop and implement a common project in subjectivity, social education and government whose basis can be found in Guizot's 1812 text discussed above. Guizot tied together the mathematical ranking of merit in the classroom with the subjective hierarchy Kant had introduced. In so doing, he offered a way of grounding social inequality and the class system in the very structure of the *moi*. Kant, whom Cousin followed closely, had been able to wed the notion of a universal individual with inequality by redefining social hierarchy as an internal attribute of selfhood. Starting from the premise that 'people are

²⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 334-335.

morally good or bad by virtue of the maxims governing their actions', Kant was able to identify 'Three dispositions in human nature': First, 'a disposition to animality, as a living being with needs and inclinations'; second, 'to humanity, as a rational being able to exercise prudence in regard to those needs and inclinations'; and third, 'a moral being aware of obligation and accountability before the moral law'.²⁸⁰ This Kantian three-stage hierarchy of the self would be central in nineteenth century France, while the same scale updated by Sigmund Freud as the id, ego and super-ego would be very influential in the twentieth century as well.

Guizot followed the same tripartite model setting out a scale consisting of the need to act, personal interest and the sentiment of duty. The first was the domain of children, 'idiots, inept people and those without foresight' and consisted on natural impulses and instinct. 'More reasonable men examine that which is convenient, they foresee, plan, calculate and govern themselves according to that which they think is their interest'. This satisfied reason, but not morality. 'Then come the virtuous men who consult above all their conscience and take it for guide in all the occasions in which it speaks'. Guizot equally understood that children develop through each of these successive stages.²⁸¹ The study of how to govern these motives and stages in children was indistinct from a wider attempt to understand human motivation and social government.

In the hands of Guizot and the *Doctrinaires*, this threefold hierarchy of selfhood, which Cousin would start developing in 1818 into his theory of the *moi*, became

²⁸⁰ Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, p. 128.

²⁸¹ Guizot, *Méditations*, p. 284.

the basis of society, education and politics. Kant intriguingly said that ‘animals are like potatoes’; and the same worth came to be attached to those who stood at the base of the social pyramid *because* they were dominated by blind instincts.²⁸² The middle classes were those governed by the rationality and egotism of self-interest. At the summit of society stood the ‘disinterested interests’ of the *capacités*, those who had achieved a level of spiritual development such that they had overcome themselves and were driven by reason, duty and morality alone. Only the latter were universal beings because they could embody Kant’s 1785 categorical imperative of *universalizability*: ‘act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law’.²⁸³ It was to this handful of elite men, imagined as devoted to the good of all, that the right to vote was granted prior to 1848. They were the natural guardians of the collective and of the blindness and infantilism of those who refused to shake off the shackles of their own ignorance, unawareness and particularity. Once this inner hierarchy of the universal self was established, education was for the first time organized into the three-tier system –primary, secondary, and superior, corresponding to animality, egotism and dutifulness– as a means of organizing stabilizing these three modalities of self in society. By making it all rest upon each person’s journey of self-perfection, the universality of man was guaranteed at the same time as it was internally split into the infra-human, human and super-human. As in the classroom arithmetic of merit, there was a common and clearly laid-out standard of distinction for all against which each person’s numeric worth in the world and

²⁸² Quoted in: François Laplantine, *Le sujet: essai d’anthropologie politique* (Paris, 2007), p. 89.

²⁸³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 71.

position in the ladder of excellence could be determined impersonally in each moment. The society of classes had been born.

Freedom was a necessity for liberal government, since individuals were personally responsible *because (and only if)* they were free. Cousin defined liberty as the abstract essence of man, as what characterized humanity. Agency was couched in vague universal assumptions rather than in actual doing. Thus, the assessment of personal actions did not need to account for actual freedom, deliberate choices and contextual circumstances as the cause of actions. Liberty was neutralized as an a-priori given derived from the theory of the *moi*: 'will alone belongs to man, only it constitutes personality.[...] It is the very essence of my will to be free'.²⁸⁴

Instead, what set men apart, what determined their level of emancipation, was their closeness to impersonal reason, and through it to the good, the moral and the dutiful. Unlike the will, reason was not free, since it did not belong to the person.

It is not the individual that constitutes his conceptions. In other words, reason in itself is not individual, but universal and absolute, and it is as such that it obliges all individuals. Ideas are conceptions of this universal reason that appears in us[...] although it is not we, and in no case can be confused with our personality.²⁸⁵

In the individual, universal reason 'fell' and became fallible. Therefore 'truth' could only ever exist outside the individual. Reason, in 'its impersonal and truly divine character', was 'superior in itself to all laws and rules, comprises all duties, duties of devotion as well as justice; therefore all morality that raises from reason, but of reason decongested of its forms and considered in its essence, is a complete

²⁸⁴ Charles Berton, 'Raison', *Dictionnaire du parallèle* (Petit-Montrouge, 1858), p. 1106.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

morality'. It was only available to the elevated few, recognized by 'a kind of spontaneous instinct, without rules, without precise formulas, that is in morals what genius is in the arts. It is the reason of the few, a reason superior to that of the common reason of men, a pure reason'.²⁸⁶ 'According to the members of this same natural aristocracy', Francis Dupuis-Déri has argued, 'only they possessed the competences to identify, defend and promote the common good, while the lesser folk are only motivated by their personal and immediate interest'.²⁸⁷

Indeed, the sinister elitism of this project of social hegemony is indisputable. But if seen from the viewpoint of subjectivity, a different image emerges. For this threefold social hierarchy —instinct (absence of reason), rational faculties (personal reason) and morality (universal reason)— was located *within* the *moi*.

In 'the primitive state of man, that of the child', argued Jouffroy, one of the great popularizers and developers of Cousin's *moi*, there was no liberty because there was no awareness, only raw passions.²⁸⁸ All humans started their life ranked among the beasts. Instead of the source of privilege and nobility, birth had thus become the greatest equalizer in history. Then,

starting at the age of reason, the life of man is a perpetual alternative among the three moral states, depending on whether passion, egotism or the moral law take hold in us, turns upon our will and preside its determinations. No life is exempt from these alternatives. What distinguishes men is the nature or motive that

²⁸⁶ E. Vacherot, 'Avertissement', in: Victor Cousin, *Oeuvres*, IV (Brussels, 1845), p. 139.

²⁸⁷ Francis Dupuis-Déri, 'L'esprit antidémocratique des fondateurs de la "démocratie" moderne', *Agone: Philosophie, critique & Littérature*, 22 (1999), p. 98.

²⁸⁸ Jouffroy, *Cours de droit naturel*, p. 36.

triumphs the most often.[...] Nobody obeys exclusively and constantly a single one of these three motives.²⁸⁹

Only this inner struggle could awaken the *moi*, for said *moi* simply constituted itself as the *intermediary* between the warring parties, always under the conviction that by applying will and logic, it could achieve the desired results. 'Liberty supposes reason and only comes with it; when these two principles introduce themselves as intermediaries between the instinctive movements of our nature and the faculties, then the situation in which we are changes completely'.²⁹⁰ This was a position of absolute centrality. 'Cousin did not cease repeating that the entirety of man could be found in all phenomena of which he was the theatre, the cause and the spectator'.²⁹¹ Indeed, the birth of the self as central intermediary of all phenomena marked one's status as a modern individual, but the battle raged on nonetheless. Regardless of which motive we followed 'we always find between our end and ourselves obstacles which we will not be able to overcome completely in this life. Hence, in all possible cases, [there is] a perpetual and fundamental struggle between our nature and the situation in which it has been placed, which is as the background of the human condition in this world'.²⁹² The self embodied a war between 'nature' and reality. Thus elite status, or indeed any basic worth as a person in society, could only be claimed in the battlefield of a daily, internal struggle in which there would be no definitive victory.

'But independently of this fundamental struggle which is reproduced in all possible moral situations', Jouffroy wrote, 'each moral situation contains in its core a

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

²⁹¹ Jules Simon, *Victor Cousin* (Paris, 1887), p. 31.

²⁹² Jouffroy, *Cours de droit naturel*, pp. 82-83.

different internal struggle which is characteristic to it'.²⁹³ In the primitive state, this conflict took place among the different passions. At the next stage, passions were all at war in turn against enlightened self-interest. 'Because we only conduct ourselves according to the rules of *l'intérêt bien entendu* under this one condition: that we contain and repress the natural action of our different passions. At each instant we sacrifice the stronger passion for the weaker one, the present passion to the future one'. All these struggles carry on to the higher state, where our passions and self-interest in turn waged war against duty and the good. In other words, fully formed individuals were to live in a permanent state of conflict with no end in sight between a primitive will to dominate, the calculation to gain advantage over another at the lowest cost and the high demands of duty and morality. What determined the character of a man was the strength of will to intervene in the battle so as to control himself in order to take sides with one motive or another. This intervening force was the *moi*, whose genesis tale paralleled that of the state as the pacification of the primitive war of 'man' against 'man'. In any case, it was impossible to escape remorse or regret, Jouffroy indicated, and no victory was lasting; the danger of relapsing into the primitive state could never be exorcised.²⁹⁴ 'At the bottom of all these struggles, there is one more fundamental, that of man against nature; without it the others would not exist, but it exists by the force of things, and from its fecund womb emanate all the others'.²⁹⁵

The way of climbing up the hierarchy of the *moi* was then not education, but rather the personal capacity to subject the body to the will, the will to the mind and the

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

mind to impersonal reason and morality. It was that triumph over the primitive nature within, however reversible the victory, that qualified a person to tame the primitive impulses and exercise leadership in society at large. It was not what one knew, but how one thought that was key, for there were two types of reason: one personal and one impersonal, one fallible and one infallible. But both shared a distinct capacity for abstraction. 'Reason, in its simplest definition, is the faculty to understand (*comprendre*), which should not be confused with the faculty to know (*connaître*)'. Animals know, but do not comprehend.²⁹⁶ Comprehension demanded relinquishing a first-person perspective for the universal, third-person viewpoint that alone could objectify our sense of self and our understanding of our own behaviour.

There is an age in the life of man, and this period may prolong itself for a quite long time, in which there is no sort of governmental power, so to speak, that is, a period in which there still does not exist in us the fact of being able to direct our faculties ourselves, which is liberty.

In childhood and in many other moments in life, this ability for self-steering was absent. While the 'executive faculties' of the will were present, 'they act without us, or, what is the same, without our will imprinting it with a direction, and under the only impulse of our tendencies.'²⁹⁷

Translated into morality, knowing and comprehending equated the distinction between what was good in one instance, which most could muster, and what was always good. 'If it is true that reason shows itself in good enough time in man, no one would dare argue that it rises immediately to that high conception of order

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 71-72.

that is the moral law'. 'Most men only have a confused idea of morality, a moral conscience, instinct or sense, which tries its best to distinguish good and bad in particular cases, but cannot derive its judgement from the moral law as such and a high conception of duty'. Most men never reached that state. 'It would be necessary to conclude that there is no morality in man until a certain age and that there never is any among the largest number of men'.²⁹⁸ Morality and reason involved overcoming as much as one's particularities as possible. Reason introduced the idea of an 'absolute good', meaning order. It was the very impersonality of reason that made it obligatory,

because that which is personal, not being superior to the person, can in no way obligate him. The idea of law implies something exterior and superior to the person, something universal, that comprises and dominates the particular.

Only in the impersonality of reason could private interest be abandoned for a broader aim capable of apprehending without contradiction what was best for all.

Then morality is possible in man; the condition of all morality, which is to act on behalf of an impersonal motive or idea, on behalf of a law, is satisfied; it did not exist before.²⁹⁹

One had to completely give oneself over to moral law-abidingness. 'There is no morality in human nature unless man is free and subjected to a mandatory law', or the law of duty.³⁰⁰ The rare and exceptional few who lived by this high law were rewarded with their privileged status as social elites, but also their full human potential, including happiness. For 'it has been demonstrated by experience and

²⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

reason that the best way to be happy is to remain, in all possible cases, faithful to the laws of duty'.³⁰¹

In 1848, the July monarchy collapsed, and with it the understanding of a unique, universal order that the regime had sustained, tumbled. From all quarters, the previous understanding of duty was condemned. Duty could no longer be the attainment of the few and the only source of modern privilege, as we saw in the first chapter; the search began for a system founded on the sacred duty of each and all, rather than on sovereign rights against the state and each other. But the result of this change was a new source of alienation from the self. As Procacci has argued:

In the light of a network of duties, the individual appeared fragmented into a series of experiences, rather than unified as the subject of juridical rights. In each duty, each is but the individual counterpart of a collective experience, the meaning of which surpasses him constantly: the entire space of individual experience is fragmented into as many parcels as there are duties assigned to the individual.³⁰²

In the third chapter we will explore how this passage from the transcendental unity of duty to its fragmentation also implied the splintering and multiplicity of the modern individual.

Conclusion.

In the eighteenth century, the rise of the belief in the equality of 'men' was inseparable from a new understanding of social order that rested precisely on this equality. Because individuals were the same in their psyches and interchangeable

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁰² Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 305.

in society, the approval and validation of others became crucial. Vanity came to be seen as the primary drive behind of human actions. Towards 1800, there was a search for a new technique of governing through vanity. Morality emerged as a technique of self-government that, while offering no certainty at all, required comparing one's motives and behaviour with that of others and the dictates of universal reason or duty. The establishment of emulation as the basis of the educational system in the 1830s institutionalized this process of constant comparison as a new model promising to socialize children for public life in ways the family never could. The fetish of a universal and divinized reason equally tied human thought to the social order by transferring the possibility of knowing 'truth' from the individual to the state and academic institutions. Comprehension required comparing one's ideas to those of the elite men, who alone could approach reason. This profound inequality in intelligences became the bedrock of a highly hierarchical and exclusive political regime.

The separation of law and morality that took place after 1789 delegated to the individual the burden of determining what was right or wrong in daily life. This was to be carried out through the cumbersome application of a 'moral looking-glass' whereby one could assess and objectify one's motives from the 'outside' and against the backdrop of what was universally moral according to social elites. An ambiguous, painstaking and error-prone operation, moral determinations became highly subjective. However, the assumption that each person carefully calculated his or her actions based on interest and morality made it possible to objectify a person's moral worth by means of their behaviour. Thus conduct became the objectified measure of morality. It then becomes easy to understand why any

departure from behaviour deemed normative could be cast as immoral and why the majority of the French population came to be imagined as corrupt and debauched in the 1830s and 1840s. Official and scholarly publications widely publicised the rampant extent of immorality. Indeed, this was the task of the so-called 'moral sciences', which Ian Hacking aptly described as 'above all the science that studied, empirically and en masse, immoral behaviour'.³⁰³ At the same time that the state and social elites drew attention to immorality, they declared the helplessness of the law, repression and welfare to alleviate and correct these problems (as had been the case in the Old Regime), while personal charity and alms could only make things worse. Expectations of collective change were frustrated the moment they were created. The option that remained for the aware individual was self-reform in daily and domestic life through more meticulous self-steering in order to bring inner life in line with social norms.

In other words, a wedge was driven between what one must and must not do, determined now by positive, state law alone, and between what one ought and ought not to do, which belonged to the domain of morality. Formally unregulated, moral behaviour came to depend on personal assessment, which required evaluating and choosing among the many competing standards of conduct that became available in an increasingly plural public sphere. In turn, the stakes for such preferences were raised. In a meritocratic society of free, autonomous and accountable moral subjects, the standing and worth of a person became tied to his or her comportment, tastes and habits. The weight of behaviour became more decisive at the same time that the standards for conduct became fragmented,

³⁰³ Ian Hacking, 'How should we do the history of statistics?', in: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, 1991), p. 182.

unclear and subjective. There remained a belief in the absoluteness of good and evil, but it was up to a lonely, interpreting and choosing self to discover where the good and the bad was to be found. On the correct deciphering of these moral values, in turn, would depend his or her social worth. In this way, the separation of law and morality in 'free' societies at the end of the eighteenth century necessitated a self-reflective agent tasked with continuous comparison and self-analysis in order to arrive at independent moral determinations. I would argue this had the effect of encouraging individual reliance on external values and non-local viewpoints, which in turn converged in a limited plurality of large and increasingly homogeneous, institutionalized and nationalized communities of opinion.

This chapter has equally shown the crucial part 'otherness' played in configuring the 'structure of experience' of the individual in eighteenth-century modern philosophy and in the rise of the self in the nineteenth century. The belief that all 'men' were equal led to the search of new categories through which to legitimate and explain the actual differences among persons. The key category that allowed this operation was the novel specificity of childhood that emerged in the eighteenth century. While birth had been the foundation of Old-Regime privilege and social rank, in the nineteenth century infancy became the great equalizer. Everyone was born in a state of helplessness, unreason and uncontrolled behaviour. But childhood was more than a temporary stage of life, its brutish tendencies re-emerged in the case of inattentiveness of the controlling and intermediary entity of the self. The passage from savagery to civilization now became a path each individual had to take in the form of an inner battle between the acceptable self and the intolerable 'other'. It was through the figure of the child

that the self internalized social 'otherness'. The early nineteenth century became populated by a numerous cast of 'others', which became the object of wide-ranging public debate. The increased visibility of deviance served to increase the stakes of diverting from normative behaviour thus establishing narrow but uncertain boundaries for self-steering and self-government. The next chapter will explore in more depth this process of public debate and will expand on the uses of childhood within the logics of social and family government.

While welfare programmes were eminently coercive, their focus on thriftiness and the fear that assistance could aggravate moral deviance in specific individuals and reproductively irresponsible populations led to austere policies that reached only few groups for a limited time with as little expense as possible. The failure in the moralizing aims of these private and public programmes often only confirmed the need for more austerity. While actual aid was very restricted, welfare policies were however crucial in naming and identifying 'the social' as a threatening domain of widespread immorality over which law and political power could do little. As social and administrative experts discovered, documented and publicized the extent of deviance and pauperism, the public debates and moral panics that followed the technical and scientific studies of these men emphasized the existence of collective moral lacks endangering the social order together with the lacks and limitations of the state to solve these problems. While this process generated awareness of social problems that did not have social solutions, it provided a catalogue of guilty 'others' and their dysfunctional subjectivities, which established a link between behaviour, self-worth and socio-economic ranking. Poorly governed selves were thus cast as the cause of the poverty and immorality that threatened

the body politic. By defining a catalogue of subjective lacks, the discourses and policies relating to poverty and welfare pointed to the opposing conducts that, from the exercise of foresight to the proper moral deliberations of the moi, outlined a programmatic view of a normative self. Pervasive analogies between 'others' and the blank-slate of childhood as generating permanent deficit in selfhood, governing and knowledge, served to internalize structural contradictions and the broader complexities of social government. By pointing to subjective inadequacies, the awareness of social lacks would serve to highlight deficiencies inside the self, which was understood as deriving from a universal set of drives within the psyche. I have therefore argued that the widely-debated difficulties in social government posed individual self-government as a problem, which could only be solved by the rise of a disciplining intermediary experienced as a psychological self. By generating awareness of social problems that did not seem to have social solutions, the awareness of collective lacks mobilized the individual to act and take a stand as the subject of action.

Thus, there developed an indissoluble link between inner life and social norms. The theorists of emulation envisioned the school and indeed society itself as capable of allocating rank on account of a mathematically-precise assessment of merit. This implied two things: first, the need for a supervisory authority able to set impersonal rules and assess merit, and second, unrelenting competition among equals whose rank was never fixed once and for all. This resulted in constant striving and insecurity, but also turned Rousseau and Smith's theories of vanity and the reliance on external opinion into an *experience* which would progressively become common for schoolchildren and adults in the nineteenth century. This

constant striving among equals under impersonal rules was meant to minimize resistance to authority, which was no longer, a personal, embodied power, but rather an anonymous mechanism resembling the school bell. Under this arrangement, as Guizot noticed, competitors would not focus on the natural advantages some had on account of their strength or superiority. Therefore, a competition among 'equals' that was supervised by an authority generated the very experience and perception of equality that it took for granted.

This chapter emphasized the importance of insecurity and uncertainty in the rise of the modern self. While Marx and Engels wrote of the necessary existence in capitalism economies of a 'reserve army of labour' resulting from a permanent surplus of population, which made it possible to keep wages low and jobs insecure through fierce competition, Elias spoke of a "reserve army" of the *upper class*' in the Old Regime. The royal court, he argued, organized competition 'under constant pressure from a reserve army of country aristocracy and raising bourgeois elements'.³⁰⁴ This disciplining effect of competition reached a new height in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was not only the case in the market economy and the school ranking. Competition held a problematic relationship with morality in Malthusianism, which was hegemonic in France from the 1820s to the 1860s. As the views of the English author were being relegated in France in 1865, one Malthusian economist described what could be called a biological reserve army. One fictional bourgeois family was described as seeking to restrain the number of their offspring in order to offer them a good life. 'But this excessive prudence is often punished'. The child died and the family went extinct. 'Then out

³⁰⁴ Elias, *Power and Civility*, pp. 41, 67, 200, 269.

of the ranks of the proletariat rises some intelligent, laborious [and] active man who becomes rich, elevates himself and in turn founds a family'. But before long this one also went extinct. And thus the impossible-to-anticipate demands of reproductive 'prudence' often led to extinction while 'new families, exiting the inexhaustible womb of the proletariat, constantly come to replace them'. It was therefore a good thing that the poor did not read Malthus and bred prolifically.³⁰⁵ Not reproducing beyond one's means was a moral and social necessity as well as the only way to try to offer one's children stability in an egalitarian society and inheritance regime. However, the grave difficulty of getting it right could lead to the disappearance rather than the advancement of the family name. Therefore the stakes were not limited to losing one's rank in society. For the wage labourer in search for work or the bourgeois family seeking permanence, competition became coloured with a pressing uncertainty with regards to the basics of biological survival and self-preservation.³⁰⁶ While in turn, this insecurity came to be cast as a prerequisite for moral character and happiness. Say made this plain:

A man who has received from his parents a made fortune, and who conserves it without conflicts or setbacks, is a picture without shadow, a Chinese painting, and insipid object.[... T]his object that is insipid for everyone else is even more so for him. He is missing a little misfortune in order to be happy.³⁰⁷

Unlike the serf and aristocrat of old, the nineteenth-century individual did not find a set place in society. Finding one's rank depended on the individual's daily struggle against misfortune, conflicts or setbacks, which in turn required an even greater inner battle to achieve increasing self-disciplining.

³⁰⁵ Léon, 'De l'accroissement de la population en France d'après les derniers recensements', *Revue contemporaine*, 14/46/81 (1865), p. 653.

³⁰⁶ See: Angus McLaren, *Sexuality and Social Order: The Debate over the Fertility of Women and Workers in France, 1770-1920* (New York, 1983).

³⁰⁷ Say, *Petit volume*, p. 22.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the indivisible and timeless individual would be abandoned for a new understanding of the self as socially determined, plural and fragmented. This led to new forms of social belonging that did not rest on competition and self-evaluation alone. While we will explore this process in the third chapter, we will now situate the discussion about the individual within the larger matrix of authority, family and social relationships that served as the backdrop of the evolving self in the middle decades of the century.

Chapter 2

Parenthood and Authority:

The Rise and Fall of the Obligatory Family, 1830s-1880s.

Introduction.

As Giovanna Procacci, Philippe Sassier and Catherine Duprat have shown, the nineteenth-century discourses on pauperism and social assistance highlighted the collective impact of personal faults. Their targets were the failings of individuals with regards to morality, personal responsibility and self-sufficiency.¹ But the welfare policies implemented were not aimed at these personal shortcomings, which were left to the efforts of the concerned individual through foresight and hard work, with at best some moralizing help from private charity. Social assistance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not focus on the necessities of individuals as such. Since Napoleonic law had inscribed personal hardship in the sphere of family responsibilities, relief from the wider community was due only when kinship groups were absent or unable to shoulder the *obligation alimentaire* or alimony.² Thus, social assistance came, in theory, to step in for the failings of family solidarity, while, as Elinor Accampo has shown for Saint-Chamond (Loire), the actual policies implemented ‘assumed family functions

¹ Giovanna Procacci, *Gouverner la misère* (Paris, 1993); Philippe Sassier, *Du bon usage des pauvres* (Paris, 1990); Catherine Duprat, *Les temps des philanthropes* (Paris, 1993) and *Usage et pratiques de la philanthropie* (Paris, 1997).

² Alimony responsibilities are defined in the French Civil Code of 1804 in Title V, Chapter V, (articles 203-211), with further spousal responsibilities listed in Chapter VI.

in the care of the children, the sick, and the old'.³ Rachel Fuchs has emphasized that charity and welfare were 'designed and implemented to help women in their domestic role'.⁴ By intervening to mitigate the lack or breakdown of the family structure, social policy promoted the ideal of an autonomous and self-sufficient family as the basic social unit.

As in the previous chapter, the writings of social, political and religious thinkers and reformists will make it possible to identify the different conceptualizations of the family and authority and how these changed through time. This will serve to contextualize the archival and administrative material pertaining to the ban on child abandonment and the attempts to provide temporary subsidies to destitute mothers who wished to abandon. Together, these sources will be deployed to elucidate the wide-ranging changes that affected the concepts and practices of the family and power from the 1830s to the 1880s. The focus will be on the government of relating, specifically through the lens of parenting. The fundamental ties between fatherhood and authority will serve to shed light on the broader issue of the governing of others. In turn, the rise of motherhood will, on the one hand, provide an understanding of the shift towards social functions that characterized the late nineteenth century and, on the other, will focus on the core of social assistance in France. French welfare since the Revolution has been described as 'maternalist', given its noticeable focus on assisting children and their mothers.⁵

The most important and expensive welfare policy in the period, the case of

³ Elinor Accampo, *Industrialization, Family Life, and Class Relations: Saint Chamond, 1815-1914* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 159.

⁴ Rachel Fuchs, 'Charity and welfare', in: David Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli (eds), *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1789-1913* (New Haven, 2002), p. 156.

⁵ Philip Nord, 'The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914', *French Historical Studies*, 18/3 (1994), pp. 827-833.

foundlings and single mothers will thus highlight family reform as the main aim of social assistance as well as document how administrators and experts attempted to put it into practice. In doing so, this chapter will throw into relief the complex and shifting interplay between the private and public divide within the wider question of government. This will serve to contextualize the historical development of the modern individual in nineteenth-century France which is considered in the other two chapters.

While the discursive construction of modern (bourgeois) motherhood as a naturalized social and biological ideal can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this chapter will not deal with that ideal in itself, so much as with cases that explicitly contravene it. By analysing social programmes aimed at destitute single mothers, this chapter follows administrators, elected representatives and experts in their attempts to grapple with motherhood at its very margins, where it diverted the most from moral codes and the family ideal. I argue that this experience was central to the definition of the maternal function at large by carving out a specific social niche for female reproduction.

One of the most relevant studies of the family in nineteenth-century France is Roddey Reid's *Families in Jeopardy*. Reid has analysed six key novels, which contextualized by the works of reformists, hygienists and moralists, have enabled him to document the key changes in domesticity from 1750 to 1910. His main contribution has been the concept of family discourse, through which he has been able to grasp the thread of change in the nineteenth century without losing sight of the nuances of each period and novelist. Instead of understanding the narrative of

family only through the ideal it represented, Reid has analysed the mutually supportive nature of 'a lack and a desire (defined as lack)'.⁶ '[I]t was as much through the *perception of transgression or lack* as through idealized scenes of restored family life that cultural narratives produced the desire for the normative conjugal family household'.⁷ While family ideals were numerous and varied, what made them converge in a common family discourse was the lack of the ideal they signalled. This lack, which Reid has argued was conveyed by the narrative medium of melodrama, served as a call to action in defence of the normative ideal in one's life and in public.

By means of their plots, reports, and treatises, novelists, physicians, jurists, and social workers penned narratives of family life deferred, disrupted, or destroyed by all manners of agents, internal and external: the cash nexus, criminals, disease, non-normative sexuality, and hereditary disorders, to name a few. [... I]t was primarily through tales of endangered or lost family life that in France familial discourse negatively constructed and disseminated new, positive norms of household living, the body, subjectivity, and social relations.⁸

Exploring the positive and generative consequences of narratives of absence offers an invaluable analytical approach to our topic. In matters of social and family reform in the nineteenth century, the dreams were very lofty, the dangers most imminent, but the actions taken were always rather modest. On the one hand, between 1830 and 1848, the liberal state in its thriftiness delegated socio-economic solutions to individual responsibility and family solidarity, understood to be the sources of wealth and education on which political franchise and

⁶ Roddey Reid, *Families in Jeopardy: Regulating the Social Body in France, 1750-1910* (Stanford, 1993), p. 110.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*

citizenship depended. On the other, the information made known through the institutions and publications of the state provided the primary material for the family and social discourse of lack and immorality, which in 1848 ultimately stood as the evidence indicting the regime for its inactivity. In her study of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques, Sophie-Anne Leterrier has shown how the institution's prize-winning essays, which uncovered the wide range of social ills of their time, served to undermine the very social and political order they were meant to uphold.⁹

I will show how at the moment of their birth in the 1830s, the debate on family breakdown and family reform was inseparable from the debate on social breakdown and social reform. I will explore one of the earliest disputes on the 'social question', the case of foundlings, and will follow the changes in policy over the course of half a century. This polemic served to draw the ideological line between two understandings of power, at work both in the family and in society at large. On the one hand were the advocates of what I will call *guardianship*, a new mode of impersonal and socialized power that was to be limited, temporary and exercised in favour of the governed. This was the position the government adopted and imposed through policy. On the other stood those who tried to hold on to the traditional and increasingly elusive notion of personal and moral *authority*, a power as absolute as burdensome was its responsibility before god and king, and thus exercised indefinitely for its own necessary good. This was especially the position of the Catholic opposition to the July monarchy, who were profoundly provoked into a debate by the new family reforms being implemented by the state.

⁹ Sophie-Anne Leterrier, *L'institution des sciences morales: L'Académie des sciences morales et politiques, 1795-1850* (Paris, 1995), p. 271.

Since the opposition was powerless in matters of policy reform, the confrontation generated a surge in Catholic charities. But charitable experiences and participation in the debate largely served to highlight the conceptual incoherencies and contradictions behind the project of reviving past forms of authority in the family and society. Bitterly defeated in matters of family policy from 1830 to 1870, Catholics would gradually come to accept their opponent's model of the family in the later part of the century, while in turn the victorious liberals and later on, republicans, gained a more plural view of social power which was largely indebted to Catholics. By the 1880s, a new understanding of social government meant that both approaches could integrate and converge with no contradiction. The notion of institution brought together and embodied in the new social expert (called a social worker after the First World War) the impersonal, limited and temporary administrative power that liberals had espoused with the Catholic focus on personal involvement, love, morality and authority. No longer at odds with each other were state power and social power, public assistance and private charity or the expertise of the notables and of the administration. By means of a multiplication of authoritative agents at the local level, networks of interpersonal and impersonal power came to support each other mutually. In order to tackle these matters, the point of departure will be to unravel the connections between the family and political ideals in the nineteenth century.

The politics of the family.

The family was one of the most strategic concepts for any ideology or political tradition because it was seen as the irreducible nucleus where problems of power

and government were posed. Whereas each political tradition promoted a specific understanding of the family, they were agreed in making of the domestic sphere a politically operative category, invariably cast in political thought as a harmonious community of interests with a single will.¹⁰ The vicomte de Bonald, a legitimist statesman, argued that 'being the family the element of the State, and the State the development of the family, and both societies being similar in their constitution, every change will be reciprocal between them'.¹¹ Every political tradition tended to draw similar analogies and reciprocities between family and political system. For ultra-royalists like Bonald, the family was an autocratic and hierarchical structure that would provide the basis for monarchic government. For republicans, the home was a site of equality and liberty, the source of the political good life. Doctrinaire liberal François Guizot justified the rule of reason through censitary suffrage limited to social 'capacities' by modelling it on the father, who

observes, listens, consults those who should obey him, enters into negotiations at the very instant, in a formal transaction with their reason and their liberty, modifies their wills according to their dispositions or their ideas, [and] conducts himself naturally and necessarily, according to the protective principle of law, which wants power to justify its legitimacy in making itself freely accepted.¹²

If reason was to rule the state, Guizot assumed the same thing was true of the home. As legitimists and liberals, republicans also cast the family as a political microcosm. The Garnier-Pagès *Dictionnaire politique*, edited by Laurent Pagnerre,

¹⁰ Frédéric Le Play, *La réforme sociale en France*, I (Paris, 1867), pp. 434-448; 'Famille' and 'Mariage' in: Laurent Pagnerre (ed.), *Dictionnaire politique* (Paris, 1860), pp. 391-394, 568-573; 'Famille' and 'Femme' in: Maurice Block (ed.), *Dictionnaire général de la politique*, 1 (Paris, 1873), pp. 1010-1012, 1014-1020.

¹¹ Quoted in: Claudie Bernard, *Penser la famille au XIXe siècle, 1789-1870* (Saint-Étienne, 2007), p. 211.

¹² Quoted in: Anne Verjus, 'Les femmes, épouses et mères de citoyens: De la famille comme catégorie politique dans la construction de la citoyenneté, 1789-1848', Ph.D. thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, 1997), p. 181.

is widely understood to have expressed the mainstream views of republicans in the 1840s. In it, Élias Regnault wrote that ‘The Family makes of the two sexes a single individual and creates the collective being’.¹³

Marriage is the reunion of two individuals in one only being, the transformation of the double nature in a single nature, more powerful and more beautiful; it is not only the coming together of a man and a woman, it is the human being completing its unity by the intimate cohesion of the active and passive principles, henceforth indistinguishable in a glorious harmony.[...] Marriage therefore makes a new human being[...], *androgynous social*, a single and double being whose bodies, concentrated in a single soul, destined to enjoy the same joys, suffer the same pains.¹⁴

The transcendental nature of this ‘physical and moral union’ had wider implications. ‘[T]his true appreciation of Marriage could serve usefully to resolve grave problems in political law’. Regnault then discussed volition, concluding that, ‘according to the real meaning of Marriage, the woman who has another will than her husband’s, the husband who has another will than his wife’s, commits moral adultery’.¹⁵ For republicans, the family solved the key political problem of individual wills merging into a greater, collective will where they were to be ‘indistinguishable in a glorious harmony’.

Every political ideology or intellectual tradition in France had its own ideal of the family as a necessary part of the greater vision of the social ‘good life’ that they

¹³ Élias Regnault, ‘Famille’, in: Pagnerre, *Dictionnaire*, p. 392.

¹⁴ Regnault, ‘Mariage’, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 569-570.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 570.

espoused.¹⁶ It became common for political ideology to be naturalized and legitimized by projecting any ideal onto the family as the pre-political state of 'nature'. But this did not mean that political traditions envisioned a clear programme of family reform or indeed a coherent narrative about the family. The best study of the profound multiplicity of family ideals between the Revolution and the end of the Second Empire in France remains Claudie Bernard's *Penser la famille au XIXe siècle*. Without reducing the complexity of family models, she has been able to identify three global currents in the writings on the family: patriarchalism, progressivism or paternalism, and utopianism. These broad discursive tendencies do not coincide with standard political differences, but actually clash with them. Thus, the first brings together ultra-conservatives such as the vicomte de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre with liberal Guizot and anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon; the second *encyclopédiste* Denis Diderot, the marquis de Sade and socialist Flora Tristan; the third liberal Tocqueville, positivist Comte and socialist Pierre Leroux.¹⁷ Little intelligibility then seems to be gained from considering the contents of family discourses.

A second approach adopts a simple division many contemporaries would have identified with: the old family and the new. Two clearly opposed models of the family were articulated during the French Revolution. Building on Jacques Mulliez's contrast between the tyrannical and the loving father, André Burguière highlighted the revolutionaries' search to 'substitute for a conception of paternity built on authority and lineage in which the father essentially intervened as an

¹⁶ Michelle Perrot, 'La famille triomphante', in: Philippe Ariès and George Duby (eds), *Histoire de la vie privée*, 4 (Paris, 1999), pp. 81-92.

¹⁷ Bernard, *Penser la famille*, part 2.

agent of transmission of the rights, goods, and honour of the lineage, a voluntary and individual conception of paternity'. This view 'counterbalanced the rights of the father with his duties (those of nourishing, protecting, [and] educating his children) and counts affection among his duties and rights'. So, from being embedded in a deeper structure, making 'of the father-child relation a passing sequence of a more fundamental bond, that of lineage' in which the 'father is limited to punishing', filiation in the new family became increasingly thrown upon itself, framed within 'a more individualized and affective conception of the paternal role that implies duties of assistance and comprehension with regards to the child'.¹⁸

This opposition between the 'old' and the 'new' family was at the centre of political imaginations during the Revolution, and indeed the whole of the nineteenth century could be read as the more or less explicit battle between these two family ideals. The problem may come from this opposition's ability to explain too much. Cognitive linguist Georges Lakoff, after asking himself 'If there are two different understandings of the nation, do they come from two different understandings of family?', has reduced the ideological distances that constitute the political spectrum in the modern-day United States to the simple but very meaningful contrast between a 'strict father morality' and a 'nurturant parent morality' (which 'is gender neutral').¹⁹ Reading his outline of such family models, both would seem to be as alive and distinct as they were in the early 1790s. These two ideals of parenting seemed to have arisen at the same time and to be inexorably tied to the

¹⁸ André Burguière, 'La famille comme enjeu politique: De la Révolution au Code civil', *Droit et société*, 14 (1990), pp. 26-28. See: Jacques Mulliez, 'La volonté d'un homme', in: Jean Delumeau and Daniel Roche (eds.), *Histoire des pères et de la paternité* (Paris, 2000), pp. 289-327.

¹⁹ George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant!* (White River Junction, 2004), pp. 5, 11.

difference between the political Left and Right, which after the Revolution has carried on structuring political confrontation. Despite the changes of the last two centuries, it is as if political identities somehow remain wedded to lingering family ideals whose changing forms only reaffirm, multiply and confirm their founding dissimilarity with startling continuity.

If the French Revolution politicized the family, it was by borrowing the Old-Regime assumption that made of it the bedrock of the political system. The absolutist monarchy had explicitly assigned politically crucial functions to the Old-Regime family, whose head was in practice a royal delegate. After 1789, the stakes represented by 'new' and 'old' families became indistinct from the larger problems of a 'new' and 'old' political system. By assimilating the founding correspondence between political and family system, revolutionaries turned the family into a central category in nineteenth-century political thought.

However, the analytical twinning of family and politics has the effect of collapsing the former into the latter. When the family ideal becomes so closely tied to a political regime that it effectively can be reduced to it, then the family becomes highly elusive as an object of study. Any attempt to think the family can thus only lead to a reflection upon the wider issue of authority in society at large, and one in which it is impossible to separate the domestic and social 'good life'. In other words, to attempt to think the family from politics leads to a reflection that has

little to say about the home as such, and a lot to say about social authority, or how relationships of equality and inequality should be structured within society.²⁰

There have also been efforts to grasp the family through the authority model it represents. Although Foucault had little to say about the family itself, there have been numerous attempts to apply his theorizations about different forms of power to the domestic.²¹ Usually ignoring his posterior work that went beyond this idea of two powers, scholars have drawn on the opposition between 'sovereign' and 'disciplinary power' that he introduced in *Discipline and Punish*. The result of these attempts has only revived the opposition between 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent' using different terminology. Chloë Taylor, in assessing these works, has made it clear that no one form of these powers can be taken as inherent to the family. Modes of both powers can be present at different times and places; they are fluid and changing because power, as the family itself, has no essence. As Taylor argued, 'We should not be trying to discover the correct theory of the family, but to genealogize it'.²² Reduced to a form of relating that is potentially everywhere, power itself should cease to be the question. Foucault's work in the 1980s was already moving in this direction.²³ Inquiry should move on to focus on relating (to self and other), for which power is but one way of reading and organizing such relationships.

By decentring the opposition between 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent', the focus can turn to the family discourse that sustained them both. What was

²⁰ Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1992).

²¹ Chloë Taylor, 'Foucault and familial power', *Hypatia*, 27/1 (2012), pp. 201-218.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²³ See: Stuart Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade* (Cambridge, 2016).

characteristic of this discourse was that broad social problems were individualized and tied to personal behaviour, while private life became politicized. Family discourse highlighted lacks, both in individual behaviour and in the capacity of collective agency to correct or direct private conduct. As reform from the top seemed elusive, the individual was mobilized to correct his or her conduct in private and public life. This was novel. In the Old Regime, behaviour was regulated by strict social norms with the backing of the judicial system. In the nineteenth century, mores and law became separated. Morality was no longer to be legally enforced. Consequently, the individual was called upon to engage and step in to bridge the gap between the moral ideal and the immoral state of affairs being highlighted by family and social lacks.

Authority and equality.

In the 1890s, Catholic Émile Cheysson, one of the leading social reformists of the conservative Le Play school, placed love at the centre of the task of the benevolent *patron*. 'As for the common inspiration to all bosses, it consists of their attachment to their personnel. Herein lies the great secret: knowing how to love. Outside that, everything is sterile and one only finds inanimate mechanisms'.²⁴ As François Ewald argued, the practice of inter-class relations of guardianship 'consisted in substituting economic and juridical relationships between the boss and the worker for relations of *sentiment*: gratefulness, respect, affection'.²⁵

²⁴ Quoted in: François Ewald, *L'État providence* (Paris, 1986), p. 126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Cheysson illustrated the deliberate attempt of conservative reformists throughout the nineteenth century to return to the Christian ideal in which the problems of relations of inequality were solved through the Christian imperative of mutual love and service. This view had gradually been abandoned long before the Revolution as the eighteenth century saw the development of a new order of the affections, one linked to the nuclear family.

Despite actual inequality within the family, the home gradually emerged as the primary conceptual site of a new type of relations of equality. In the seventeenth century, an extensive literature had brought the concept of friendship under attack. The debate on friendship operated as a way of prioritizing and ordering loyalties, strengthening 'formal' hierarchical ties at the expense of 'informal' or horizontal bonds.²⁶ The outcome of this process can be read in his 1701 *Traité de l'amitié*, where author Louis-Silvestre de Sacy argued that the fundamental condition of virtue was 'an inviolable attachment to our duties'.

These duties have marked ranks and are in such subordination, that one cannot displace them without destroying them. In this order, those of friendship come last. Born creatures, we belong to the Creator; born subjects, we belong to the State; born in a family, we belong to our family. In short, we are born men, subjects, relatives; we become friends. We only receive life charged with these first debts; these must be settled before those we want to contract ourselves.²⁷

²⁶ Foucault made suggestive comments on the history of friendship, see especially: 'Sex, power, and the politics of identity', in: Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (New York, 1994), pp. 163-173. After his death there has been an important surge of scholarly interest in the topic of friendship and politics, which casts new light on the issue of equality and inequality. For a detailed literary review see: Heather Devere and Graham M. Smith, 'Friendship and politics', *Political Studies Review*, 8 (2010), pp. 341-356, Devere, 'Amity update: The academic debate on friendship and politics', *Amity: The Journal of Friendship Studies*, 1 (2013), pp. 5-33.

²⁷ Louis-Silvestre de Sacy, *Traité de l'amitié* (Paris, 1722), pp. 137-138.

Personal observance of the rules of virtue was tied to the social order. 'In the exact submission to these different duties [to God, *patrie* and family] is contained all the tranquillity of society'.²⁸ Loyalty was to derive from one's obligations rather than affections and choices. Thus, any interaction that could place itself in opposition to these public interests becomes *une liaison si monstrueuse*.²⁹

The affections were ordered and gendered inside the home in a similar way. Religious author Catherine Lévesque, in her 1685 treatise on the perfection of love, offered a dramatic warning on the dangers of family love degenerating into incest and carnal love. 'The father, seeing the beauty [and] agreeableness of the youth of his daughter, loves her at the detriment of the love he must have for the mother'. The same case was argued for the mother with her sons. The way to avoid such sins was through a disembodied love, 'the purely spiritual love of God with their love'. The reason for her argument was a new reading of love that made it incompatible with social hierarchy and order, for the 'ruse of carnal love[...] has no eyes at all to discern the rank of People. All that is needed for it to take hold is someone of the opposite sex'.³⁰ Love, Lévesque argued, was disruptive of ranks and hierarchies inside the family and in society at large. Order could only be upheld by an interiorizing and taming of the affections.

As the belief in freedom advanced in the eighteenth century, unequal social relations became more uncomfortable intellectually. In practice, these unequal relations were rendered problematic by the gradual abandonment of the

²⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 207.

³⁰ Catherine Lévesque, *La perfection de l'amour du prochain dans tous les états...* (Paris, 1685), pp. 257-258.

traditional norms that regulated the master-servant bond, wages and worker mobility in the local economy.³¹ The mutual love that had been thought to bind master and servant became increasingly suspect and untenable. Where once a single form of love circulated in the social body, ultimately the duty of an exalted and universal spiritual love which their God had imposed on Christians, a hierarchy of *loves* seemed to have emerged in the eighteenth century. Thus the Dauphin, father to Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X, could write that

A king must see himself in his domains as a *père de famille* among his children. He must love his peoples *not as a master loves his slaves*, but as a father loves his own children; he owes them the same care, the same protection and the same efforts to render them happy.³²

Indeed, the greater the liberty imagined for the adult individual, the more unshakable the dependency of the child seemed. But while slavery or servitude was a construction of men, childhood belonged to nature. As the Dauphin had done, recourse to the child-father analogy in political thought clung on to the most 'natural' of a rapidly receding constellation of previously acceptable relations of inequality. Having lost their now inexplicable hue of intimacy, love and affection that had once defined them, the relationship between master and servant, owner and slave, boss and underling, indeed, between any two persons deemed 'unequal', became reduced to the quintessential basis of modern politics: a problem of *power*.

It was imagined that true relating and affections could only take place in the absence of this problem of power, meaning that one could only fully relate to

³¹ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (Glasgow, 1979), p. 251.

³² Quoted in: Henri de L'Épinois, *Vie du Dauphin* (Paris, 1858?), p. 161. Emphasis added.

equals. Equality entered into the home in two ways in the eighteenth century. The first was the obligation to love one's children equally. In his short story 'The Bad Mother', *encyclopédiste* Jean-François Marmontel understood this frequent 'monstrosity' to mean 'a mother that loves one of her children to the exclusion of all the others'. 'I am speaking of a blind tenderness, often exclusive, sometime jealous, that chosens an idol and victims among those innocent children one has brought into this world, and for whom one is equally obliged to lighten the burden of life'.³³ After 1789 this focus on equal treatment of children would find its legal translation into equal inheritance rights for siblings, which undermined the aristocratic foundations of the Old Regime.

The second impact of egalitarianism was on the relations between spouses. The difference between affectionate and interested marriage came to rest on the degree of equality among the spouses. In 1773, père Richard, a professor in theology, challenged the pope's use of his ability to dispense approval for marriage to relatives in the first degree. Direct forebears, he argued, were at least potential surrogate fathers and mothers, and their descendants 'owe them a respect that is naturally incompatible with the equality found between spouses in the custom of marriage'. The argument thus did not fall on the biology or morality of incest, but rather in the unacceptable mixing of two incompatible forms of relating: the hierarchy of the parent-child bond and the horizontality of marriage.³⁴ In 1792, novelist Nicolas-Edme Rétif highlighted the parameters of that equality. In his fictional saga depicting the love affair between le Chevalier de Joinville and Mademoiselle d'Arans, Rétif had the latter write:

³³ Jean-François Marmontel, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 (Paris, 1819), p. 146.

³⁴ Charles-Louis Richard, *Analyse des Conciles généraux et particuliers*, 2/4 (Paris, 1773), p. 333.

Everything contributes to assure us a constant happiness: equality of birth, compatibility of characters, way of thinking, the intimate union of our souls and both of us are favoured by the gifts of wealth.³⁵

Marriage and sentimental relations had come to necessitate an equality of condition wherein the parity of dignity and rank maintained a balance of honour, power and, increasingly, wealth. Edward Shorter has added to this list equality of age which 'rendered unacceptable the older woman and the younger man'; for 'it is increasing *equality* in the ages of the partners that points to romantic love, increasing *disparity* that points to instrumental considerations'.³⁶ Thus discrete domains of essential equality were being found for both siblings and spouses.

Having homogeneous backgrounds and biologies became the condition for equality inside the home. As a pamphleteer in 1790 under the pseudonym M*** explored the issue of the revolutionary *fraternité*, he imagined it was only possible in private. It was in 'the private society' where 'persons of the same order are closer together' because of their similarity.

There is between them a type of fraternity that designates them to be the society of each other, to live together rather than with persons of other orders. Of this habitude of living together and conversing, an analogy of principles and *mœurs* results.

He assumed that only good principles would take hold among them. And if 'citizens of the other orders will adopt' their principles and customs, 'a larger fraternity among men will result'.³⁷ Therefore, fraternity was only possible among those who

³⁵ Nicolas-Edme Rétif, *Les nouvelles liaisons dangereuses*, IV (Paris, 1792), pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Shorter, *Making of the Modern Family*, pp. 157, 159.

³⁷ Quoted in: Anne-Rozenn Morel, 'Le principe de fraternité dans les fictions utopiques de la Révolution française', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 1/41 (2009), p. 124.

were equal, either because they belonged to the same 'order' and lived in a proximate, almost domestic relation, or because they shared the same views. Hence difference had come to be seen an obstacle for social fraternity as it was for an affectionate marriage.

The divide between the private and the public highlighted an opposition between familiarity and hostility, while triggering a paradoxical fear of isolation. On the one hand, 'Solitude seems like a lack on connection and therefore a lack of constraint'.³⁸ The royalist diplomat and writer vicomte de Chateaubriand expressed concern at the proliferation of unmarried men in all the classes of his time.

These isolated men, who are consequently selfish, search to fill a void in their life by troubling the families of others.[...] The man who no longer finds his happiness in the union of a family, who often gives up the sweet title of father, becomes used to forming a happiness independently of others.³⁹

The absence of a family marked a troublesome detachment from society and the rise of asocial happiness. But to be attached to the family, on the other hand, was depicted as feeling isolated from and lost in the unfamiliar hostility of the world. George-Marie Raymond, the emulation theorist we encountered earlier, wrote of a fictional young man who was much loved in his family and village, and thus

he believes himself a very important being in the world. He leaves, arrives in a large city; nobody looks at him, no one even supposes he exists. He finds himself lost in an immense sea, and he is astonished to be but an invisible point in the unlimited space what opens up to his gaze. In order to know ourselves, in order to

³⁸ Richard Sennett, *Authority* (London, 1993), p. 4.

³⁹ Quoted in: Bernard, *Penser la famille*, p. 205.

judge the rank that we occupy, we need to measure the horizon that surrounds us.⁴⁰

Outside the limits of familiarity, the self did not matter in and of itself but rather occupied a contextual and shifting position; indeed, outside the home, rank was uncertain. One hygienist cast the immense sea of social anonymity as the slow and imperceptible ‘source of many illnesses’, a powerful claim at a time when the 1832 cholera epidemic had not been forgotten. The danger came from ‘the miasmas exuded by so many bodies assembled [and] the fetid odours resulting from the uncleanliness of most of them’.⁴¹

Discourses of disease joined those of crime to project an emotional map onto the domestic-social split. The fascination with crime seems to have been born during the Restoration, especially with the publication of the *Gazette des tribunaux* from 1825. The popular press, scholarly publications and novels cross-fertilized each other to produce what Louis Chevalier termed ‘la psychose du crime’.⁴² In 1843, the vicomte de Launay wrote about how fear of crime had reduced his domestic interaction to those of the nuclear family.

After a month one hears about nocturnal attacks, ambushes, audacious robberies... The most shocking thing about these nightly attacks is the noble impartiality of the assailants: they strike upon the rich and the poor[...] Before, misery at least had the privilege of security: that is no longer the case. Paris is most troubled by these sinister adventures; family reunions suffer in particular of these defensive

⁴⁰ George-Marie Raymond, *Essai sur l'émulation* (Geneva, 1802), p. 30.

⁴¹ J.P. Thouvenin, *Hygiène populaire à l'usage des ouvriers des manufactures de Lille et du Département du Nord* (Lille, 1842), p. 72.

⁴² Louis Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses* (Paris, 2007), p. x.

preoccupations.[...] One only lets relatives and friends leave one's house after having inspected their weapons.⁴³

A new form of blind and deadly criminality reframed extra-domestic sociability in terms of risk. Fear of crime was becoming an impediment for 'intimate soirées' with friends and relatives, tending to reduce evening socialization to the household itself. To be attached to the family increasingly meant an isolation from the exterior. The home that produced the nuclear family and grounded the experience of the private-public divide served as a refuge from hostility and a sanctuary of familiarity where individuals could feel like a 'very important being in the world'.

Relations of equality emerged with a belief that it was not interpersonal sentiments, love or service that could bind two persons together, but rather that only equality in circumstances and bodies could allow for a relationship in which power and abuse were absent. At the same time, this implied a disconnection from the social world, interpreted as a space where anonymity and difference did not provide the grounds for relationships of equality. Such an equality could only arrive in a future in which the commonality of *mœurs* and beliefs would have ironed out inequalities among strangers, thus opening the way for civic communion. Until then, the home served as a retreat from inequality and a shelter for interpersonal bonds. But this domestic haven would not be spared in 1789.

⁴³ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. v.

Guardianship.

It was precisely by framing the child-father bond as a problem of power and subjection that the revolutionary process destroyed the symbolic coherence of the patriarchal order. After 1789, no form of love was free of abuse. There could be no equality if the father and son remained qualitatively different. The conflict was dramatized via the absolutism of the Roman *paterfamilias*, whose rights 'were the same over his children as over his slaves; he had the right over their life and death; he also had the right to sell them. The terms and duration of this power had no limits; while the father lived, he conserved over his children this *jus dominii* that in nothing differed from that masters had over slaves'.⁴⁴ Through this despotism over lives, bodies and properties, paternal power was cast as indistinct from that of the slave master. But this was not another debate contrasting the ancients to the moderns. Until the Revolution abolished it, Roman law, albeit with modifications, continued to govern the *pays de droit écrits*, which encompassed the entire south of France. In these lands, the situation of the so-called *filis de famille* was not far from that of the slave: he remained under the command of the father unless he was emancipated or the father died. Any children the *filis* had before them also fell under the rule of the *paterfamilias*, who could theoretically even emancipate a grandson but not his son, who could be approaching mature age by then. For the revolutionaries, this was a barbaric humiliation.

⁴⁴ F. Brasser, *De l'émancipation en droit français* (Geneva, 1866), p. 3.

While the constraint of custom was greatly exaggerated and affected mostly married descendants living under the paternal roof, the tyrannical paterfamilias was a crucial driving force in the revolutionary imagination.⁴⁵ The Revolution put an end to the patriarchal family and inaugurated the age of paternalism, that is, of a power that is limited in scope and time.

The limitation in scope was fundamental, as it made compatible the exercise of authority while guaranteeing the liberty, lives and property of children. But beyond that, the limits to paternal power were most diffuse. This is how the authors of the Napoleonic Code explained the spirit of the new family legislation:

Children must be subjected to the father; but the latter must only listen to the voice of nature, the sweetest and tenderest of all voices. His name is at the same time a name of love, dignity and power (*puissance*); and his magistrature that has been so religiously called *piété paternelle*, does not include any other severity than that which can bring repentance to a stray heart, and that aims less to inflict a penalty than to make pardon merited.⁴⁶

Given the greater concern with arming parents against domestic, and thus social, unrest tied to an image of the father as 'naturally' suited to his role, hardly any provisions were included in the Napoleonic Code against paternal abuse. However neglectful, brutal or immoral, no father could be legally deprived of his property-like rights over his children until 1889. If these legal rights were not absolute, it was because they were subjected to clear temporal limits; with exceptions, the age of legal majority was set and maintained, from 1792 to 1974, at age 21.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the practices in the *pays de droit écrits* before 1789 see: Philippe Maurice, 'Les limites de l'autorité paternelle face aux droits patrimoniaux dans le Gévaudan médiéval: Fin XIIIe-fin XVe siècles', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, 4 (1997), electronic edition; Julien-Michel Dufour, *Observations sur le nouveau projet de Code civil* (Paris, 1800), pp. 15-32.

⁴⁶ Conseil d'État, *Motifs et discours prononcés lors de la publication du Code civil* (Paris, 1841), p. 17.

With [legal] majority, the power of fathers ceases; but it only ceases in its civil effects: the respect and recognition continue to demand considerations and duties that the legislator no longer commands, and the deference of children for their parents is the work of the *mœurs*, rather than the law.⁴⁷

In other words, the basis of the system that promised to harmonize equality and inequality was that the strict gap separating the father and the child would vanish with the latter's majority; any residual difference would belong to the caprices of custom and sentiment, not law. Parental authority in the family was to be legitimate so long as it served to produce and reproduce responsible and free adults.

While legal majority and minority had long existed, revolutionaries refashioned it as the foundation for the legal individual, each one of which now transitioned from dependency to autonomy. The contradiction between equality and inequality, between liberty and servitude, was thus replayed within every individual life cycle. Born weak and dependant, childhood necessarily represented an age of subordination. However, these years of bondage brought with them the promise of freedom through the gradual development of discernment, which became the main responsibility of the authority figure. Power was thus justified insofar as it was a necessary and temporary means of emancipation, in other words, in the interest of the subordinate. But there was something indistinct and disembodied about the new paternal power. The new 'magistrate' was an authority of a somewhat more bureaucratic and impersonal kind. Indeed, although it tended to coincide with the father, the new authority was not the father. Instead, the Civil Code established

⁴⁷ Ibid.

that paternal power belongs 'to the mother as to the father when there is no division between them; but to the father in preference to the mother, for things that are not forbidden, and over which there is no agreement [between the parents]'.⁴⁸

Burguière, among others, has emphasized the coherence of the family reform legislation through the different phases of the French Revolution, which substituted paternal and marital authority in the family for formally egalitarian bonds. Legislators proclaimed the strict equality of inheritance claims among siblings, later extended to illegitimate children. The 1792 redefinition of marriage and divorce placed the spouses on an equal footing. Understood as a civil contract, its new basis rested on the equality, mutuality and equity of the contracting parties. The highest development of this principle came in the first draft of the revolutionary civil code, voted in October 1793 but which never came into effect. It stipulated the joint administration of the communal property, meaning all decisions concerning shared property required the spouses' agreement.⁴⁹

Even as the Napoleonic Code reinstated some forms of marital inequality that would remain in place for the rest of the century, family authority was imagined as 'gender neutral', despite the actual and insurmountable inequalities between men and women in law and custom. The home was conceptually placed above power disputes, while the conceptual complementarity and unity of the spouses dispelled struggles over authority. The power of the father was reduced to having the last word in case of disagreement, but the 'office' he held itself included the mother.

⁴⁸ Dufour, *Observations*, p. 31.

⁴⁹ Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley, 2004), pp. 41, 66.

Anne Verjus has shown that in the Civil Code, it was the marital couple that substituted the Old Regime's patriarch.⁵⁰ The fiction of gender neutrality spoke of a power imagined as purely functional and faceless; it was the governed as object of guardianship that mattered, not the person at the top.

As authority became gender neutral and defined by temporary functions rather than absolute rights, a new understanding of impersonal authority could emerge. Since the adoption of minors was unlawful in nineteenth-century France, parenthood became a role that was restricted to the biological parents. The legal guardians that could occupy their places were sketched out in clearer terms by the authors of the Civil Code than those of the parents themselves.

Guardianship (*tutelle*) is, in the domestic government, a sort of subsidiary magistrature, for which we have determined the duration and functions.[...]The guardian acts as legal agent for the person and goods; he [for only men could be guardians] must be chosen by the family and from within the family: because it is necessary for him to have a real interest to conserve the goods, and an interest of honour and affection to oversee the upbringing and safety of the person. He cannot alienate, without cause and form, the estate entrusted to him, he must administer with intelligence, manage with fidelity; he is accountable because he is an administrator, he answers for his conduct; he can do no wrong without having to repair it. Here is all the theory of guardianship.⁵¹

On the one hand, the individual was identified with discernment; on the other, there was a power capable of bringing about that very discernment, of identifying,

⁵⁰ Verjus, 'Révolution et conception bourgeoise de la famille', in: Jean-Pierre Jessenne (ed.), *Vers un ordre bourgeois? Révolution française et changement social* (Rennes, 2007), pp. 364-367.

⁵¹ Conseil d'État, *Motifs et discours*, p. 17. Women could not serve as guardians, even to their own children in the case of widows.

instilling and educating it. Indeed, the development of the legal fiction of *tutelle* or guardianship, the new template for a new paternal model of family command, would become the crucial idiom through which power in society could be understood. According to Robert Castel, it was 'a new relationship, one which is no longer that of formal reciprocity but of regulated subordination[...] This is the matrix for every policy of assistance. Doubtless it is a relationship of domination, but[...] it is unleashed for the good of those subjected to it'. First articulated in 1791, this was a 'conception of *social non-adulthood* that is shared by both children and the insane'.⁵² The defining discernment of the adult individual, what separated him or her from the minor, required a clear way of recognizing and dealing with non-discerning adults. The 1838 law on the insane was among the first to serve to fix these limits. Castel argued that this 'was the first great legislative measure [in France] that recognized a *right of assistance and treatment* for a category of the sick or those in need. It was the first to set up a complete mechanism of assistance'.⁵³ Parents exercised guardianship over children in the family, while the administration exercised the same legal *tutelle* through public assistance.

The foundation of paternalism was laid upon the legal fiction of guardianship, that is, the functional right and duty of the guardian to act in the tutee's best interest within the limits of time defined by minority. The legitimacy of guardianship was found on the lack of maturity and self-sufficiency of the beneficiary. The need to act on behalf of some sort of group cast in the role of legal minor came to justify administrative and private interventions in social problems in the nineteenth

⁵² Robert Castel, *The Regulation of Madness* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 37.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

century. As we will see next, this was the case even among those who defended an authoritarian view of domestic and social relations.

Omnia munda mundis: The question of virtue.

The parameters of family discourse, its mobilizing lacks and desires, can be identified even in deliberately authoritarian depictions of the family. We will consider the 1844 pastoral letter for Lent by the archbishop of Lyon, cardinal de Bonald, the son of the legitimist statesman and sociologist discussed above, the vicomte de Bonald. In line with much legitimist thought, this letter evoked a conscientious ‘return’ to ‘traditional’ values that outlined the rationale and duties of the ‘Christian family’, or more specifically *l’éducation chrétienne*, encompassing both education and upbringing, an ideal which in this particular instance was deployed against secularized education.⁵⁴ In order to attack the regime’s schooling policy, de Bonald penned a passionate pastoral in the style of contemporary family discourse.

For the cardinal de Bonald, the attack from evil and sin, namely liberal society, was compared to ‘that great combat that Satan wages against Michael and his Angels’. This was a confrontation in which faithful but crucially gender-neutral parents — for he addressed both ‘Pères et Mères’ indistinctly— were called to be *médecins des âmes*, or doctors of souls, in order to combat ‘the contagion of vice’.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ On legitimist thought see: Steven Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of French Society* (Baton Rouge, 1992); Pierre Macherey, ‘Bonald et la philosophie’, *Revue de synthèse*, 1 (1987), pp. 3-30; Carolina Armenteros, *The French Idea of History: Joseph de Maistre and His Heirs, 1794–1854* (Ithaca, 2011).

⁵⁵ Cardinal de Bonald, *Lettre pastorale... sur l’éducation chrétienne* (Lyon, 1844), pp. 4, 6.

Struck by the dangers of which infancy is surrounded on every side, and the criminal negligence of so many heads of families who do not want to rise to the height of their vocation, [... bishops must] remind those parents who forget it of the sanctity of their mission.⁵⁶

This mission was the salvation of children's soul that relied on the proper choice of schooling.

Child rearing was a 'sacred debt' towards God and society. The means of fulfilling this duty was for both parents to become a completely transparent and permanently legible embodiment of the ideal. Thus the parent's example was placed 'at the head of all your duties, because you will not find a more persuasive language to make yourselves understood'.⁵⁷ There was an insistence on teaching 'more by their examples than by their discourses'.⁵⁸ Bonald seems to underscore a form of moral transmission through a grammar of the body, not words. The objective was, 'In short, that your children may see in you nothing that they can imitate without sinning'.⁵⁹ 'Your life must be an open book in front of their eyes, in which they can read *all that is true, all that is chaste, all that is just, all that is saintly*'.⁶⁰

The lack of vigilance that could place a profane book or a poorly chosen teacher before the child, or indeed any deviation from the 'Christian' ideal, any contamination from the modern, world would destroy the family and condemn the

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

parents, to whom all the temporal and spiritual blame belonged.⁶¹ The 'precious treasure of their innocence and their candour' could be undone in an instant: 'An enemy hand has touched it; everything has dissipated'.⁶² Thus the need for perpetual surveillance: 'this obligation to always be on guard (*veiller*) and fear (*craindre*) must make you lose sleep'.⁶³ A parent had to 'Deepen more and more this examination to which is attached the salvation of your children, your domestic happiness, the future of your house'.⁶⁴ If not the father would 'reap what he has sown. Instead of a tender and respectful son, he finds by his side a young *philosophe*, emancipated from all prejudices, well imbibed of his dignity, and knowledgeable of his rights'.⁶⁵

Paternal power thus became articulated through a narrative of lack, through anxiety and fear delivered through a melodramatic medium. But a lack that highlighted not the institutional shortages of the likes of the archbishop himself, incapable, given his position and power as an agent of both the Church and the state, of upholding virtue as a socially-imposed law, but rather that of an absence thrown back upon the parents. They were to fight the battle between secular and religious education in their own daily lives through an unrelenting and 'painful vigilance that extends to everything'. This included their children, domestic servants, teachers, but especially the parents themselves 'in order to say and do nothing that may be an occasion of scandal and fall'. The goal of this suffering was the fulfilment of higher duties. '[W]hen these children have been born to religion

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶² Ibid., p. 24.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

and virtue, you will forget all your torment because you will have given the Church a true believer (*fidèle*) and society a useful member'.⁶⁶

In other words, Bonald's argument was that of family discourse itself; grave dangers, such as the monstrosity of the *philosophe*-child, were used as a war cry for a certain type of self-fashioning. Any struggle between ideological models of family themselves consolidated family discourse in its universality and desirability. And the means of such self-production were the same as well. Bonald demanded virtue not through the observance of the old social-legal practices, but of practices of the self, expressed as acute vigilance and discipline of self and other, as well as an alienation from the results of such an activity. The end game behind the torments of becoming a subject was that these would simply be forgotten. Even the otherworldly rewards and the eschatological climax were absent; the subject vanished the moment his or her deeds were done, once they 'have given the Church a true believer and society a useful member'. Bonald, in criticizing the modern ways, could only formulate a counter-conduct that itself reproduced and validated the modern practices of subjectivity he combated and the domestic discourse that sustained them.

The cardinal very clearly understood that the vehicle of disbelief in the modern world was the inevitable consequence of the secular faith in progress. That force which 'pushes forward with the increasing speed of *progress* towards an era of prosperity, knowledge, and sympathetic union, such that *the eye of man has never seen, the ear heard, or the mind understood*'. Progress promised to change

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

everything, even Catholicism. ‘The religion of the morrow will bury the religion of the eve’. Instead, Christianity, like the Old Regime, demanded fixity and stability across time and space. ‘As for the Church of Jesus-Christ, it will always be the same until the end of time’.⁶⁷ But the argument of progress, of a drive to perfection that propelled man and mankind forward, equally relied on the mobilizing force behind the narrative of lack, danger and involution. Both the movements of progress and backwardness —that is, the understanding that the actual and the ideal are separated by the two-way street of *time*—, made it possible to qualify and situate spaces and bodies within the temporal matrix of idealness, casting some places and faces as *future* and others as *past*. Either evolution or involution could be as effective in impeding static, merely quantitative conceptions of time. By using a narrative of the slipping backwards from the ideal, of parents failing to ‘raise to the height of their vocation’, Bonald was forced to imagine his own vision of progress; he may have populated this future that ‘the eye of man has never seen’, with purity, pious vigilance and ‘hearts that vibrate every moment of the day’, but it nonetheless reaffirmed and consolidated the very narrative of progress he wished to oppose.

De Bonald illustrates the potential shortcomings of reifying family models. When applied to the family, the analytical dependency on power and politics is misleading on three accounts. First, in the Old Regime, there was a unified sense of authority on which power rested, in which power was embodied. Thus, the father did not have authority because he was the father, but rather was the father because he had authority, which was granted and closely regulated by the

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

community. In the strategies of different family lineages, not all men were destined to head a household. And even if he was, the door of his house was never closed to scrutiny and corrective interventions in his exercise of command, founded as it was on reciprocity.⁶⁸ For the cardinal, the family remained within an Old-Regime logic in which power, of a sovereign kind in their domain, was delegated to families and corporations in exchange for their legal responsibility before the crown over their subordinates. In this relay of power and punishment, the *family* had to respond before God and the state. So, while paternal power was evidently asymmetrical, it was a power in which there was an ultimate solidarity in responsibility among the members of the family. Before damnation or salvation, father and son stood together. The office of head of family was a judging power that was under constant indictment, an unremitting observer observed.

Thus the pure *paterfamilias* as an island of sovereignty and absolute power is a myth. But this points to the fact that the modern family was severed from this tie to social authority; rather command became a function of a context-specific situation, not derived from or extended beyond its confines. In other words, an authoritative and socially-sanctioned head was no longer needed as in the Old Regime for social reproduction, which could be left to parents who, as we will see below, may not have been social role models or even married (meaning integrated into the religious and national community).

Second, the idea of the authoritarian father and his punishments was a wilful reduction that obscured the ways of relating, rationality and legitimacy that such a

⁶⁸ See: Shorter, *Making of the Modern Family*, p. 13.

social model implied —a question of key importance to understand nineteenth-century paternalism. De Bonald's notion of authority was not limited to the home. His called for a new aristocracy of virtue, one that could be fashioned within the family, from where it could rise to the rank of social authority. Rather than a return to the past, Bonald's text then could be placed in the context of a large body of writing that unified most of the political establishment in the nineteenth century, from the ultra-royalists and their liberal counterparts, in the search for a new social aristocracy.⁶⁹ The hyper-virtuous and vigilant head of household would then be the self-made model for the good *père-patron*, the agents of a new social paternity capable of governing failing families. In 1863, the legal expert Charles Fliniaux recommended that industrialists modelled on father figures should offer incentives in order to prevent strikes, such as paying by hour and good conduct.

But besides these material means, the *patron* must employ others that are of a more elevated order; it is a duty for him to instruct those that surround him, to moralize them, to inspire in them religious practice, and everywhere and always to be a role model; it is through example that one persuades, it is by example that one inflames strength; the captain does not send his soldiers onto the attack, he conducts them and marches at their head! The *patron* must love his workers, direct them, encourage them, in one word, form with them but one family.⁷⁰

Fliniaux underscored how this was a mode of authority in which duty was to be carried out through an array of forms of relating —*patron*, teacher, priest, captain, friend, father— that today either seem misplaced and confused in vertical relations of power or are themselves proof of abuse of power. And yet, Fliniaux's *patron-père* was not a negative, punitive power, but rather an excessively productive one;

⁶⁹ See: Annelien de Dijn, *French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁷⁰ Charles Fliniaux, *La grève, les patrons et les ouvriers* (Paris, 1863), p. 13.

we might object not to a lack of nurturing, care, and affection, but rather to an excess in content and form, 'everywhere and always', over bodies and souls, with no regards for boundaries. These boundary crossings point to important historical changes in the structuring of relating within the family and the state. The ideal among conservatives was to ground hierarchical relations in holistic interpersonal bonds in which command did not exclude affection. Questions of power and the politics of family obscure such transgressions by oversimplification and distortion.

Third, the political confrontation of family models hid the opacity that family had for contemporaries. In the Restoration, after the two models of family had been debated for thirty years, there was an enormous rejection of the egalitarian family among legitimists, but no clear sense of the alternative to which they had to go back. Public opinion was exasperated and there were desertions among their ranks. The comte de Villèle, the Restoration's prime minister for much of the 1820s, wrote in 1834 that Louis XVIII had

named the comte K... a peer, which charged him with establishing an entitlement: *he let his peerage perish rather than wrong his daughters by favouring his son*. Out of twenty well-off families, there is but one that uses the faculty of favouring the eldest or any other of their children. Egotism is everywhere, one prefers to live well with one's children, and when setting them up, one promises to favour none of them. The bonds of subordination are so loose everywhere that in families, the father would be obligated, I think, to treat his children with consideration (*ménager ses enfants*). If government proposed to re-establish primogeniture rights, it would not find a single vote in favour.⁷¹

⁷¹ Paul Bernard, *Histoire de l'autorité paternelle en France* (Montdidier, 1863), p. 415.

Beyond a ban on divorce, the Civil-Code family changed little in the nineteenth century. In the picture de Villèle painted of high society, political views failed to translate into expected familial behaviour. The conservative family was conceptually attached to a past whose language was no longer comprehensible, and the progressive family was tied to a future in which not even utopians could envisage any clear family form. Family lacked detail in the political imagination. The family was opaque because law and political system were never its most powerful sources; rather it belonged to the mysteries of 'nature' and *mœurs*. The ideal family was not a product of law, but of morality. And it was precisely the Revolution that drove a wedge between both; producing a certain family form through law (marriage and inheritance) and keeping silent on and eliminating many of the legally binding moral rules through which state, Church, municipalities, bodies and corporation had imposed decency inside the home. Morality became a private affair, for the first time in parent's hands. Thus the moment the family became a highly charged political concept there was already a slipping away of family and politics, which became situated in different conceptual territories. The difference between 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent' thus occulted their ability to turn a common form of domesticity into a condition of social ordering. And as we will explore next, in de Bonald's time family discourse had already been altering the understanding of authoritarian father for some decades. In religious and theological circles since the late eighteenth century, the authority of the paterfamilias was no longer tied to the absolute sovereign power that descended from God. Instead, family discourse offered a new way of contextualizing and relativizing authority.

Guardian of the Son of God.

The complex and fragmented spiritual landscape of personal, local and strategic veneration, gave way in the nineteenth century to two-fold process involving the nationalization of devotion in figures such as Joan of Arc on the one hand, and on the other (and of more relevance to our discussion), a devotional centralization focused upon the Holy Family. The latter was possible thanks to a recasting of the person of Saint Joseph. The relatives of Jesus could only gain legitimate devotional attention as 'a consequence of the devotion to the humanity of Christ, which characterizes the spirituality of the twelfth century'.⁷² But while Mary gradually moved to the centre stage in the following centuries, Joseph remained an obscure figure.⁷³ This changed only after the gradual 'discovery' of childhood, human and divine, and especially the crystalizing of the notion of family in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, as Ariès has shown.⁷⁴

Towards the mid-nineteenth century Saint Joseph became the subject of a massive expansion of popular devotion, sociability and publications, which only gained pace in the second half of the nineteenth century. Contemporaries were well aware of this sudden popularity.

Catholicity has entered today in an epoch where the all-merciful grace of God moves pious souls to a tender and generous devotion to Saint Joseph. Everywhere,

⁷² Joseph Dusserre, 'Les origines de la dévotion à Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, II/I (1954), p. 84.

⁷³ See: Paul Payan, 'Pour retrouver un père: La promotion du culte de Saint Joseph au temps de Gerson', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, 4 (1997), [online]; and 'Ridicule?: L'image ambiguë de Saint Joseph à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Médiévales*, 39 (2000), pp. 96-111; Leonardo Boff, *Saint Joseph: The Father of Jesus in a Fatherless Society* (Eugene, 2009), [ebook].

⁷⁴ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York, 1962), for Saint Joseph see pp. 362-364.

the very deserved cult of this great patriarch is acquiring such a growth that one can follow its marvellous development on a day-to-day basis.⁷⁵

Pope Leo XIII affirmed that the cult had 'grow[n] into greater proportions in Our time, particularly after Pius IX'.⁷⁶ While in the Vatican, the latter had greatly elevated the Saint's role and that of the Holy Family. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, decreed in 1854, came in the midst of a series of advances made by the cult of Joseph. Without a day in the calendar until 1847, his liturgical importance expanded in 1861, 1871, 1872 and 1877, when he was given a whole month à la par with his wife, later every Wednesday, mentions in daily mass, and so on. While Pius IX held the First Vatican Council, convened to condemn rationalism, the sudden fall of Napoleon III in 1870 left the city of Rome without its protector. In the immediate aftermath of the Italian occupation that led to the suspension of the Council, in the first days, that is, of the 'Roman Question', it was to Joseph that the pope turned, declaring him the Patron Saint of the Universal Church.⁷⁷

The arguments sustaining his sudden 'discovery' changed little since they first appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century, and on through the many hundreds of tomes of hagiographic and devotional literature in France repeating each other verbatim, until Leo XIII firmly consolidated the position of the Saint by giving him his very own encyclical in 1889. The source of the change, I argue, was the new understanding of authority that family discourse introduced. In a panegyric published one year before his death in 1787, the abbé Barthélémy

⁷⁵ Louis Barthés, *La régénération de la famille par Saint Joseph* (Paris, 1868), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Leo XIII, *Quamquam Pluries*, 1889, section 2.

⁷⁷ Boff, *Saint Joseph*; A. D'Esprées, 'Saint Joseph: tapes successives de son culte', pp. 105-106, article without reference available at: http://www.liberius.net/articles/Saint_Joseph.pdf.

Baudrand, a former Jesuit, was one of those who found in the belief in equality of spouses the basis for the new interpretation of the role of Saint Joseph within the Holy Family.

Who can doubt in effect that the quality of husband to Mary did not naturally require in Joseph an intimate resemblance with her?[...] God, in creating Joseph, destined him to be Mary's husband, he chose him for her, he formed him for her, he rendered him worthy of her: and yet, a husband worthy of Mary can only be a husband similar to Mary, similar in graces, similar in saintliness, similar in virtue: this is a law dictated by nature, that in an alliance, in a well-matched marriage, equality is necessary between the spouses, and where equality cannot be found, at least proportion is necessary.⁷⁸

A new idea borrowed from the eighteenth century, a need for 'intimate resemblance' was not part of Catholic doctrine with regards to marriage, although there was insistence on some similarity in age, condition and temperament whenever possible.⁷⁹ This change would have profound repercussions. The belief in equality of spouses meant that Joseph could be raised to the status of divinity, offering a new model of paternity.

These claims were developed in the hagiographic work of Bertrand de Latour, a prolific polemist and dean of the chapter of the cathedral of Montauban (Tarn-et-

⁷⁸ Abbé Baudrand, *Panegyriques des saints* (Lyon, 1786), pp. 261-262.

⁷⁹ The whole list of things to take into account before marrying, which did not include love, which had no specificity with regards to marriage, was the following: 1) Consult marriage decisions with God and those that hold his place. 2) Not marry for interest, ambition, etc. 'rather with the sole goal of sanctifying oneself in such a state, provide children for the Church, procure care for infirmity'. 3) Give more importance to virtue than wealth in the choice of a partner, 'observing in this choice, as much as possible, an equality of age and condition', and avoid those of troublesome humours. 4) Behave with maximum restraint in pre-marital encounters, which must be chaperoned. 5) Not be together in the same house before marriage, and 6) Become instructed in the main mysteries of the Religion and the duties and sanctity of marriage. Duc de Fitz-James, *Rituel du diocèse de Soissons* (Paris, 1753), p. 289.

Garonne) until his death in 1780. De Latour wished to argue that Joseph was 'the first of the saints', above the apostles and even the angels, a rather bold claim, given that for many centuries his well-known deeds, marriage and surrogate paternity did not seem to qualify him above his possible competitors.⁸⁰ Familial discourse allowed de Latour to establish a novel sense of unity in sentiment and a shared dignity in the Holy home. The point of departure was the union between Mary and Joseph, 'so close, that they were but one heart and one soul'.⁸¹ This enabled de Latour to argue that, just as the Holy Trinity, in the Holy Family 'three Persons have but one heart and one soul'.⁸² From here, and not without some hesitation, de Latour was able to re-contextualize the order of legitimacy and hierarchy of his time. Agreeing with his contemporaries that 'All creatures are more excellent the closer they are to their source', he confessed that

It is true that Joseph is the last person of this order [the trinity of the Holy Family]; but that is enough to raise him above all of an inferior order, even angels[...] But even if in this order he is the least perfect person, he holds there the most elevated rank, the rank of chief, husband and father. Nothing equals this eminent perfection.

There was a split here between the temporal and the spiritual; the vertical continuum descending from God no longer grounded the transmission of legitimate authority. Joseph was at once superior and inferior. It was as if the domestic was summoned to neutralize the 'exterior', usually the social and economic context, but in this case it dismissed the issue of the cosmological order of beings. Rather than receiving authority from on high, Joseph received it from below. His dignity derived not from his command, but from their obedience; it was

⁸⁰ Bertrand de Latour, *Œuvres complètes*, VI (Petit-Montrouge, 1855), p. 635.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 651.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 639.

the fact that Mary and Jesus subjected themselves to his authority that elevated him. Thus 'Jesus only washed saint Peter once, but a thousand times did he render service to Joseph', while 'Mary saw him as her Lord'.⁸³ This argument ultimately confused and distorted the issue of authority altogether, establishing rather a reciprocity of bonds dependent on sentiment and duty. In other words, paternity was being re-founded on functional grounds: rather than emphasizing godly-kingly sovereignty that derived legitimacy from its origin and position of centrality, that is, from who the father *was*; it was now possible to focus instead on what he *did*.

Thus the Church, despite its insistence on traditional-sounding marital and paternal authority, had come into line with modern family discourse, which displaced the question of the father's authority for that of his guardianship. This can most clearly be seen in the 1889 encyclical *Quamquam Pluries* proclaiming Joseph 'the guardian of the Son of God'. Leo XIII repeated the arguments circulated since the eighteenth century. Mary and Jesus had subjected themselves to Joseph.

From this two-fold dignity flowed the obligation which nature lays upon the head of families, so that Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the divine house whose chief he was. And during the whole course of his life he fulfilled those charges and those duties.⁸⁴

First among these duties was providing materially for the family through work. More generally, it involved being 'the companion, the assistance, and the upholder of the Virgin and of Jesus'.⁸⁵ The parent-child bond was understood in the context of reciprocity of obligations and solicitude. Paternity no longer seemed to be self-

⁸³ Ibid., p. 652.

⁸⁴ Leo XIII, *Quamquam Pluries*, section 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

explanatory. It had to be broken down into a list of functions, which were as important as they were de-centred: guardian, administrator, legal defender, protector, provider, companion, assister, upholder... As in the wider family discourse, the domestic became the means of reforming the social as well. The pope recommended Saint Joseph as the role model for 'men of every rank and country'. He was to be the inspiration of fathers and the protector of virgins; he would teach the highborn to find dignity in misfortune and the 'workmen, artisans, and persons of lesser degree' an example of labour and toil for one's family as well as of being contented with few possessions 'with greatness of soul'.⁸⁶ Therefore, there was an abandoning of the ideal of the authoritarian father in the Catholic Church for an increasingly enclosed and self-contained nuclear family that could embody the social and religious ideal.

The axis of authority.

Few legislative measures directly tackled family and social problems in the almost seven decades spanning from the Civil Code to the Third Republic. Besides the 1833 Guizot law that made free schooling available to poor families where municipalities could provide the facilities, and the 1838 law on the mentally insane that provided free hospitalization for poor families, the other important measure affecting poor families was the 1841 law on child labour.

The legislation on child labour and its implementation in nineteenth-century France is very well known following many good national and local studies. While

⁸⁶ Ibid., section 4.

allowing for many nuances and for geographic pockets of vigilant compliance, the consensus in these works points to the serious shortcomings of its enforcement and lack of political will behind these regulations.⁸⁷ Without needing to challenge this literature, I should like to analyse this law within a wider issue of reforming domestic relations, and in so doing highlight an aspect of these measures that has been overlooked.

Liberalism was founded on the belief that liberty logically ensued when the obstacles to it had been removed. This liberty-obstacle polarity applied to the markets as much as to anything else, including undesirable liberties, such as any bohemian or 'antisocial' activity. Government was hence concerned not with the removal of obstacles to liberty, but rather with their careful and creative management. The 1841 law on child labour, I argue, served to manage the parent-child bond in a certain way through this interplay of liberties and obstacles. Instead of a solidarity between father and son, master and slave or ruler and ruled, guardianship required a clear hierarchical ordering of authority within the family.

Regulating child labour directly affected two 'sacred' liberties, those of employers and fathers. While most of the public and legislative debates and compromises centred on the former, concerns 'regarding the legislature's alleged encroachments

⁸⁷ Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1988), part 3; Lee Shai Weissbach, *Child Labor Reform in Nineteenth Century France* (Baton Rouge, 1989), chapters 4 and 5; Catherine Rollet, *Les enfants au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2001), chapter 4; Katherine Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France* (Madison, 1988), chapter 5; Claire Lemerrier, "Il faut parler de ce qu'on sait": "Hommes pratiques", "économistes distingués" et législateurs face au travail des enfants, 1837-1874', in: Christophe Charle, Julien Vincent (dir.), *La société civile: Savoirs, enjeux et acteurs en France et en Grande-Bretagne, 1780-1914* (Rennes, 2011), pp. 127-146; Philippe Sueur, 'La loi du 22 mars 1841, un débat parlementaire: L'enfance protégée ou la liberté offensée', in: Jean-Louis Harouel (ed.), *Histoire du droit social* (Paris, 1989), pp. 493-508; Francis Choisel, 'Le Sénat du Second Empire et le travail des enfants dans les manufactures', *Parlemen[s]: Revue d'histoire politique*, 17 (2012), pp. 132-148.

on paternal authority' were quickly dispelled after the baron Charles Dupin, a mathematician and economist, a liberal parliamentarian from 1827 to 1870 and one of the key champions of the 1841 law, stated that 'In our view, [parental authority] is fortified by the same laws that circumscribe it, as if to surround by a social rampart the free field of its exercise'. He understood as the *right of fathers* simply their obligations to feed and clothe their children, watch over their souls and bodies and instil in them love of virtue and work. 'But as to the supposed right to sell, without control or restraint, the force, health, and lives of their children, we want the law to ban it, have it wilted and punished in the person of fathers unworthy of that holy name'. This would reduce 'paternal authority to the happy need of no longer manifesting by abuses'.⁸⁸ Here it was the obstacles of a 'social rampart' that opened up the space of a designated liberty and 'the free field of its exercise', or that rather divided acceptable from unacceptable freedoms.

The 'fathers unworthy of that holy name' were very specifically those who were thought as living off the labour of their children. Swiss-born Alsatian industrialist and philanthropist Daniel Legrand, one of the advocates of child labour reform, highlighted that to be fed 'by their children at an age when they should feed themselves' involved and 'overturning [of] all the bases of paternal authority'.⁸⁹ However, the evidence for this was at best extremely thin. In his support, Dupin could only cite to the Chamber one hesitant fragment that read: 'In Elbeuf [Seine-Maritime], one seems to believe that the state of disorder in which some fathers live obligates them to give their children over to premature work. If this opinion

⁸⁸ See the proceedings of the discussions in 'Travail des enfants (sic) dans les manufactures' in: *Annales du Parlement française*, 2 (Paris, 1841), p. 83.

⁸⁹ Quoted in: Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology*, p. 183.

were true, the work of very young children would thus most often serve to pay for the misconduct of the fathers'. Dupin added: 'This doubting manner of presenting the facts, [which are] unfortunately too certain, must not carry less weight before your eyes'.⁹⁰ After much debate, the chamber was persuaded and the law passed.

I would argue that the 1841 law advanced the establishment a clear order of dependencies within the family. The 'natural laws' forcing the able bodied to work for survival needed to be differentiated and organized within the family in order for the male breadwinner to be born. The first step was to emancipate the father from the extra-domestic labour of his children.

The law created a scale of graduated working hours according to age and an obligation to make schooling arrangements for child workers below the age of twelve. Those employed in factories were the only French children subjected to mandatory schooling until the Jules Ferry Laws of 1881 and 1882. If these children had a basic certificate before this age, they could be exempt from schooling. Provision of education was often lacking in industrial areas and even where they existed, attendance and learning outcomes were very poor; few children could get exempted and even verifying their age and identity was problematic. The maximum legal working hours depended on age, and never matched a full or half working day for an adult. Children thus had to be organized in relays in several odd shifts. Even if enforcement was deficient, it could entail onerous dealings with the administration and asking for favours in order to get excused from compliance

⁹⁰ 'Travail des enfants', p. 81.

or discharged from fines.⁹¹ The managerial disruptions this entailed necessarily must have raised the cost and inconveniences of employing children.

Colin Heywood showed that the 1841 law 'had the unintended effect of driving some of the younger children, under the age of twelve, out of the factories.[...] The extent of the exodus is not clear'. But he cites fragmentary evidence of some important declines for Seine-Maritime, the Nord, the Aisne, the Somme, the Haut-Rhin and the Vosges.⁹² I would contend that these effects were unintended or unforeseeable; rather child labour was gradually priced out of the marketplace by making it bothersome. The age limit of twelve was significant. By law, foundlings were treated and referred to as 'adults' at age twelve, with the consequent need to earn their own living. Subsequent but unsuccessful efforts would also focus on women's labour. Dupin was pushing forward a bill further regulating infant and female work when the 1848 revolution interrupted these determinations. The end of his long and turbulent legislative career found Dupin introducing legislation to the same end in the spring of 1870 with a similar fate. This became the basis of the law of 19 May 1874 further regulating the industrial work of children and adult women, which marked the start of uninterrupted family reform legislation into the twentieth century.⁹³

The 1841 law did not question the presence of children in the industrial economy, despite acknowledging the inability of the wage-bond to generate the right kinds of

⁹¹ Heywood, *Childhood*, pp. 243-244.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁹³ Véronique Antomarchi, *Politique et famille sous la IIIe République, 1870-1914* (Paris, 2000); Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton, 1997).

social subjects. There was broad agreement that factory work did not provide a proper moral upbringing for children. The solution was either to keep children at home or subject them to the extra-domestic guardianship of administrators, philanthropists and industrialists capable of intervening between home and market to redress the imbalances.

From this indirect means of family reform that the 1841 law represented, we now turn to the more direct forms of reform. Despite the relative legislative silence on family issues from the 1840s to 1870s, these middle decades of the century were the testing grounds of a social government through guardianship. These efforts were not the result of new legislation, but rather of an aggressive programme of family reform through administrative means at the local level. From the 1830s to the 1880s, local authorities sought to transform poor families by impeding single women from abandoning their illegitimate children.

The origins of the foundling system.

Bastardy served as the main fault line in the debate on the family; it posed the problem of biological ties in the absence of the moral prerequisites of family existence. The women and children who enjoyed the exclusive legal rights granted to them by marriage were identified as being 'legitimate'. By contrast, the single mother, disapprovingly called a *fille-mère*, and her children, for standing outside the socio-juridical scope of wedlock, were 'illegitimate' or 'natural'. Victims of profound prejudices, indigent single mothers and their children increasingly came under the guardianship of the administration. Policymakers, officials, police

officers and doctors now became tasked with directly supervising and shaping families. By having to determine (in)eligibility and moral worthiness, they had to create new normative parameters for family functions that could be put in practice and assessed. The single mother and her children thus became the testing grounds for new concepts and practices of the family and also for social government through guardianship.

Starting in the 1830s, some unwed mothers were offered departmental aid to keep them from abandoning their children in foundling hospitals. The new policy was introduced as an alternative to the existing foundling system, which was set up with the intention of soaking up all children conceived outside the confines of marriage. The new programme was motivated by a straightforward desire to reduce public spending. By providing some indigent single mothers with paltry sums for only some months or years in exchange for rearing their own children, the administration could impede abandonment and escape its legal responsibility of having to maintain all foundlings until the end of their twelfth year. This implied not only a change in welfare policy, but also a profound change in the understanding of the individual and its defining relationships to the patriarchal family and the wider society. It came face to face with the deep-seated repudiation of single mothers and their children and thus had to find the leeway to negotiate significant revisions of the role of motherhood and the cultural boundaries of the family ideal defined by a male-dominated marriage.

Child abandonment, organized around foundling hospitals, was the first universal welfare programme in France. From the seventeenth century, single mothers had

been socially compelled to give up their children to a foundling hospital. In defence of the normative family, the state assumed the growing financial burden of extra-marital sexuality. Following an 1811 decree, small infants could be freely abandoned at designated public hospitals using the *tour d'exposition*, a turning cradle placed in an opening in the external wall of a foundling hospital with the aim of granting complete secrecy to the abandoner.⁹⁴ Abandoned children were then sent off to wet-nurses in the countryside as soon as possible. While admittance was in theory gratuitous, anonymous and unconditional, practice varied widely within France.

This foundling system originated from legal changes to the family regime. In the context of the gradual transference of family regulation from the Church to the state, a royal order of 1639, building on previous experience, ordered that any marriage promise that had not received parental consent was void and unenforceable. This enabled elite families to prevent socially unequal marriages caused by their children's youthful pregnancies. Before these changes, canonical and common law, less concerned with pre-marital sexuality than with transgressions against the family order, had protected women who had been 'seduced' following dishonest marriage promises. When pregnancy resulted, the couple could be forced to marry or the father made to bear childbirth and alimony expenses. The morose were imprisoned.⁹⁵ The 1804 Civil Code mandated parental consent and introduced the strict prohibition of paternity searches except in cases

⁹⁴ Fuchs, *Abandoned Children: Foundlings and Child Welfare in Nineteenth-Century France* (Albany, 1984), pp. 21-22. In Europe, the *tours* came to be used in France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, and Italy. Fuchs, 'Charity and Welfare', pp. 158-159.

⁹⁵ Isidro Dubert, 'Église, monarchie, mariage et contrôle social dans la Galice rurale, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles', *Annales de démographie historique*, 2/118 (2009), p. 109; Ivan Jablonka, *Ni père ni mère: Histoire des enfants de l'assistance publique, 1874-1939* (Paris, 2006), p. 13.

of rape. Even if the filiation was of public knowledge, men had no responsibility for out-of-wedlock children, while women remained liable.⁹⁶

The direct result of these legal changes was a significant rise in bastardy.⁹⁷ While the burden theoretically fell on women alone, the strong taboos against single motherhood impeded these from raising their children. Fearing infanticide and social disorder, modern foundling policy, formulated by Saint Vincent de Paul in 1638, sought to preserve the life of the infants and the family regime. Public authorities assumed the burden of raising illegitimate children in order to manage transgressions to the family system. Originally financed by local 'feudal' lords with some involvement of the Church and the crown, the system became a state responsibility in 1790.⁹⁸ Secret abandonment would preserve the personal and family honour of women. With her 'fault' or pregnancy thus effaced, the seduced or fallen woman could still 'return to virtue' and marry honourably in the future.⁹⁹ In France, there was a six-fold increase in the number of abandoned children from 1740-1749 to 1820-1829.¹⁰⁰ At its peak in 1831 and 1832, some 35,000 children were abandoned every year.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Paternity searches were allowed in 1912 only if the putative father was unmarried. This restriction was lifted in 1972. For a detailed study of paternity searches see: Fuchs, *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France* (Baltimore, 2008).

⁹⁷ Dubert demonstrated in his study of provincial Spain, where the same measures were adopted between 1776 and 1788, that this rise in bastardy cannot be explained by reference to economic or sexual modernization. Instead, he highlights the changes in family structures triggered by these legal changes that altered 'the traditional mechanisms of social and family control over the prenuptial universe of inland Galicia'. Dubert, 'Église, monarchie, mariage', pp. 116-117.

⁹⁸ Felix Martin-Doisy, *Dictionnaire d'économie charitable* (Petit-Montrouge, 1857), pp. 445-582.

⁹⁹ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde Session Tenue a Poitiers en Septembre 1834* (Poitiers, 1835), p. 331.

¹⁰⁰ Volker Hunecke, 'Les enfants trouvés: Contexte européen et cas milanais, XVIIIe-XIXe siècles', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 32 (1985), p. 5.

¹⁰¹ L.A. Labourt, *Recherches historiques sur les enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1845), p. 89.

In the eighteenth century, Russia and all predominantly Catholic countries in Europe implemented the same foundling system France was building at the time. In the following century, these developed into nationalized and secularized systems of mass child abandonment, affecting hundreds of thousands of children every year in Europe for the explicit purpose of protecting the honour of the unwed mother and her family, thus alleviating the burden of illegitimacy and preventing infanticide.¹⁰² These systems remained in place well into the twentieth century, despite the fact that since the early years of the foundling hospitals their disproportionate mortality became evident. In 1758, the death rate in the foundling hospital in Paris was 68 per cent.¹⁰³ A century later in Ille-et-Vilaine, it was 70 per cent, and as high as 92 per cent in the worse hospices (compared to 16.83 per cent for the general population).¹⁰⁴ If it were not for these high death rates, and despite having the lowest proportion of illegitimate births and assisted children in the country, the burden of foundlings would have consumed a fourth of the Ille-et-Vilaine's departmental budget.¹⁰⁵ Many more were suspected of dying in transit to these hospitals. Until the mid-nineteenth century, between two thirds and three fourths of foundlings died. Fuchs stresses that these death rates made 'this form of welfare tantamount to culturally sanctioned infanticide'.¹⁰⁶ The endurance of this form of welfare speaks to the tenacity of the notions of honour surrounding the family regime.

¹⁰² Fuchs, 'Charity and welfare', p. 174.

¹⁰³ Isaac Joseph, 'Tactiques et figures disciplinaires', in: Joseph, Philippe Fritsch and Alain Battegay, *Disciplines à domicile: L'édification de la famille* (Fontenay-Sous-Bois, 1977), p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ Conseil Général d'Ille-et-Vilaine, *2e Session de 1848 pour 1849* (Rennes, 1849), p. 130.

¹⁰⁵ C.G. d'Ille-et-Vilaine, *1848*, pp. 16-17, 129-130; J.F. Terme and J.B. Monfalcon, *Nouvelles Considerations sur les Enfants Trouvés* (Paris, 1838), p. 475. The illegitimacy rate in the 1830s was 22 per thousand, against 316 in the Seine. In the 1860s, the department aided one child per 3,520 inhabitants, compared to the Rhône with one per 110. Rollet, *La politique à l'égard de la petite enfance sous la IIIe République* (Paris, 1990), p. 64.

¹⁰⁶ Fuchs, 'Charity and welfare', pp. 160, 171.

Child abandonment, by contrast, was not practised in predominantly Protestant countries, despite the fact that these often had higher illegitimacy rates than Catholic countries.¹⁰⁷ Northern countries retained some form of protection against seduction, and while mothers had to keep their children, fathers or the next of kin could be made to face the expenses. These contrasting models could also be seen within France, between the North and the Midi or between Alsace and Brittany.¹⁰⁸

The existence of divergent Catholic and Protestant systems first became known in France in 1829 when Frenchman H. de Gouroff circulated a short number of brochures containing the preliminary results of his research commissioned by Russian government, not published in full until 1839.¹⁰⁹ Rather than a fatal response to poverty and illegitimacy, de Gouroff had read the foundling system, which he opposed, as a culturally relative practice belonging to the sphere of morality and religion. Some interpreted these findings as evidence that it was the very policy of free abandonment that caused the effects it sought to alleviate by generating undesired incentives. Thus, 'the existence of the tours increases the number of abandonments'.¹¹⁰ Or worse yet, it was their cause. 'The department of Haute-Saône, which has no tours, has no foundlings either'.¹¹¹ For single mothers, 'if [the *tours*] had not existed, the thought of abandoning would not have crossed their minds'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ For an international overview see: Martin-Doisy, *Dictionnaire*, pp. 582-629.

¹⁰⁸ Fuchs, 'Charity and welfare', p. 159.

¹⁰⁹ H. de Gouroff, *Essai sur les enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1829) and *Recherches sur les enfants trouvés et les enfants illégitimes en Russie, dans le reste de l'Europe, en Asie, et en Amérique* (Paris, 1839). See: Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, p. 312.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹¹¹ Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1840), p. 479.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 494.

This came at a time when the foundling system was under attack because of suspected abuses and its growing financial cost. Firstly, there was some evidence that legitimate children were being abandoned in the *tours*. Secondly, it became commonplace to assume that mothers abandoned their children to then offer their services as a wet-nurse at the same hospital, leading to calls to ‘put an end to the scandal of children being nursed at the State’s expense by their own mothers’, who thus ‘receive a salary to carry out an obligation that nature imposes on her’.¹¹³ Rather than protecting their honour, families seemed to be making strategic use of the system. Thus, some parents seemed to use the foundling hospital as a temporary deposit for their children in times of hardship, a practice that was lawful in the Ille-et-Vilaine and that was habitual in some foreign countries.¹¹⁴ In an attempt to eradicate local misuses of the system, the government had introduced several unsuccessful reforms that had tried to make the system stricter and render abandonment irreversible. These had little long-term effect on abandonment numbers, entailed greater spending and deeply divided public opinion.¹¹⁵

Emboldened by de Gouroff’s findings, and as a way to address growing expenses and perceived abuses, the departmental council of Vienne, after a 15-to-14 vote and despite local opposition, decided to experimentally suppress all the *tours* in the

¹¹³ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, pp. 315, 320.

¹¹⁴ C. G. d’Ille-et-Vilaine, 1848, pp. 16-17. One of the better-studied examples is Milan: Hunecke, ‘Les enfants trouvés’.

¹¹⁵ The most important of these measures was a swap of assisted children between neighbouring departments. See: Isabelle Le Boulanger, ‘Les échanges d’enfants assistés dans les années 1830: Objets, enjeux, bilan: L’exemple des Côtes-du-Nord », *Revue d’histoire de l’enfance ‘irrégulière’*, 14 (2012), pp. 223-248.

department, except for the one in Poitiers, starting in 1834.¹¹⁶ At this stage, there was no alternative aid for those seeking to abandon. Coincidentally, the September session of the 1834 Congrès scientifique de France was held in Poitiers, bringing together national figures with local opponents of the measure and the elective representatives who had voted it. There was a heated and lengthy debate that quickly transcended its local boundaries. The conference crystallized a sharp opposition on the subject that would last many decades, pitting Catholics and social economists, on the one hand, against liberals and political economists, on the other. While the general assembly was finally swayed in favour of the *tours*, it was made plain that ‘the experience is totally lacking, the facts are not known, and that it is urgent to gather them’.¹¹⁷ This marked the birth of the first modern debate on the ‘social question’ in France and the first modern uses of statistics to influence public opinion. The *Statistique générale de la France*, which Adolphe Thiers had founded in 1833, devoted its first published volume in 1835 to the collection of national and local statistics on foundlings from 1824 to 1833.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, scholars, publicists and administrators undertook numerous studies on the subject that were printed in 1837 and 1838, when the debate became national.¹¹⁹ The *tours* debate, thus, brought together for the first time the complex interaction between politics and administration, scholarship and academies, and public opinion and literature that would come to identify social debates for the rest of the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁶ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, pp. 310, 317-318, 344

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

¹¹⁸ Muriel Jeorger, ‘L’évolution des courbes de l’abandon de la Restauration à la première Guerre mondiale, 1815-1913’, *Publications de l’École française de Rome*, 140/1 (1991), p. 705; Hervé Le Bras, ‘La Statistique générale de la France’, in: Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 2 (Paris, 1986), pp. 317-353; Ann La Berge, *Mission and Method: The Early Nineteenth-Century French Public Health Movement* (Cambridge, 1992), chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ For an annotated bibliography see: Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouvés*, pp. 474-486.

The controversy surrounding the *tours* only died out after the turn of the century, with a major national debate taking place every decade until the 1880s. The same discussion was echoed verbatim in countless sub-national assemblies and learned societies during the period. However, this long-lived debate was singularly monotonous and unoriginal. Every new instalment of the polemic, whether locally or nationally, turned to the same set of opposing arguments and rationales set out in the late 1830s. The new data and administrative experiences had little effect on what was but an instance in a larger clash between two opposing models of personal, family and social responsibilities tied to competing geographies of the public-private divide. We will now explore in turn the opposing views of Catholics and liberals on the issue of the abolition of the *tours*.

The Catholic position.

For Catholics and social economists, founding hospitals were vital for the protection of the family regime and morality, on which the social order was founded. The *tour* was an escape valve for the family ideal. It absorbed all illegitimate, adulterous and incestuous children, and also relieved indigent marriages from the members they could not feed.¹²⁰ 'In reality, what is the *tour*?', asked Auguste Nicolas, a Catholic writer and official in the ministry of public worship, 'It is a drain, an outlet, a sewer, if you will, but a cesspit that is necessary to save the child from death or perversity, the mother from crime [and] society

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 476, 478, 483, 485, 498.

from scandal'.¹²¹ Social intervention was necessary to manage and contain both the transgressions and the shortfalls of the rules of marriage and honour. 'A family's honour, which must not be affected by the misconduct of one of its members, demands secrecy'.¹²² The shame and opprobrium resulting from her immoral behaviour naturally resulted in child abandonment; if impeded from carrying it out, and faced with a lifetime of infamy, family disaffiliation and unemployment, then it was a logical inevitability that the result would be abortion, infanticide or even suicide. This system of honour and the growing gendering of the cash-nexus meant that few women could afford to raise a child outside marriage.¹²³ The *tour* saved lives as much as it avoided the mother from being 'condemned to live fatally in disorder', an easy prey to new seducers.¹²⁴ By hiding her fault, anonymous and secret abandonment gave a worthy woman the opportunity of rehabilitation, leading perhaps to a respectable marriage and maternity in the future. Thus, a single mother and her child needed to be separated for their mutual benefit and in order to prevent immoral examples from contaminating the community. Consequently, the issue was of the highest importance, for on it rested the tranquillity of households and local communities as much as the very survival of the state. As a result, Catholics sought to have foundling expenses assumed by the state and the national budget rather than leave it in the hands of departments, as established by the 1811 decree.

¹²¹ Commission des enfants trouvés, *Travaux*, 1 (Paris, 1850), pp. 98-99.

¹²² A. Legoyt, 'De l'assistance des enfants en France', *Journl de la société statistique de Paris*, 5 (1864), p. 284.

¹²³ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, pp. 315, 321.

¹²⁴ Legoyt, 'Assistance des enfants', p. 284; C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, 1848, p. 137.

While the only enduring solution was increased religious observance, Catholics demanded a law against seduction that would put an end to the unpunished victimization of girls that was the immediate cause of the problem. If Protestant countries had no foundling hospitals it was because 'paternity searches are permitted and that the mother almost always obtains a judicial decision condemning her seducer to a temporary or life annuity'.¹²⁵ Catholics thus emphasized the necessary accountability of the stronger party, in terms of gender, hierarchies in the workplace and also class.¹²⁶

Catholics favoured a complex household model, where orderly and morally-sanctioned bonds of authority produced family-like sentiments beyond wage and blood relations to include servants, workers and strangers. Rather than filiation, it was these relations of moralized authority that structured and held the social order together. They were equally favourable to institutional care, convinced that '[i]t is often more beneficial for children to be raised in a hospice than in their family'.¹²⁷ Single mothers 'would make of [their children] beggars [or] scamps, whereas in the hospice, they receive or could receive a good upbringing'.¹²⁸ The 'hospice guarantees the morality of foundlings, and is favourable to that of their mothers'.¹²⁹ With Alphonse de Lamartine, one of the leading defenders of the *tours*, they were optimistic that foundlings would find an adequate home with their

¹²⁵ Legoyt, 'Assistance des enfants', p. 287.

¹²⁶ Congr s scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, p. 323.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

¹²⁹ Quoted in: Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouv s*, p. 477.

guardians in the countryside, where cohabitation would 'inspire a consanguinity almost as strong as that of nature'.¹³⁰

Catholicism thus 'aids both the child and the mother, but isolates them as if seeing a moral contagion in their mutual contact'.¹³¹ Conseiller-général Rouxin did not deny that 'natural children should be assisted', but added: 'do you believe that their mothers are suitable to instil in them moral principles?'¹³² Catholics used strong language to reject the possibility of unmarried motherhood. The Abbé Adolphe-Henri Gaillard, who, together with Lamartine, was the foremost champion of the *tours*, argued that

often nothing is more deplorable for the children than to be kept by their mothers. Indeed, can they lay claim to this sacred title, they who have conceived in the manner of beasts? Can they claim their rights, when neither religion nor society have recognized their union? Is it not justice as well as wisdom to rescue their victims? They have sullied their children by giving them life; do not tolerate that they poison still the rest of their life.[...] a *fille-mère* has no right over her child, especially when she has abandoned him; the most beneficial for her and for him [the child] is that his origin remains unknown, and that she, in turn, decides to forget him. Following the expression of Mme La Vallière, *one must cry more over his birth than his death*.¹³³

Family could simply not exist outside marriage, of which it was but a consequence. 'Never, in effect, would he find beside a natural mother the advantages he would find next to a legitimate mother'. Since authority, the basis of the social and the family order, only derived from moral observance, 'she will never have over her

¹³⁰ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 481.

¹³¹ Martin-Doisy, *Dictionnaire*, p. 660.

¹³² C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, *Session de 1851* (Rennes, 1851), p. 257.

¹³³ Adolphe-Henri Gaillard, *Recherches... sur les enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1837), p. 355-356.

child the necessary authority'.¹³⁴ Furthermore, to provide *only* single mothers with assistance would create a very dangerous incentive for public immorality.

The liberal reforms were finally successful, despite the tenacity of Catholic opposition at the national and local level. The most immediate reason why liberals had the upper hand was the active and durable support of the government, from the July Monarchy to the Third Republic. The administration had the authority to overturn the votes of the *conseils généraux*, municipal councils and hospital boards which in predominantly Catholic departments, such as Ille-et-Vilaine, were openly defiant of the official policy.¹³⁵ However, there also was a fundamental epistemological reason. From the late eighteenth century, political economy had introduced a new mode of argumentation that relied heavily on statistics and in the assertion that cause-effect correlations and economic laws had been derived from empirical data gathered through scientific observation, thus enabling systematic deductive and inductive operations. When applied to human populations, quantitative evidence was philosophically troublesome for Catholics and conservatives, since it presupposed that persons were equal and interchangeable. Qualitative evidence was better able to take into account the innate hierarchy among individuals, the moral order of Creation and the local-historical complexity of things; this was the founding principle of the social-scientific schools of Bonald and Frédéric Le Play. Catholics and conservatives did not share the liberal method of argumentation because they did not see a clear distinction between moral reflexion and empirical data. Indeed, their opponents

¹³⁴ Léon Lallemand, 'Rapport sur les enfants trouvés', in: Comités catholiques de France, *Assemblée générale* (Paris, 1873), p. 198.

¹³⁵ C.G. d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 1848, p. 143; 1851, pp. 221-223, 264; 1855 (Rennes, 1855), p. 151.

were able to link the two in ways that were unclear. For liberal thinkers at the time, statistics served more to illustrate than shape their 'empirical' observations. This meant that any data that did not agree with the observations was dismissed. Informing the king on the abuses of the system and the first foundling statistics, prepared in 1835 by the prefect of the Yonne the vicomte de Bondy, Adrien-Etienne de Gasparin, the minister of the interior, found a list of things that 'are impossible insofar they clash with the simplest of understandings and good sense'. Statistical data contradicted his claims of immoral abuses, but he argued that this itself was proof of the abuses:

These abuses, as you will recognize, Sire, have been so great in some locations as to change the natural relationships of things, in such a way that it is no longer possible to establish statistical calculations on any base that is not false.¹³⁶

Statistics were nonetheless portrayed as 'hard' proof. The departmental debates show how this epistemological gap between the opponents made Catholics vulnerable to vigorous attacks for relying on 'circumstantial evidence' and 'une foule d'anecdotes'.¹³⁷ Although his own arguments were no more substantive than his adversaries', prefect Pagès of Ille-et-Vilaine, in refuting the *Conseil's* Catholic majority obstinate resolve to repeal the new policies, argued that:

with over nine hundred children under the administration's guardianship, you have been able to cite but a few facts, so isolated and unimportant that it has not been possible to make them pass through the administrative sieve. Their small number, compared to the very elevated figure of admissions, proves, furthermore, the benefits of the policies in place.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Adrien-Etienne de Gasparin, *Rapport au Roi sur les hôpitaux, les hospices et les services de bienfaisance* (Paris, 1837), p. 65.

¹³⁷ Eugène Ory, *La protection de l'enfant et de l'adulte* (Saint-Étienne, 1883), p. 171.

¹³⁸ C.G. d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 1851, pp. 262-264.

The ‘immense advantages’ of the system were ‘proven’.¹³⁹ Gradually in the second half of the century, both approaches converged in a shared ‘scientific’ epistemology and methodology.

The liberal position.

In turn, liberals and political economists sought to eliminate secret abandonment and partly substitute it for temporary assistance to unwed mothers, a policy that ‘is more in accordance with the principle of responsibility, which is one of the bases of our social edifice’.¹⁴⁰ Liberalism, political economy, Malthusianism and utilitarianism all rested on shared assumptions about the individual. The understanding of the abstract individual as a rational, autonomous and self-interested agent demanded that it be held fully liable for its actions, and only for these. The same was true of collective responsibilities. Thus local spending needed to match and derive from local taxation in order to remain accountable and limited; this was especially true of foundling charges, the most expensive welfare programme in the country, which liberals wanted to see transferred from the departmental to the municipal budget.¹⁴¹ Since ‘One knows too well that a responsibility spread out among many is not borne by anyone’, social or public agency was to be kept to the minimum.¹⁴² State activity was expected to focus on eliminating the obstacles to the ‘natural’ development of the free market, rational individuality and the acceptance of full responsibility by persons and groups. The

¹³⁹ C.G. d’Ille-et Vilaine, 1854 (Rennes, 1854), p. 104.

¹⁴⁰ Xavier Delore, ‘La vérité sur les tours’, *Annales de la société de médecine de Lyon*, XXVI (1878), p. 289.

¹⁴¹ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, p. 343; Frédéric Cuvier, ‘Enfants trouvés’, in: Charles Coquelin and Gilbert Guillaumin (eds.), *Dictionnaire de l’économie politique* (Brussels, 1853), p. 769.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 768.

foundling system went against these core beliefs. It required strong public intervention and spending, enabled paupers to reproduce beyond their means and exempted individuals from the responsibility of their moral transgressions. Moreover, it was indiscriminate, an aspect that galvanized widespread condemnation in nineteenth-century France against all universal welfare programmes, the most emblematic of which was the English Poor Law. As one departmental representative put it, welfare across the Channel 'gives aid indistinctly to all the indigent, even to those whose poverty is the result of their misconduct'.¹⁴³ Individualizing schemes, in turn, made it possible to operate differently on the worthy and the unworthy.

The primary cause and main argument for the liberal reforms of the foundling system were financial, claiming that the rapidly increasing burden on the departmental purse was on the verge of becoming intolerable. Mortality statistics also showed that the system was wasteful in human lives, provoking the demise of most of its beneficiaries, with a death rate for foundlings that was two or three times that of illegitimate children reared by their mothers. The ease of gathering and presenting these statistics provided valuable ammunition against the Catholics. Protecting the life of the child became one of the keystone arguments in favour of the new policy since the 1830s, anticipating by a generation the rationale of child-saving campaigns that became so characteristic of the second half of the century.

¹⁴³ C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, 1848, p. 191.

The system was uneconomical, deadly and plagued by abuses and misuses, but also deeply immoral. The *tour*, by effacing moral culpabilities, personal responsibility and lack of foresight, was seen as an encouragement of debauchery. But the focus again fell squarely on women here. On the part of the mother, abandonment was a guilty act, per se, regardless of its lawfulness; 'it is an act contrary to nature; even the beast cares for her young. It is an anti-religious and immoral act', indeed, 'the supreme expression of selfishness'.¹⁴⁴ Abandonment prevented her from developing 'maternal sentiments', an unrivalled force 'deposited by nature deep down in the mother's heart for the conservation of the species' that functioned as a primitive and biological moral compass capable of rehabilitating even reprehensible females.¹⁴⁵ 'One sees even prostitutes raise their children with solicitude, having them receive a good upbringing and guarding them attentively against bad examples and influences'.¹⁴⁶ The aim was 'to push back vice by removing comforts and facilities of which it abuses', for 'It is not public charity, but rather his mother that the foundling needs'.¹⁴⁷

The *tour*, equally, was 'an obstacle for the repentance of the mother, because it is a complete and definitive concealment of her fault. In keeping her child, the mother carries out an act of courage and resignation that rehabilitates her to her own eyes and brings about the suffering of her conscience'.¹⁴⁸ Only this penitence could rehabilitate her. Since men seeking only to satisfy their desires would be deterred by the *fille-mère's* hefty load, 'The child is a safeguard against a second fault. Its

¹⁴⁴ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', pp. 284-285.

¹⁴⁵ Legoyt, 'Assistance des enfants', pp. 283, 285.

¹⁴⁶ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 283.

¹⁴⁷ Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouvés*, p. 495.

¹⁴⁸ Legoyt, 'Assistance des enfants', p. 283.

presence, moreover, can make the seducer decide to repair his fault, either by recognizing the child or marrying the mother'.¹⁴⁹ More so, 'marriages are the consequence of the awakening of moral faculties' in these girls.¹⁵⁰ In this rationale, the father's claim to responsibility was the hypothetical and idyllic act that certified and concluded the successful atonement of the mother's sins. In the case of the *fille-mère*, the focus on 'personal responsibility' both intensified and hid from sight the structural conditions determining and advancing the unequal allocation, along gender and class lines, of legal, social and economic resources and burdens, especially marriage, family dependency and wages.

Indigence alone, in the absence of depravation, liberals claimed, could not lead to abandonment.¹⁵¹ Economic reasons for family malfunction were brushed aside. Prosper Gauja, prefect of the Loire-Atlantique, asserted in 1852 that 'An honest female worker, when she wants to behave well, always finds enough resources in her trade and condition on which to live'.¹⁵² The same thinking applied to things such as medical care. 'One could object that the [indigent] mother, if medical assistance were not free [as part of the assistance programme], would refuse to call in the doctor if her child were ill? Such a conduct, if it were to occur, which we doubt, would be guilty to the highest degree'.¹⁵³ This imagined ability to survive regardless of circumstances especially applied to legitimate mothers. Rather than accounting for structural economic, social and cultural factors, the problem of

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 283.

¹⁵¹ Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouvés*, pp. 476, 478, 483, 485, 498.

¹⁵² Conseil Général de la Loire-Inférieure, *Session de 1852* (Nantes, 1852), p. 222.

¹⁵³ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, *Session d'aout 1881* (Nantes, 1881), p. 392.

family breakdown at the bottom of the social pyramid was thus reduced to a matter of moral reform that aimed to re-establish 'natural' behaviour.

Liberals very ambiguously asserted that one of the central aims of the assistance to unwed mothers was to 'conserve a family' for the child or 'to attach the child to the mother by the bonds of family', since 'by creating a family for him, one attaches him to society through the sweetest of all ties'.¹⁵⁴ Thus, even without marrying the father, 'through her recognition, the mother confers the child an *état civil* [the socio-legal proof of family filiation and social affiliation, traditionally reserved for legitimate children] which, albeit incomplete, is preferable to the absence of all filiation, as well as a family, whose care, tenderness [and] solicitude, cannot be replaced by the hospital guardianship'.¹⁵⁵ 'Family' here would seem to imply a reduction to biological filiation or its existence in the absence of marriage and a male chief, which stood in contradiction to contemporary morality. Catholics would not have been alone in finding the mention of a family without marriage to be an oxymoron. The rarely developed assumption here was that the woman's parents would receive her and her child. The child would thus 'remain in the family', since 'after their fault, which is for them a harsh lesson, [single mothers] return to their families where their child is often surrounded by attention and affection'.¹⁵⁶ Liberals thus sought to see the standard of personal responsibility extended to the family. 'The honour of families is a very beautiful thing; but above all it should consist of keeping their *filles*', or unmarried girls who became

¹⁵⁴ Conseil Général de la Corrèze, *Session de 1861* (Tulle, 1861), p. 111; C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, 1851, p. 253, and, 1860 (Rennes, 1860), p. 108.

¹⁵⁵ Legoyt, 'Assistance des enfants', p. 283.

¹⁵⁶ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 283; C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, 1852, p. 210.

pregnant.¹⁵⁷ 'It is important that that false sense of honour be destroyed, and that dishonour be attached to abandonment rather than to raising a natural child'.¹⁵⁸ At the heart of the policy shift was then the desire that the legal responsibility families had for providing nourishment to their members would extend to their reproductive liabilities as well. Thus, ideally, the mother's parents or next of kin would take charge of her and her child, if they had the means. If poor, assistance would be provided. In cases of 'absolute isolation', single mothers would be denied aid and encouraged to abandon. However, this reading of poor families proved very optimistic. It was customary for families to disown the *fille-mère* to protect their honour. Indeed, aid to unwed mothers explicitly took into account 'those without a family or domicile'.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, in many cases these 'families' created by the new programme consisted only of the mother and her child(ren). 'Personal responsibility' for unwanted pregnancies fell exclusively upon the woman, and the expenses tended to fall increasingly on the public purse.

In opposition to the legal-economic rationality of the public sphere, liberals cast the family in a naturalized biological mould that became increasingly feminized. Only the primitive and irrational bonds of kinship, comparable perhaps to religious fervour, could motivate the blind devotion and self-sacrifice needed to rear a family.¹⁶⁰ Family-style bonds and sentiments were thus incompatible with any commercial or wage relationship, governed by the economic rationality of self-interest. This was assumed to be the case of servants in general, and especially of the wet-nurse *sur place* in a bourgeois home, for whom money overrode the drive

¹⁵⁷ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 295.

¹⁵⁸ Congrès scientifique de France, *Seconde session*, p. 315.

¹⁵⁹ C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1843* (Tulle, 1843), p. 28.

¹⁶⁰ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 285.

of biological attachment.¹⁶¹ There could be no mercenary parenting, no ‘maternal sentiment’ for hire. This essentialist mothering did not concern the quality of the care, but a mystical attribute of vigilance and clairvoyance, contained in ‘maternal sentiment’, that grasped what was best for the child, even in extreme poverty or if sent far away to nurse in the countryside.¹⁶²

A curious and incontestable fact is that the surveillance exercised by the government [through the inspection of assisted children] is, despite its zeal and intelligence, very inferior to that which a poor single mother can provide; the mother’s eye exercises its influence despite distance and the most unfavourable conditions.¹⁶³

As child mortality statistics showed, ‘the anxious gaze of a poor *fille-mère* is more efficient than all this [official] deployment of means’.¹⁶⁴ Through the mother, and her proverbial visual prowess, the private sphere amalgamated the domestic and the ‘natural’ to create a unique and irreplaceable space of primal socialization and individuation. The continuity of the family name and position signalled one’s fatal place in society, turning the social hierarchy into a private and biological affaire.

The absence of a family was seen as a dangerous state of social isolation, creating ‘a separate category of individuals who are the pariah of society’.¹⁶⁵ ‘The quality of recognized natural child is a lot better than isolation within society and the

¹⁶¹ ‘As for the maternal attachment that accompanies breast-feeding, against what some *philanthopes* claim, experience unfortunately shows that [for wet-nurses] it does not persist long, and never survives absence. Its length most often is equal to the cause that provoked it [i.e., employment] and, when the cause is no more, the attachment disappears’. Amédée Achard, ‘La nourrice sur place’, in: Léon Curmer (ed.), *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*, I (Paris, 1840), p. 300.

¹⁶² Cuvier, ‘Enfants trouvés’, p. 767.

¹⁶³ Delore, ‘Verité sur les tours’, p. 287.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

absence of a family name'.¹⁶⁶ The notion of 'isolation', and equivalent fin-de-siècle terms such as 'asocial' or 'antisocial', made no reference to actual sociability, professional and social relationships and solidarities or community belonging. Rather, it implied a state of perceived disaffiliation with the social order at large, encompassing drifting characters to where not embedded, attached or anchored in the socio-economic system, through family, market, labour and the state. It was the rational, self-controlled individual's 'other', living in a completely unrestrained state.

Emancipated by law and in fact, [once they are adults] foundlings are absolute masters of their actions. No control is imposed on them; they recognize no special surveillance. Without family bonds, strangers to parental authority, they are in the condition of an orphan. This near complete isolation, this emancipation from every family responsibility has deplorable consequences. Poor, normally deprived of education, and too often without a clear profession, foundlings are accessible to all seductions; many give in to these, many give in to a vagabondage of which prisons are the ordinary endpoint.¹⁶⁷

This was 'an unrestrained population' that had to be fed the first part of their life and surveyed thereafter.¹⁶⁸ Catholics participated in an equivalent anxiety. Rather than the breakdown of filiation, they decried the weakening of the moral authority in the family. Nicolas, using de Gérando's figures argued that 'It is proven that among criminals, there are considerably fewer foundlings than illegitimate children. By turning foundlings into illegitimate children, what do you achieve? You turn into crooks men who are honest and useful in their majority'.¹⁶⁹ In

¹⁶⁶ C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, *Session de 1869* (Rennes, 1869), p. 301.

¹⁶⁷ Terme and Monfalcon, *Histoire des enfants trouvés*, p. 309.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 479

¹⁶⁹ Lallemand, 'Rapport sur les enfants trouvés', p. 199.

writing the history of the foundling system in 1904, Charles Porak commented that 'Never, perhaps, has statistics been more intensively employed than in these debates; never, perhaps, has it led to more contradictory conclusions'.¹⁷⁰

With the application of the liberal reforms by 1840, filiation had thus become the linchpin of social stability. And the irreducible nucleus of filiation, it seemed, was the mother-child bond. Through the application of the programme to aid single mothers, departmental administrators found themselves tasked with giving such a bond normative contents. Leaving behind the intellectual focus of the *tour* debate, the practical question now arose of how to identify and enforce adequate 'maternal sentiment'. It was necessary to define what these vague 'natural' forces entailed and if they went beyond their mystical emotional-biological aspects to articulate some form of maternal practice involving actual maternal care and desirable mother-child relationships that could be objectively assessed and enforced. It remained to be seen how 'nature' related pragmatically to the mother's morality, and what relation it had to the primary moralizing effect of the programme.

Administering virtue.

At its height in the early 1830s, there were some 273 *hospices dépositaires* to receive abandoned children. Of these, 250 had a *tour*, although some were monitored to prevent anonymous abandonment. Most of these were closed between 1834 and 1844. By the late 1840s, there were only 141 hospices, 76 of them without a *tour*. Thus 185 *tours* had closed and of the 65 remaining in

¹⁷⁰ Charles Porak, 'Rapport [sur la loi de 27 juin 1904]', *Bulletin de l'Académie de médecine*, 68/LII (1904), p. 671.

operation, only 25 were not policed and allowed anonymous abandonment.¹⁷¹ In 1858 there remained but 48 increasingly surveyed *tours*, a figure that further dropped to 25 in 1860 and 5 in 1862. The last turning-cradle, in Marseille, was closed between 1866 and 1868.¹⁷² At that point, the *tours* remained a public obligation mandated by the 1811 decree. They were only banned in 1869, by a law that recommended optional aid to unwed mothers and made the service of assisted children a departmental domain in the hands of the prefect. This culminated the process started in the 1830s of shifting control of the foundling system from the unpaid local hospitals boards controlled by local notables to inspectors appointed from Paris. These inspectors of assisted children or welfare establishments were the basis of the newly centralized system.¹⁷³

However, the dramatic decrease in *tours* and hospices was not mirrored in the number of abandonments, which only declined gradually. From 1838 to the mid 1850s, yearly admissions stabilized at 25,000, despite a population increase of over three million or ten per cent in this period. The overall 'stock' of children under public guardianship decreased by a fourth from 1833 to 1838 and remained at just under 100,000 until the 1850s, kept in check by very high death rates. As the general inspector for public assistance Adolphe de Watteville remarked, this meant that life expectancy for foundlings was just four years.¹⁷⁴ Abandonment would plummet in the following decades. In 1861, the figure of yearly admissions

¹⁷¹ While the rapid abolition of abandonment hospices and *tours* is indisputable, there is little agreement as to the actual numbers. For the 1830s and 1840s I have relied on Adolphe de Watteville, *Statistique des établissements et services de bienfaisance* (Paris, 1849), pp. 13-16. See also: Jeorger, 'Évolution des courbes de l'abandon', pp. 721-722; Bernard-Benoît Remacle, *Des hospices d'enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1838), p. 217.

¹⁷² Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', pp. 272, 274; Porak, 'Rapport', p. 667; Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 64.

¹⁷³ Virginie De Luca, *Aux origines de l'État-providence* (Paris 2002).

¹⁷⁴ De Watteville, *Statistique*, p. 27.

was half what it had been 30 years before. In 1881, it would reach its lowest point at 10 thousand per year, before starting to increase again over the following decades.¹⁷⁵ In 1849, 8,072 *filles-mères* were receiving aid, while this rose to 19,660 by 1860.¹⁷⁶ But this important increment did not make up for the fall in abandonments.

If the reform of the system was able to successfully curb the progression of admissions, its main impact was on the form of child abandonment. The 1811 decree established three categories of children at the charge of the state: foundlings (*enfants trouvés*) were those of unknown parents; the *enfants abandonnés* were born to known parents who had disappeared; and poor orphans were those without relatives. Local and governmental practices tended to confound these categories; indeed, until 1854, statistics included all three classes only as an aggregate under the generic term *enfants trouvés*. After the closure of the tours, the number of *enfants trouvés* proper dropped quickly reaching negligible figures by 1870, while the *abandonnés* rose sharply. The importance of this fact is that, while the former category placed abandonment in the hands of parents and local hospices, the latter, like assistance to unwed mothers, required prefectural approval. Under the new system of *admission réglementée* a woman seeking to abandon went through a thorough application procedure involving a series of meticulous inquiries and counter-inquiries into her circumstances. The process took months and eleven per cent of children died before a decision was pronounced.¹⁷⁷ These meticulous inquiries would rapidly become the norm in all

¹⁷⁵ Jeorger, 'Évolution des courbes de l'abandon', pp. 703-740.

¹⁷⁶ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁷ Delore, 'Verité sur les tours', p. 293.

welfare services in France. While they did occasionally make use of philanthropic-style home visits, the investigation usually fell to the local police. Standard policing techniques thus became central to the intelligibility of the reality of local poverty and the day-to-day functioning of welfare services. It was thus possible to impede all married and non-indigent single women from relying on the hospital-hospice system. Not only were they excluded from permanent abandonment, but also from the longstanding tradition of having children admitted temporarily into a hospice in times of family hardship.¹⁷⁸ Now the final decision on a family's disaggregation was in the hands of the prefect. The central administration thus gained the means to enforce a family policy set from Paris.

While the law established a strong preference for assistance in kind since at least 1796, unwed mothers, and later other poor mothers, were the first category of assisted persons to receive aid in cash until the twentieth century. This was the case, despite the fact that there was a consensus, until the end of the Third Republic, on the fact that the poor could not be trusted with money. Their poverty testified to their lack of responsibility, which tied to some degree of irrationality or immorality, meant that pecuniary aid could cause more harm than good.¹⁷⁹ While poor unwed mothers would have been especially targeted by these prejudices, the

¹⁷⁸ With the exception of those whose parents were hospitalized for medical reasons or imprisoned.

¹⁷⁹ The opinions expressed on the subject in 1839 by the baron de Gérando remained unchanged until the twentieth century: *De la bienfaisance publique*, 4 (Paris, 1839), pp. 231-232. While the new social programmes in the early twentieth century used monetary aid, the reserves regarding its use did not seem to change. There was an inconclusive debate on the subject in the 1900s in *La revue philanthopique*: Bienvenu Martin, 'L'assistance des vieillards et des infirmes', VIII (1901), p. 289; and the 'Bulletin de la Société internationale pour l'étude des questions d'assistance', sessions of 24 January 1906, XVIII (1906), pp. 481-485, and of 24 March 1909, XXIV (1909), pp. 746-755. Viviana Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money* (New York, 1994), chapter 4, studied the turn-of-the-century shift towards monetary aid in social assistance the United States, which served to tutor the poor into acceptable forms of economic rationality. This was not the case in France at the time.

programmes to assist them were not modelled on indoor or outdoor relief, but were a simple extension of the policies in place for foundlings.

Babies abandoned in hospices were farmed out quickly to the countryside to one family who would nurse and raise them to the age of twelve.¹⁸⁰ In 1859 there were 75,620 such children.¹⁸¹ The administration paid as little as possible for these services, attracting only the poorest families and often unhealthy wet-nurses and carers from remote rural areas.¹⁸² The national average paid for the complete upbringing of a foundling was 923 francs in 1860, or 6.41 francs per month.¹⁸³ Payment was higher for the first years and decreased as the child grew, under the assumption that their labour would increasingly cover their expenses. The logic behind these fees was never entirely clear, since the sum paid was meant, problematically, both as retribution to the guardians for their work and maintenance allowance for the child. The administration also provided their clothes; these coarse uniforms made them instantly recognisable as foundlings, while the identification tags, initially attached through one then two earrings that

¹⁸⁰ The word *nourrice* made reference to paid or 'mercenary' childrearing in general. Thus guardians raising foundlings until the age of twelve were called, *nourrice*, *famille nourricière*, *mère nourricière*, etc. It can be translated as wet-nurse, but does not exclusively imply breastfeeding. It also applied to child-minders and nannies, which together with those who bottle-fed babies for pay, could also be called a *nourrice sèche*. Sources are usually not very precise. Bottle-feeding dramatically increased infant mortality compared to breastfeeding until the mid-twentieth century, despite becoming safer at the end of the nineteenth century, and was widespread in some regions such as Brittany. The administration preferred wet-nurses, but often made recourse to bottle-feeders.

¹⁸¹ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 63.

¹⁸² In the 1830s, as many as three fourths of wet-nurses hired by the Parisian Public Assistance were considered unfit for the job, but were accepted due to the lack of alternatives. Fuchs, *Abandoned Children*, p. 168. Similarly, even though the Parisian administration preferred married wet-nurses, they did accept unwed ones. See the cases of the filles Rosin, Houée, and Bongualt, in: A[rchives] M[unicipales de] R[ennes]. 5Q20.

¹⁸³ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 66.

would commonly tear, leaving visible scars for life that 'indicated the origin of these children and could harm their future'.¹⁸⁴

Since Paris produced a third of the national foundlings that had to be sent to increasingly distant departments, the Seine had to pay higher fees to attract guardians. Those caring for very young Parisian foundlings earned 12 francs in the 1860s, 18 in 1876, and 28 in 1902.¹⁸⁵ In the Ille-et-Vilaine, wet-nurses earned 7 francs per month, which had to be increased, much to the irritation of the Department, to 10 francs in 1862 because the 'invasion' of 1,200 Parisian foundlings had made it impossible to find guardians. In the Corrèze, the equivalent payment was 4 francs, raised to 6 in 1843 and to 7 in 1862. For comparison, privately-hired wet-nurses in the countryside earned 20 to 25 francs per month. Wet-nursing costs depended on location. In a typical fashion, in the Haute-Vienne, monthly fees *au sein* within the city of Limoges averaged 25 to 30 francs, down to 20 to 25 in the bordering communes, and 15 to 20 in the more distant rural areas. For older children, a guardian in Limoges cost 15 francs.¹⁸⁶

As in many departments, the Loire-Atlantique established that unwed mothers could not claim more than the 'allowance allocated to wet-nurses for children of the same age'.¹⁸⁷ This enabled them either to send away their children or provide these services themselves. In fact, in the first decades of the programme, both were

¹⁸⁴ In the 1850s these were substituted for lead pendants, with their register number, on a collar that could not be removed. These had to be worn until about the age of 6 to prevent fraudulent substitutions of children.

¹⁸⁵ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 185.

¹⁸⁶ A[rchives] M[unicipales de] L[imoges]. 5Q198. Wet-nurse register for 1890.

¹⁸⁷ A[rchives] M[unicipales de] N[antes]. Q5C15D2. Prefect's letter of 11 June 1847. This was 7 francs per month for two years, lowered to 3 francs in the third year.

entirely interchangeable. There seemed to be no specific criteria for mothering that distinguished it from the work of a paid wet-nurse. And assisted mothers were banned from working as wet-nurses themselves.¹⁸⁸ Thus the 'maternal sentiment' that the programme sought to instil would develop just the same whether or not the mother and child cohabitated.

In the early years, the overriding concern was to make the mother keep the child at any cost. In order to justify closing the last remaining *tour* in the department, the prefect of the Corrèze argued that not all women would accept aid.

There will always be a certain number of *filles-mères* whose coldness of heart and the desire to regain their liberty will lead them to rid themselves of their children, so long as there is a *tour* where they can leave them. The departmental succours, even if granted liberally, will ever convince these girls to carry out the duties of nature. They only think of themselves.[...] [T]hey never hesitate to sacrifice their children to their personal conveniences. For abandonments with this cause, I know no other remedy than to suppress the tours.¹⁸⁹

The aim was for the mother to learn personal responsibility and the police tracked down any unapproved abandonment.¹⁹⁰ Since it was considered improbable that legitimate families 'had the criminal idea of abandoning' their children, the key suspects were illegitimate mothers and particularly those whose benefits had expired.¹⁹¹ In Paris, 8.1 per cent abandoned at the end of their twelve-month succour from 1863 to 1867, and only 6 per cent from 1870 to 1873.¹⁹² Often,

¹⁸⁸ AMR. 5Q20. Prefect's letter of 17 September 1883.

¹⁸⁹ C.G. de la Corrèze, 1843, pp. 27-28.

¹⁹⁰ C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1839* (Tulle, 1839), p. 24-25.

¹⁹¹ AMN. Q5C15D2. Letter dated 1 November 1849 about a child names Jules-Marie.

¹⁹² Fuchs, *Abandoned Children*, pp. 72-74; Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 69.

children were left with a rural wet-nurse while the mother disappeared.¹⁹³ In one such case in Nantes, the police were asked to investigate a mother who said to have left for the colonies.¹⁹⁴ But in any case, the state became increasingly effective in impeding unauthorized abandonment.

But perhaps the most important way of preventing abandonment was by regulating the midwifery sector, by substituting the age-old rural *matrones*, known for their knowledge of abortive practices and for being intermediaries for child abandonments, for publicly educated and certified *sages-femmes*.¹⁹⁵ The quality of the instruction was less important than ‘pursuing the ends of the new policy’. ‘The aim of the department is less give students a remarkable training than midwives who can meet the needs of the countryside’.¹⁹⁶ At the same time the policy tackled urban midwifery; the midwife training schools served as birthing hospitals for those so poor that they did not have another option. Designed to cater to unwed mothers, these hospitals had extraordinary mortality rates. The maternity ward for *filles-mères* in Lyon serviced more than twice the amount of patients and had almost four times the mortality rate as the maternity ward in the Hôtel-Dieu devoted to married women.¹⁹⁷ But they were very successful in preventing abandonment. ‘Most pregnant girls enter the establishment with the intention of abandoning their children. Almost all, on the contrary, yield to the advice that the members of the Commission have given them, and have made up

¹⁹³ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁹⁴ AMN. Q5C15D2. Letter dated 16 July 1849 on Marie-Louise Fauchoux.

¹⁹⁵ C.G. de la Corrèze, 1843, p. 28; Annick Tillier, *Marie Vaillant: Histoire tragique d'une infanticide en Bretagne* (Paris, 2011), chapter 4.

¹⁹⁶ C.G. de la Corrèze, 1839, p. 40.

¹⁹⁷ E. Fayard, *Modifications apportées par la loi du 5 mai 1869 dans le Service des enfants assistés du Département du Rhone* (Paris-Lyon, 1871), pp. 10-11.

their minds to fulfil the duties of nature and maternity'.¹⁹⁸ Their stay at the maternity ward also helped identify the women in case they did later abandon, as was the case in the Ille-et-Vilaine for one *filie* who was rapidly identified and prosecuted for committing 'une action si criminelle'.¹⁹⁹ But the prevention of abandonment was not necessarily achieved through force. De Gérando spoke with admiration of a new technology of maternal attachment he saw being deployed in Seine-Maritime and Pas-de-Calais.

Several hospital administrations in France have successfully tested obligating women who come to give birth in their establishments to breastfeed their own children during the first few days. After this trial, the mothers have themselves asked to keep their children, which at first they had wanted to separate themselves from and deposit at the hospice.²⁰⁰

In short, either out of constraint or attachment, maternity became obligatory in France.

Parenthood as a duty was the reverse side of the sacred rights with which the private sphere was invested. Thus while Catholics insisted that bad parents should be deprived of their children, liberals denounced this as socialism. In the parliamentary commission on foundlings that convened in 1849, Nicolas, representing the common Catholic view, asked whether a prostitute should have custody reinstated for a child she had abandoned and then reclaimed. Victor Lefranc, a moderate republican representative during the Second Republic who would be part of the first cabinets of the 1870s and interior minister in 1872, replied that nobody would have the right to refuse her her child, any more than

¹⁹⁸ C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1840* (Tulle, 1840), pp. 28, 67.

¹⁹⁹ C.G. d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 1851, p. 260.

²⁰⁰ De Gérando, *Bienfaisance publique*, 2, p. 11.

criminals could be deprived of their offspring. As Nicolas insisted on the right and duty society had to step in for the family in such cases, Lefranc argued that it was very dangerous for the state to have the right to confiscate children, for the rights of the family had to be respected.²⁰¹

Moralizing motherhood.

Not all departments offered assistance to single mothers once the *tours* were closed, which meant these had access to no form of help, since 'legitimate children have the exclusive support of the Maternal Charity Societies, crèches, nursery schools, and beneficence bureaus, private charity not having yet here adopted natural children nor having them participate of their alms'.²⁰² However, assistance to *filles-mères* gradually became commonplace in the 1850s and 1860s. There was an enormous geographic variation in policy. While the services of a rural wet-nurse averaged 25 francs per month, in the 1860s the *filles-mères* received an average national allowance of between 3 and 15 francs per month during the first year and from 2 to 10 francs per month in the third year, which was the average length of the benefits.²⁰³ Whereas these quantities were very low, they had a huge impact on the finances of the recipients, who were indigent. In Nantes in 1850, claimants reported incomes of 15 to 60 centimes per day, or about 4 to 18 francs per month or 50 to 200 francs per year.²⁰⁴ While the invention of the 'poverty line' is usually attributed to the work of British social reformers Charles Booth and

²⁰¹ Commission des enfants trouvés, *Travaux*, 1, p. 366.

²⁰² C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, 1851, p. 227.

²⁰³ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, pp. 67-68.

²⁰⁴ See the dozen claim forms dating September to December 1850 in AMN Q5C15D2. These give daily or yearly figures. It is problematic to extrapolate yearly or monthly income from daily income and vice versa, since most workers cannot be assumed to have been in continuous employment throughout the year.

Joseph Rowntree from the 1880s onwards, Alan Gillie argues that English school boards had already applied an equivalent notion in the early 1870s.²⁰⁵ In France, effective poverty thresholds had been developed in official industrial studies in 1848. Thus the 'Enquête du 25 mai 1848 sur le travail industriel et agricole, cantons de Saint-Genest-Malifaux et Bourg-Argental' found that a family of four required a minimum of 500 francs per year.²⁰⁶ The parliamentary commission that in 1849 and 1850 studied the issue of foundlings and assisted children was more precise. In his report, Adolphe Thiers informed the commission that a poor family required 124.25 francs per person per year, or 34 centimes daily per capita.²⁰⁷ These calculations seem to have had an impact on local policy. Thus, single mothers living in Rennes and earning 20 francs in monthly wages were considered above the poverty line, able to support themselves and their child without help.²⁰⁸

With these paltry amounts, most lived in extreme poverty and either left their children alone all day or had to pay 6 or 10 francs per month to someone even poorer to mind the child. In 1864, the foundling inspector of the Loire-Atlantique commented that the children of *filles-mères* were generally well, in particular those raised by their mothers or by rural wet-nurses. 'The least favoured are those left to urban women' who were 'atrociously destitute and in the impossibility of giving the children all the cares they would need'. Given the poverty of the involved, 'you will understand to which rank of society one if forced to go to seek these supposed wet-nurses'. The inspector asserted that there was no remedy. 'One cannot

²⁰⁵ Alan Gillie, 'The origin of the poverty line', *Economic History Review*, 49/4 (1996), pp. 715-730.

²⁰⁶ Quoted in: James Lehning, 'Family life and wetnursing in a French village', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 12/4 (1982), p. 650.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in: Paul Dartiguenave, 'Les enfants trouvés, une histoire immorale?: L'exemple du Calvados', *Cahier des annales de Normandie*, 13 (1981), pp. 124-125.

²⁰⁸ AMR. 5Q20. Letter of 7 March 1883.

demand a poor girl, who already deducts from her extremely low wages the complement for her child's boarding, to send her child to an affluent *nourrice*'. But he tried to elicit sympathy for himself, given the 'moral calamities to which are exposed the eyes of the Inspector charged with watching over the poor creatures whom the departmental administration takes under its protection'. Indeed, he argued that this part of his work 'is the hardest'.²⁰⁹

Morally, my task is also arduous, because I must penetrate hovels of a repulsive aspect and often fight against vice and the most deplorable instincts; because it would be a deceiving utopia to think that the succours granted operate a miraculous metamorphosis over all those who receive it.²¹⁰

In its implementation, the repressive new system was able to reduce abandonment to negligible figures while offering relief to a small but stable portion of the former clients of the *tours*. This led to immense savings, since, as one 1860 report made plain, to help a *fille-mère* cost six times less than to provide for a foundling or assisted child for twelve years.²¹¹ But few unwed mother received help. In this respect, the department of Ille-et-Vilaine was representative. Under a system of free abandonment between 1801 and 1846, 19 per cent of illegitimate children were recognized by a parent in the Breton department and the rest, a yearly average of 433, were abandoned in the *tour*. The new policy impeded virtually all abandonments while aiding only about 100 of the single mothers.²¹² The same was the case in other departments and nationally. Thus, under the new policy in France, only about a quarter of poor unwed mothers met the behavioural and

²⁰⁹ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, *Session de 1864* (Nantes, 1864), pp. 57-58.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 70.

²¹² C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, 1848, pp. 17, 129-132. Abandonments averaged 20 per year from the late 1840s to 1870.

financial requirements to qualify for assistance.²¹³ While there is no indication in the administrative sources to explain this quantitative tendency, it was likely derived from the classification of illegitimate mothers offered in 1839 by de Gérando, whereby

From the point of view of morals (*mœurs*), women [who have conceived out of wedlock] can be classified as follows: a fourth have been seduced by marriage promises, etc., and can be brought back to the good path; a fourth already disposed to surrender to debauchery, but that one could perhaps bring back also; half composed of more or less perverted women, but towards which all attempts would be futile.²¹⁴

In line with the moralizing aims of assistance to single mothers, the administration would thus have focused only on the portion of them believed to be susceptible to reform. However, despite this prudence, a large enough number of those assisted was later found to be unsuitable so as to lead the prefect of the Loire-Atlantique in 1851 to qualify the programme as a failure. The assistance was not aimed primarily at their indigence, but rather sought moral rehabilitation through maternity and ‘an existence that is henceforth honest and exclusively consecrated to the upbringing (*éducation*) and the needs of their child’. Unfortunately, not all had realized ‘the hopes of the administration’. Some had further illegitimate children, meaning that their conduct was ‘a perpetual disorder’; others lived in a

²¹³ In Haute-Alpes, the 108 foundling admissions of 1840 were reduced to five in 1843 and one the following year. 28 single mothers received assistance. T. Curel, *Parti à prendre sur la question des enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1845), p. 129. In the Corrèze, following strong fluctuations in the late 1830s and 1840s, some 200 women on average were aided in the 1850s, while the number of foundlings had averaged one thousand in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Elisabeth Barge-Meschenmoser, *L'administration préfectorale en Corrèze, 1800-1848* (Limoges, 2000), p. 253 and see the relevant departmental proceedings for the 1850s. Nationwide, 8,072 filles-mères were receiving aid in 1849, which was about a fourth of the number of abandonments at its height 15 years earlier. Rollet, *Politique à l'égard*, p. 64.

²¹⁴ De Gérando, *Bienfaisance publique*, 1, p. 353.

state of *concubinage*.²¹⁵ This further increased the downward trend in assisted mothers, which had fallen every year in the department from 284 in 1848 to 134 in 1851.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, the inspector, who had ended the last two fiscal years with a surplus in the assisted children budget totalling a saving of over four thousand francs in 1851, received a bonus.²¹⁷ These concerns over abuses and raising costs became common in the 1840s and 1850s, leading to an increasingly repressive system. While the administration succeeded in significantly limiting abandonment, the predominantly moral aims of the policies involved were unsuccessful.

And yet, the programme succeeded in a way few cared to notice. Nineteenth-century assistance was a fundamentally urban phenomenon. Rural assistance only became a matter of discussion in the late 1880s.²¹⁸ And yet, the masses of foundlings pouring out from cities into the countryside tended to be concentrated in very specific rural regions. The Yonne was part of the large area that, in addition to its own abandoned children, received foundlings from the three departments in the Paris region. Anne Cadoret has estimated that in 1861 the number of assisted children represented up to 62 per cent of the local youth in some villages.²¹⁹ This meant that the most utopian experiment of governmental guardianship was carried out in these villages where virtually all households depended on administrative intervention. The nature of this administrative intervention tended

²¹⁵ AMN. Q5C15D3. 'Suppression des secours aux filles-mères'. Letter of 5 February 1851 from the prefect to the mayor of Nantes.

²¹⁶ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, 1852, p. 69.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72

²¹⁸ Georges Picot, *Rapport sur l'assistance publique dans les campagnes* (Paris, 1888); Émile Chevallier, *De l'assistance dans les campagnes: indigence, prévoyance, assistance* (Paris, 1889); G. Saunois de Chevert, *L'indigence et l'assistance dans les campagnes depuis 1789 jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1889).

²¹⁹ Quoted in: Marie-Laure Las Vergnas, *Histoire de l'Agence d'Avallon des enfants assistés de la Seine* (Paris, 2012), p. 55.

to focus on very basic domestic issues, the most important of which were the use of fireguards and individual beds. In the Loire-Atlantique, the inspector complained of rural houses being too small and the 'lack of concern of country folk for the moral and physical dangers of beds shared by several individuals of different sexes and ages'. Demanding individual beds, as the regulation did, proved troublesome, since 'wet-nurses often prefer to give up the foundlings, rather than do something for them that they do not do for their own children'. But beyond these small but crucially individualizing domestic improvements, the administration was promoting a small family model. Foundlings were to be placed in households with no more than three or four children, but the ideal was 'placing an orphan in a house where there are no other children'. This allowed for more intensive and emotional parenting, 'not only avoids the inconveniences of agglomerations, but also finds guardians who get attached to him, often keeping him beyond the period of payment, and occasionally adopting or endowing him'.²²⁰ Equally, the administration promoted a certain vision of intensive mothering. For example, foster parents were not to be old, for it was argued that 'raising a child is a lot more difficult than one generally thinks'. Old women not only had archaic prejudices but 'they do not have the health or force necessary to provide their foundlings with the thousand cares that they demand'.²²¹ While the state did very little for the health, education and social opportunities of the children under its direct care until the Third Republic, and even then groomed them to fill only the lowest ranks of society, the main concern behind policies on abandonment and child welfare seemed to have been the promotion of the modern domestic ideal.

²²⁰ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, 1864, p. 55.

²²¹ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, *Session d'août 1883* (Nantes, 1883), p. 519.

In the Corrèze, the last remaining *tour*, in Tulle, was finally closed in 1857. Despite having been heavily policed since 1839, its closure led to a three-fold increase in assisted unmarried mothers. The prefect, suspecting abuses and ‘struck by the number of succoured children’ that could not be explained by the extension of aid from 15 months to three years, ordered an investigation into admissions. Of the 233 applications of the last year, only 42 were turned down, owing to recidivism or sufficient income. Suspecting abuses and seeking to keep expenses under control, a new criteria was introduced: ‘that the *filles-mères* breastfeed their children themselves, except in exceptional cases in which they would be authorized to send them to a wet-nurse following the recommendation of the inspector. One would better attach them by this means to the sentiment of maternity; closer bonds would be formed between them and their children; one would finally protect them against new deviations’.²²² The suggestion was very well received in the *Conseil Général*, since ‘the foremost protection owed to the child is breastfeeding, the bosom of the mother’.²²³ While there was no way in which this measure would have been compatible with extra-domestic work commitments of the recipients and could only have promoted that children be left unattended, these women became the testing grounds for a new understanding of motherhood that was becoming increasingly tied to specific functions rather than vague natural instincts. Breastfeeding not only implied the mother’s direct and intensive care of the child, but more importantly domestic cohabitation. Sending the child to a wet-nurse no longer counted as appropriate parenting.

²²² C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1860* (Tulle, 1860), pp. 81-82.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Saving children.

In 1868, the Ille-et-Vilaine founding inspector, Pierre Bellamy, came across a disturbing finding. The advances in medical services provided to assisted children had made death rates plummet. From 1861 to 1870, mortality for all assisted children in the department (either abandoned or under the care of a single mother) had averaged 19.5 per cent for those under the age of one. And that was despite the fact that due to the lack of wet-nurses in Brittany, virtually all were bottle-fed and thus in greater danger. But illegitimate children of the same age ‘over which no surveillance is exercised’ died at a rate of 66 per cent.²²⁴ The department was then only aiding one fifth of all illegitimate children.²²⁵ This shifted things radically in the inspector’s eyes. While the problem had until then focused on those mothers seeking aid, it now turned to those the administration ignored. Bellamy suspected criminal intentions on behalf of these mothers. *Filles-mères* in extreme poverty, even when they were assured to obtain monetary aid and clothes, refused to apply, he argued ‘so as to avoid the surveillance and especially the inquiry made in case of death’ of the child.²²⁶ The inspector convinced the prefect to solicit from all mayors the list of illegitimate children in their locality. But the measure was declared illegal. ‘The administration does not have the right, regardless of how praiseworthy its end may be, to meddle in the search and verification of illegitimate births and penetrate thus in the private lives and secrets of families’.²²⁷ Such information could only be obtained if the woman applied for aid. A commission was appointed for the subject and recommended

²²⁴ C.G. d’Ille-et Vilaine, 1871 (Rennes, 1871), pp. 201, 219-220 ; 2e session de 1872 (Rennes, 1872), p. 350.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 351.

²²⁶ C.G. d’Ille-et Vilaine, Session d’aout 1882 (Rennes, 1882), p. 486.

²²⁷ C.G. d’Ille-et Vilaine, 1871, p. 201.

multiplying the amount of women assisted, even if they had more than one illegitimate child, but they had to be the ones to ask for the succour.

In 1870, the death rates of assisted children further dropped to just over 16 per cent. The following year, it was just below 13.5 per cent.²²⁸ According to the 1869 census data, the mortality figure for children under the age of one in the general population was 17.6 for both Ille-et-Vilaine and France. Shockingly, it meant that the children of the poorest, most stigmatized and marginal women, when subjected to a light administrative supervision and periodical medical visits, were outliving the rest. The content of these visits we would not class as medical today, but rather as related to cleanliness and hygiene. One medical inspector for foundlings opined: 'Vigilance towards the application of the rules of hygiene in food, clothing and housing, such is the threefold perspective that, in my eyes, must guide the medical inspection'.²²⁹ It seemed that this basic hygienic monitoring 'outperformed' the most naturally gifted mothers.

This was a turning point in the understanding of assistance. Poverty increasingly gave way to more general social problems, which in turn could gradually be imagined as a technical issue, unrelated to personal or moral considerations. Money was equally not the problem. The success of medical and administrative guardianship in reducing child mortality confirmed the approach of nineteenth-century philanthropy that favoured advice over material assistance. But rather than moralizing advice, what was needed was scientific guidance not only for the poor, but also for everyone. But, to the frustration of the medical profession, there

²²⁸ C.G. d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 1872, p. 351.

²²⁹ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, *Session d'août 1882* (Nantes, 1882), p. 534.

was too much opposition to direct intervention into family homes. In 1874, the Théophile Roussel law extended state and medical protection to all children being raised by 'mercenary' hands, targeting specifically legitimate children raised outside the home by wet-nurses. The medical supervision consisted in having wet-nurses take their foster children to the doctor's surgery where these were assessed and always weighed in order to keep track of their progression. Doctors reported that wet-nurses and assisted mothers not only complied, but 'are currently interested with the greatest attention in the periodic weighing of their babies'. They developed 'a sort of envy among them' that worked to the child's benefit.²³⁰

At the time of the Roussel law, the notion of medical supervision of children and the technology of weighing were no older than a decade. In the mid 1860s, medical experts such as doctor Paul Lorain, professor of medicine in Paris, were putting forward a new vision of medicalized childcare that focused on feeding. This is plain in Lorain's entry in an 1864 medical dictionary on the topic of *allaitement* or lactation, which included natural lactation or breastfeeding, artificial lactation or bottle-feeding, and the recommended mixture of both. 'The times of grand utopian philosophies is passed' and the masses now resisted the seductions of the likes of Rousseau, he wrote, whose romantic views on breastfeeding had been relegated to the 'curiosités de l'histoire'.²³¹ Bottle-feeding was a necessary supplement to the breast that the child's appetite, 'l'instinct des mères' and 'physical or social' causes rendered 'indispensable'. Given time, work or health constraints, most women were unable to properly nurse a child without the bottle. It was in lactation,

²³⁰ C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, *Session d'août 1909* (Rennes, 1909), pp. 613-614, 617-618, 642.

²³¹ Paul Lorain, 'Allaitement', in: Sigismond Jaccoud (ed.) *Nouveau dictionnaire de médecine et de chirurgie pratiques*, I (Paris, 1864), p. 729.

regardless of its type, he argued, that 'l'instinct de la maternité is shown in all its activity'. This reflected the shift in the essence of mothering from her morality and 'nature' to the wellbeing of the child, now as specifically defined by nurture. This defined mothering as a specific function: making sure through unwavering attentiveness and medicalized supervision that the child was always well fed. Medicalized care was imagined as superfluous for rural mothers, since the countryside naturally produced vigorous children. But somehow when these same women nursed the children of urban women, the infants were 'almost fatally predestined to an imperfect development'. Medicalization was thought of as necessary, in turn, for urban dwellers, naturally predisposed to illness, especially for working-class mothers and the wet-nurses boarding in bourgeois homes. Without the doctor's oversight, there developed among urban carers the 'pernicious practice of a lactation that is more apparent than real, that serves better the softness or vanity of a mother who is penetrated by her worldly duties or obligations, than the interest of the child, an innocent victim who finds his natural advocate in the [medical] doctor'.²³² The focus on feeding also decentred the specificity of the mother and left room for the function to be delegated to surrogate carers, as was the case in bourgeois households. Lorain did not distinguish among carers. Instead of referring to mothers, Lorain's text spoke of the mothering subject as 'la nourrice', the term that could apply for 'mercenary' wet-nurses, guardians and carers, which simply meant the feeder, the one who nurses, the one who carried out the essential function of the mother.

²³² Ibid., pp. 722, 730-731, 736.

Other than enforcing 'the rules of hygiene', medical supervision specifically came down to one act: weighing the baby, as the basis of diagnostic assessment.

It is above all by the appearance of the child, by the progress of his development, that one judges the qualities of his nurse (*nourrice*). One thus judges the cause by the effect. Little attention is still given to the progressive weight of infants in the initial periods following birth; this would be the best means of control. A strong and well-constituted child, if he has a good nurse (*nourrice*), may gain 300 grams of weight weekly, or more.²³³

The absence of such gains signalled negligent and ignorant care. Lorain argued that just as 'you can tell an artist by his work', the changing states of the child's body defined the quality of his or her mother(ing).²³⁴ Mothering had consequently been reduced to a function whose performance could be measured precisely in grams. The difference between a good or bad mother was now objective. Instead of a creation of 'nature', the mother had become a technology for the production of child welfare, which in turn could only be defined and assessed by the medical gaze.

At the turn of the century, these initiatives of medical supervision, first tested on welfare recipients and extended to those nursed outside the home in 1874, would be rolled out to the general population through infant welfare centres and milk dispensaries. The aim was to 'cause all the *mères de famille* without exception to come and follow the advice of the medical-inspectors'.²³⁵ But since the law could not compel them, the problem was no longer how to keep the needy from applying for aid through discipline and constraints, but rather how to lure mothers into

²³³ Ibid., p. 728.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 731.

²³⁵ C.G. d'Ille-et Vilaine, *Session de septembre 1912* (Rennes, 1912), p. 590.

these centres. The staff were trained to seem comprehensive and accessible. Sometimes women were given an incentive such as a one-franc piece, a kilo of meat or four to five kilos of bread in exchange for taking the child to be weighed every week; for others there were awards and Christmas or Easter events.²³⁶ There was a brief experiment with using baby pageants as an enticement. Imported from the United States where these contests emerged in mid-century, they became very popular spectacles in France in the 1890s and 1900s.²³⁷ But it quickly got out of the hands of doctors.²³⁸ 'Each arrondissement has wanted to have its own baby exhibit'. The medical profession denounced some entrepreneurs in the field for profiteering and the epidemic risks of the agglomerations. But above all, the medical excitement with weighing babies weekly, together with a populationist beauty standard that celebrated plump children, meant that some mothers had started fattening their young: 'nobody ignores the preparation process of *foi gras*'. Force-feeding was the logical result of the grave confusion between appearance and health that such events bred, a confusion derived from the unlearned claiming a vantage point from where to assess child wellbeing which bypassed the medical expert. It was claimed that several children had died immediately after winning baby pageants. Doctors, it was recommended at the start of the new century, should start promoting the *effort* of childrearing rather than valuing it through measurement.²³⁹

²³⁶ E. Ausset, 'Le bilan des consultations de nourrissons et des gouttes de lait', *Revue philanthropique*, xxiv (1909), pp. 564-614.

²³⁷ AMR.5Q20. Société d'hygiène de l'enfance: Concours de bébés, 1892-1904.

²³⁸ In the 1920s a similar situation would happen with the development of regionalist festivities which quickly escaped the limits the regionalist and cultural elites had in mind. Patrick Young, 'Fashioning heritage: Regional costume and tourism in Brittany, 1890-1937', *Journal of Social History*, 42/3 (2009), p. 643.

²³⁹ Adolfo Scander Levi, 'Communication sur les concours à prix entre les parents...', in: William Chance, *Report of the Proceedings of the Third International Congress for the Welfare and Protection of Children* (London, 1902), pp. 318-336.

For Bellamy and inspectors in other departments, the 1870s was a period of increased activity following the 1870 war. With the new decade came a new language and energy into the service. While depicting single mothers as victims of poverty and seduction in need of help, regardless of their number of ‘faults’, they were gradually able to dismiss financial considerations for the interests and lives of the children they administered, rather than the conduct of the mother.²⁴⁰ ‘We carry out assistance with the heart and we apply the spirit rather than the letter of the regulation’.²⁴¹ With these arguments and encouragement from Paris they sought to elicit the support and funding of the Conseils Généraux for a new generous understanding of public assistance. Bellamy kept pushing for an expansion in the service. Assistance to *filles-mères*, he argued, should be given for ten rather than three years.²⁴² In 1874, he proposed extending aid to legitimate children, and by 1881 383 were benefiting, although lack of funding restricted this to large families after 1893.²⁴³ Indre-et-Loire in 1873 is also an example of this dramatic expansion of assistance to unwed mothers. The background and morality check for one *filles* Dallières who was granted aid was based on the good references given by her own mother.²⁴⁴ One Pelletereau was granted aid for two years based on the recommendation of her local mayor who noted that ‘In Amboise she is known as having had guilty relations only with a young soldier, her neighbour, who has promised to marry her as soon as he is freed from service, which will be

²⁴⁰ Ory, *La protection*, pp. 139, 146, 179.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

²⁴² C.G. d’Ille-et-Vilaine, 1871, pp. 219-227; 1872, p. 149.

²⁴³ Laurence Léonard, ‘Les enfants assistés et le Conseil général de la Gironde sous la IIIe République, 1870-1914’, MA Dissertation, Université de Bordeaux 1 (Bordeaux, 1993), p. 53.

²⁴⁴ A[rchives] D[épartementales d’]I[ndre-et-]L[oire]. 3X230. August 1873. Only files dated between June and September 1873 seemed to have survived, but these show this expansive trend.

soon. Her antecedents are thus satisfactory'.²⁴⁵ One née Huguet was recognized as having bad conduct, but was nonetheless assisted for five years on account of the infirmities of her child and the expenses incurred in his treatment.²⁴⁶ While these cases would have been scandalous a decade before, the Indre-et-Loire was not an exception in its generous approach. In the Seine, the number of assisted *filles-mères* went from 25,208 in 1872, to 38,962 in 1873.²⁴⁷

This drive for enlargement was only curbed by the budgetary paucity of some Conseils Généraux. A dramatic case of this was the conservative department of Loire-Atlantique. Together with men like Eugène Ory in the Loire, H. Pallu was part of a new cohort of young, republican inspectors. After being appointed in 1879, Pallu became notorious for his shameless budgetary deficits. With the discrete support of the prefect, he exceeded funding every year and, when called to order by the Conseil Général, he would propose further expansions, especially a medical service that did not yet exist, and even higher budgets. To the horrified representatives who had convened him for a disciplinary hearing, one of whom had been in the chamber since 1852 and reminisced about the days when the budget was 50,000, Pallu proposed in effect a doubling of the foundling budget between 1879 and 1882, from 140,000 to 274,000 francs, while adding that new deficits were to be expected due to the harsh winter.²⁴⁸ In turn, inspector Belhache, appointed in l'Eure in 1860, was typical of his mid-century colleagues. He received very good commendations from the prefects until 1881, when a general inspection came from Paris. It was found that his books were kept immaculately, but he had

²⁴⁵ Ibid. August-September 1873.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Rollet, *Politique a l'égard*, p. 64.

²⁴⁸ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, 1881, pp. 369-393.

visited only a twelfth of the children in the last six months. His overriding concern was to economize public funds, even by cutting transport costs. He retired in 1883, giving way to a younger inspector who followed Paris in constantly pushing for new measures in the years of budgetary expansion following the Ferry laws on free, public education.²⁴⁹ But these years also revived the old ghost of the *tours*.

Revisiting the *tours*.

In 1876, in the middle of these developments, André-Théodore Brochard successfully re-launched the *tours* debate with a highly provocative and combative book. Brochard was one of the Catholic doctors who in the mid 1860s had published statistical studies about the enormous impact of wet-nursing and bottle-feeding on infant mortality. These studies translated immediately into a series of campaigns and the creation of Sociétés protectrices de l'enfance across the country. After having found that basic medical supervision halved death rates, these associations highlighted the need for state and medical intervention in favour of a reformed understanding of mothering centred on breast-feeding, and marked the birth of modern child-saving initiatives. Banking on his reputation as a child-welfare expert, Brochard now launched a fierce attack on the founding system. While sparing the Parisian service, his wrath particularly targeted his former employer, the department of the Rhône, which, he claimed, had subjected him to a series of reprisals for speaking 'the truth', including the attempt to strip him of the *Légion d'honneur* distinction granted to him a quarter of a century earlier. Brochard had a knack for spectacle; his book wove together a tale of state

²⁴⁹ De Luca, *Aux origines*, pp. 56-59.

conspiracy, while his public speaking engagements in favour of breastfeeding were filled with graphic tales of tragic deaths in the hands of ignorant wet-nurses and horrific statements: 'it shall suffice for us to say that the mother who does not nurse her child willingly *doubles* or *triples* the chances of him dying'.²⁵⁰

He repeated all the Catholic attacks and solutions of old, to which he added the absolute need to organize the foundling system on medical grounds with an extensive system of health inspections. This was an important argument, since by the mid 1860s the Malthusian qualms over overpopulation had given way to the fears of depopulation, exacerbated by the 1870 defeat to Germany.²⁵¹ Fluent in the use of both quantitative and dramatic qualitative data, Brochard was now able to confirm an increase in infanticides that Catholics had suspected for four decades. Furthermore, he denounced how foundlings suffered an appalling lack of good wet-nurses, vaccinations, medical supervision, food, opportunities and education; in fact, most of the children raised by the departments were illiterate.²⁵² The children of assisted *filles-mères*, he argued, had it even worse and lived in extreme poverty, were unsupervised by the authorities and doctors, their mortality rates were twice or thrice that of abandoned children and, since illegitimate children were not admitted into nurseries, they were left alone at home all day while the mother worked. However, he did not object to *filles-mères* keeping their children, but argued that it had to be their choice rather than an official imposition.²⁵³ The biggest fault of the system, he argued, were the inspectors who had exclusive

²⁵⁰ André-Théodore Brochard, *De l'amour maternelle* (Lyon, 1872), p. 5.

²⁵¹ Yves Charbit located this shift between 1856 and 1866, see: *Du malthusianisme au populationnisme: Les économistes français et la population, 1840-1870* (Paris, 1981).

²⁵² Brochard, *La vérité sur les enfants trouvés* (Paris, 1876), pp. 21-22.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 239-268.

control of the foundling system with no local or legal accountability; indeed, the department assemblies that funded the programme had no oversight and could only receive information of the service from the inspector himself. Nobody inspected the inspectors, he claimed. Brochard documented the profound indolence, lies, false statistics and lack of transparency of these delegates of the prefect in the hands of the minister of the interior. Himself a correspondent for the journal *La décentralisation*, the greatest fault Brochard found in this, as had been the case with most of the Catholic authors who had participated in the old debate, was the progressive substitution since the 1830s of assemblies of charitable local notables in the foundling and hospital administration for a single Parisian agent.²⁵⁴

Dr Brochard's supporters in the Senate brought his findings to the floor, leading to a new round of national consultations on the topic of the *tours*. These consultations and the debates they provoked, however, showed that a significant shift had taken place in the previous decade. There no longer was a confrontation between liberals and Catholics, indeed, the old positions no longer made sense. Instead a common ground had emerged: abandonment had to be free, but without a return to the past.

Brochard was warmly received at the liberal Société d'économie politique. Members readily admitted that 'it is very true that this suppression [of the *tours*] seems to have risen the number of infanticides' and they criticized assistance to single mothers as a 'negligible succours that represents a third or a quarter of the

²⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 29-32.

expenses of the child'.²⁵⁵ Frédéric Passy, one of the most respected liberal economists of his time, vigorously called for a law on seduction and admitted that 'une sorte de *demi-tour*' was needed, meaning that secret abandonment was necessary in a lot of cases.²⁵⁶

When the issue was discussed in the Conseil Général de la Seine, the approach was the same; the faults Brochard had brought to light were readily admitted and condemned, but his solutions were quickly dismissed. There was a desire to receive abandoned children with open arms from anyone who could not raise them.

It matters little from the point of view of results that families be disinterested in their children and abandon them; on the contrary, it is fortunate that capable fathers and mothers, so long as they are not forced, commit such an act and leave their little children to the department's charge, because they would not have been able to themselves to make of them honest citizens.²⁵⁷

The concern with personal responsibility of the previous decades had made way for collective interests. An attempt would still be made to try and have the mother keep the child in exchange for aid, but it was pointed out that the administration needed to be able to remove the child in case of negligence. The Conseil voted to receive children under a *bureau-ouvert* system, open all day and night. Under this arrangement, secrecy and anonymity could be guaranteed while also allowing officials to offer aid and intervene in abandonment cases.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Arthur Mangin, 'Les discussions de la Société d'économie politique', *L'économiste français* (13 October 1877), p. 459.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

²⁵⁷ Conseil Général de la Seine, *Session d'octobre-novembre 1878* (Paris, 1878), p. 512.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

On a national basis, there had been a tendency to allow free abandonment in the 1870s, while by 1883 the *bureau-ouvert* was already being called 'the current system'.²⁵⁹ All restrictions to abandonment were lifted in 1886, although the law only reflected this in 1904.²⁶⁰ These changes were part of a more profound transformation of the nineteenth-century family that took place at the turn of the century. Among many other measures, divorce was reinstated in 1884, children were allowed to marry without paternal consent at age 21 in 1907, paternity searches were allowed if the father was unmarried in 1912, while in the interim illegitimate children gained inheritance rights and women gained the capacity to legally represent the family and control her earnings.²⁶¹ Family was quickly becoming a voluntary affair.

As a result of free abandonment, maternity became detached from biology and became a free choice for any woman. And at the same time the possibility of non-biological kinship opened up for their abandoned children.²⁶² Ivan Jablonka has shown how the language used between foundlings and their foster families changed in the fin de siècle. From at least the 1890s, the novelty was that these started using terms and behaviours of family affection and biological affiliation.²⁶³

'Nature' was no longer a sufficient condition for parenting, and as the twentieth century progressed the task of the mother in particular would come to be seen as a

²⁵⁹ Ory, *La protection*, p. 159.

²⁶⁰ Fuchs, *Abandoned Children*, p. 57;

²⁶¹ Lloyd Bonfield, 'European family law', in: David Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli (eds), *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1789-1913* (New Haven, 2002), pp. 140-142; Remi Lenoir, *Généalogie de la morale familiale* (Paris, 2003), p. 185.

²⁶² The adoption of minors was not legal in France until 1923, and remained impractical until 1939. The conditions were so strict that only wealthy bourgeois families met them. So paid foster parents and their foundling child formed 'administrative' rather than legal families.

²⁶³ Jablonka, *Ni père ni mère*, pp. 98-106.

semi-professional occupation. As we will see in the next chapter, parenting became increasingly understood as a technique that experts could apply in schools and other institutions.

The reverse side of this tendency was to make biological parenthood conditional on performance. An 1889 law further expanded in 1898 enabled the state to deprive parents of their children's custody. Once again, the practice had become common long before then. While there was no legal basis for this, officials were able to 'persuade' mothers to abandon. Vagabonds were particularly targeted. This was the case of Estelle Maître-Jean, a vagrant and a registered prostitute in Rennes, where the police were also asked to investigate vagabond Marie Junot and 'give their opinion on the inconveniences that there could be in leaving her child in his mother's care'. The death of the child stopped the inquiry.²⁶⁴ Thus in the fin de siècle, parenthood was no longer understood within the framework of sacred property rights and obligations. Instead, the family was a social function which individuals were free to pursue, while the state and society gained the ability to regulate the domestic sphere as it did other social functions. Thus the family joined other domains governed *through* freedom, in which free and voluntary choices were inseparable from liability over conduct and performance.

The tension Brochard had emphasized between the inspectors appointed from Paris and local notables could also be quickly dispelled. A zero-sum view of central-local and administrative-private power had been gradually giving way to a multiplication of social authorities under the institutional axis of the state. After it

²⁶⁴ AMR. 5Q20. Documents dated May, August, September 1879.

was recommended in 1847 by inspector de Watteville, there was a timid attempt to build a support network of charitable workers to complement the administrative supervision of the assisted. Local *visiteurs, visiteuses* and ‘comités de surveillance et de patronage’ were to take on the exclusively affectionate and charitable dimension of welfare, mostly visiting and encouraging foundlings periodically, without affecting policy or having any responsibilities. ‘To see, to listen, to advice, to encourage: that is what the Administration demands of your zeal’.²⁶⁵ This often implied siding with the administration against the local notables of the hospital and beneficence boards. In 1860, the prefect of the Ille-et-Vilaine hoped to create these committees and encouraged local priests to make foundlings the object of their charitable attentions.²⁶⁶ Few of these initiatives were put in place or lasted very long.

By the 1880s this changed. Bellamy boasted excellent results with his assisted children owing to a new form of surveillance, an ‘authority that is exercised in so many ways and at every instant’. Foundlings and assisted children were not only subject to the attention of the departmental inspector and his medical staff.

In the towns they are the object of an incessant surveillance on the part of the authority, which appears not only in the persons of inspectors, but that multiplies itself in all forms, in the person of the priest, the mayor, the teacher [and] of the village police officer even: finally anyone who has an authority can correct and advise them and inform us about it.²⁶⁷

It had become possible to imagine a single authority in society that could be embodied in any authoritative person with no conflict. *Who* held legitimate power

²⁶⁵ C.G. de la Corrèze, *Session de 1851* (Tulle, 1851), p. 315.

²⁶⁶ C.G. d’Ille-et Vilaine, *1860*, p. 123.

²⁶⁷ C.G. de la Loire-Inférieure, *1882*, p. 434.

was no longer the issue. The focus shifted from the exercise of power to the productivity of its outcomes and utility. Previous understandings of power, either the command of the patriarch or the functional guardianship of the parent, had still relied on an authority understood as an exclusive possession. Throughout most of the century, debating social reform or decentralization implied a confrontation between private and public or local and national agency. This either-or opposition tended to loosen as the twentieth century approached. This may be contextualized within the wider shift from rights and sovereignty to function that Donzelot has analysed for the second half of the century.²⁶⁸ In matters of social and family reform, the multiplication of authorities came to populate the 'void' between the individual and the state or governors and the governed with a dense capillary network of relays or points of non-exclusive and functional authority. Moreover, this was an understanding of authority that did not necessitate the paternal analogy. Sylvia Schafer has shown how the 1874 law on child labour established for the first time a clear distinction between the roles of the parents and the employers of children. 'Employers could no longer be trusted to fulfil "paternal" functions where their young workers were concerned'.²⁶⁹ As distinctly social and institutional functions emerged, claims to social authority could no longer depend on the duplication of paternal roles.

Increasingly this multiplication of authorities came to include private charity. Colette Bec has argued that from 1886 the close collaboration between the mostly Catholic charitable sector and the welfare administration was an essential piece of

²⁶⁸ Jacques Donzelot, *L'invention du social* (Paris, 1984).

²⁶⁹ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, p. 51.

the republican project.²⁷⁰ Despite the bitter divisions on ideological and religious grounds at the fin de siècle, Topalov and Bec have shown how 1900 represented the golden age of this search for collaboration.²⁷¹ A new partnership was able to advance a social vision in which secular and religious or impersonal and interpersonal forms of welfare were fully compatible under republican legality. Charitable religious groups in this period exceeded the boundaries of their community of faith. The beneficiaries of French Jewish and Protestant charity gradually expanded beyond their original confessional lines to the point of largely blending in with secularised assistance. Catholicism underwent a similar process, with fundamentally lay works that operated beyond religious exclusivity or with personal voluntary engagement in the 'terrain laïc'.²⁷² Indeed, it was Catholics who spearheaded the pan-charitable, non-religious ideal of beneficent organisation and collaboration, most notably in the Parisian *Office central des oeuvres de bienfaisance* and its equivalent in Bordeaux.²⁷³

Therefore, in the field of social assistance, there was a clear shift towards what Pierre Rosanvallon has termed the Network state, consisting of the integration of associations and intermediate bodies into a complex vision of 'society'. In this respect, he mentioned two of the forms this integration took: 'First, associations

²⁷⁰ Colette Bec, *Assistance et République: La recherche d'un nouveau contrat social sous la IIIe République* (Paris, 1994), p. 143.

²⁷¹ Ibid.; Bec, 'Deux congrès internationaux d'assistance, Paris, 1889-1900: Temps forts des rapports public-privé', in: Bec, Duprat, Jean-Noël Luc and Jacques-Guy Petit (eds) *Philanthropies et politiques sociales en Europe, XVIIIe-XXe siècles* (Paris, 1994), pp. 145-157; Christian Topalov, 'Langage de la réforme et déni du politique: Le débat entre assistance publique et bienfaisance privée, 1889-1903', *Genèses*, 23 (1996), pp. 30-52.

²⁷² Sandra Dab, 'La philanthropie laïque: Facteur d'intégration des juifs sous la IIIe République', in: Bec, Duprat, Luc and Petit (eds) *Philanthropies*, pp. 105-112.

²⁷³ Steven M. Beaudoin, "'A Neutral Terrain.'" Public Assistance, Private Charity, and The State in Third Republic Bordeaux, 1870-1914', Ph.D. Dissertation, Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, 1996), pp. 221-222.

and intermediate bodies were co-opted as political agents of the monist republican vision. Second, they became functional auxiliaries of the state'.²⁷⁴

There no longer was a contradiction between the authority of the *patron* that was based on patriarchal love and Christian charity and that of the secular administrator or expert that relied on an impersonal and technocratic vision of society. *Institutions* were able to end the zero-sum game of power between the state and the individual and unite the notions of traditional authority and modern guardianship. If power rested in society at large, then it neither belonged to the individual nor the state. The word institution only gained its current meaning in the fin de siècle; before then its use was very loose. Thus in 1799 liberal thinker Germaine de Staël took social institutions to refer to equality and liberty.²⁷⁵ Around 1900, the modern sense of the word institution was already being used, as will be seen in the following chapter. It implied a regulated and hierarchical structure of relations in which personality and impersonality could be made compatible. In institutions, impersonal functions remained unaffected by the personality of its holder, while the individual could not be reduced to his or her institutional role alone. The charitable sector in France towards 1900 became highly institutionalized and organized in a vast network of local associations and societies, which were in turn organized into larger federations and bodies. This complex matrix of initiatives was able to integrate individuals regardless of their ideological or confessional views. Local (and often self-defined) experts and notables gradually were invested with social authority and legitimated in their

²⁷⁴ Pierre Rosanvallon, *The Demands of Liberty: Civil Society in France since the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), p. 231.

²⁷⁵ Germaine de Staël, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (Paris, 1842), p. 423.

roles as social guardians, while the disparate conglomerate of characters and initiatives served to buttress legality and the wider institutional structure of state guardianship.

In the fin de siècle, power and authority no longer depended on family analogies. Instead, the family itself came to be derived from a broader scientific rather than moral understanding. Consequently, the opposition between 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent' lost its political import as the nuclear family and domesticity came to be subsumed into 'nature' and became hegemonic.

The nuclear family.

The abbé Auguste Riche, of the order of the Saint-Supilce, was a widely read and translated scholar. With the overt endorsement of pope Pius IX, Riche dedicated his life to the combative demonstration that Christianity and the Catholic doctrine were compatible with the modern world and political and scientific developments. As for many Catholic scholars of his generation, this meant proving that Christianity was the very source of the modern individual, its liberties, and dignity, as evidenced by the contrast with the brutality of the pagan world. If Western modernity was founded on Christ, then secularism denatured it entirely, leading to the widespread ills of the day. This applied with exceptional urgency to the family, a matter on which Riche wrote much.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Auguste Riche, *Le Catholicisme considéré dans ses rapports avec la société* (Paris, 1866); *Agreement of Science and Faith upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (London, 1883).

Besides his long intellectual career, he served as an army vicar during the war with Prussia and was later appointed as a confessor to the Communards who were to face the execution squads on 25 May 1871. This odious role would however award him his fifteen minutes of fame. Shortly thereafter, he published the dramatic account of how, in the course of one of these confessions, a prisoner had revealed having placed explosives and petrol in Notre-Dame cathedral set to go off with the most pressing imminence. He was able to alert the authorities, who arrived just in time as the fire had started to consume some of the furniture. He secured a pardon for the prisoner and a name for himself in the gossip columns on both sides of the Atlantic as the man who saved Notre-Dame.

But it is perhaps a lesser-known work by the abbé Riche that can shed the most light on the modern, individualistic, nuclear family, despite being a treatise on friendship. The nuclear family was no longer the domain of one social or political group by the aftermath of the Commune, when Riche first published his treatise on friendship anonymously, showing some hesitation to avow the work, he claimed, given the frivolity of the subject at the time of the 'calamities that have shaken France down to its foundations'.²⁷⁷ The hesitation to publish under his own name could well have resulted from the fact that he had far departed from the 'traditional' family. But a warm reception, among the public and presumably the Church hierarchy, led to an extended edition that bore his name, and a third edition by 1886. This work documented the moment when French Catholics adopted the nuclear family model.

²⁷⁷ Riche, *L'amitié* (Paris, 1886), p. 1.

The first part of the book sought to provide a much-needed re-contextualization of the writings on friendship from the ancient world to the end of the Old Regime. Indeed, most historical writings on the subject would have evoked adultery in the minds of Riche's readers, for definitions like Aristotle's ('friendship is like one soul in two bodies') elicited a level of unity that the nineteenth century reserved for husband and wife.²⁷⁸

The second part of the book considered friendship almost exclusively in or through the family, the basis of which was equality.²⁷⁹ Equality of wealth and status meant that marriages driven by interest and egotism were immoral, while he argued that 'we know of nothing more monstrous' than spouses of different ages.²⁸⁰ One anonymous American reviewer of Riche's earlier work had picked up on his tendency, increasingly common in the French Catholic Church, to move away from marital and paternal authority as the basis of the family.

The abbé knows and concedes [the proper subordinate place of women], but he uses expressions which are too favorable to the Women's Rights movement, as we have sometimes found the illustrious Bishop of Orleans [Dupanloup] himself doing.²⁸¹

Now Riche took this even further by not only highlighting the importance of equality, but also by substituting authority for friendship as the foundation of domesticity.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 136-138.

²⁸¹ Anonymous, '[Review of: Riche, *The Family* (New York, 1875)]', *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, III/4 (1875), p. 477.

Friendship was central to Riche's Christian family. Since 'Year by year love grows weaker and finally disappears', only a 'superior friendship' built of devotion and sacrifice, indeed 'something more pure and calm' than love, could keep the family together.²⁸² For Riche, as for all who defended an indissoluble marriage, such an important union could not be based on the whims of love, hence this deployment of 'friendship', as a passionless, disinterested form of relating that finds in the home its most naturalized expression. In turn, love had to be channelled toward parenting. 'There is something even more ardent and tender than friendship in the heart of a father and a mother with regards to their children: there is love'.²⁸³

The domain of this love, argued Riche, was pure feminine sentimentality. While 'men of money and men of pleasure[...] do not love like the others', he narrated the case of a seasoned general, the tears running from his eyes on the eve of a great battle as he saw off his little boy. 'I am not at all surprised: this general, he was a father, and he had in his heart a whole treasure of love'.²⁸⁴ The same happened with a scientist, who in his tormented seriousness found time at night for sentiment: 'the man of science has picked up [his small son] from his bed, he is caressing and kissing him with all the precautions and the tenderness of a mother'. Then a worker had a tender encounter, following the common literary trope of coming home to his son's arms 'and the worker forgets in those caresses the worries and fatigues of the day'.²⁸⁵ The androgynous nature of parenting and domestic ties was a common theme in family literature of the fin de siècle. Literary critic and moralist Thérèse Bentzon remarked that, while the father represented

²⁸² Riche, *L'amitié*, pp. 146-147.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

authority and the mother tenderness, 'there is nothing rigorous about this division'.²⁸⁶ The mother communicated heart and gentleness to her son, 'she feminized him in the best sense of the word', while the father hardened the intelligence of his daughter, 'he makes of her an honest man, which is never damaging to an honest woman'.²⁸⁷ Riche concurred, 'it seems possible to conclude that there is something more maternal in the father's love for his daughters, and on the contrary, something more paternal in the love of a mother for her sons'.²⁸⁸ As Reid has argued, building on the de-centring of gender carried out by literary scholar Nancy Armstrong, a split occurred between gender and sex in the mid-century.²⁸⁹ In 1859 doctor P. Briquet cast hysteria as a mental condition that was no longer derived from the uterus. By translating the boundaries of this excess of female sensitivity from the body to the mind, the borders between male and female became more permeable and the indeterminate sexes and the male hysteric, later to be termed homosexual, became a medical possibility. 'The weaker the discursive differences between men and women', Reid has remarked, 'the stronger the solicitation to define, detect, and perhaps control them'.²⁹⁰ While this translated into greater stakes in social self-steering and self-policing, I would argue that for parents it carved out a new gender-neutral space in which sentimentality and emotionality gained a legitimate object and means of expression.

²⁸⁶ Thérèse Bentzon, *Causeries de morale pratique* (Paris, 1913), p. 12.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

²⁸⁸ Riche, *L'amitié*, p. 158.

²⁸⁹ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford, 1987); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Gillian Brown, *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, 1990).

²⁹⁰ Reid, *Families in Jeopardy*, pp. 59, 61.

Riche's treatment of friendship outside the family is thin. True friendship at best could be experienced at school with one's peers, which were carefully chosen by parents.²⁹¹ These childhood friendships experienced devotion 'to the danger of death for themselves'. 'The virtuous friendships of youth provide a lifetime of sweet and perfumed memories'.²⁹² But adult life left very little room for friendship. The lucky few retained their childhood friends and could see them sparingly. The rest retained only the pleased reminiscence of these bygone days. 'The father and the mother speak happily [of their childhood friends] and, even in old age, these loved memories give charm to their stories'.²⁹³ After childhood, such feelings were to be reserved for one's own children and grandchildren.

The Catholic family was no longer to be understood as a moral beacon and a bastion of virtue as it had been by the cardinal de Bonald; instead it adapted to the times and came to serve as a temporary refuge in an intimidating world. The Catholic *père de famille* could still act as a role model in the community, but his legitimacy no longer derived from his moral sovereignty and totalizing command. As the century came to an end, the *père-patron* adapted to the boundaries between the private and the public. Fatherhood within the home came to depend increasingly on emotional and egalitarian bonds and functional performance, while authority in society became a personal embodiment of an impersonal power derived from the wider institutional framework of republican legality and morality. The moral superiority of the loving Catholic patriarch no longer represented an alternative form of government of the family and society, but

²⁹¹ Riche, *L'amitié*, p. 190-191.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

rather came to be subsumed as functional guardians of the wider secular order. Thus, while the fin de siècle represented the most overt confrontation between Catholicity and secularism, it was as if the more the terms of disagreement could be expressed in strictly political terms, the more space could open up for a broader moral and civic consensus. Hence the politicization and 'ideologization' of this old confrontation between Catholics and liberals developed a new governmental, social and familial consensus around 1900.

Conclusion.

This chapter has traced how parenting and authority unfolded and developed at a time when understandings of governing and verticality found their ideal in the notion of guardianship, as a limited and temporary power exercised for the benefit of the governed. In order to do so, we have considered a wide range of case studies ranging from the profanity of 'fallen' and marginal women to the holiest family of Christianity. The influence of the family discourses we have considered did not rest only in the ideal they put forward; instead, as Reid has shown, these narratives mobilized a dramatized sense of lack which itself had a productive effect in shaping behaviours and perceptions. Thanks to this approach to lack, this chapter has been able to highlight the productive influence of social debates and administrative action in shaping parenting in the home and authority in society at large. This made it possible to move beyond political and ideological confrontations without denying the importance they played. In particular, this chapter moved away from the problematic simplicity of the opposition between the 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent' in order to trace the complex development

of the understanding of the family, motherhood and fatherhood in nineteenth-century France as well as the intimate connexions between the domestic sphere and the broader problem of power and authority in society. By tracing the rise and fall of the obligatory family in nineteenth century France and the thought and practices that sustained this process, it has been possible to document the shifting nature of parenting and social government.

Within the Old Regime's unified and patriarchal conception of authority, there were no clear boundaries between the domestic and the social, private and public, morality and law or love and power, but there was an irreducible gap between those who had authority and those who never would. With the French Revolution and the Civil Code, an increasingly egalitarian family model emerged. The family was egalitarian on two accounts. First, by creating a family, all adults gained equal access to exercise an exclusive authority within the home. Authority no longer depended on moral superiority. Unequal access to power in society was compensated by an equal access to sovereign command within the family. Second, domestic authority drew a clear vertical rupture between parents and children, while conceptually equalizing the position of both parents, despite actual gender inequalities, and eliminating the differences in legal and affectionate treatment of children. The family respectively equalized parents and children by separating both along a vertical axis of power. The 1841 law on child labour served to reinforce this vertical order inside the family. The separation between legal minority and legal majority became the basis for the nineteenth-century understanding of power. Paternal guardianship was no longer absolute because the inequality of power on which it rested was temporary, functional and

utilitarian. The inequality between infant and grownup ended when it fulfilled its purpose, that is, when the child became an equal adult capable of reproducing the cycle indefinitely, making biological reproduction indistinct from social reproduction. In other words, paternal guardianship justified inequality precisely because it promised to eliminate it. As such, the opacity of the private sphere became central for the justification of state power as a guardian of social betterment as well as for the rationalization of the irreducible social inequalities that were mapped onto the adult-child opposition.

Thus the split between the domestic and the social carved out two separate domains of sovereign authority operating on dissimilar but complementary manners. In the home and in private charity work, power and love still went hand-in-hand, while social government rested on an impersonal state authority capable of steering the atomized crowd of strangers that society was now imagined to be. In the social and domestic domains, sovereign rights and legitimacy were tied to inescapable obligations. While parents exercised property-like rights over their children and home, they gained an absolute obligation to keep their children regardless of circumstances. These absolute rights and obligations derived from biological affiliation provocatively came to override the previous conditions of marriage and morality that had defined the family. The rights and obligations of the state were equally as absolute, but focused less on assisting families than on enforcing paternal obligations while keeping public spending at a minimum in order to protect the property rights of taxpayers. While in the Old Regime morality had been a precondition for family life, in the nineteenth century the domestic sphere became an extra-judicial space where the rewards and punishments for

morality could be allocated impersonally. The virtuous enjoyed the home as a sacred space that guaranteed their rights and properties, while the vicious found in the burden of domesticity the retributions for their transgressions. In either case, the private and the public sphere were inseparable within the larger understanding of government in society.

From the 1860s, this tight opposition between private and public and rights and obligations gradually loosened. Without eliminating them, society emerged as an intermediary entity between the binary oppositions that had been so dear to the first half of the century. Social interest and utility, rather than morality, came to determine the orientation of both the private and public sphere. Parenting became a temporary and voluntary social function that was to be exercised on behalf of society in the interest of the child, regardless of his or her ingratitude. Marriage in France increasingly became little more than the social function that articulated productive and reproductive duties. In the early twentieth century, there was a tendency to consider unmarried couples in the same light as married spouses, further emphasizing function over form. While even by 1899 close to a third of those prosecuted spent time in prison, adulterous couples gained the right to marry in 1904.²⁹⁴ By 1919 pensions for widows of combatants were also granted to their concubines.²⁹⁵ As with foundlings' foster parents, parenting was becoming a matter of procedure and practice rather than a defining ontological category.

²⁹⁴ Patricia Mainardi, *Husbands, Wives, and Lovers: Marriage and its Discontents in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, 2003), p. 220.

²⁹⁵ Stéphanie Petit, 'La pension de veuve de guerre de 14-18: Une pension de fidélité?', in: Évelyne Morin-Rotureau (ed.), *Combats de femmes, 1914-1918* (Paris, 2004), pp. 119-120.

Paternal authority was no longer only gender neutral, but became unhinged from biology and reduced to technical tasks destined to (re)produce socially-viable individuals. This progression was clearly seen in the case of maternity. While the figure of the mother was indistinct in the first half of the century and indistinguishable from that of a paid wet-nurse or guardian, the focus on breastfeeding implied not only that motherhood became linked to an obligation of direct care, but that the cohabitation of mother and child had become central to the mother-child bond. From the 1860s, the duties of mothering moved away from vague notions of instinct, nature and morality towards the need for an intensive and constant attention towards the child, implying a fragmented series of hygienic operations that were most successfully carried out under medical and administrative supervision. These *savoirs* and practices were defined and promoted by institutions through a sensationalist narrative of lack and danger, most notably through the use and vulgarization of statistics. Thus the domestic was no longer the hidden-from-view space where inequality could be naturalized in the parent-child bond as the basis of social government. Instead, the home became increasingly permeable to the gaze and influence of these administrators, scientists, philanthropists and doctors, who gained the ability to either sever or reinforce biological bonds. While no longer a right, parenting became in turn optional and voluntary; and as the First World War approached, it became a subsidized and progressively professionalized social occupation.

Equally standardized became the role of local and charitable authorities. A new framework of impersonal and institutional power emerged into which interpersonal authority and affection could integrate without contradiction.

Authority became unified in the legality of social government at the same time that it multiplied locally as a dense web of authorities that came to structure the national space into the solidary, totalizing and indistinct whole that society was imagined to be. Private and public power thus merged to generate a new social authority; one as unified as it was manifold.

While the family and the wider issue of social government were inseparable in the nineteenth century, one could not be reduced to the other, or indeed exist without the other. The nineteenth century saw the implementation of a regulation of the affects to bring them in line with duty, a process whose origins dated back to the seventeenth century. The home came to represent the space where love and inequality were to remain compatible owing to the dictates of nature. Elsewhere, affection was imagined as dependent on material or moral equality, a condition that was absent in most social interactions. Thus the school gradually emerged as a supervised space of egalitarian sociability where friendships could flourish. As the family lost its centrality in the 1880s, schooling became free and universal in France, while, as we will see next, these institutional spaces of egalitarian interaction would multiply, breaking up the hostility of the social world into manageable spheres of voluntary group belonging and recognition. The sources of the individual in the second half of the nineteenth century were no longer to be found in the privacy of the home and the *moi*. We will now explore the rise of the increasingly socialized self.

Chapter 3

Gouverner les Mœurs:

The Sociology of the Plural Self, 1848-1914.

Introduction.

‘The notion of the relationship between the individual and society’, wrote statesman Léon Bourgeois in 1896, ‘has been profoundly modified in the last quarter of a century’. Although, he pointed out, ‘In appearance, nothing has changed’.¹ Pierre Rosanvallon has called these fundamental yet hidden changes ‘a silent revolution of the political system, in its facts’.² A ‘great turn’ took place from 1870 to 1920, with the 1890s being the watershed moment.³ While politics became permeable to ‘social’ interests to which parliamentarians were increasingly bound, parliament lost its monopoly on democratic life vis-à-vis an increasingly dynamic civil society.⁴ While universal (male) suffrage finally gained generalized acceptance, a *demopedic* determination arose, seeking to ‘educate democracy’ and channel political participation into the act of voting.⁵ The conceptualization of society as an organic entity altered the notions of political

¹ Léon Bourgeois, *Solidarité* (Paris, 1902), p. 8.

² Pierre Rosanvallon, *La démocratie inachavée* (Paris, 2000), p. 266. See: Andrew Jainchill and Samuel Moyn, ‘French democracy between totalitarianism and solidarity: Pierre Rosanvallon and revisionist historiography’, *Journal of Modern History*, 76/1 (2004), pp. 140-146.

³ Rosanvallon, *Demands of Liberty* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), p. 215. The rise of ‘national-protectionnisme’ in the period is analysed in: Rosanvallon, *La société des égaux* (Paris, 2011), pp. 183-202.

⁴ Rosanvallon, *Démocratie inachavée*, pp. 258-329; Nicolas Rousselier, *Le parlement de l'éloquence: La souveraineté de la délibération au lendemain de la Grande guerre* (Paris, 1997).

⁵ Rosanvallon, *La consagración del ciudadano* (Mexico, D.F., 1999), pp. 312-351.

representation and gradually made acceptable the presence of particularistic interests in the public realm. This was a rupture with the Jacobin tradition in French political culture. François Furet defined Jacobinism as a belief in ‘the central figure of a sovereign and indivisible public authority with power over civil society’.⁶ The counterpart to the indivisible *moi*, the Jacobin understanding of the state had sought to guarantee equality by impeding the formation of intermediary bodies between the individual and the state. This view of the state was abandoned towards the 1890s, making possible the institutionalization of political parties, the legalization of trade unions and associations; in short, the rise of new forms of structuring of the social did away with the opposition of the state and the individual. Networks of intermediary bodies gradually fused with the state as the early twentieth century progressed.⁷ ‘[A] veritable *general economy* of representation was progressively realized, making the original revolutionary model more complex and plural’.⁸ At the same time, the turn of the century witnessed the abandonment of the old understanding of pauperism and the transition towards modern universal welfare practices. These substantive changes that led to a ‘normalization’ of politics in France took place while ‘The Constitution remained unchanged’. ‘It is therefore not the institutions that changed. Nor was a social rupture the cause [of the shift]. It is quite simply that the mores and practices had imperceptibly remodelled the life of the institutions and changed their spirit’.⁹

⁶ François Furet, ‘Jacobinism’, in: Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds.), *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 710.

⁷ Rosanvallon, *Le peuple introuvable* (Paris, 1998), pp. 133-175; and *Demands of Liberty*, part III.

⁸ Rosanvallon, *Peuple introuvable*, p. 221.

⁹ Rosanvallon, *Démocratie inachavée*, pp. 260, 267.

This chapter continues the discussion on subjectivity started in the first chapter and contextualized by the second. The writings of physiologists and *aliénistes* will be used to show how the former unity of the *moi* came to be challenged, while with the sociological views of Auguste Comte there emerged a new understanding of society as a reified force that was necessary to govern individuals now imagined as divided. An instrumental figure in developing these medical and social views was physician Émile Littré, one of the key developers of Comte's positivist views and an 'intellectual founding father of the Third Republic'.¹⁰ In turn, Jules Simon, a republican politician and prolific thinker, will help us document the leap of these ideas into the field of welfare and social government.¹¹ The new developments of the positivist sciences of the mind in the 1870s and 1880s demonstrated the fragmentation of consciousness, further entrenching the division of the self. This paved the way for the work of the well-known sociologist Émile Durkheim. I will argue that Durkheim very deliberately put forward a new paradigm of subjectivity much in the same way that Victor Cousin had done earlier in the century.¹² As the first, this chapter will discuss the origins and development of this model of the self, as well as the governmental technologies of the self that sustained it. As society became the source of morality, a new 'sense social' came to substitute the old 'sense moral' of the first half of the nineteenth century. Each individual was now

¹⁰ Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectual Founders of the Republic* (Oxford, 2001), chapter 1.

¹¹ Philip Bertocci, *Jules Simon: Republican Anticlericalism and Cultural Politics in France, 1848-1886* (Columbia, 1978).

¹² On this parallel between V. Cousin and É. Durkheim see: Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self* (Cambridge, 2005), chapter 14. I have found few other authors who have studied Durkheim's views as *one* historical conceptualization of subjectivity, rather than a normative and descriptive scientific theorization of how humans *really* are (as is the case among present day 'sociologists of the individual' in France). One exception is Anoop Gupta, *Kierkegaard's Romantic Legacy: Two Theories of the Self* (Ottawa, 2005), chapter 7, but his aim is not to historicize Durkheim but rather to offer an original theorization of selfhood. Although with a similar purpose, Massimo Rosati, *Ritual and the Sacred: A Neo-Durkheimian Analysis of Politics, Religion and the Self* (Surrey, 2009) provides a most thought-provoking engagement with Durkheim's notion of *moi*.

called upon to fully participate in society by engaging in a myriad of self-governing groups, each of which held specific standards of normality. The self became identified with a plurality of non-exclusive functions and memberships. Individuals were to find in their social occupations and participations their own sense of self worth. 'One esteems oneself in considering that one has done his duty, and that one is useful to oneself and others', wrote republican politician Édouard Laboulaye, the man who gave New Yorkers their Statue of Liberty.¹³ We will see how a new understanding of self-mastery, consisting in actively willing social compliance and function performance, became the new standard for self-government. And yet, this was not the obedience of old. Submission to society now became tied to the affirmation of one's individuality and particularity, as an uncertain mixture of authenticity and aesthetic self-fashioning, sameness and diversity, compliance and defiance. Through one bestseller by Jules Payot, we will see how modern self-improvement literature offered specific guidance for these tasks. These technologies of the self would take the place of the moral deliberations Elie Luzac had proposed. We will also see how the new understanding of the self was translated into innovative pedagogical approaches that no longer relied on comparison with others. The old schools tasked with producing and policing sameness and discipline, now focused on developing socially integrated individual personalities capable of self-mastery and voluntary obedience. Writings by the influential education minister Léon Bourgeois will be key to document some of these governmental changes in the same way that the thought of François Guizot did in the first chapter. Bourgeois was prime minister in the mid 1890s and a cabinet member for most of the decade. This 1920 Peace Prize

¹³ Édouard Laboulaye, *Discours populaires* (Paris, 1869), p. 61.

laureate is best known as the theorist of *solidarisme*, the official political philosophy of the Third Republic.¹⁴ I argue that *solidarisme* was closely linked with the new model of sociological subjectivity. The majority of the views and authors discussed in this section were linked to this doctrine of solidarity. As in the first chapter, my focus on the governmental applications of theories of subjectivity had led me to leave aside competing views on the self and governing. In so doing, this chapter concludes the lines of inquiry begun by the first. The same genealogical approach, with its reliance on printed sources, will be used.

Through these sources, I should like to explore the profound changes that took place in the fin de siècle and that Rosanvallon dubbed 'le moment 1890'. My claim is that these cannot be attributed to seemingly unintelligible transformations in 'mores and practices', but rather that they reveal the emergence of a new paradigm for the modern individual and the state. Equally, rather than 'imperceptible', these changes came about after decades of intense public debate on the nature of individual and social life. This chapter will thus trace the gradual and hesitant development of the fin-de-siècle shift in subjectivity by tracing its origins in the profound intellectual crisis that resulted from the 1848 revolution and the 1851 coup d'état by prince Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte.

The changes that took place by the fin-de-siècle implied an abandonment of the unified theory of the *moi*, the socialization of moral deliberations, the end of educational emulation and a deep transformation in the nature of social assistance.

¹⁴ J.E.S. Hayward, 'The official philosophy of the French Third Republic: Leon Bourgeois and Solidarism', *International Review of Social History*, 6/1 (1961), pp 19-48; Serge Audier, *Léon Bourgeois: Fonder la solidarité* (Paris, 2007); Marc Sorlot, *Léon Bourgeois: Un moraliste en politique* (Paris, 2005); Marie-Claude Blais, *La solidarité: Histoire d'une idée* (Paris, 2007).

While these changes in welfare policy were linked with the rise of so-called ‘social rights’, the very notion of rights had changed. Bourgeois wrote that ‘Society is formed by fellows (*semblables*), that is, by beings that have, under the real inequalities that distinguish them, a primary [and] indestructible identity’. Instead of drawing on abstract notions of the rights and duties as inalienable possessions of ‘man’, he argued that rights belonged to this shared social identity. Rights belonged to society, not the individual. The ‘natural inequality of all sorts that separate and differentiate men[...] will be the only causes of a difference that should never be increased by an inequality of rights’.¹⁵ Key among such inequalities granted by ‘nature and luck’ were personal health and lifespan.¹⁶ In other words, claims to assistance did not derive from citizenship nor were equal for all; they were not subjective or dependent on the subject itself, and therefore nothing anyone had an innate right to. Instead, they were grounded in the objectivity of ‘natural inequalities’, that is, in the tangible body as apprehended specifically by the sciences of ‘man’. This explains the particular morphology of the welfare edifice built in the Third Republic. Édouard Campagnole was a civil servant in Henri Monod’s influential Direction de l’assistance publique, the public institution that served as intellectual engine behind Republican welfare reform.¹⁷ He clearly emphasized the tripartite nature of this republican social policy. ‘The assistance of children, the assistance of ill adults [and] the assistance of the elderly form, properly speaking, the three aspects of a single difficulty, the three terms of a

¹⁵ Bourgeois, *Solidarité*, pp. 112-114.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁷ The Direction and the Conseil supérieur together formed the heart of Third Republic’s *assistance publique*. Colette Bec, *Assistance et République* (Paris, 1994), chapter 3, and ‘Politique sociale et initiative administrative: L’exemple du Conseil supérieur de l’assistance publique, 1886-1906’, *Le mouvement social*, 163 (1993), pp. 67-84.

single question'.¹⁸ Biological and bodily difference made it possible to isolate the worker in all his purity; age and health became the only objective criteria for being exempt from work. The reduction of individuality to the body made possible the development of increasingly encompassing forms of social assistance without violating the liberal maxim that there should never be a personal right to assistance from the collective. Work no longer needed to be apprehended through the moral lens of political economy or biblical condemnations. The consensus in the early half of the century had coincided with Tocqueville's claim that poverty and crime were the result of individual's 'natural passion for idleness'.¹⁹ Consequently, the 'true' causes of misery had been hidden under the moral veil of the poor's intentionality; no institutional mechanism had been able find objective grounds to distinguish the 'good' poor who, unable to subsist on their own, merited genuine help and the 'bad' poor who were social parasites because they refused to sell their labour. At best the matter could be taken up by private charity, for which the litmus test to separate the 'good' and the 'bad' was the former's willingness to recognize their own childish inability for self-government and cede their intentionality to a benevolent guardian. By the fin de siècle, every adult was defined as a dutiful and productive member by 'nature'; ready to work when a job was available. This was a 'nature' that also randomly allocated exceptions to the rule in the form of bad health. Individual particularities and the recalcitrance of the body or the mind they housed could be treated and educated through specialized interventions. But while discourses on health and the body came to shape individuals' place in society and the market in new ways, state expertise did not yet have the coercive powers it would acquire later in the twentieth century. And

¹⁸ Édouard Campagnole, *L'assistance médicale gratuite* (Paris, 1895), p. 1.

¹⁹ Quoted in: Michael Drolet, *Tocqueville, Democracy and Social Reform* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 142.

even then, oppression was not the aim and means of these medical discourses. As Robert Nye argued, medical discourses operated through 'a process whereby medical and health precepts have been embodied in individuals who assume this responsibility for themselves' as subjects of their own health.²⁰ As the first, this chapter will therefore explore the 'structure of experience' that provided individuals with the possibility and tools in order to constitute themselves as free, responsible subjects, and this self-construction constituted the ultimate end of state policies such as social assistance, schooling or military service.

By the end of the nineteenth century, poverty was no longer related to morality, but had become an objective category tied to state institutions. In 1908, German sociologist Georg Simmel argued that: 'He is poor whose means are not sufficient to attain his ends'. Since levels of needs are specific to the person's milieu and class, he argued, it is therefore not possible to establish a level of absolute poverty. Relative poverty in one class could mean abundance in an inferior one. The conclusion was that if poverty was possible in all social classes, then not all poverty could be relieved through social assistance.²¹

For this reason, no one is socially poor until he has been assisted. And this has a general validity: sociologically speaking, poverty does not come first and then assistance[...] but a person is called poor who receives assistance[...] The poor, as a sociological category, are not those who suffer specific deficiencies and deprivations, but those who receive assistance or should receive it according to social norms.[...] This group does not remain united by interaction among its

²⁰ Robert Nye, 'The evolution of the concept of medicalization in the late twentieth century', *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 39/2 (2003), pp. 117-119.

²¹ Georg Simmel, 'The poor', in: Donald Levine (ed.), *Georg Simmel on Individuaity and Social Forms* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 172-174.

members, but by the collective attitude which society as a whole adopts towards it.²²

Poverty did not refer to an individual situation, regardless of actual hardship. Poverty was simply a standard that society set at random. And by society Simmel meant welfare agencies. It was these state benefits that *made* the poor a valid category. The moral and subjective traits had disappeared, making way for public welfare programmes and considerations of public utility. Poverty now spoke of governmental rather than individual inadequacies. At the same time, welfare programmes were becoming increasingly complex, each catering for more and more disaggregate and distinct groups. There was little use for 'poverty' as a vague umbrella term. By the eve of the First World War, its use was increasingly restricted to ex-colonial peoples and was more a way of remarking the shortcomings of their governments than that of the poor themselves. Consequently, 'the term *poor* seemed to have been crossed out once and for all from the social and economic vocabulary of the West', argued father Joseph Wresinski.²³ This was the case until 1965, when Jules Klanfer rediscovered the concept of poverty together its conceptual synonym 'exclusion', both of which have known a surprising intellectual success in France in the last fifty years.²⁴ In effect, the changes in the understanding of the subject and the state in the 1890s caused the very notion of poverty to disappear from France for more than half a century.

²² Ibid., pp. 175-177.

²³ Quoted in: Philippe Sassier, *Du bon usage des pauvres* (Paris, 1990), p. 341.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 342-377. See: Jules Klanfer, *L'exclusion sociale: Etude de la marginalité dans les sociétés occidentales* (Paris, 1965) and *Le sous-développement humain* (Paris, 1967); Julien Damon, 'La protection sociale à l'épreuve de l'exclusion', *Regards sur l'actualité*, 345 (November 2008), pp. 37-49.

Healing 1848.

While the opposition to the July monarchy had been very diverse, their shared rejection of the regime had pushed them to adopt a common position. Instead of *order*, the watchword of the heterogeneous opponents of the regime that fell in 1848, from socialists and Saint-Simonians to the Catholic Church and legitimists, was *organization*. There was to be an organized society of ‘organized beings’.²⁵ To base the government of the body politic on the free play of ‘human nature’ led to social disintegration, depravity and anarchy. This was a reaction ‘against that “void of society” that should allow, according to liberal theory, to preserve the distance between the State and the individual, but that did not solve the political danger of their confrontation’.²⁶ The place of power needed to be occupied, either by reason or morality. The social body needed to be organized in accordance with that power, and steered in the rightful direction. But liberalism was not just one political ideology among others; instead, liberalism, as a model of governing through liberty, was what made possible to speak of politics in any modern sense. The political field was not an open space of possibility, but rather a highly determined and structured domain.

After eighteen years of liberal hegemony, the capacity to think the state, society or the individual had been reduced to a Manichean opposition, either liberal or illiberal, and both options had been drawn up and theorized by liberal thinkers themselves. In other words, the alternative available to the ‘innovators’ of 1848 was the very antithesis that liberal thinkers themselves had sketched out.

²⁵ L.-F. Jéhan, *Dictionnaire d’anthropologie* (Paris, 1853), p. 955.

²⁶ Giovanna Procacci, *Gouverner la misère* (Paris, 1993), p. 306.

Illiberalism took two forms, both of which could be traced back to J.-J. Rousseau. As Judith Shklar has shown, Rousseau offered two different utopias, not as programmatic ideals, but as a nostalgic longing for a simpler and more virtuous past that was forever lost to civilized man. The first was the image of domestic bliss in a remote rural village devoid of strangers. It is the ideal of a simple social existence reduced to nothing but truly *personal* and familiar interactions. The second was that of the Spartan city, a domain of pure civic and public life, an impersonal world in which family, humanness and intimate ties had been sacrificed to the greater glory of the city.²⁷ Since both had become equally impossible and oppressive, Rousseau argued, what was left was the unstable and distressing compromise of a social contract, that imperfect synthesis that tried to salvage and shore up what it could of individual and collective existence, while offering no solution to inevitable human suffering and the longing for perfect equality. 'The road from nature might have led men to Spartan virtue or to domestic bliss. In actuality he chose civilization, a condition in which neither duty nor felicity is possible'.²⁸

The intentions of some groups of utopian socialists, Catholics, Freemasons or the young Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte alike coincided with Rousseau's first utopia. Between 1830 and 1870, there was vast deployment of agricultural colonies, model settlements, patronages or institutions that were to sequester inmates in a highly regulated private kingdom of interpersonal virtue, walled off from the world. Even when working almost exclusively with very keen and submissive

²⁷ See: Varad Mehta, 'Sparta in the Enlightenment', Ph.D. thesis, George Washington University (Washington, 2009).

²⁸ Judith Shklar, *Men and Citizens* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 33. See especially chapter 1.

inmates who voluntarily chose the seclusion, no wall seemed to be tall enough to keep the vices of the world out. Nonetheless, this dream managed to survive unscathed the uninterrupted chain of failures and bankruptcies of nineteenth-century utopian initiatives. Rousseau's second utopia was the nineteenth-century authoritarian dream that sought to place infallible and indisputable virtue at the summit of the state, and from where impersonal harmony and order would descend to reign in a world in which individuals would make free and eager sacrifices for the good of all. While this dream was never far from the nineteenth-century thought, it only seemed possible to develop the idea by arming the state against individuals. Tocqueville perceived this situation very clearly when he wrote that 'two revolutions seem to be in operation in our days in opposite directions; one weakens power continuously and the other reinforces it endlessly; in no other period in our history has [power] appeared so weak or so strong. But when one considers more closely the state of the world, one sees that both revolutions are intimately tied one to the other'.²⁹ Both rejected what astronomers call the Goldilocks zone, their power was too cold or too hot. The alternative that remained was Rousseau's bland stalemate, devoid of duty and happiness.

Whether in the opposition of individualists or collectivists, spiritualists or materialists, proponents of an immutable order or defenders of an organized society, the actual political options available in 1848 were limited. Either society was nothing more than an agglomeration of individuals with no substance, or individuals were nothing but atoms of a Spartan social body. Either society and power were founded on impersonal relations mediated by law and the state, or it

²⁹ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 310.

had to rely on affective, personal and private relationships between its members. Either individuals were the spiritual embodiment of a cosmic order which political power could do nothing to alter, or they were nothing but the material products of the collective which state and society could shape at will. Because of these conceptual difficulties, the two decades following 1848 was a period of intense deliberation about social matters and what could substitute the unitary, absolute and indivisible self. And the intellectual deadlock only started to loosen gradually as a result of innovations in the field of medicine.

Shortly after his appointment in the Val-de-Grâce in 1814, the military hospital and medical school in Paris, François Broussais' first publication 'really marks a turning point in the history of French medicine'.³⁰ It attacked the pillars of the medicine of the day, which was based on Philippe Pinel's psychological reading of mental illness. Following Pinel, the mainstream understanding focused on symptoms on the basis of which the nature or essence of a disease could be established. If illnesses were essences, then their symptoms spoke of a deeper trouble in the spiritual essence of the individual, the *moi*. Thus the most representative and influential form of medicine was *aliénisme*. Coined in 1833, the term referred to the branch of science concerned with 'bringing back to reason' (*ramener à la raison*) the insane. This relied entirely on the ingenuity and firm will of the practitioner. The 'moral treatment' on which aliénisme relied was not that different from a Catholic exorcism. The basic premise was that, by embodying the authority of reason on which society depended, a doctor could command a return

³⁰ Erwin Ackerknecht, 'Broussais, or a forgotten medical revolution', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 27 (1953), pp. 322-323.

to order in the patient. The inflexible will of reason necessarily had to overcome any form of wayward volition to restore the universality of good order. 'In effect', confessed Isidore-Hyacinthe Maire in his textbook on childrearing, 'I cannot understand true and conscientious medicine without the absolute submission of the patient, without the complete abnegation of his will; in my account, this is closer to magnetism [hypnosis] than medicine, but, in any case, it is only at this price that one obtains good results, because only at this price the most innocent remedy acquires sometimes the most salutary properties, and sometimes also the most energetic'.³¹ Healing was just the placebo effect of proper authority. The limit to the physician's authority was precisely the unequally distributed authority in society. A former student of Jean-Étienne Esquirol and chief editor of the influential *Annales d'hygiène publique et de médecine légale*, François Leuret was a leading *aliéniste* and the *médecin-chef* at the Bicêtre hospital.³² In developing his method of *Révolusion morale* or intimidation for the mad, Leuret had found that it worked better with women in general or with poor madmen detained in charitable institutions.

By contrast, in those houses with characters (*personnages*) who have belonged to the elevated classes of society, the intimidation treatment[...] would be impossible to execute because it would offend short-tempered characters whose education does not allow that one can easily impose on them another's will.³³

³¹ Isidore-Hyacinthe Maire, *nouveau guide des mères de famille* (Paris, 1843), pp. 462-463.

³² On Leuret see: Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, 'La raison de l'expert ou l'hygiène comme science sociale appliquée', *European Journal of Sociology*, 26/1 (1985), pp. 58-89; Jacques Arveillera, 'Le syndrome de Tardieu: Maltraitance des enfants, médecine légale et psychiatrie au XIXe siècle', *L'évolution psychiatrique*, 76/2 (2011), pp. 219-243; D.F. Allen and Carole Mariotti, 'Les "Incohérents" et les "Arrangeurs" de François Leuret: Éléments pour une histoire du délire d'interprétation', *L'information psychiatrique*, 90/7 (2014), pp. 567-574.

³³ Académie de médecine, 'Séance du 1 Juin 1841', *Journal des connaissances médicales* (July 1841), p. 307.

To this psychological approach, Broussais opposed his *physiology*. Illnesses were not essences and had no ontological nature in themselves; to focus on symptoms was to take the effect for the cause. Maladies were only inflammations in specific organs, especially the gastro-intestinal tract. Inflammation was a *local* departure from the normal state; it affected specific organs rather than the whole being, and left visible lesions in those organs. The key treatment was leeches. Testimony to the success Broussais enjoyed during the Restoration, the consumption of leeches reached an all time high; while in 1820 France had a surplus of leeches and exported a little over a million leeches, by 1834 it imported over 22 million. What the replacement of authority for leeches meant was that disease belonged to the sphere of matter, not the soul, not the *moi*. This was a frontal attack not only on Pinel, but also on the entirety of the psychological paradigm that generated twenty-year intellectual war in French medicine. Broussais' popularity vanished in the first years of the 1830s with the change in regime and intellectual climate. In an attempt to reclaim the limelight, he threw himself completely behind the cause of phrenology, which was compatible with his materialist view.³⁴ His medical focus would not be completely abandoned, and indeed it became the basis of Léon Rostan's approach to medicine, called *organicism* because, like Broussais, the focus was on organs, and derived the principle of life from their structure rather than the immaterial soul. But Broussais' legacy was entirely stripped of its radical philosophical implications, since in Rostan and much of the mid-century physiology the soul was still at the very centre of medicine, they just denied that 'the soul [is] a principle capable of being affected by illness'.³⁵

³⁴ Ackerknecht, 'Broussais', pp. 321-333.

³⁵ For a discussion of the different approaches up to the 1860s, see the introduction to Th. Liégeois, *Traité de physiologie* (Paris, 1869), quote in p. 35.

Meanwhile, in 1826, a young and promising scholar was half way through the series of lectures that would introduce humanity to the new 'positive age' when he became melancholic and had to cancel his commitments. As Ian Hacking recounts, Auguste Comte, suffering from an obstinate depression, entrusted himself to the prestigious *aliéniste* Esquirol. Some eight months later, he was dispatched as 'Not cured'. A month later, the lectures had resumed. In the interim, Comte had read Broussais and was able to reinterpret his situation as a 'cerebral attack'. It had been the inflammation of a specific organ, not a moral ailment of the depths of his soul. It was not his fault.³⁶ Comte would apply these ideas to society by focusing not on volition as the basis of social government, but rather on a term he borrowed from Broussais: the 'normal state'. The norm was susceptible for no good reason of becoming inflamed or disturbed and of being treated *externally* with no account of personal will, of either doctor or patient. *Normality* was born, destined to become 'one of the most powerful ideological tools of the twentieth century'.³⁷

But Comte's realization that he was not to blame also implied an interesting split within the concept of the individual. Disease and the self existed in two separate planes, the first a series of normal or inflamed states, the second an unrelated domain of volition. Best remembered for his dictionary, physician Émile Littré was one of the key propagators of the type of materialist medicine that denied the soul as Broussais had advocated. He was also the main successor to Comte in the positivist school. He was able to sanitize positivism by declaring that the

³⁶ Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 167.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

subjectivist bend of the end of the master's career and his attempt to found a new religion were to be explained precisely as a result of Comte's mental illness.³⁸ Instead, positivism was to be unwaveringly objective. In doing so, he established the distinction between objective and subjective as we now understand it, the latter being 'one of the greatest obstacles to science'³⁹. Of importance to our discussion is Littré's negation of free will, which led to prolonged and medieval-sounding debates on *libre arbitre* in the middle decades of the century. For Littré, all human activity was reduced to matter, and free will was little more than illusory and inaccurate pictures painted by the brain. But the brain only received impressions from the nervous system which 'depending on their texture, it transforms into ideas and feelings'.⁴⁰ Among these firing neurons, volition was nowhere to be found. 'How could I have [free will]', Littré asked, 'if I played no role in my coming to this world, the composition of my organs, the time and place of my birth?'⁴¹ Freedom was but a feeling. 'However much one feels free, this intimate consciousness does not exclude the action of causes, [which are] efficient, although sometimes unperceived. Without experience, the universe would be foreign to us, and it is apperception of our distinct and relative state, vis-à-vis objects external to our mental life, that deludes us about our autonomy'.⁴² Thus we depended on the exterior, and the interior was little more than illusory self-awareness.

³⁸ Masahito Hirai, 'Objectivity in the beginnings of the positivism: Dispute between Auguste Comte and Émile Littré', *哲学・科学史論叢*, XVIII (2006), p. 26.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Louis Delasiauve, 'M. Littré et le libre arbitre', *Journal de médecine mentale*, 9 (1869), p. 67.

⁴¹ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

The delusion that made up our virtual sense of self still mattered, and had consequences in social life. As a result the social outside had the right to set rewards and penalties. But knowledge was the key to bridge the interior and the exterior. 'One acquires morality as one does science. In us the sentiment of the good, the just, which leads us to search for them in the same way innate curiosity is the motive for the desire for knowledge (*connaissances*). The more the level of [knowledge] raises in the world, the more each individual receives the influence of it, an admirable sociological indication. This social emanation makes up for free will'.⁴³

By the 1870s, it became increasingly common to speak of an external and an internal division of the individual, coinciding with a separation between passivity and activity. Thus criminologist and social reformist Henri Joly wrote that

each man lives so to speak two parts of his life, one that is engaged in society, the other that develops entirely within (*intérieurement*) or in a narrow enough circle for society to be absent. Here the free will of the individual may be exercised without great constraints, at least on the part of other men.⁴⁴

The pathologies of this new division of the individual were soon mapped out. Mental-health expert Prosper Despine now defined madness as a sentimental disturbance altering 'the normal dependence of the inside towards the outside'. He identified the social 'outside' as what nurtured, stimulated and regulated the passive 'inside' of the self. The inability to find the right balance between the external and the internal spelt out two extreme forms of madness.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 68.

⁴⁴ Henri Joly, '[Review of the works of] Quetelet', *Revue scientifique de la France et de l'étranger*, 46 (1872), p. 1095.

If the mad has a tendency to live in an excess of subjectivity, to feed off his own ideas, the idiot, who cannot elevate himself to any subjective construction, is on the contrary dominated by an excess of objectivity, he is always crushed by the exterior preponderance and, in absence of ideas of his own, he is only occupied with that which strikes his senses.⁴⁵

The domain of the *moi* was being increasingly reduced to a narrow sensation of interiority, faced with a dominating exterior over which it had no control. And this dependence was a 'certain fact' that 'invites us to a more modest conception of our individuality and of the part of our initiative in our own conduct'. For 'we no more seize the absolute reality of the *moi* than that of any other thing. We only know the phenomenon of ourselves in the entirely formal unity and in the successive intuitions of consciousness', incapable of 'inform[ing] us pertinently of the degrees of our merit or demerit'.⁴⁶

Father Jude de Kernaere would translate these findings into political theory. He refuted political theories that sought to establish the 'substantial unity of the human person' by denying the duality of its constituent parts. The same had to be true of government in society, which consisted of two inseparable parts: the governed and the governors. The first were an amorphous 'multitude of members that have among them no necessary bond', capable of presenting itself 'under every possible social or political form imaginable'. The second element was

⁴⁵ Prosper Despine, *De la folie au point de vue philosophique* (Paris, 1875), p. 977.

⁴⁶ F. Pillon, '[Review of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's] L'idée de la responsabilité', *La critique philosophique*, 1/II (1883), pp. 252, 254.

an authority that makes of the multitude a society, in giving it, according to its own nature, the monarchic or republican form, aristocratic or democratic, federalized or centralized. The multitude here is the matter, the authority is the form.⁴⁷

This implied an abandonment of the no-nonsense universalism of the first half of the century. What justified a form of government was no longer its validity in all times and places. Instead, the nature of power was to be entirely *particular*, one specific form among many. 'Man' remained the universal substratum of things, but became only amorphous matter to be shaped from above. Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet had been working in this direction since the mid 1830s. He fathered a remarkable creature of statistical abstraction he called *l'homme moyen*. It was quite simply the average man that statistics uncovered, he had the average height and weight and so on. The universal thus became knowable in a completely new way; 'the more one measures individuals, the more the differences, effects of fortuitous causes, destroy each other in order to let the general type predominate'.⁴⁸ He took this to be the absolute general type, the new standard of beauty for fine arts, the embodiment of universality, finally stripped of particularities. And yet '*l'homme moyen* varies from one people to the next [... and] from one age to the next'.⁴⁹ Here was something that was always true and yet not global. It was now possible to conceive without contradiction of a universal particularity or a particular universality; it was now possible to conceive the

⁴⁷ Jude de Kernaeret, 'L'unité dans la personne humaine et dans la société', *La controverse et le contemporain*, VIII (November 1886), p. 426.

⁴⁸ Joly, '[Review]', p. 1094.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1096.

nation-state.⁵⁰ And with it a new paradigm of the modern individual was on the rise.

Healthy Freedom.

The Catholic Church did not miss out on the promises of the new medical gaze. The transparency of the body was to join the spiritual deliverance of the *cure d'âmes* to enable a holistic comprehension of human existence. A 'physiologie catholique' was to apprehend the body and the soul in tandem to counter the godless materialism of the likes of Broussais. Parish priests were to be instructed in matters of hygiene and health, while clerics trained as doctors were to defend the faith in hospitals, surgeries, universities and academies. Since the body 'is where the moral man is hidden', father Pierre Debreyne made the argument that 'It is thus the study of the exterior man which makes us penetrate into the interior man'. Consequently, the knowledge of Catholic physiology was 'indispensable for the clergy, confessors, and directors of souls', since they would find there 'the key to the human heart'. This, Debreyne claimed,

introduces them in the sanctuary of *la conscience* [meaning both conscience and consciousness]; it reveals to us the whole man, that is, the physical, intellectual, moral and social man. These principles are true, incontestable [and] irrefutable because they emerge from the very nature of things, that is, from the nature of man.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Émile Durkheim's nephew and most talented disciple, Marcel Mauss, recognized around 1920 that 'The word "nation" is of recent use, relatively, in the technical language of jurists and philosophers, and even more in that of the peoples themselves'. Mauss, *Œuvres*, 3 (Paris, 1969), p. 573.

⁵¹ Pierre Debreyne, *Physiologie catholique et philosophique* (Paris, 1868), p. VII.

A new science of 'man', 'la science de la vie de l'homme', a 'double priesthood of religion and medicine represented by the Catholic priest and doctor', was to encompass earthly existence in its totality.⁵² And this included miracles. In the 1860s, the Church had relied on scientists to help clarify the most extreme cases of demonic possession, while 'in 1883, a medical consultation office was opened at Lourdes, making the collaboration of physicians in certifying miracles there official'.⁵³ As health and welfare services became secularized in the fin de siècle, nuns, who in the nineteenth century had emerged as a formidable army at the service of those who suffered, went into secular training schools to be qualified as nurses and social workers.⁵⁴

A new Catholic normativity could arise from this 'agreement of the providential and physiological laws'. In this agreement, L.-F. Jéhan, the lay author of a Catholic encyclopaedia on anthropology, had found a new understanding of longevity in 1853. '[E]very man penetrated by the sentiment of his excellence, of the duties he must fulfil on this Earth, must aspire to live out a long career, that which is assigned to him by natural death'. 'God gives him the time to accomplish the serious mission of his duties. The importance of these attests sufficiently that he could not have been endowed with an ephemeral existence'.⁵⁵ As longevity became 'a moral and respectable end', Heaven could wait. No longer was life in the hands of Providence; instead the time to complete all the individual's obligations had to be earned through 'the sacrifices he imposed himself to become an old man', 'a sum of

⁵² Ibid., p. 1; Debreyne, *Le prêtre et le médecin devant la société* (Paris, 1848), p. vii.

⁵³ Sophie Lachapelle, *Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychological Research and Metaphysics in France, 1853-1931* (Baltimore, 2011), p. 63.

⁵⁴ Katrin Schultheiss, 'Gender and the limits of anti-clericalism: The secularization of hospital nursing in France, 1880-1914', *French History*, 12/3 (1998), pp. 229-245.

⁵⁵ Jéhan, *Dictionnaire d'anthropologie*, p. 870.

sustained efforts, [and...] uncommon virtues'.⁵⁶ Indeed, 'longevity is measured by the degree of *bonnes mœurs*', which could be summed up in three terms: 'temperance, self-mastery (*empire sur soi-même*) and purity of the soul'.⁵⁷ Moreover, our virtues and vices mattered because they outlived us, for the length of life was determined by the laws of heredity —the modern way of making children bear the sins of their fathers. Habit was key. Jéhan cited longevity statistics that showed that, on average, theologians lived the longest (to the ripe-old age of 42), despite their 'unfavourable physiological conditions' derived from their celibacy. At 40, agricultural workers were a close second, while the more mundane industrial and liberal occupations did not exceed 35. Thus 'daily habits of order and regularity' promised a long existence.⁵⁸ Yet this evidence did not stop Jéhan from putting forward a new 'normal longevity', which was the same we have today: 'the ordinary duration of life has been 70 or 80 years. All the mortality tables demonstrate in effect that the normal time of death coincides with these figures'.⁵⁹ The sensitive ones lived short lives, for they lacked the 'firmness of character that is founded upon a just appreciation of things which renders [men] independent from the blows of luck'.⁶⁰ The absence of longevity as a social goal explained 'the agitations of society', for 'the rapid succession of new men for the old' led them to start their work anew instead of continuing what was already under way. Jéhan ends with a quote from Esquirol showing how not carrying out this approach led to an early death by suicide.⁶¹ Death changed, and even for a

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 871.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 870, 873.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 874.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 871.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 874.

⁶¹ Quoted in: Ibid., p. 876.

militantly Catholic author of an officially-sanctioned work, it was not a divine but rather a social matter requiring a mobilizing engagement of the self.

No less relevant was the solution that medicine offered liberals. Rather than the possibility of separating the normal from the pathological and the internal from the external or of unifying body and soul in a single perspective, liberals gained a new reading of human universality that was not juridical. Until the 1860s, only the legal and penal system were able to make liberalism's fundamental distinction between those who were legally irresponsible because they were incapable of freedom and those who were responsible because they were completely free and autonomous. This meant that the domain of liberty could only be defined in the negative by prohibition, which required a restrictive and disciplinary approach to the law and the conceptual possibilities of liberty in society, since statute needed to address itself not to the respectable, but to the recalcitrant and residual elements of society. Liberty needed to be governed with a heavy hand.

But the medical concept of 'incurables' changed this. In his 1861 study of female work and salaries, Jules Simon, who was a leading republican politician and author of many widely-read books on morality, education or social reform, argued that

An enlightened beneficence makes the same distinction between the poor that a doctor does between the sick. It has its incurables that it takes under its charge: these are those who can no longer be saved neither by themselves, nor by the family, veritable castaways (*épaves*) of charity.⁶²

⁶² Jules Simon, 'Le salaire et le travail des femmes: IV', *Revue des deux mondes*, XXXI/32 (1861), p. 88.

The cure for the curable was as simple as appealing to their courage, for 'it is by their own efforts that [charity] heals them'. Drawing the line between those who were apt and inapt for liberty was no longer a painstaking moral assessment that could best be guaranteed by judicial procedure; it became a routine material assessment, as simple as a doctor naming the illness that was visibly there for the trained eye. 'There is no longer a place in society for the slothful, no more than there ever was a place in the world, even in the physical world, for the useless'.⁶³ Moral and metaphysical deliberations gave way to the self-evidence of the palpable. And as in medicine, therapy either restored the health of freedom or identified those who were beyond help and salvation and needed a compassionate marginalization. Incurability was the exception that confirmed the rule that all were born to be free. The line between child and adult no longer hovered threateningly over every act; it was a simple distinction for the psychiatric gaze. All could be taken as adults until the opposite was certified by a specialist. By reducing recalcitrance to matter, to unfit bodies rather than the dark recesses of human nature, liberty was no longer the child of repression. A new freedom, in the positive, could be imagined for all.

By focusing on incurability, Simon was able to reject the available disciplinary approaches to social assistance. He equally rejected the model of social reform that operated from above through authority and law, and from below through the personal bonds of *patronages* and closed institutions. But the measures he proposed were the same liberals had put forward since the late eighteenth century: savings, friendly societies, education and the family. But the focus had

⁶³ Simon, 'L'éducation', *Reforme sociale*, III/7 (1887), p. 685.

shifted from disciplining through these institutions to a new understanding of freedom. 'Far from treating workers as minors and incapables, let's hurry to make men of them'.⁶⁴

Will and reason did not mean the same thing that they had done a generation before. They had become relative and highly qualified. Volition had been reduced to the *impression* of making choices rather than shaping the world. The key was to provide *social* for 'anti-social' choices. These acceptable choices were increasingly presented along the lines of well-defined social functions. 'It is not a matter of governing or militarizing (*enrégimenter*) workers, but of making of them husbands, fathers [and] men. It is necessary to habituate them to will'.⁶⁵ Hence the importance Simon saw in introducing clearly differentiated gender roles, what we would now call the male-breadwinner model. The simple daily exercise of productive and reproductive social functions in themselves could attach individuals to the social order by generating predictable forms of subjectivity in them. 'The worker does not belong to himself during the twelve hours he spends in service of a mechanical motor; may he be at least given back to himself when he passes the threshold of the factory, may he be husband and father, may he feel the will in his heart'.⁶⁶ The development of domestic life in itself promised to signify the existence of the worker, for there was a 'narrow solidarity that unites liberty, work, property and domestic virtues'. Thus the answer to the query 'What is the head of a family?' could re-signify the existence of the worker by carving out the home as the key locus of the free choices of a manly will. As the understanding of

⁶⁴ Simon, 'Le salaire', pp. 86-87.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

motherhood was moving away from abstract notions of nature and instinct to increasingly detailed functions, Simon was able to argue the same for fatherhood. The male breadwinner was no longer the authoritative father, but rather a very specific social role.

He is above all the protector and purveyor of the house: he is also, among his own, the living reason. Everybody needs to feel sheltered against all attack and against need by his devotion and his force; moreover, everybody should feel enlightened and directed by him. On Saturdays, he acts like a father when he brings home the earnings of his work, which for eight days will give bread and clothing to the family; but he is not just in charge of the bodies of his children, he is responsible for their souls. Until their reason matures, it is up to him, and only him, to decide and think for them. If his mind is not formed, if he is not aware of his acts, if he is condemned by his ignorance to a perpetual minority and childhood, how will he carry out his duty? How will he be able to inspire around him confidence and respect?⁶⁷

But since the father was naturally 'absent all day' then 'Nature has wanted women to be in charge of the earliest education', for which they themselves needed education.⁶⁸ The male-breadwinner model thus re-signified the roles of both genders by linking freedom with the accomplishment of specific social roles.

Equally, even the great men had lost their claim over reason and truth. With the definitive split between modern science and religion from 1840 to 1860, the understanding of knowledge changed. As the means of arriving at knowledge and the consumption of knowledge were clearly separated by the rise of

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 106.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 111, 113.

institutionalized academic disciplines, reflection and thought became increasingly impersonal and collective. No scientist, no individual had direct access to truth; it had become a collective endeavour wherein only a convention among expert peers could determine what was to be tentatively accepted as fact. Th. Jouffroy had separated reason, understood as comprehension, from knowing. Now the old divinized reason merged into science, and knowledge, which Jouffroy had devalued by recognizing it in animals, was opened up for all. Knowledge thus became sanitized and was no longer a political threat, for the *consumption* of knowledge only drew individuals closer to the structure of the social order which was increasingly thought to be in accordance with scientific truths. F. Pillon wrote that science was the source that deduced and confirmed the social norms. 'The wise' did not obey the law blindly as the ignorant did, but rather did so rationally, consciously and willingly. 'His obedience is subjectively free, because it is the obedience of reason. It is above all science which he obeys, science, thanks to which he is a master of himself'.⁶⁹ Thus the focus had to shift from tutored *transmission* to free *consumption* of knowledge, for self-righteous moralization did not work. Simon downplayed 'the power of direct preaching' carried out by philanthropists who thought they could moralize by giving alms. Simon suggested that workers agreed with the preaching in order to obtain the alms, but instantly forgot the message. 'Workers are particularly rebellious against morality that reaches them in the form of a lesson. They ask themselves if they are incapable of thinking, and if they have such a need to be taught'.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Pillon, [Review of Émile Boutroux's] *Socrate fondateur de la science morale*, *La critique philosophique*, 1/1 (1885), p. 33.

⁷⁰ Simon, 'Le salaire', p. 114.

What was novel about Simon and the other great champions of education of the time, a time in which 'almost half of the young conscripts are illiterate', was that instruction was not limited to an authoritative moral guidance but rather a more modern acquisition of knowledge by means of reading, schooling for both sexes and adult courses and conferences. 'Above all, instruction is good in and of itself.[...] It inspires he who possesses it the confidence in his own forces, which is the start of virility'.⁷¹ He mentions the prefect's very recent approval in February 1861 of adult conferences in Paris where 'each evening the amphitheatres overflow'. This would become a massive phenomenon in the 1870s and 1880s. This was thus the first time knowledge was intentionally meant to flow down the social pyramid as a means of holding together the social body, and 'Wherever one has called upon the intelligence of workers, they have responded'.⁷²

Knowledge, choices and clearly-defined social roles opened up a new domain for liberal freedom which could encompass the vast majority of the social body with no drastic change, conditional on no moralization campaign or repression, simply by giving new meaning and shape to the productive and reproductive roles citizens already carried out. So long as some were as a matter of fact deemed incurably beyond salvation, freedom did not have to be feared, but was rather the only way forward. But for the free, already in Simon, there was but one condition. 'In the social, the principle of government is not the law, but the participation of the subject, who in turn only becomes affirmed as a subject, in the sense of a social

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 113.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 108, 110.

actor, through this participation'.⁷³ This participator understanding of the self takes us to the work of Durkheim.

Homo Duplex: The Social Self.

Durkheim was the founding father of French sociology and one of the few great international minds to have moulded the basic substance of the discipline. Although readers since his own day have not ceased to find flaws in the specifics of his sociological premises, theories and methods, the framework he provided still sustains the study of society. A *normalien*, his background was not scientific but rather philosophical and 'most early Durkheimians were philosophers'.⁷⁴ 'Durkheim', said G. Gurvitch, 'invented sociology as Christopher Columbus discovered America in looking for the Indies: in wanting to found a morality (*une morale*)'.⁷⁵ Together, I will argue, the Durkheimian school sought to replace the psychological model of 'man' by fashioning a new metaphysical foundation for the modern individual: a sociological paradigm of the self. In 1893, Durkheim wrote:

There are in us two consciousnesses: one only contains the states that are personal to each of us and which characterize us, while the states comprised by the other one are common to all society. The first only represents our individual personality and constitutes it; the second represents the collective type and, consequently, society, without which it would not exist. When it is an element of the latter that

⁷³ Procacci, *Gouverner la misère*, p. 312.

⁷⁴ Susan Stedman Jones, *Durkheim Reconsidered* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 41.

⁷⁵ Bernard Lacroix, 'La vocation originelle d'Émile Durkheim', *Revue française de sociologie*, 17/2 (1976), p. 254; John Brooks, 'The definition of sociology and the sociology of definition: Durkheim's Rules of Sociological Method and high school philosophy in France', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 32 4 (1996), pp. 379–407.

determines our conduct, we do not act based on our personal interest, but rather we follow collective ends.⁷⁶

‘These two aspects of our psychic life thus oppose one another as the personal and impersonal’. He derived this from ‘the constitutional duality of human nature’, or the old theme of the *homo duplex*, according to which we are divided into ‘the body, on the one hand, [and] the soul on the other’, which in effect were two separate beings. In this account, the self became reduced to the body, while society was the soul. Not only were these two different entities, but also they were largely ‘independent of each other’. One perishable and one eternal, ‘the body and soul do not belong to the same world’.⁷⁷ Religiosity was the model on which Durkheim constructed this opposition, having in mind specifically the divide between profane and sacred.⁷⁸ Both were incompatible, mutually exclusive and at war with each other.

We cannot give our selves over to moral ends without moving away from ourselves, without unsettling the instincts and inclinations that are the most deeply rooted in our body. There is no moral act that does not imply a sacrifice.[...] And this antinomy is so deep and so radical that in the end it can never be resolved. How can we belong altogether to ourselves and altogether to others, or vice versa?⁷⁹

This inner battle was constitutive of human nature. The self could not be in agreement with itself since it was not possible to satisfy both impulses simultaneously or one of the two entities without doing the other injustice. Pain

⁷⁶ Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (Paris, 1893), p. 113.

⁷⁷ Durkheim, ‘The dualism of human nature and its social conditions’, *Durkheimian Studies*, 11 (2005), p. 36.

⁷⁸ Rosati, *Ritual and the Sacred*.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

and suffering was thus inevitable since, given this inner split, 'Our joys can never be pure'.⁸⁰

Bizarrely, this inner war was itself proof that society had a separate existence. If society were nothing but the development of the individual, both parts would find harmony. Instead, 'society cannot form or maintain itself without requiring of us perpetual sacrifices that are costly to us'. This was because each part made opposing demands within the subject. Society went beyond individuals and thus obligated them to go beyond themselves, 'something which does not happen without a more or less painful tension'. The contradictions between individual and collective interests were thus displaced to the inner life of the subject.⁸¹ The conflict only got worse with time, as 'the place of effort will always go on increasing with civilisation'.⁸² Therefore, individuals and society somehow explained and necessitated each other mutually. External representations 'enter into us and thus become part of ourselves', while 'we attach ourselves to them at the same time as to ourselves'. But this socialization of mental space, whereby was not only what made 'man' a 'man', but it was equally crucial for society to emerge, since 'society cannot constitute itself unless it penetrates individual consciousnesses and fashions them "in its image and likeness"'.⁸³ The location of the self was the social, while the location of society was the self; 'it is impossible for these ideals, the product of group life, to take form and above all endure, unless

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸² Ibid., p. 45.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 35.

they penetrate individual consciousnesses and are organized there in a lasting fashion'.⁸⁴

Thus, 'a double centre of gravity' made up 'our internal life'. One was individuality founded in 'our body'. 'Strictly individual, these states of consciousness attach us only to ourselves, and we can no more detach them from us than we can detach ourselves from our body'.⁸⁵ Opposing the body was 'everything that, within us, expresses something other than ourselves'; these extra-corporeal states 'translate [society] in us and attach us to some thing that goes beyond us'.⁸⁶ But our humanity was divided quite asymmetrically between the two. 'Our different psychic functions are ascribed unequal value; they are ranked among one another, and it is those that depend on the body that are at the bottom of the hierarchy'.⁸⁷ 'It is evident that passions and egoistic tendencies derive from our individual constitution', namely 'the sensations and the sensory appetites', while 'intellectual and moral life', or all 'our rational activity, whether practical or theoretical, is closely dependent on social causes'. The top of our inner hierarchy was thus reserved for society, since its greatest achievement was civilization itself.

[I]t is civilization that has made man into what he is; it is this that distinguishes him from the animal. Man is man only because he is civilized. To look for the causes and conditions on which civilization depends is therefore to look, as well, for the causes and conditions of what, in man, is most specifically human.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 36 44.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

On the one hand, then, Durkheim placed the denigrated animal body, on the other, that which is most civilized, 'most essential', and 'most specifically human'. To society belonged language, symbols and concepts that necessarily 'are always common to a plurality of men'. Inner antagonism 'is no different in the order of knowledge', where (personal) feeling and (impersonal) understanding excluded each other. 'Hence we cannot understand things without giving up, in part, a feeling for life, and we cannot feel it without giving up an understanding of it'.⁸⁹ This did not obliterate the self as a thinking subject, but made all thinking social.

To think, one must be, one must have an individuality. But, on the other hand, the self cannot be altogether and exclusively itself, for then it would empty of all content. If, to think, one must be, one must also have things to think about. Yet what would consciousness consist of, if it expressed nothing except the body and its states?⁹⁰

The same was true, *mutatis mutandis*, of volition. The options available to the will were socially determined; to exercise free will then became little more than to choose among collective ends.

But this was not a theory of social oppression. In fact, what was revolutionary about Durkheim's theory was that it erased coercion and obedience from the domain of government. The fundamental conflict between the individual and the state or the part and the whole, was relocated within the individual's mind. The social space was thus freed from any constituting conflict. The public and the private sphere were no longer at odds with each other. The social could only be experienced in an individualized form, while any individualizing understanding,

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

like all language, reason and thought, was necessarily supra-individual. Therefore, the normative nature of society was not in the contents of social consciousness, but rather its very existence. When social representations came 'to mingle with our individual life, these various ideals are themselves individualized; in close relation with our other representations, they harmonize with them, with our temperament, character, habits, etc. Each of us puts our own imprint on them; this is how everyone has their personal way of thinking about' collective beliefs and concepts.⁹¹ Durkheim's approach was hence profoundly pluralistic. And the social plurality was not limited to freedom of conscience, opinion or expression, but extended to behaviour as well; he shocked his contemporaries by making of immoralities such as crime and suicide a normal and regular aspect of any society. Private freedom was no longer in conflict with the collective good, even when it was exercised explicitly against the moral standards of the day. Rather than making of deviance a *foyer d'infection morale*, he acknowledged that some degree of resistance and dissidence was inevitable and healthy in any society. Equally, societies were irreducibly plural across time and space, for anything that could count as social had to make reference to group specificities that would be absent if the members 'had lived in other human groups'.⁹²

The problem of coercion could once again be avoided, because these were impersonal forces that imposed themselves on the individual, not through external agents, but as consciousness and conscience. Society was not constituted upon a collection of concrete sacred beliefs that were shared and that necessitated

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

⁹² Quoted in: Steven Lukes, 'Introduction', in: Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York, 1982), p. 4.

consensus, but rather upon the *fact* that everyone already had a domain in their consciousness that was an authoritative voice, regardless of what the voice actually said.

But even in individualizing and thus becoming elements of our personality, collective ideals still hold on to their characteristic attribute, namely, the prestige with which they are invested. Even when our own, they speak within us in a wholly different tone and with another accent than the rest of our states of consciousness: they command, they inspire in us respect, we do not feel on a level footing with them. We understand that they represent something in us superior to us.⁹³

Not only did all the contents of thought come from this external, social self, but also our sense of self-government and self-constraint, operating as an authoritative voice in our heads addressing the self 'in a tone of command' which may order people 'to do violence to their most natural inclinations'. Some individuals may well have mistaken this inner voice for some external authority, Durkheim claimed, but 'constraining and necessitating action' arose from within the mind.⁹⁴ The issue of authority and power or constraint and necessity were turned into a separate consciousness within individuals, over which they exercised no control and which they could struggle against, but not ignore.⁹⁵

This authoritative inner voice did not only belong to society at large. It was primarily experienced through groups. Group sentiments could be identified because they possessed 'an energy that purely individual sentiments cannot match'. These superior forces, with the individual 'does not recognise as his own,

⁹³ Durkheim, 'The dualism', p. 43.

⁹⁴ Jean Terrier, *Visions of the Social: Society as a Political Project in France, 1750-1950* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 142-143.

⁹⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*

which steer him, of which he is not the master[...], the individual loses interest in himself, forgets himself, gives himself totally to the common goal.⁹⁶ Therefore the governing function of collective consciousness in practice translated into a complete identity with group sentiments. The function of self-steering that was the hallmark of Cousin's *moi* was now transferred to the irresistible forces of the group.

Any group could produce this effect, not directly, but rather by the aura of authority collective ideas acquired, 'which brings the particular people who think them and believe in them to represent them to themselves under the form of moral forces that rule over and support them'. Such forces inspired 'respect and reverential awe, but also of gratitude for the comfort we receive from them; for they cannot communicate themselves to us without raising our *ton vital*'.⁹⁷ While there had previously been a certain stiffness and seriousness to bourgeois sociability, voluntary associations and the maintaining of a careful separation of the public and the private, in the 1890s new distinctly social domains emerged where the self could engage as a matter of routine in a more complete, festive, and careless social experience. In other words, the doors were open to the plural edifice of 'mass society', with its lively associative and leisure life and, in particular, the rise of modern sport events.

⁹⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 140. Emphasis added.

⁹⁷ Durkheim, 'The dualism', p. 42.

Manly bodies.

Despite frequent changes in his thinking, Durkheim remained steadfast on his theory of two consciousnesses; he dedicated the rest of his career to its development, and offered its most articulate formulation in 1914, in the last scientific text he published. As his work matured, the space reserved for individual consciousness decreased steadily. From the more liberal notion of self as personality and personal interest, our private domain increasingly came to represent the body.

And indeed, the 'New Man' that was born with the twentieth century 'rendered as the chief concern the values of the body. This was the great revolution of the twentieth century.[...] The new man starts with the body, he knows that the body is the articulation of the soul and that the soul cannot express, deploy, or ensure itself other than in the body'.⁹⁸ But the fin de siècle was equally the time when the body experienced a twofold socialization and objectification, becoming itself a primary locus of government. Firstly, the body was increasingly apprehended in its *activity* and movement as a machine to be engineered, 'through the often narrow and forced, mercantile and spectacular practices of sport', through the conveyor

⁹⁸ Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, 'Renaissance de l'homme européen', *Recherches*, 32-33 (1978), p. 550. For the unity of body and soul in the New Man see: George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford, 1996).

belt first introduced in 1893, or through the he chronometric practices of scientific factory management that Frederick Winslow Taylor made known from 1895.⁹⁹

Secondly, in its *passivity* the body was the helpless habitat of illness. Medicine as we know it today emerged from the combination of the Pasteurian revolution in microbiology and the rise of modern pharmaceuticals following Bayer's synthesis and commercial production of aspirin in 1899. The first ushered a new age of surgery, since the 'act of operating no longer kills: we are more or less masters of the cuts we make, we direct them almost at will toward immediate healing'.¹⁰⁰ The plasticity of workable flesh and life were no longer incompatible. With the second, the body was freed from the cage of biology and entered the age of chemistry and its ever so subtle and precise technological interventions. Together, asepsis and drugs rendered possible the modern reading of illness as an objective and impersonal invasion from an evil external agent requiring the intervention of specialists in order to eradicate it and restore normality; human particularity was pure circumstance, while the body was but the passive battleground.¹⁰¹ As the inside of the living body yielded its secrets with the discovery of the x-ray in 1895, so did the unconscious mind become transparent to science. Philosopher Maurice Blanchot wrote of psychoanalysis and its pretention 'to determine the interior reality of the subject': 'What faith in reason! What confidence in the liberating

⁹⁹ Drieu La Rochelle, 'Renaissance', p. 551; J.H. van den Berg, *Divided Existence and Complex Society* (Pittsburgh, 1974), p. 96.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in: Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), p. 46.

¹⁰¹ For an excellent analysis of medical rationality see François Laplantine, *Anthropologie de la maladie* (Paris, 1993), 'Jalons pour une anthropologie des systèmes de représentations de la maladie et de la guérison dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines', *Histoire, économie et société*, 3/4 (1984), pp. 641-650.

power of language! What virtues accorded to the most simple relation: one man speaks and another listens! And thus are healed not only minds, but bodies'.¹⁰²

Therefore, in neither body nor mind, interiority or exteriority, did there remain a domain of actual particularity, specificity, or uniqueness for the self, an irreducible and unified sense of individuality, or a set of conceptual boundaries to separate the individual and nature, otherness, society or the state. This was not an accident or a new form of tyranny, but rather the result of a new theorization of the individual that challenged the old paradigm. Léon Bourgeois, one of the key republican statesmen of the 1890s and the prime minister from 1895 to 1896, was among the first to have turned this new theorization into a political theory known as *solidarisme*. He argued that so long as 'man' was considered as different from nature and equal to others as an exemplar of a universal type created one and for all by divinity at the dawn of time, then it was a simple logical operation to deduce that man was an absolute endowed with absolute rights and clear duties. And such rights were the appropriate means for an individual imagined as the goal of existence and creation. But, Bourgeois argued, the understanding of 'man' had changed. No longer 'an abstraction whose "one and identical" *moi* is the a priori subject of rights themselves', 'man' was no longer special and different from other living beings. All creatures were subject to the laws of evolution and were necessarily determined by their milieu. These realizations had profound implications for the understanding of the state.

In destroying the abstract and *a priori* notion of the isolated man, the familiarity with the laws of natural solidarity destroys with the same blow the equally

¹⁰² Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* (Mineapolis, 1995), pp. 230, 234.

abstract and *a priori* notion of the State, isolated from man and opposed to him as a distinct subject of rights or as a superior power to which he would be subordinated.

This was a paradigm of hazy borders, and as such it went against the conceptual boundaries and the series of *a priori* that upheld the unassailable centrality of the liberal individual and the state. The name for this dissolution of fundamental conceptual frontiers in the political theory of traditional and present-day liberalism is *totalitarianism*. But the term does not refer to the absence of liberties, only to those specific liberties that make possible a certain type of liberal self and state understood to be the conceptual condition for all liberties. There existed liberties and government *through* liberty outside those advocated by orthodox political and economic liberalism. For example, the switch to a socialized self enabled the proliferation of new freedoms in the form of unprecedented social rights we have come to identify with the Welfare state, which were structurally impossible under the previous theory of indivisible subjectivity. In the next section, we turn to the new liberties that became available to the socialized self.

‘I contain multitudes’: The multiple self.

While in 1893 Durkheim had considered that personal consciousness ‘only represents our individual personality and constitutes it’, we have seen how the space reserved for our private mind progressively decreased as Durkheim’s work matured, and in the end it was limited to ‘the body and its states’. He would write that ‘We say our individuality and not our personality. Although the two words are often taken for one another, it is important to distinguish them with the greatest

care. The personality is made up essentially of supra-individual elements'.¹⁰³ Therefore, personality had also been annexed to the social domain. Indeed, the meaning of personality changed dramatically in the fin de siècle.

It was in the 1870s that the old 'metaphysical' approaches across a number of disciplines were substituted for their modern 'scientific' ones we can now recognize. Charles Renouvier and his school operated this change in philosophy, leading to a reinterpretation of Kant along the lines of a pluralistic and social theory of consciousness.¹⁰⁴ Susan Stedman Jones has convincingly shown the enormous debt Durkheim had with Renouvier in many of his most foundational suppositions.¹⁰⁵ Théodule Ribot was the first to carry out the same modernizing shift in psychology in the 1870s. The abandonment of the metaphysical bases of the unified and indivisible self led to an increasingly unsettling number of discoveries about the psyche especially thanks to hypnotism and other experiences of complex automatism. Perhaps the most crucial of these for the purposes of our discussion was that of secondary or multiple personalities, first reported in 1876 in the journal Ribot edited. The condition spread quickly following its discovery. Ian Hacking has shown that from 1874 to 1886 'a wave of multiplicity swept over France'.¹⁰⁶ Initially interpreted as a form of somnambulism, this psychic anomaly would become pivotal in the 1880s for the abandonment of the old model of the self.

¹⁰³ Durkheim, 'The dualism', p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ See Laurent Fedi, *Le problème de la connaissance dans la philosophie de Charles Renouvier* (Paris, 1998).

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *Durkheim Reconsidered*, chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton, 1995), p. 128.

It is hard to express the scale of the intellectual effervescence of the 1880s in the international field of consciousness research. A multitude of scientists, occultists and writers served as pioneers in the mysterious land of *unconscious consciousness* or *conscious unconsciousness*; their names and works were destined to be quickly forgotten, Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* notwithstanding. While men 'often quite independent of each other' were reaching the same conclusions on both sides of the Atlantic at a dizzying pace, here Paris, as in so many other respects, was the epicentre. 'More than sixty publications on suggestion, hypnosis and the dual self appear in France between 1885 and 1887' alone.¹⁰⁷

The *normalien* and psychologist Pierre Janet, the nephew of philosopher Paul Janet, was one of the key figures in this epistemic change. He would write that this odd discovery 'was the great argument of which the positivist psychologists made use at the time of the heroic struggles against the spiritualistic dogmatism of Cousin's school', its unitary self and the system of morality that derived from it.¹⁰⁸ But rather than dismiss the sense of self completely by reducing awareness to brain function, which was the existing alternative to Cousin's *moi*, which would have meant breaking with the spiritualist philosophical tradition in which he had been educated, Janet argued based on his work with hysterical patients, that 'the fact of successive existences strikes no blow at the notion of the self'. Instead, a new

¹⁰⁷ Van den Berg, *Divided Existence*, p. 41, see chapter 2.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in: Edward M. Brown, 'Pierre Janet and *Félida Artificielle*: Multiple personality in a nineteenth-century guise', *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 39/3 (2003), p. 281.

alternative was offered based on the existence of 'states of unconscious consciousness' and a multiplicity of selves.¹⁰⁹

Not denying but rather appropriating and reinventing the self was a way of undercutting the modernized and reinvigorated versions of the unitary, psychological model of the self and society, which in France became associated with the names of Herbert Spencer and Gabriel Tarde. By means of their sociological psychologies, they gave new life to the old psychological paradigm that remained much more coherent and philosophically sound than the new sociological model, as the on-going debate between Tarde and Durkheim showed.¹¹⁰ In the debate as throughout his career, Durkheim's answer to the thorny questions he faced was commonly ignorance, claiming that the current state of the sociological science meant that we did not *yet* know. The new scientific model offered no metaphysical cohesion, only tentative findings. But in 'les années électriques' of the fin-de-siècle these results promised an exciting new world.¹¹¹ Logical certainties had given way to endless possibility. And the findings of multiple personalities participated in that mind-blowing awe of scientific discovery of the time. In introducing this discovery to the English-speaking world,

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in: Ibid., p. 282. As Durkheim would attempt to incorporate the religious into sociology in the context of the clerical-anticlerical disputes of the day, so did Janet and his fellow psychologists try to annex the spiritual realm into their newborn discipline. A key device that allowed for Janet's breakthroughs into the dark recesses of multiple personalities was his use of 'automatic writing', the technique with which *spiritistes* communicated with the dead. Janet's research into 'possession, ecstasy, and stigmata' and other supernatural 'pathologies' make him one of the key sources for the simultaneous birth of both modern psychology and parapsychology. Brown, 'Pierre Janet', p. 283; Lachapelle, *Investigating the Supernatural*, chapter 3.

¹¹⁰ This pique between Tarde and Durkheim included the exchange of some 26 polemical texts between them from 1893, climaxing with a face-to-face debate in 1903 in *l'École des hautes études sociales*. Marcia Consolim, 'Émile Durkheim e Gabriel Tarde: Aspectos teóricos de um debate histórico, 1893-1904', *História: Questões & debates*, 53 (2010), pp. 39-65. For a recent reenactment of the debate (available on YouTube) see: Eduardo Viana Vargas, Bruno Latour, Bruno Karsenti, et al., 'The debate between Tarde and Durkheim', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26 (2008), pp. 761-777.

¹¹¹ Christophe Prochasson, *Les années électriques, 1880-1910* (Paris, 1991).

American psychologist and philosopher William James praised Janet in 1890 for having proven that ‘the total possible consciousness may be split into parts which coexist but mutually ignore each other’.¹¹² For his readers, such a thing must have seemed beyond Jules Verne’s imagination.

While the history of multiple personalities, in France in particular, has received scholarly attention, I would like to focus on a neglected legacy of this discovery.¹¹³ That is namely the fact that multiple personalities offered the grounds for the new form of socialized self Durkheim and others were putting forward at the time, and also for its corollary in a new understanding of government (and therefore of new domains of ‘freedom’) that made social pluralism possible for the first time since 1789 by locating social diversity inside the self in a new way.

The increasing complexity of the self crystalized into a new paradigm around 1893.¹¹⁴ Dutch psychiatrist Jan-Hendrik van den Berg has pointed out the synchronicity of three major and independent discoveries that occurred in 1891 and 1893 that shifted the understanding of the self. The first was Durkheim’s finding in 1893 of a dual consciousness. In 1891, James argued that individuals had as many social personalities as the groups to which he or she belonged. The third was the first article discussing a hysteria patient who was living an existence that was partly conscious and partly unconscious. It was published in 1893 by Joseph

¹¹² Quoted in: Ibid.

¹¹³ See especially Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*.

¹¹⁴ For the events of circa 1893 in French experimental psychology, see: Frédéric Carbonel, ‘L’aristocratie aliéniste face au disciple de Charcot: Une nouvelles croisée des chemins au début des années 1890?’, *HAL*, 00191150 (2007), pp. 1-21; P. Estingoy, ‘Le concept d’automatisme à l’épreuve de la filiation: De Charles Richet à Pierre Janet’, *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 166 (2008), pp. 177-184.

Breuer and Sigmund Freud, who would soon base his depth psychology on the understanding that all humans lived divided between a conscious life and a hostile unconscious.¹¹⁵

As these discoveries consolidated a new form of compound subjectivity, they were quickly translated into new theories of government. In the second half of the 1890s, these emerged simultaneously across the Anglo-European world. There was agreement on the new basic premise of government, which rested on the dividedness of the subject as uncovered by the fin-de-siècle sciences of the mind. Swiss theorist Sigismond Balicki could not have been clearer in this respect. In 1895 he wrote that 'Modern research in experimental psychology has established that our personalities are multiple and changing'.¹¹⁶ He took this to mean, with James, that we had as many personalities as social roles. He understood that 'social groupings do not embrace the entire individual' but only 'engage one part of his functions, corresponding to the function of the collective'. Therefore, individuals were fragmented into being a father, worker, political militant, believer of a faith, citizen or member of voluntary associations.

Each of these associations only engages a share of our life and individual forces. This share, merged with collective life, leaves a particular imprint on our being and determines our corresponding *personality*. We have as many of these [personalities] as there are social communities which share our supposed internal unity.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Van den Berg, *Divided Existence*, chapter 2.

¹¹⁶ Sigismond Balicki, 'L'organisation spontanée de la société politique', *Revue internationale de sociologie*, 3/6 (1895), p. 451.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Each of the social groupings to which one belonged was necessarily based on some form of fundamental similarity between its members sharing that one, non-exclusive personality. Indeed, 'in order for the resembling elements [*éléments ressemblants*, meaning the group members] to be associated, it is indispensable for all the differences that may compromise common action to be removed (*écartés*)'. In such a group, 'individual particularities are erased, distinct elements are removed, internal affinity increases, and all the mass becomes more consistent, more homogeneous'.¹¹⁸

James had articulated a similar approach in 1891. 'Properly speaking', he argued, 'a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind'. This was instantly qualified along lines that would very soon become commonplace. 'But as the individuals who carry the images fall naturally into classes, we may practically say that he has as many different social selves as there are distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinion he cares'.¹¹⁹

The claim Balicki and many of his contemporaries were making was that if multiple personalities were possible, then the self could not be reduced to its many personalities. This meant that each social role or function constituted, regulated, and engaged only *one* personality, but never the entire being. The individual could not be reduced to any or the sum of its roles. As a result, individuality and socialization no longer contradicted each other in an either-or manner; being a

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 457.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in: van den Berg, *Divided Existence*, p. 275.

completely social individual did not exhaust private particularity and personal freedom, but actually constituted it. At least in theory, personalities were a matter of choice. The self was now called upon to fashion itself by creating a unique collage of social personalities to which it could never be reduced. Particularity was now the specific and creative manner in which one person engaged with the social. To the question 'What then is the individual from the point of view of society?', Balicki replied 'He is but the point of intersection of diverse collective currents, diverse organizations, a synthesis of his own instincts and tendencies which are those of society'.¹²⁰

Hence individuality was the ability to generate a personal (and personally meaningful) synthesis made of borrowed social elements, which never had to be merged in the self or in some meta-personality; instead, it is more like the capacity to recognize appropriate self-division in the self and others. Each 'of his own instincts and tendencies' had to be expressed through the fitting social channel, 'differentiating the ensemble of his general aspiration into precise tendencies'. In other words, individuals had to be apt in keeping separate each of their multiple personalities (as worker, father, student, and so on) and not mixing up the personalities of another.¹²¹

While the idea of multiple personalities being taken to constitute a new sense of social self may sound alien to our ears, it gains a sharp focus if we substitute the term personalities for its modern equivalent: *identities*. Until the twentieth

¹²⁰ Balicki, 'Organisation spontanée', p. 452.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 456.

century, the word *identité* only meant *mêmeté* or sameness. Identity signified that several things were one same thing or idea. One's identity in legal language meant that the man that entered a contract or committed an act was *identical* with himself across time and space, and thus legally responsible. Now, the very basis of socialization through associations was group homogeneity or being identical in some aspect. While I have not been able to locate when the modern usage of identities originated, there were already signs by 1899 of movement in that direction, as in this discussion of family life: 'The affinities of kinship, the daily life in common predisposes to affections, that is to say, the identification with others'.¹²²

As early as 1883, German philosopher of history Wilhelm Dilthey had argued that society as the 'cultural systems' that arose from it were made up of these interlocking groups, none of which encompassed the whole individual. Distinctness remained private, for it was only 'the similarity of individuals which allows them to share common contents in their lives'.¹²³ Since these similarities in turn generated a common purpose and will, Dilthey called groups 'volitional unities'. These were theorized as not only autonomous from its members, but most importantly as essentially unchanged by them. Families, states or churches endured 'while individuals pass in and out of them, just as an organism continues in spite of the appearance and disappearance of the molecules and atoms that

¹²² Thérèse Bentzon, *Causeries de morale pratique* (Paris, 1913), p. 6.

¹²³ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Princeton, 1989), p. 100.

constitute it'.¹²⁴ The same was true of culture. 'Religion, art, and law are imperishable, while the individuals in whom they live change'.¹²⁵

By 1901, Durkheim had adopted this view, borrowing from his supporters Marcel Mauss and Paul Fauconnet the definition of sociology as 'the science of institutions, their genesis and their functioning'. This included both formal and informal institutions understood as an instituting or 'crystalizing' of 'certain modes of action and certain ways of judging which are independent of the particular individual will considered separately'. These were added on to the individual's nature and embodied by a succession of individuals 'without this succession destroying their continuity'.¹²⁶ With its inflexible concern with continuity, the institutional focus on social groupings and customs dramatically reduced the space reserved for people and human agency by dissolving them into an inter-generational and even god-like temporality where actual persons were rendered irrelevant.

But where the German and French interpretations parted ways was in the issue of the state. What Balicki proposed was an ideal of a stateless society, a 'spontaneous organization of the political Society'. He argued that the state was only necessary because coercion and constraint were indispensable to harmonize heterogeneous and divergent elements. The need for government was only the result of differences in society, rather than derived from equality and sameness of desires. Balicki thus turned Hobbes on his head. The opposite of coercive government was

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 115.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

¹²⁶ Quoted in: Lukes, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5.

spontaneous action which was born out of 'bonds of homogeneity', making possible a conflict-free integration through unhindered sameness.¹²⁷

Durkheim also agreed that antagonism was what made the state necessary, but he argued that conflict in society was inevitable due to ever increasing complexity brought about by the division of labour. While also emphasizing the homogenizing effect of groups, Durkheim in turn relied on analogies borrowed from evolutionary biology, whereby advancement is the passage from homogeneity to heterogeneity.¹²⁸ The 'mechanical solidarity' of traditional societies implied a strict adherence to collective consciousness, leaving no room for that which made us distinctive; thus 'originally the individual was absorbed in the group'.¹²⁹ Growing functional diversity was inseparable from moral pluralism and increasingly individualized minds and emancipated individuals; thus in modern societies individuals became increasingly dissimilar and specialized, while internal divergence within groups inevitably led to new groups.¹³⁰ Eventual conflicts within and between groups were as inescapable as the inner struggles between the two consciousnesses in individuals, to which the problem could be reduced. For he interpreted the state as necessary because of injustice, the principal source of which was inequality. If the state did not intervene, then families, castes, classes, corporations and all sorts of clans and economic bodies necessarily would use their superiority to completely subsume those under their influence. This meant that it was necessary to have 'an equal (sovereign) force that is more elevated than

¹²⁷ Balicki, 'Organisation spontanée', p. 460.

¹²⁸ Alessandro Pizzorno, 'Lecture actuelle de Durkheim', *European Journal of Sociology*, 4/1 (1963), pp. 31-33.

¹²⁹ Durkheim, *Division du travail*, p. 318.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

all the others and that, consequently, is capable of containing and preventing their excesses. Such a force is the State'.¹³¹

'The essential function of the state', Durkheim wrote, 'is to liberate individual personalities', or what he would later call individualities.¹³² Without the state, it seemed as if the social consciousness would certainly obliterate the individual one; and states existed to impede this. Oddly, this meant that the war between the private and social aspects of the mind were not so much inevitable and natural, but rather at once the main cause and effect of the state, the main goal that justified and necessitated governing. Thus state and individual were as inseparable in the theory of the two consciousnesses as they had been in the psychological theory of the self.

The culture of the self.

Durkheim's society was not far from a notion that had been gradually gaining ground since 1870, that of culture. Both functioned as the crucial normative domains that structured the terms in which behaviour and merit were to be understood.

The social or the cultural came to stand for something at once already existing and containing its own ideal, simultaneously internalized and objectively external. They were normative not because they acted directly upon behaviour and

¹³¹ Durkheim, 'L'État', *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 148 (1958), pp. 435-436. In *Division du travail*, p. 455 he makes the same claim about 'the regulatory action of society' acting through law.

¹³² Quoted in Jones, *Durkheim Reconsidered*, p. 167.

thinking, but rather because the socio-cultural functioned as a complete catalogue of symbols, categories and meanings that was already there for individuals to draw upon. Categories such as the ideal, the normal and the pathological were part of what Gertrude Jaeger and Philip Selznick call the 'the conception of culture as a "design for living". A design for living is a set of implicit and explicit standards which, in any society, can be only approximately embodied in action. The society has its ideal father, son, workman and friend, but the observed role, and even the learned role, may be a far cry from the cultural ideal'.¹³³ But this understanding does not take us far from the early-nineteenth century notion of morality as a set of intuitive but unspecific and even contradictory ideals towards which all *must* advance. This morality of the early nineteenth century had been locked in an all-or-nothing legal ideal, as can be seen in the work of Henri Nadault de Buffon. In 1862, in his book on child-rearing for mothers he stated that 'Submission is an indispensable virtue in the child'. It taught individuals to lower their pride in the presence of the obstacles of nature or law.

It is indispensable, in effect, that man becomes accustomed, from the first hours of his life, to obey blindly certain necessary laws: this is what I would call the discipline of intelligence, which is irremediably destroyed by the spirit of discussion. *Laws are not discussed, there are either respectfully observed or audaciously combatted.*¹³⁴

'If the child obeys, he benefits; if he revolts, his progress stops', and by extension the same was true for all members of society.

¹³³ Gertrude Jaeger and Philip Selznick, 'A normative theory of culture', *American Sociological Review*, 29/5 (1964), p. 655.

¹³⁴ Henri Nadault de Buffon, *L'éducation de la première enfance: Ou, la femme appelée à la régénération sociale par le progrès* (Paris, 1862), p. 253. Emphasis added.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the main obstacle for the practice of government was the irruption of volition, either in the form of the General Will or unruly private determinations. The main task of the self was theorized as being the taming of will by intellect. Reason was enthroned as the supreme value of human existence, albeit one that was itself infallible, impersonal, non-human or divine. While each person was called upon to work on their own perfecting, this could only be done by reaching out from a limited private intellect to a reason external to us, and embodied only in the great men gathered in the official academies. Pierre Florins, himself belonging to more than a dozen such scientific academies, offered a Manichean choice between instinct and intellect. '*Instinct* does not learn, it does not instruct, develop or perfect itself. *Intelligence* learns, instructs, develops and perfects itself'.¹³⁵ This hollowing out of volition was completed in Littré's vision of man as matter. Free will and personal autonomy from the milieu was but an illusion derived from the electrical impulses in the human brain. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl separated law and morality, grounding the first in impersonal public utility and defence, and the latter in freedom of conscience. Wrongdoers could be punished simply because they had broken the law of the land, rather than having to locate them as rational and free moral agents within the metaphysical order. Law was a factual and blind machine with entirely objective rules and penalties, rather than a moral cause one either accepted blindly or combated audaciously.¹³⁶ Durkheim reduced individuality to little but form, whose essences, shapes and contents belonged to the impersonal consciousness of society.

¹³⁵ Pierre Florins, *De la raison, du génie, et de la folie* (Paris, 1861), p. 142.

¹³⁶ Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *L'idée de la responsabilité* (Paris, 1884).

But awareness of the 'fact' that society was an impersonal machine that ploughed on through the ages regardless of humans, opened up the possibility of creatively using personal will and choices (be they real, illusory or socially determined) in a novel manner of creative self-fashioning. By locating the impersonal inside the self but beyond its control, Durkheim opened up a new domain of individual agency, which I think can be captured in Jaeger and Selznick's emphasis on individual symbolization and adaptation.

in the struggle against alienation, man transforms the instrumental and the impersonal, the physical and the organic, into a realm of evocative, expressive, person-centered meaning.[...] It is an effort to make the world rich with personal significance, to place the inner self upon the stage, to transform narrow instrumental roles into vehicles of psychic fulfillment. It implicates the self and strives to invest the environment with subjective relevance and meaning.¹³⁷

By 1900, the individual was being called to participate and integrate into a collective system by endowing it with personal meaning through 'the transformation of an impersonal setting into a personal one'.¹³⁸ Early twenty century nationalist rallies, 1st May *Fêtes du Travail* or football matches did not imply the blind acceptance of socially normative categories, but rather the individual's investment in them by conferring onto them personal meaningfulness, in other words, the person's identification with them.

The inability to carry out this symbolization is what Durkheim called *anomie*, which he explored in depth as the source of suicide.¹³⁹ Anomie meant

¹³⁷ Jaeger and Selznick, 'Normative Theory', pp. 659-660.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 658.

¹³⁹ See: Durkheim, *Suicide* (Glencoe, 1951).

'normlessness, lawlessness', 'unrestraint, abandonment' or 'derangement', in short, it was the absence of *solidarity*, meaning the social regulation, organization and coherence of the plurality of social functions.¹⁴⁰ But more importantly, it was an updated version of the liberal axiom that one should not govern too much or too little. Thus Durkheim proposed 'a just middle between two extremes, between a minimum and a maximum. The individual may get lost where society is too compact, or where it subordinates him too narrowly to its own designs ("altruistic" suicide); but just as much in the opposite situation, when the social fabric is too loose, impeding the individual from fixing limits to his own desire ("anomic" suicide)'.¹⁴¹ 'Anomie is especially a lack of definition of individual ends'. In such a state, individuals 'have lost the criteria that would allow them to evaluate their own individual ends, the measure of values, the possibility to be integrated in the collective consciousness. Society is in a state of immoderation, malfunction, anomie'.¹⁴² This dialectic of identification or anomie also occupied the attention of jurist Maurice Hauriou, whose 1896 *Cours de science social* sought to separate 'the objective elements of progress from the problem of conduct'. He opined that

When an individual concerns himself with leading a truly social conduct, that is, with adapting to society even his unconscious energies, with making the direction of these agree with the common direction [of society], he accepts this base of traditional beliefs without debate, as a product of a revelation. When out of scepticism or dilettantism he does not act this way, he is not playing with an open hand (*il ne joue pas franc-jeu*), and if there were not a majority of loyal players, society would not be possible.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Van den Berg, *Divided Existence*, p. 100.

¹⁴¹ Jacques Donzelot, *Invention du social* (Paris, 1984), p. 84

¹⁴² Pizzorno, 'Lecture actuelle', pp. 20-21.

¹⁴³ Maurice Hauriou, *Cours de science sociale* (Paris, 1896), p. 31

The pathological nature of this lack of identification with social roles would soon become the foundation of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson wrote that

Freud was once asked what he thought a normal person should be able to do well. The questioner probably expected a complicated answer. But Freud, in the curst ways of his old days, is reported to have said 'Lieben und arbeiten' (to love and to work).¹⁴⁴

In 1930, Freud made the same claim in writing, and specified that 'love' here meant sexual attraction as well as mother-child affection.¹⁴⁵ In other words, normality for psychoanalysts was to find contentment and meaning in the inevitable social functions of production and reproduction.¹⁴⁶

By contrast, this process of objectification of the self through symbolization and identification was what Marx termed alienation. In capitalist production the objects of the world stood as alien to 'man', even if they were of his own creation. This led to experiencing the world and even oneself receptively and passively. Marx argued that alienation turned a person's human essence into 'a *means* for his *individual existence*', thus 'alienate[ing] from man his own body, external nature, his mental life, and his *human* life'. Existence becomes experienced 'as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him'.¹⁴⁷ But in the twenty years after Marx's death in 1883, the nature of alienation would shift, requiring the increased participation of the alienated. This is best captured in the following lines by Thomas Merton: 'Alienation begins when culture divides me against myself, puts a mask on me, gives me a role I may or may not want to play.

¹⁴⁴ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (St Albans, 1977), p. 238.

¹⁴⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York, 1962), p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ The same premise can be found in our own time among psychoanalysts such as Frank Pittman.

¹⁴⁷ Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York, 1961), pp. 45, 43.

Alienation is complete when I become completely identified with my mask, totally satisfied with my role, and convince myself that any other identity or role is inconceivable'.¹⁴⁸

It was this very game of masks and conceivability sustained by self-conviction that marked the new self in 1900. And with it dawned a new age of opportunity for self-definition.

The will to belong.

Franklin Ankersmit wrote that 'it seems impossible for Tocqueville to describe democracy without an appeal to paradox'.¹⁴⁹ And one of the irreducible paradoxes of liberalism as a form of government is that new freedoms were inseparable from and unthinkable without new constraints. The sociological paradigm of the self left very little space for what one could theorize as individuality. Reduced to the instincts and sentiments lodged in the body, it would seem the self was reduced to a social automaton. And yet, the shift from the psychic to the social self opened up an unprecedented space for human freedom. It was specifically a form of freedom that we can more easily recognize today, one that relied entirely upon the will and was experienced as *choices*, from which we derived our specificity as individuals.

At the time a philosophy teacher in a provincial *lycée*, Jules Payot published *L'éducation de la volonté* in 1894. By 1909 it had gone through 32 editions and

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Merton, *Seeds* (Boston, 2002), p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ Franklin Ankersmit, *Aesthetic Politics: Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value* (Stanford, 1996), p. 331.

several translations and its author had become a prominent theorist of education. The success of the book was inseparable from the novelty of its aim. 'I have heard many youths complain about the absence of a *method to arrive at self-mastery (maîtrise de soi)*. I offer them what has been suggested to me by almost four years of studies and meditations'. Payot claimed to have systematized the innovations in experimental psychology of the last two decades and especially those by Ribot, to whom the work was dedicated, and translated them into a practical manual offering a tempting form of power: '*to make the future be that which we want it to be*'. The premise was that 'we can carry out the education of our own will, and with time and the knowledge of the laws of our [psychological] nature we are sure to arrive at an elevated self-mastery'.¹⁵⁰ It was dedicated to those who carried out 'prolonged and persevering intellectual labour', and takes for granted that the reader is a young student between the ages of 18 and 25.

Payot was one of the pioneers of a new genre which departed from the conduct book or moral guide of old. Rather than focusing on normative behaviour, the emphasis is rather on the ability to shape oneself through volition. This was the literal moulding of the self into a work of art that took Edgar Quinet's words as programmatic:

Each man is a sculptor who must correct his marble or clay until he has brought out from the confused mass of our coarse instincts an intelligent and free character, the just, that is, he who regulates his actions following a divine model,

¹⁵⁰ Jules Payot, *L'éducation de la volonté* (Paris, 1895), p. 269.

who knows, when needed, how to strip clean the mortal life as the sculptor strips clean the marble to reach the interior sculpture.¹⁵¹

Through sheer willpower, one was not to become different, but rather eradicate differences within to reach the universal marble hiding behind the tasteless particularities of all 'men'. The new emphasis on what moralist and literary critic Thérèse Bentzon called self-work (*travail sur soi-même*) is evocative of what Foucault called 'arts of existence' or 'techniques of the self', meaning:¹⁵²

those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves[...] and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria.¹⁵³

At the turn of the century, the work of Nietzsche and Marcel Proust perhaps best developed the notions of aesthetic fashioning of the self.¹⁵⁴ In Bentzon's work, this 'aesthetics of existence' involved a complete re-framing of ethical relations with the self, the other and society. Following the form of traditional advice books, Bentzon published in a 1899 work on practical morality that reads as a subjectivity manual, offering the feminine reader a way to make sense of her life, circumstances and relationships by signifying them in relation to social roles and national utility. Émile Coué offered a more simplified approach; from the 1910s he became a celebrity because of his use of autosuggestion or self-hypnosis. He taught how to change one's life and health by using the imagination and tirelessly

¹⁵¹ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 263.

¹⁵² Bentzon, *Morale pratique*, p. 261. The notion of *travail sur soi-même* seems to have been quite new in France at the time. As Bentzon was considered an expert in American literature and affairs, perhaps she borrowed the term from the United States.

¹⁵³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume II: The Use of Pleasure* (New York, 1990), pp. 10-11.

¹⁵⁴ Duncan Large, *Nietzsche and Proust: A Comparative Study* (Oxford, 2001); Lanier Anderson, 'What is a Nietzschean Self?', in: Christopher Janaway and Simon Robertson (eds), *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 202-235; Joshua Landy, "'Les Moi en Moi': The Proustian Self in Philosophical Perspective", *New Literary History*, 32/1 (2001), pp. 91-132.

repeating the positive statement 'Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better'.¹⁵⁵ Payot came somewhere in the middle of these two figures.

Written with the grand claims and the nervous prose of present-day self-improvement books, Payot rejected both the belief in innate character and in free will. The first was false and the second childish, since it made self-change seem easy and thus discouraged people from trying. Transforming oneself was an arduous process and a slow conquest. Like all liberty and things of value, self-mastery 'is the reward of the strong, the skilful, [and] the persevering. Nobody is free without meriting it. Liberty is not a right, nor a fact, it is a reward'. Liberty meant 'self-mastery, the assured domination in us of noble sentiments and moral ideas over the sprouts of animality'. Everyone was capable of achieving this 'conquest of oneself', 'even in the most desperate cases'.¹⁵⁶ Provided the right psychological techniques, 'In order to assure our liberty, all that is needed is for our imagination to be capable of conceiving a life-plan to realize'.¹⁵⁷ With time, patience and tenacity, intelligence would be liberated, and would 'slowly and surely seize power and become a dictatorship: a dictatorship tempered only by the laziness of the sovereign and the temporary revolt of the subjects'.¹⁵⁸

The technique was very simple. Since 'our actions are almost exclusively, if not exclusively, provoked by affective states', it was by engaging our emotions that we

¹⁵⁵ See: Hervé Guillemain, *La méthode Coué: Histoire d'une pratique de guérison au XXe siècle* (Paris, 2010) and Lindsay Yeates, 'Emile Coue and his method', *Australian Journal of Clinical Hypnotherapy & Hypnosis*, 38/1 (2016), pp. 3-79.

¹⁵⁶ Payot, *L'éducation*, pp. 28-29, 274.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

could create new behaviour.¹⁵⁹ In order to establish stable habits linking an idea and a conduct, the connection needed to be established in ‘the heat of affective states’; ‘Our end is to provoke in the soul movements of hate or love’, ‘vigorous affections or vehement repulsions’.¹⁶⁰ While he gave indications on how to ‘feed’ some spontaneous feelings or ideas and ‘starve’ others and ‘bar the entry of painful thoughts and emotions into our consciousness’, the foundation of this technique was what he called contemplation or meditation.¹⁶¹ Carried out in exalted emotional states, it consisted in a very vivid visualization and reliving of target situations. In this meditative emotional stir, Payot claimed that links between ideas, feelings or ideas and emotions could be either consolidated or broken. The goal was to ‘provoke resolutions, pose rules of conduct [and] escape the double whirlwind of states of consciousness of inner origin and those provoked by the external world’.¹⁶² This clearly included emancipation from peer influence. ‘Their vanity is so great towards age 20 that it subjects them submissively to public opinion, that is, the opinion of their peers.[... But] He knows that most of his comrades have never reflected on the direction of their own lives, he knows they are dragged along as in a whirlwind, unconscious playthings tossed around by exterior forces, and he gives no more importance to their opinion than does a psychiatrist to the madmen he examines’.¹⁶³

In short, this was a method of emotional self-manipulation. But what is interesting is that the sole purpose and only application of this technique was to become a

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 66, 93, 98.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 225.

better worker. The whole aim of self-mastery was to vanquish sloth. The student was expected to shun his comrades' dispersion, and centre his meditation on 'seek[ing] through simple and familiar reflections to "make himself" love work and make himself detest the soft, useless and stupid life of the idler'.¹⁶⁴ The path was that of meditations so rich that they could be 'savoured' by visualizing things 'to the smallest concrete details'. The student had to enumerate the many pleasures provided by work. But this could not be merely verbal, since 'Words are short and comfortable signs[...], mediocre spirits think with words, abstract and dead things, such that there is no impact in their inner life'.

For example, do not say: my parents will be happy! Evocate the memory of your father, see the manifestations of his joy for each of your successes, see him in your imagination receive the complements of the family friends; represent to yourself the pride of your mother, her pleasure to be on holiday walking by the hand with a son she is proud of.¹⁶⁵

The next step to 'the joys of self-mastery', the source of all happiness and knowledge, was to turn resolutions into new habits. The reader was reminded that in public we do not belong to ourselves, we were part of a party, that we had to acquire a lifestyle in agreement with duty and remain self-coherent. 'This is why it is important, when one breaks with a life of laziness, to do so with courage, to give one's word of honour to oneself and others. One changes restaurant, apartment, [and] relations[...] In one's presence, the ridicule of work is never allowed, nor is the praise of wayward student life.[...] It is thus in every respect necessary to join action and meditation'.¹⁶⁶ Action included seeking out suitable institutionalized

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 140.

sociability in youth associations over informal sociability and *relations mondaines*.¹⁶⁷ The book also includes a long section on 'bodily hygiene', whose laws one had to follow in order for the whole scheme to work.

Both self-improvement authors such as Payot, Coué or Bentzon and the occult and 'New Age' spirituality that emerged in the fin de siècle developed a common understanding of self-mastery.¹⁶⁸ But the belief that a more elevated self would be brought about through self-discipline was by no means exclusive to these groups. Behavioural experts, military thinkers and philosophers, including Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Bergson's *moi profond*, also emphasized the possibility and need of a higher or deeper self to emerge as the final emancipator and fully-sovereign philosopher-king of inner governing. Thus while there seemed to remain little room in the modern self for pure interiority and extra-social particularity, it continued being defined and problematized as site of governing, where hierarchical authority, as in mass democracies, was constantly scrutinized, challenged, consolidated and legitimated. The task of governing was to succeed in the external or social worlds, operating as organized spaces of interaction, by fashioning oneself out of them and in their image. The psychological self had not had the project of becoming a superior entity. The transcendental self was beyond the grasp of the personal and constituted a law-giving authority that was above challenge, and which could at best constitute the utopian horizon and moral North towards which the well-governed, disciplined and obedient self ought to move through the types of exercises of moral deliberation outlined by Elie Luzac. The

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 227-228.

¹⁶⁸ Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge. Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leyde, 2004); Dante Germino, 'Henri Bergson: Activist Mysticism and the Open Society', *The Political Science Reviewer*, 9 (1979), pp. 1-37.

sociological self, in turn, was tasked with labouring to chose, signify, embody, become and defend each of its own plural and group-dependent set of authoritative and transcendental selves. Payot's work illustrates the degree of personal investment in the social order that became conceivable in the fin de siècle. Next we will explore how social government started to change to reflect this ideal.

The will to (dis)obey.

While the second chapter explored profound changes in the conceptualization of authority, this chapter has shown how an objective, and external power came to be situated within the modern individual. The goal of self-mastery that Payot explored substituted the submission to a commanding superior for a voluntary surrender to an impersonal social power that each had to work to signify, internalize and obey. From 1890 to 1910, there was widespread debate and condemnation of authority in many different fields, leading to a new understanding of social government. On the one hand, this implied subordinates could make unprecedented claims upon authorities. Philosophy professor P.-D. Pontsevrez readily recognized that 'The State owes its citizens protection and assistance'. On the other hand, there had to be a complete submission to social power. 'He who refuses to obey the law seems to create, in his own profit and out of his own authority, a particular law, a privilege; by this very fact, he imposes his will on his equals, thus breaking equality' and thus the basis of citizens' claims upon the state. This new understanding of compliance led to wider access to and new understandings of welfare schemes and medical treatment. We saw how child

abandonment or assistance and infant welfare clinics sought to become as widely available as possible in the fin de siècle. Doctor Louis Fiaux argued for a hospital system that relied on 'complete liberty' in which all coercion would cease for the treatment of venereal diseases. 'We demand that any individual, man or woman, may voluntarily receive treatment at the hospital, through the public assistance's outdoor programmes or any doctor chosen' by the patient.¹⁶⁹ Behind this freedom, medics working in new fields of expertise such as clinics devoted to infant welfare or syphilis hoped that the free will of patients would make up for the lack of legally-mandated treatment and supervision. But this meant a change in logic. No longer did the pauper have to procure handouts; it was now the state that had to seek out and entice the assisted. This implied a crisis in the moral economy of social assistance that had relied on the exchange of meagre benefits and advice for the poor's deference and gratitude, as this section will analyse.

The common ideal that emerges from these debates on republican authority was that of a 'voluntary discipline that identifies the law with liberty', as Gabriel Séailles claimed. He was the founder of the Société des universités populaires that offered adult conferences for workers. Created as a domain of post-schooling sociability that would establish needed 'points of contact' between different social classes, the ultimate aim of the society was to 'make new men for a new society' by recognising that 'we will only change the milieu by chaining ourselves' through active cooperation and mutual understanding.¹⁷⁰ The source of authority and order was now inside the self and required full participation rather than passive

¹⁶⁹ Louis Fiaux, *L'organisation actuelle de la surveillance médicale de la prostitution* (Brussels, 1899), p. 67.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in: Marcel Fournier, 'La Fondation universitaire de Belleville et la Société des universités populaires', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 6/XXII (1899), p. 327.

subservience. Agricultural economist Daniel Zolla expected that the 'sincere acceptance of the strict rules of voluntary discipline' on the part of organised workers and cooperatives would solve the 'question ouvrière' and the problems of the economy, if not leading to 'a regime of "social" production', then at least to more humane 'conditions of independence and wellbeing' for workers.¹⁷¹

These changes applied to both the governing of the self and of society. Authors such as Bentzon and Pontsevrez taught readers to wilfully internalize and follow authority in self-steering, the home and child rearing, the school, the workplace or the barracks. We have seen the importance of these changes in self-government in the work of Payot. In this section I will consider how these changes affected the army, while the last two sections of this chapter will consider their effect on schooling. I will explore the changes in military and pedagogical thought and policy as a way of documenting, in the manner done in the first chapter, how these changes in the understanding of the self gave rise to specific technologies for the government of society. The changes in schooling were not only important but also highly strategic for the Third Republic. They were also fundamental for Durkheim, who spent most of his career lecturing not on sociology, but on education and pedagogy.¹⁷² These were critical domains in which he sought to establish new secular grounds for authority in a modern social order, largely following the steps Cousin had taken in the 1830s.¹⁷³ And he was very influential. Indeed, Durkheim

¹⁷¹ Daniel Zolla, 'Revue des questions ouvrières et de prévoyance', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 6/XIX (1899), p. 153.

¹⁷² Daniela Barberis, 'Moral education for the elite of democracy: The Classe de Philosophie between sociology and philosophy', *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 38/4 (2002), pp. 355-369.

¹⁷³ Howard Peterson, 'The quest for moral order: Emile Durkheim on education', *Journal of Moral Education*, 4/1 (1974), pp. 39-46; W.S.F. Pickering, 'Durkheim and moral education for children: A recently discovered lecture', *Journal of Moral Education*, 24/1 (1995), pp. 19-36.

together with Janet and Ribot, among others, were widely cited as the sources of the new understanding of discipline.¹⁷⁴ Part of the broader shift in subjectivity being considered, the intellectual changes related to the abandonment of strict discipline for free compliance led to a series of official regulations that affected both martial and schooling policy in France at the turn of the century, as we will see. The changes in punishment and disciplining were also mirrored in both the civilian and military judicial and penal systems in the pre-War 'crisis of repression'.¹⁷⁵ However, despite the lengthy discussion and official regulations, the practices of disciplining only changed very gradually. Jean-Claude Caron has documented the resistance to change in the schooling system, where physical punishments continued to be applied well into the new century.¹⁷⁶ In the military, the innovations in this field, which only applied in times of peace, received a timid application and a reversal during the War.¹⁷⁷ But rather than a return to the past, there emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century and in the trenches a 'new type of hierarchical relationship' and a more fluid and negotiable understanding of authority and obedience, as Leonard Smith and Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien have shown.¹⁷⁸ These transformations will be explored to show how the

¹⁷⁴ Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien, 'Forcer l'obéissance: intentions, formes et effets d'une pratique militaire dans l'activité combattante de la Grande Guerre', in: André Loez and Nicolas Mariot (eds), *Obéir/désobéir: Les mutineries de 1917 en perspective* (Paris, 2008), p. 35 and 'Pourquoi obéit-on?: Discipline et liens hiérarchiques dans l'armée française de la Première Guerre mondiale', *Genèses* 75/2 (2009), p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Dominique Kalifa, 'Magistrature et "crise de la repression" à la veille de la Grande guerre, 1911-1912', *Vingtième siècle*, 67/1 (2000), pp. 43-59; Saint-Fuscien, 'Entre guerre et paix: La décennie décisive de la justice militaire française, 1906-1916', *Mil-neuf-cent*, 33/1 (2015), pp. 15-30; Bernard Schnapper, 'La correction paternelle et le mouvement des idées au dix-neuvième siècle, 1789-1935', *Revue historique*, 534 (1980), pp. 319-349.

¹⁷⁶ Jean-Claude Caron, *À l'école de la violence: Châtiments et sévices dans l'institution scolaire au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1999).

¹⁷⁷ For the continuities between 1870 and 1905 see: Odile Roynette, *Bons pour le service: L'expérience de la caserne en France à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2000).

¹⁷⁸ Leonard Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton, 1994); Saint-Fuscien, 'Pourquoi obéit-on?', p. 4 and *A vos ordres?: La relation d'autorité dans l'armée française de la Grande Guerre* (Paris, 2011).

shifts in selfhood were supported and encouraged by state policy towards the turn of the century in France.

When the Berteaux law was passed on 21 March 1905, all Frenchmen had to provide two years of 'personal, equal, and obligatory' military service for their country. As the army entered the democratic age after a decade of scandals brought about by the Alfred Dreyfus affair, général Jules Bourelly was greatly disturbed by how social developments seemed to undermine the very core of army life, in particular military obedience. The nineteenth century had little to say on this point. The 1891 military regulations had copied its 1833 predecessor verbatim.

Since discipline constitutes the principal force of armies, it is important that every superior obtain from his subordinates *a complete obedience and submission at every instant, that orders be executed literally, without hesitation or murmur*; the authority that gives them is responsible, and complaints are only permitted to the inferior when he obeys.¹⁷⁹

There were strict penalties for disobedience, which in case of war involved 'punishment by death with military degradation'.

The several scares of a military *coup d'état* in the 1880s changed this. After the first such panic in 1882, commander Jean-Marie-Arthur Labordère was the first to raise the alarm in the Senate. Given the choice between the firing squad and marching on the enemy, how should soldiers react if that enemy was the Republic itself? What would happen to the soldier that refused to carry out 'a fragrant violation of

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in: Jules Bourelly, 'La discipline militaire', *La nouvelle revue*, 29 (1908), pp. 289-290.

the law'? Absolute obedience, he insisted, should be distinguished from an obedience 'qui a une limite', but the senators voted this down 307 to 38. Those who as Labordère wanted to see the military established upon the principle of *obedience to the law* found little support among the state elites, uneasy about making compliance reliant on subjective judgement.

After the Berteaux law, 'Another theory of military discipline tends to spread'. This view stated that 'Military discipline is based on *respect, esteem and conviction*'. The times had changed, some argued, recruits were no longer the poor and illiterate castaways unable to pay for a substitute. The citizen-soldier was more educated and enlightened than ever before, he was 'an intelligent bayonet and not an automaton'.¹⁸⁰ In a state of war, what was needed was a self-disciplined soldier capable of operating autonomously even when superiors were not watching. This was the controversial view championed by captain Paul Simon, who was close to general Louis André, the minister of war from 1900 to 1904. He taught a course on oral education at Saint-Cry, the foremost French military academy, where he had as students a large part of the officers who were called to the frontlines in 1914, including a young Charles Gaulle.¹⁸¹ Simon and his followers argued that it was time to humanize the army. Bourelly found this to be much worse than obedience to the law. Martial order now rested on 'personal opinion', 'more or less thought out, more or less reasoned, more or less durable'. It 'replaced the general duty of complete obedience for a sort of vague duty of conscience which each would be

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 295, 298.

¹⁸¹ Saint-Fuscien, 'Forcer l'obéissance', p. 35; Paul Simon, *Instruction des officiers* (Paris, 1905) and *La discipline moderne* (Paris, 1909).

free to carry out in their own way'.¹⁸² What was being proposed was no less than 'voluntary submission' or 'voluntary consent'.¹⁸³ Maurice Berteaux, the minister of war who gave his name to the universal conscription law, stated that

it is necessary to make an effort to obtain *voluntary discipline* based on the elevated sentiments of devotion to the *patrie*, on the exact knowledge of duty; we will arrive there by developing moral education.¹⁸⁴

Henri Marty, in a context unrelated to the military, perhaps phrased it more explicitly. In complex societies where hierarchies were mixed up rather than layered, he argued that discipline was more necessary than ever.

The form under which it presents itself to us has equally varied: we reject passive and depressive submission, and we aim to accept and impose a voluntary discipline based on self-mastery (*maîtrise de soi-même*).¹⁸⁵

Moral education and self-mastery spoke of the same aims behind Payot's method, a complete and unconditional identification with society. Now this was being taken as the basis of a new reform of the most fundamental aspect of military life. Bourelly was appalled. 'Voluntary discipline! Who would have dreamt twenty years ago of joining those two words?'. One had to go back much further to find similar ideas expressed. The willing submission of soldiers was discussed in 1793, but never translated into military regulation as was being done towards 1900.¹⁸⁶ However, Bourelly's contemporaries inscribed the new ideas into the memory of the Revolution. In a speech given to commemorate the centenary of the Revolution's battle of Valmy, education minister Bourgeois claimed that the source

¹⁸² Bourelly, 'Discipline militaire', pp. 295, 298.

¹⁸³ Anonymous, 'Questions militaires', *La revue hebdomadaire*, 17/VIII (August 1908), pp. 411-419.

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹⁸⁵ Henri Marty, 'Conferences et les séances récréatives', *La science sociale*, 25/71 (1910), p. 104.

¹⁸⁶ Eugène Carrias, *La pensée militaire française* (Paris, 1960), p. 201.

of the victory had been the existence 'between the soldiers of Valmy and their chiefs of a bond much narrower than those of material authority, a voluntary discipline that was even more rigorous than that of the armies of Frédéric' II of Prussia.¹⁸⁷ The glorious successes of the French Revolution were being used to craft a new understanding of the nation at war that relied on Bergson's idea of *élan vital*, meaning 'vital impetus' or 'vital force', an abstract force capable of shaping the very inner drives of soldiers. Historian Ian Ousby has argued that 'military training consisted less in advocating strategy or tactics than in inculcating and celebrating a warrior code'.¹⁸⁸ In strongly Durkhemian terms, captain Simon defined 'modern discipline' in a widely-publicized public speech as

a sort of *religion*, having its *faith*: patriotic and military beliefs; its *charity*: sentiments of patriotism, affection, [and] honour; its *rites*: the salute to the flag, honours; having its *music* and its *hymns*; having its practices: the habitudes of obedience, work, [and] hygiene; having finally its *saints*: the brave, and its *martyrs*: soldiers who died in the field of honour.¹⁸⁹

The approach that came with universal conscription had weakened the army on several fronts, Bourelly further argued. '[O]ne only elevates the soldier in his own eyes by lowering officers and lessening their authority'; 'in raising to his eyes the importance of his personality [soldiers are] rendered less apt to submit to the hands of chiefs, that is, less disciplined'.¹⁹⁰ The error originated in the new understanding of the military as an institution of republican citizenship. 'Under the

¹⁸⁷ Bourgeois, 'Discours prononcé le 20 septembre...', *Bulletin administratif du Ministère de l'instruction publique*, LII/1014-1040 (1892), p. 450.

¹⁸⁸ Ian Ousby, *Road to Verdun: World War I's Most Momentous Battle and the Folly of Nationalism* (New York, 2002), [ebook].

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in: Anonymous, 'Questions militaires', *La revue hebdomadaire*, 17/VIII (August 1908), p. 417.

¹⁹⁰ Bourelly, 'Discipline militaire', pp. 299, 301.

pretext that the barracks are the prolongation of primary schooling and a school of civility, the syllabus for the education of the troops has been populated, in the form of conferences and otherwise, of subjects that are foreign to the end for which the army was created, that is, war'.¹⁹¹ There was also a tendency to focus on the obligations of the superiors and ignore as much as possible those of the recruits. The intervention in strikes had hurt the good image of the institution, and so had the continuous attacks of the press, especially on high-ranking officers, and the bad press given to army mutinies. He does not mention Alfred Dreyfus. Politics had invaded the ranks of military hierarchy, while the internationalist and anti-military propaganda did not cease to demoralize those in uniform.¹⁹² 'In effect, discipline based on obedience is more than just a factor of success for war', Bourelly concluded, 'it is the sine qua non condition for it; an army where it does not reign may gain some passing advantages, but it is destined to a final defeat'.¹⁹³

Bourelly was not the only one to anguish over the discipline problems of the young. In 1902, one incident in Angers signalled that the old forms of charity were in crisis. As other municipalities across France in the nineteenth century, the city of Angers usually ran assistance-through-work schemes or *ateliers de charité* in the winter, when there was least work in the city. These charity workshops usually paid only the most basic survival wages, three or four times below average private sector wages, in exchange for unqualified labour in public works. The premise of these forms of assistance par le travail was to offer work rather than humiliating handouts. It was not a right in any way, and was only granted to those who were

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 299.

¹⁹² Ibid., pp. 299-300.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 298.

deferential, submissive and laborious, principally if they were burdened with family obligations, and even then for no more than about three days per week. Benefits were just enough to avoid starvation.

In January 1902, it came to the attention of the city and the inspector of road works that 109 men had registered and been accepted in the programme but not collected their admittance letters from the police department, while only 94 were being employed for three days a week each. The Bourse du travail, a work-placement office through which municipalities started implementing the first unemployment benefits at the turn of the century, was instructed to only offer subsidies to those who were working in the city quarries. This measure instantly doubled the number of recruits in the workshops. This 'modified almost instantly the spirit of our teams', according to the road-works inspector. 'Previously, our teams of workers were composed by *pères de famille* or the elderly by whom the few young men were flanked and work was carried out very reasonably'. Now everything changed. The new recruits were very young and, for the most part, undisciplined and lazy.

Everywhere, these are but youths playing around like brats (*gamins*) or chatterboxes (*bavards*), babbling away for hours at end reclined on their tools, distracting the others from their occupations, in the end imposing the maxim that men hired by the 'winter workshops' are not obliged to provide any amount of labour in exchange for the allowance of 1.50 francs that the city [of Angers] grants them.

At least a third of the workers employed produced nothing at all, and labour costs soared to three times the market value.

One can visit any of the construction sites at any moment and one is almost certain to see most of the men occupied in any other thing but work. As a general rule, the supervisors have observed that the elderly and mature men occupy themselves conscientiously, but conversely the youths, especially those aged around 17 to 20 produce hardly any work. Moreover, the latter do not tolerate observations and are always ready to threaten or hit those who direct them.

L'assistance par le travail was the hallmark of nineteenth century assistance. It was the basic premise of the English poorhouses and workhouses, replicated in one form or another across Europe. But the youths of the new century seemed to think that work and welfare benefits, obedience and assistance, were not one and the same. Thus, the very logic of the system no longer worked.

We believe that, in these circumstances, the very humanitarian measure taken by the Conseil municipal aiming at providing work to those who lack it, is not appreciated as it should by those in whose favour it is applied and that to continue the misguided ways followed up to now cannot constitute but a most damaging waste for the budget of the City of Angers.

To highlight the urgency of change, the inspector raised the spectre of abuse. He claimed to have seen a foreigner arrive saying that he heard that in Angers everybody was given work, while local employers and owners had started firing their workers in the winter since they would have a guaranteed municipal wage in the workshops. While this was likely an exaggeration, the chief engineer put forward a very ambitious reform. Those with family responsibilities and serious workers should be employed six days a week, with no help for the rest.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ A[rchives] M[unicipales de] A[ngers]. 2Q9. 'Rapport de l'inspecteur de la voirie', 6 January 1902.

From de fin de siècle, the old moral understanding of poverty was giving way to more mechanistic and impersonal interpretations of social problems. In 1909, Durkheimian Max Lazard published his study on work statistics in France and Germany. He found that the number of unemployed depended on economic laws, meaning that personal factors had no influence in them. From the poor, the unemployed, and their moral recalcitrance, the debate could shift to the impersonality of *unemployment*, as a social, not individual phenomenon. Christian Topalov has shown that the same types of conclusions were being reached simultaneously in France, the United States and Britain.¹⁹⁵ In 1907, William Beveridge, whose 1942 report would become the basis of the British Welfare state, was occupied studying the job market in London. What struck him with regards to temporary work was not that the masses of casual workers were unemployed, but that they were able to survive, that they had enough work to keep them there, alive. It meant that some were able to survive with no fixed work commitment, simply off the opportunities the capital and its working-class neighbourhoods offered, thus 'resisting total dependence on wages'.¹⁹⁶ 'Those people who managed to survive in the very heart of major cities by working one day and not the other, had to be weeded out'.¹⁹⁷ The solution was to organize work so as to give the stable worker enough to make a decent wage and leave the casual workers with no income, forcing them to become either decent full-time workers or vagrants that would be subject to repression.¹⁹⁸ By inventing unemployment as a social fact, the

¹⁹⁵ Christian Topalov, *Naissance du chômeur, 1880-1910* (Paris, 1994).

¹⁹⁶ Topalov, 'The invention of unemployment: Language, classification, and social reform, 1880-1910', in: Bruno Palier (ed.), *Comparing Social Welfare Systems in Europe*, I (Paris, 1995), p. 505.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 503.

¹⁹⁸ The turn of the century was the golden age of the vagrant as a mythical figure, whose presence in public discourse was disproportionate to actual errancy. Guy Haudebourg, *Mendiants et vagabond en Bretagne au XIXe siècle* (Rennes, 1998) ; T.B. Smith, 'Assistance and repression: Rural

new work policy would wrestle work assistance from unions; in the new system, which since then remains unchanged, 'benefits were to be denied both to strikers and to workers who would not accept offers by the public employment agency'.¹⁹⁹ The messy lives of working class individuals did not have to be reformed, but only made impossible through new impersonal work policies, modern slum clearing, and urban planning.²⁰⁰ The two main consequences Topalov highlights in this process are the following: 'First, "the dangerous classes" or "the poor" were classified again into new categories, each of which having to be taken care of by appropriate techniques. Second, "the social question" was faded out by being disarticulated into a series of "social issues". To be solved each of them called for a set of separate technologies'.²⁰¹

I believe these changes in the understanding of work and assistance can already be assessed in Angers in 1902. The young no longer interpreted assistance in moral and personal terms, while the chief engineer wished to distinguish the committed, full-time worker from the opportunists by taking the kind of approach Beveridge would take five years later.

These transformations stood at a considerable distance from the disciplinary understanding of the poor the nineteenth century had witnessed. Measured from

exodus, vagabondage and social crisis in France, 1880-1914', *Journal of Social History*, 32 4 (1999), pp. 821-846; Jean-François Wagnart, *Le vagabond à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1999). I would argue that these turn-of-the-century discourses and moral panics served to further establish a clear difference between full-time workers and the rest. Jean-Claude Beaune, *Le vagabond et la machine: Essai sur l'automatisme ambulatoire, médecine, technique et société, 1880-1910* (Paris, 1983).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 500.

²⁰⁰ Topalov, 'From the "social question" to "urban problems": Reformers and the working class at the turn of the twentieth century', *International Social Science Journal*, 42/3 (1990), pp. 325-334.

²⁰¹ Topalov, 'The invention', p. 502.

the old paradigm, there appeared, as it were, an actual right to insubordination among the downtrodden. But from the new paradigm, the goal was not total submission but active and virile agreement and identification, or, more globally, consensus. Thus there no longer needed to be a gendarme standing guard for decency and the social order in every public meeting of more than 20 individuals and in every provincial dancehall. Instead, 'we accept and impose *a voluntary discipline based on self-mastery*', meaning everybody was given the benefit of the doubt with regards to his or her conduct. Causing trouble reflected, then, an absence of self-mastery, which meant little else than full identification in social roles. While absence of self-mastery was not against the law, it reflected a behavioural pathology requiring expert intervention for the social good. Childishness was no longer a moral but a psychiatric category. The delinquency of old became illness and maladjustment. The juridical analogies became medical.

Towards men like Bourelly, the paradigm shift of the turn of the century was most unkind. It had ruthlessly struck the very foundations of authority, that sacred and unchallenged truth of the defunct century. What they encountered was not insubordination, but something much more disturbing: *entitlement*. To say that command needed to be founded on '*respect, esteem, and conviction*' was another way of saying that, as the rest of the new social paradigm, it relied on *identification*, in this case between superior and inferior, ruler and ruled. There was no obedience without wholehearted belief. Only then would the subject yield its holy right to autonomy in a peaceful and willing surrender, not to force, but to faith.

In the tense military environment between 1870 and 1914, theories of subjectivity in fin-de-siècle France were taken seriously enough to have inspired military reforms. Under conceptions of a new and totalizing form of wilful compliance and blind nationalism, more could be demanded from soldiers than had been possible under a system of absolute obedience. For these were no longer bodies at war, it was a combat of souls. With armies of self-mastered ‘new men’, wars became total. We will now turn to the new ideas of normality that came to sustain a new pedagogic understanding.

Les anormaux normaux: The normalities of the self.

In 1915, Alfred Moulet signalled an epoch change in French history: the end of the utopian belief in the powers of education.

The creators of the republican primary school assigned their moralizing action an almost unlimited power. If one looks back at the parliamentary debates in 1880, one will find there a resolutely optimist conception. It animates all discussions; and the adversaries of the secularising programme attack it with even more vehemence in the measure that they are persuaded as well that schooling is all-powerful over *mœurs*.²⁰²

‘Its like a creed: primary schooling forms honest men and the good citizen’. It dated back to the eighteenth century, and in the twentieth century still ‘our primary schools carries in it this generous naivety’. Indeed, “la panacée scolaire” in many points has proven itself ineffective’.²⁰³

²⁰² Alfred Moulet, *L'école primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique* (Paris, 1915), p. 12.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Since the French Revolution schooling was inseparable from the wider project of social government. With the rise of emulation, moreover, it became the template of social hierarchy. In the classroom there was a single rank table in which everybody would be allocated their place. In competition with others, each was to be ranked strictly according to their temporary level of merit. It was this single standard of distinction that became the basis of a meritocratic and hierarchical society. The ideal was for positions to be as unambiguous, incontestable and un-appealable in society as they were in the classroom, were, following Guizot 'Édouard is forced to cede the first place to Alphonse'. Moulet informs us this was no longer the case. The *panacée scolaire* was no longer a *panacée politique*.

The logic of the new model can be perfectly illustrated by one phrase: le *criminel normal*. As with discipline volontaire, contemporaries in the 1900s could have exclaimed: 'Who would have dreamt twenty years ago of joining those two words?'. The reason was very simple. Criminals had always been considered the clearest embodiment of monstrosity, pathology, or abnormality. The term 'normal criminal' was thus an oxymoron.

The term arrived in France through translations of Italian criminologists, the best in the world at the time. Across the Alps, a group of criminologists in the 1890s sought to introduce a more flexible reading of criminal responsibility by handing over to medical specialists all criminals deemed abnormal, and not just the old category of the criminally insane. The defenders of a more traditional juridical approach challenged this medical takeover of justice. In the 1893 French translation of his *Sociologia criminale* Enrico Ferri had criticized Francesco

Poletti's notion of normal and abnormal criminals, a concept 'absolutely contradicted by the givens of criminal physio-psychology'. 'The truly normal man does not commit crimes', Ferri argued. 'To say thus normal criminal is to say something [that is] inexistent and even scientifically inconceivable'.²⁰⁴ At the turn of the century, the term started to be used in France by proponents of a medicalization of criminal responsibility.²⁰⁵ The issue was taken up in the 1910 international congress of criminology held in Washington, D.C. The congress was to vote on the following proposition: 'No *normal* criminal, regardless of age and hardening, should be considered as not susceptible to amelioration'.²⁰⁶ Amédée Constantin, general inspector of administrative services in France, 'disapproved of the employment of in this text of the word *normal*'.²⁰⁷ Pastor Gallagher concurred. 'The expression *normal criminal* seems to be lend itself to misunderstanding here, it seems to me, because many criminologists claim that every normal criminal is an abnormal woman or a man'. But he objected on very different grounds that Ferri had. 'If one refers here to a normally constituted individual, the proposed resolution is just; but even in this sense, it is too restrictive, since an abnormal man may become normal through an appropriate medical treatment'. In other words, the congress objected the idea of incurability implied in saying that *only* the normal criminals could be ameliorated. As Gallagher pointed out, some *may* be cured. But the new medical approach focused on treatment rather than diagnosis and outcome. If all could be ameliorated by 'appropriate medical treatment', incurability was no longer placed outside medicine; abnormality no longer

²⁰⁴ Enrico Ferri, *La sociologie criminelle* (Paris, 1893), p. 380.

²⁰⁵ Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, *La folie des foules* (s.l., 1901), p. 6; Raoul de la Grasserie, *Des principes sociologiques de la criminologie* (Paris, 1901), p. 88.

²⁰⁶ Louis Guillaume and Eugène Borel (eds), *Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Washington, Octobre 1910*, I (Groningen, 1913), p. 150.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

signalled the limit of therapy, whose vast interior now encompassed the whole social body, but rather its starting point. 'After a discussion on the meaning of the word "normal", in which many members took part', which unfortunately is not included in the minutes, the proposition was reworded and passed as follows: 'No detainee, whatever their age or background, must be considered as incapable of reform'.²⁰⁸ The existence of the normal and the abnormal criminal thus became validated, and each entrusted to specific therapeutics of reform.

Since Comte borrowed it from Broussais and it started being applied to society in the mid century, the notion of normality had acquired two meanings. On the one hand, it signalled what was most frequent and common, what all shared, what defined belonging. On the other, to be normal was to be mediocre; since normality was so common, in itself it had no value.²⁰⁹ The term thus marked both the minimum requirement for participation in social life and an insufficient condition for success in social life. It made explicit the minimum level of conformity and identification, while highlighting the need for further effort and hard work. It at once integrated everyone into the social body (eventually even the incurables), and carved out a new space for hierarchy and the elitism of those who performed above the average, who exceeded the norm. Normality-abnormality should not be understood, then, as an all-or-nothing bipolar opposition modelled on the old moral-immoral couplet. Instead, it was a *scale* mapping out and organizing a full progression of diversity. In society at large, the term served as a complete nosology of the socially desirable and the pathological, identifying a multiplication

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁰⁹ Hacking, *Taming of Chance*, pp. ix, 178.

of points of technocratic intervention, normalizing therapeutics and *travail sur soi-même*.

Normality was the updated and much improved version of Guizot's classroom ranking. A multiple self could no longer be measured against a single standard. Instead, each of the groups and group identities making up the plural self would manage their internal diversity against their own standard of normality. It became possible to conceive of criminals as a social group having their own internal and particular standards and pathologies making some normal and others abnormal. French schooling now needed a new model that did not rely on ranking and comparison.

Point d'émulation: Governing through particularity.

The nineteenth century had attempted to govern individuals in their universality. 'Man' was to belong to the generality, to the civic community of equals. And that required sacrificing all particularities through unrelenting discipline and moral obedience. In the *fin de siècle*, this suddenly generated much anxiety. The changes we have seen, including the irruption of the subconscious, shifted the focus; now what experts saw was that behind the submission there lurked dangerously repressed and ungoverned impulses. And the only way to know and access these was by bringing particularity back to the surface of government. A good way of gauging this, and at the same time reviewing the profound shift we have seen in the government of subjectivity in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is to focus on the pedagogical changes this shift materialized. We will consider the

changes taking place in French schools, including the two social extremes of the system: on the one hand, the pre-schools or nursery schools, which mostly catered to the children of workers and was the foundation of the vast schooling project the Third Republic developed, and, on the other, the secondary schools, which serviced only 70,000 students in the country, the richest two or three per cent of each cohort, who 'were the ruling class or, at least, its nursery'. 'The programs and degrees of secondary education', Eugen Weber wrote, 'built the fortifications of the bourgeoisie'.²¹⁰

In his letter to secondary school personnel dated 15 July 1890, the then minister of education Léon Bourgeois informed them of the reforms that had been in the pipeline 'after almost twenty years'; 'in the Senate I recently indicated the general outlines of the reform that calls for this schooling whose orientation, methods, and even its name are not yet fixed. The details and means of execution of this reform are still under study'.²¹¹ While much remained hazy, action needed to be taken as the result of profound fear that had emerged of the dangers hiding behind a perfect order.

In a school grounds where the time of recreations is regularly spent in slow promenades or monotonous talk, a monitor, even a very attentive one, does not see any problem. This very calm, nonetheless, has every reason to trouble us and is in itself a grave symptom, if one dreams that in that prolonged inoccupation the body little by little becomes anaemic and withers and that, in the boredom that follows, characters end by becoming embittered and irritated. In pedagogy, no less

²¹⁰ E. Weber, *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), pp. 228-229.

²¹¹ Bourgeois, 'Lettre aux membres du personnel administratif et enseignant des lycées et collèges', *Bulletin administratif du ministère de l'instruction publique*, supplément au no. 922 (1890), pp. 417, 420.

than in political economy, 'what one does not see' often has as grave effects as 'what one sees',²¹²

Pauline Kergomard highlighted the same problem in nursery schools. In 1881, Kergomard was appointed general inspector of nursery schools, as part of the complete makeover of the institution education minister Jules Ferry was implementing. Formerly known as *salles d'asile*, in 1881 they became the modern *écoles maternelles* or maternal schools. For forty years Kergomard would devote herself to breathing life into the new institution. She wrote:

In the *école maternelle*, all children resemble each other; discipline has made of them a sort of machine; they are not really living. Life reclaims its rights as soon as they step onto the street, each becomes spontaneously himself, having shaken the discipline that made of him all day an artificial being.²¹³

Discipline was precisely what made proper government impossible. The old ways generated a profound order, but one sustained on a farce. 'This submissive child is in a state of rebellion', Moulet warned, 'bad feelings agitate him' below his apparent calm.²¹⁴ Severity had become the end. This was no less than 'une crime de lèse-enfance' according to Kergomard. 'Until now, *l'école maternelle*[..] has applied itself above all to discipline, to discipline materially.[...] Thanks to material discipline, one avoids stampedes, tumult, one obtains silence, without which no teaching is possible.[... But] the triumph of discipline is the defeat of education'.²¹⁵ For Bourgeois, the source of evil was also 'purely repressive discipline', which,

²¹² Ibid., p. 419.

²¹³ Pauline Kergomard, *L'éducation maternelle dans l'école* (Paris, 1889), p. 33.

²¹⁴ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 59.

²¹⁵ Kergomard, *L'Éducation maternelle*, p. 31-32.

resting on mistrust, using only constraint, is happy with an apparent order and exterior subjection, under which are dissimulated the bad instincts, compressed but not corrected, and the deaf revolts that will escalate later.²¹⁶

He condemned this form of discipline as clumsy and narrow-minded, since it sacrificed future security to the appearance of order in the present. For Bourgeois, such a discipline 'refuses to see the profound disorder it tolerates, and still less that which it creates', since punishment only made the student irritated and resentful against teachers.²¹⁷

All were agreed as to the solution. Bourgeois saw 'liberal discipline' as being the way forward, for it sought the improvement rather than the containment of the child; the aim was not to repress but 'to win over' the student. This form of discipline, he argued, 'wants to touch the depths, the conscience, and obtain not that surface tranquillity that does not last, but the interior order, that is, the child's consent to a rule deemed necessary: it wants to teach him to govern himself'.²¹⁸ Kergomard highlighted how this constituted a radically new approach. 'In effect, the exclusively collective approaches that have made of each child an abstract unity in the group impede the blossoming of *individuality*'. And what did this mean if not the irreducible particularities of each?

Save a few exceptions, one does not remark, among the children that populate our *écoles maternelles*, any prominent qualities or defects. I am often terrified by the extreme ease with which they can be conducted. This ease comes from their moral sleep.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Bourgeois, 'Lettre aux membres', pp 424-425.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 424.

²¹⁹ Kergomard, *L'éducation maternelle*, p. 34.

The meaning of education had changed. For Kergomard, the path to moral awakening was proper mothering. So, the attempt was to reduce the crucial role mothers played in character formation to techniques that could be applied in the nurseries. The ideal of the *école maternelle* was to substitute and institutionalize the mother, hence the title of her work: *Maternal Education (or Upbringing) in the School*. After all, so many mothers were unqualified or too busy making a living. And what was discovered as most distinctive about mothering was the individualising treatment and knowledge of the child.

Interrogate a *mère de famille*, a conscientious mother, who studies her children, who makes an effort to develop in them certain dispositions and halt others; she will tell you not only the absolute differences that are blindingly obvious in the character of each, but also the differences in detail, the nuances.[...] What the *mère de famille* fears the most is a colourless child, without apparent qualities or defaults.

But 99 per cent of the students did not have that luck; their mothers 'do not have the necessary time or the culture' and thus could only gain a broad overview of the child's character. This is what the *école maternelle* existed to remedy. 'A very broad discipline, barely noticeable, will make it possible to study the dispositions, [and] direct them towards the end of gradually developing characters'.²²⁰

Each layer of the schooling system was to have an analogous aim. 'Developing in them what makes them men, thus what they have in common as humans', the good teacher 'wakes up in them at the same time their individual and particular

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

dispositions, their personality'.²²¹ Instead of imagining the universal and the particular as pitted against each other, the multiplicity of the self was now entrusted to harmonize these. 'Individual variety is as important for collective progress as the community of aspirations and the unanimity of tendencies'.²²² Under the guidance of new pedagogical techniques, individuals were to learn at school how to adapt to the group without being lost in it. In the classroom 'the child feels known and recognized, moving along with a collective and raised for social life, but aware also that he remains himself, under the gaze of a vigilant teacher, which follows him'.²²³

These changes implied a overhaul of the system of punishments and rewards, which now had to satisfy two equally important aims: 'the good order which[...] is the need and the right of all, and individual improvement that is our duty towards each'.²²⁴ Most of the harsh penalties were banned. 'One will preferably make use of bad marks, that touches the self-love of children without humiliating them, that allows for repentance and reparation, that can be reinforced, weakened, or erased'.²²⁵ For Bourgeois, punishment signalled weakness on the part of the teacher. Authority, he claimed, depended on the person to establish a reputation of being equitable. 'The ideal we propose to all our teachers is to acquire an authority such that it dispends them most often from having to turn to rigorous measures'.²²⁶

²²¹ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 340.

²²² Ibid., p. 342.

²²³ Ibid., p. 341.

²²⁴ Bourgeois, 'Lettre aux membres', p. 424

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 425.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Moulet concurred. Punishment in schools had to adhere to the same principles being floated by criminologists. The idea was to ‘apply the individualization of the penalty, which is the justice of the future’.²²⁷ Indeed, ‘punishments should be adequate to the nature of the students, not to that of the teacher’.²²⁸ It was therefore crucial to know the students in their individuality. ‘A wise teacher chooses the means according to the age, temperament, [and] tastes of the students, which he knows, which he *must* know individually’.²²⁹ The ‘personal intervention of the teacher’ had to ‘find the path of that rebellious heart’; ‘he knows how to adapt [the penalty] to fit the punished child; and he never forgets that the moralizing effect of chastisement resides not in the penalty itself, but in the manner it has been inflicted and in which it has been received by the child’. Discernment was required to ‘take into account the diversity of temperaments more or less susceptible and delicate’.²³⁰ A vain child gave in to a reproach, while an obstinate one would need extra homework. Some would rebel if punished in public, while others would not respond unless chastised in front of their peers. To ‘suppose that all children are equal in intelligence and dispositions is rewarding or punishing not the child, but nature!’.²³¹ Equally, a first offence could not be punished as a repeated one. The old disciplinary system, Moulet argued, ‘has no variety, no nuances, and the very monotony of its means renders these punishments illusory’. ‘Thus punishment is the exception in a school directed by a good teacher’.²³² The reason for this was

²²⁷ Quoted in: Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 62

²²⁸ Pierre A. Dufrenne, ‘De la discipline’, *Revue de l’enseignement primaire et primaire supérieur*, 28/16 (1906), p. 250.

²²⁹ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 53.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-62.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 61-63.

that the difficult and ‘incorrigible’ students were to be apprehended by specialized institutions other than the school. The precondition for Bourgeois’ disciplinary reform was this split between *maisons de discipline* (reformatories) and *maisons d’éducation* (schools).²³³

The same changes and attacks applied to rewards, which were to be as sparse as punishments. Rewards fostered laziness, satisfaction with brief and mediocre efforts, they tended to become the only motivation and they developed in the child emotions that were antidemocratic, if not immoral, but in any case belonging to a lower order.²³⁴ They equally lent themselves to envy, jealousy and deception. Emulation in particular had to go. It too easily degenerated. Instead, ‘one will compare the composition of each student with himself rather than with his peers’.²³⁵ Success and effort could only be measured against one’s individuality. Since there was no longer a shared measure of success for all, emulation no longer belonged in schools as in was seen as promoting vanity and egotism; it was at most to be reserved for the *école maternelle*. ‘Without renouncing the happy effects of emulation, especially among young children, one will refrain from overly exciting it and by bad means’. Rewards, Bourgeois wrote, would depend on good will rather than success and ideally would consist of no more than congratulations. The aim was to get the student to behave following only the dictates of conscience ‘of which the reprimands and praise are but the authorized and indisputable expression’.²³⁶

Moulet compared emulation with using a piece of sugar as lure to train a dog.

²³³ Bourgeois, ‘Lettre aux membres’, p. 426.

²³⁴ Moulet, *École primaire*, pp. 51-52.

²³⁵ Dufrenne, ‘De la discipline’, p. 251.

²³⁶ Bourgeois, ‘Lettre aux membres’, p. 426.

This type of emulation through rewards is artificial and not very honourable. When it is lacking in life, where nothing assures man a reward and a piece of sugar, where will the child who has become an adult then find the force to progress? What reasons will he give himself to progress? Why want to improve himself if rewards remain random, or if, even having been promised, they lack, or they seem to him *a priori* insufficient?²³⁷

Instead, education was to tap into the ‘profound sources where the child, the future man, draws from the moral source’.²³⁸ ‘Having recognized the individual in the child, we exhort him to be that which he promises to be’.²³⁹ The goal of the system was for the child to know him or herself as the new basis of self-government. Proper rewards ‘enlighten the child about himself, calls him to a judicious life, brings out of his consciousness the obscure force that helps him to do good’. The child would come to develop and obey this obscure force. With ‘each of the small victories he claims over himself’, ‘he feels that it is himself he obeys; the authority towards which he is so docile, is his *conscience*’ (meaning both conscience and consciousness). To develop this inner authority was to live ‘freely in self-obedience’. Submission was recognized as socially crucial, but the self was now internalizing and managing the conflicts and ethical problems of command, legitimizing social powers by internalizing their contradictions. ‘Because he must obey —order commands this— then may it be always that which is best in him’

²³⁷ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 53.

²³⁸ Bourgeois, ‘Lettre aux membres’, p. 427.

²³⁹ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 342.

that he obeys. 'This is the price of liberty, as of happiness; and there is no better definition of Duty'.²⁴⁰

'It is with punishments as with rewards: the goal is to touch the better *moi* of children, and affirm it in the struggle against the inferior *moi*'. The teacher had to 'ally himself with the former against the latter'. Educators could now operate, as it were, *inside* the fragmented *moi*. 'It is truly an alliance, defensive and offensive, which the teacher signs with infantile nature against that which opposes or menaces it'. By taking sides in this battle of selves inside the child, the teacher could do little else than 'realize in the child the balance of forces between action and constraint'.²⁴¹ The end result was the 'affectionate and charming tyranny of the Good to love, and not of the Evil to fear'.²⁴² The moral education syllabus for third-year male middle-school students of the *École primaire supérieure* summarized the importance of schooling in this process. 'Conclusion: if the child *loves* instinctively the good, he needs to *know* it; *l'éducation morale* has as its object responding to that need; it will depend on the child to *want* [to know] it; the constant diligence of the school to form that will'.²⁴³ The school was now imagined able of shaping not only desires, but also the very will to desire.

The key means of achieving these results was by fostering self-confidence in the child and pointing out that with every step in the right direction he was already good, for 'How will he become [virtuous] if he is not so already, at least a little?' But there could only be room for such self-love if the child was properly tutored in

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 54, 60.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 355.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 59-60, 63.

²⁴³ Léon Martin (ed.), *Encyclopédie municipale de la Ville de Paris*, I (Paris, 1904), p. 621.

developing it. ‘This voluntary discipline thus has as its principle and rule the confidence in ourselves, with the condition that a wise and foresighted education has known how to subject, through all teachings and disciplines, our activity to the rule of a duty’.²⁴⁴ Moulet made plain the ultimate goal of these reforms: ‘moral education, as France conceives and carries it out, is a pedagogy of obedience in liberty’.²⁴⁵ In more detail, middle-school moral-education teachers were instructed to ‘show that it is in the nation that man fully realizes his nature, where he becomes a true man, that is a moral person, aware of his duties and his rights; that the function of the individual, as a member of a nation, is to cooperate voluntarily with the work of the nation in human civilization’.²⁴⁶

The school was still crucial, but no longer enough. It could not compete against the family and the street. By instilling high values, it uprooted the child from his or her milieu, only to be soon abandoned by the system ‘to his solitude’. ‘Primary school students leave, in general, when the crisis of puberty is staring for them’. At puberty, ‘that decisive moment in the psychological and moral formation of a human being’, the child found him or herself ‘without an authorized guide’. There was a sudden need for post-and extra-school institutions, which were not limited to intellectual development initiatives such as Séailles’ Société des universités populaires. Moulet argued that schooling would achieve nothing if ‘education *after* the school did not sustain it, start it afresh, [and] prolong it’. For ‘the school is helpless with only its own resources to raise the virtuous man and the aware citizen. After school and outside the most active and best school, there is social life,

²⁴⁴ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 354.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

²⁴⁶ Martin (ed.), *Encyclopédie*, p. 621.

which forms or deforms, sharpens or blunts, moralizes or demoralizes'.²⁴⁷ Social belonging for children or adults could not come about without the individual becoming enmeshed in a network of overlapping groups where alone the new style of individuality could emerge. Universal military service as a prolongation of schooling was part of the solution, but the key came from the multitude of after-school institutions that emerged at the fin de siècle. The word *patronage* would no longer refer to institutions that sequestered inmates from the world, but had already gained their current meaning of institutions of extra-curricular sociability for children. Summer camps, the scouts, sporting associations, religious sociability, and so on, all sought to no longer leave the individual to his or her own solitude. In an institutionalized society, the individual would no longer be abandoned.

The most fascinating thing about these pedagogical changes is that the teacher could now carry out the old role of the self: that of an intermediary between inner forces at war. The self no longer relied on the person to develop; it was just another thing one learnt at school. More than ever before, subjectivity had simply become a technique, and one that did not require much participation of the subject. Education had gained the same ability medicine had: at once able to grasp 'man' in his generality and particularity. By the fin de siècle, pedagogy had joined a very large domain of expertise capable of producing citizens. It was time for a new understanding of physical and intellectual education.

²⁴⁷ Moulet, *École primaire*, pp. 14-17.

In Body and Mind.

At the fin de siècle, behaviour was no longer an end in itself, but rather only a means. Since free will was considered little more than the force of habit, the routines that made up bad conduct could themselves be reformed, by focusing on the habit-creating causes rather than combating behaviour, which was only an effect. Once the danger of erratic behaviour was exorcised, it revealed itself to be a crucial asset. It was the individualizing vehicle through which the nature of the person could be known; it signalled the areas needing intervention. Only a free and spontaneous behaviour could make the subject transparent to power and reflected back to him or her. That is why the big pedagogical cause of the fin de siècle was to let children play freely or practice sports. Only in spontaneity could difference emerge to be governed.

Other than the 'indirect method' we have considered above, dependant on the personal bond between the teacher-expert and the student and mediated by rewards and punishments, more direct means were also at play. The very structure of order of the school, its layout and curricula, was to create an impersonal environment where obedience came naturally. For Kergomard, 'material habits already imply that there is discipline in school. Each [student] gradually learns what he must do and to do it at the appropriate moment[...] The discipline of the *école maternelle* is a result: the result of being occupied'.²⁴⁸ Children no longer needed to be micro-managed, because there was an overall structure from where

²⁴⁸ Kergomard, *L'éducation maternelle*, p. 47.

order derived. 'One has forgotten a fundamental truth; that an occupied child looks after himself, and that it becomes possible to look after a large number of children when they are busy and interested'.²⁴⁹ Force was no longer what made it possible to govern behaviour. 'The child is born active; we must provide the nourishment of his activity'.²⁵⁰ And that activity could be directed.

'Play is the work of the child', argued Kergomard, 'it is his trade, his life'.²⁵¹ Play was fundamental and needed to be encouraged by all means available and not just among the little ones. Of secondary-school students Bourgeois said: 'In disdainning the games of their age, our students do not know what damage they do to themselves. But we must know for them'.²⁵² The well-off children of the nineteenth century, who did not play, now became problematic. 'Il y a quelque chose de malade ou qui va l'être dans une jeunesse qui ne joue pas', Bourgeois added. At the time Jules Simon had become a champion of child's play. 'The right I demand for children, is the right to play.[...] I demand active play, what the English call athletic games', military exercises, and gymnastics, 'but that which I demand above all else is play; the development of physical force in joy and liberty'.²⁵³

Spontaneous play was the only way to fully grasp the individuality of the child. Moulet made this clear: 'it would be inexcusable for a teacher not to observe keenly the students'. The best time to do this was when they did not feel themselves to be supervised, such as in the playground. Hence the importance

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁵² Bourgeois, 'Lettre aux membres', p. 418.

²⁵³ Simon, 'L'éducation', p. 678.

given to play within the new pedagogical system. By studying in great detail every characteristic trait of the child, the teacher would find the 'revelation of a personality that is still uncertain and awkward, but which appears to those who know how to search for it.'²⁵⁴ A more personal and relaxed environment served this purpose, for 'the child gives himself with naivety to the teacher he loves'.²⁵⁵ The child's natural spontaneity and innocence had to be integrated into the pedagogical project.

Equally, play and sports, and indeed any strenuous physical activity, were inseparable from hygiene and a culture of the body that had become the basis of fin-de-siècle subjectivity. 'Physical education, carefully maintained by youths, is the best ally of moral education', argued Bourgeois, who in no clear way seemed to distinguish bodily training and hygiene from each other or from the broader moral aim. He instructed teachers to give particular attention to appearance and propriety.

Cleanliness is in itself a virtue; it implies the respect of one's self and others. He who, in childhood, has acquired through a long habit this regular and simple propriety that demands the continuous surveillance of one's self will be on the path to moral progress.

Because of the types of techniques and ethics of the self it generated, hygiene had become the new shortcut to morality. The body had been socialized, and now mediated our respect for others and ourselves. The benefits of appropriate care of the body spilled over to many other domains. For Bourgeois a clean body gained

²⁵⁴ Moulet, *École primaire*, p. 342.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

through effort would imperceptible translate into a better behaviour, which in turn led to a better use of language, which in time reformed the person's *mœurs*.

In playing, gymnastic exercises, the regular care of the body and behaviour (*tendue*), there is also for the mind (*pensée*), the will and sentiment as it were a natural discipline whose effects go farther than one may think and that makes it possible to make many economies on the repressive discipline of statutes and punishments. Equally, one of the main pillars of the *école maternelle* was hygiene, and not only the sanitary state of the child. 'It is not the appearance of cleanliness we want, it is *cleanliness*. What we must obtain from the *mères de famille* is for the children's entire bodies to be washed each morning; it is the absolute cleanliness of the head'.²⁵⁶ If not their children could be expelled. 'When the mother sees that *it's serious*, that it is, for her, a matter of being or not being discharged of her child during working hours, she will take with regards to him, and little by little without reservations for herself as well, habits of cleanliness'.²⁵⁷ Hygiene thus became the cornerstone of the new edifice of selfhood and project of social government; it directly touched upon the three goals Bourgeois now gave secondary and higher education: 'education of intelligence, education of the body, education of the will'. In his textbook on gymnastics intended for the 'development of the vital forces and civic education of populations', Guillaume Docx argued that properly directed games 'exercise the body, senses, conception, judgement, perspicacity, imagination and cold-blood of the child; these become habituated to observing rules, voluntary discipline [and] respecting the rights of others'. Play also developed their personal initiative, sociability and morality.²⁵⁸ The body became a pillar of subjectivity to be

²⁵⁶ Kergomard, *L'éducation maternelle*, p. 17.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁵⁸ Guillaume Docx, *La gymnastique rationnelle* (Namur, 1884), p. 234.

developed inside and outside the school at every level. Thus the 'university will have completed all its tasks', Bourgeois argued, 'when youths leave their hands with a robust and flexible body, a solid instruction and a sound judgment, a will that is upright and in command of itself'.²⁵⁹ Therefore, a new type of embodied subject, and a new type of panacea, was being cast as the objective of the schooling system at the turn of the century.²⁶⁰

This focus on the body meant that schooling came under attack for being too intellectual. The buzzword for school reformers in the fin de siècle became *surmenage intellectuel*, meaning mental exhaustion or overburdening. From the nursery school to university, students were depicted as victims of a monstrous intellectualism and mandarinism. As we have seen, in the fin de siècle the emphasis changed from understanding to knowing, from holding the keys of reason to consuming information. Thus, like behaviour, knowledge was no longer an end in itself.

Simon estimated that secondary schools required a student to devote eleven hours and a half per day to intellectual work.²⁶¹ There was no time left for anything to do with the body; 'during the very brief recreation break one grants them, they remain in a corner stupefied by their work, chatting or strolling like grave bourgeois men'.²⁶² Intellectual overwork was also denounced in nurseries. For Kergomard, factitious discipline went hand-in-hand with 'premature teaching' and

²⁵⁹ Bourgeois, 'Lettre aux membres', p. 416-417.

²⁶⁰ For the period after the War see: Joan Tumblety, *Remaking the Male Body: Masculinity and the Uses of Physical Culture in Interwar and Vichy France* (Oxford, 2012).

²⁶¹ Simon, 'L'éducation', p. 679.

²⁶² Ibid.

‘over-the-top instruction’ which was equally as oppressive to children and the development of their intelligence. ‘Thanks to this dogma: “the child is in school to become learned (*savant*)”, our early-childhood schools are inhumane, unnatural schools’.²⁶³ The aim of school, then, was no longer intellectual, but rather focused on the arduous development of the multiple self that was able to merge into multiple social groups without renouncing individuality.

The heavy and exhaustive curricula in the secondary schools needed to be simplified. The important thing was not the syllabus or the content of the information and skills the students learned; ‘the useful thing par excellence is intelligence itself, because only it is capable of applying knowledge with discernment and appropriateness and only supplemented, sometimes, to the inevitable insufficiencies of all knowledge, by a reflection and general methods whose resources are infinite’.²⁶⁴ The aim was to form discerning consumers of knowledge, who had some criteria on how to apply it, and where to find its ‘infinite resources’. An excessively scholarly education was thus not only unnecessary, but also dangerous.

We have realized this simple, and thus most often unknown, truth: that the intellectual capacities of the child remain more or less today what they have always been, while the sum of science acquired increases every century and every day.[... S]chooling must be general without doubt in its principles, but not encyclopaedic in its matter, the beginning of wisdom will be to allow ignorance.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Kergomard, *L'éducation maternelle*, p. 34.

²⁶⁴ Bourgeois, ‘Lettre aux membres’, p. 421.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The upper-class calm and effeminate ways of the nineteenth century was gradually giving way to the focus on the manly and vigorous body. In a much-applauded speech, Simon made plain how much had changed.

One gives society a small and ridiculous mandarin who has no muscles, who cannot jump over a barrier, who cannot elbow his way through the crowd (*jouer des coudes*), who cannot shoot with a rifle, who cannot ride a horse, who is afraid of everything, who, in turn, is stuffed with all sorts of useless knowledge (*connaissances*), who does not know the most necessary things, who cannot give anyone advice, or give it to himself, who needs to be directed in all things and who, feeling his weakness hand having lost his edge, throws himself as a last resort into that State socialism [saying] ‘The state needs to take me by the hand, as University has done up to now’.²⁶⁶

The very profound changes that took place in the schooling of the rich and the poor in France at the turn of the century reflect the deeper transformation in the self we have been discussing at length. Towards 1900, man had become at once highly fragmented and whole. Moulet denied the will could be isolated at all. All human faculties were in solidarity with each other. ‘The *will* is a manner of behaving and conducting oneself, a way of thinking, feeling, desiring, acting, and reacting [that has] become habitual and very easy’. It was not a distinct faculty anyone could isolate and manage. ‘One forms the will in learning to think, feel, and act normally’.²⁶⁷ The best way to bring about this normality was to elicit conviction by appealing to the emotions, by ‘Touching the child in the living depth of his heart’. It

²⁶⁶ Simon, ‘L’éducation’, p. 682.

²⁶⁷ Moulet, *École primaire*, pp. 346-347.

was 'the fecund emotions that engender a strong will'. But once again, the model was religious. 'Our will is our joyous docility to a faith, religious or not, and the declaration of a generous belief'.²⁶⁸ For indeed the twentieth century man was fashioned out of faith.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the gradual rise of a multiple understanding of the individual that crystalized into a new paradigm of the self and the state in the fin-de-siècle. While I have focused on the work of Durkheim, the exploration of the process leading up to his findings after 1893 shows that, as with the Cousin school, this was not the work of one man, but rather the culmination of a long series of public debate on the problems of modernity. While the key to Cousin's *moi* had rested in a clear separation of the personal and the universality of reason, the fin-de-siècle experience of the self had few clear boundaries. The exclusively individual aspects of the self kept receding before the expansion of the social domain. In my view, this accounts for the very shallow sense of interiority of the fragmented and paralyzed self that was found in modernist literature after 1900.²⁶⁹ According to Edward Said, these works of fiction stood for 'a general loss of faith in the ability of novelistic representation directly to reflect anything other than the author's dilemmas'.²⁷⁰ This change also seems to have affected portraiture. Laura Asok has analyzed a change from the representation of problematically unitary selves gave way towards the end of the century to eroded

²⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 351-352.

²⁶⁹ Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: A Study in Self-Fragmentation* (New York, 1989).

²⁷⁰ Quoted in: Roddey Reid, *Families in Jeopardy* (Stanford, 1993), p. 282..

and disintegrating depictions of the individual.²⁷¹ However, this inner contraction of the domains of individuality was met with an outward expansion of the possibilities and opportunities for social belonging. Through the development of what we would now call identities, the subject gained an ability for self-fashioning through the adoption of a growing number of social identities, each of which offered their own parameters of normality. A clearly-defined personality was not only recognized as valuable and necessary for social life, but the individual was offered a series of techniques of the self that promised to turn the personality into an aesthetic creation. Through new hygienic approaches, the body also opened up to be shaped and moulded. While the alienation of the self and body derived from the medical materialism introduced by Broussais, the diseased body also offered new liberties. The empowering effects that bodily alienation had for the young Comte has been confirmed for the period through the work of medical historians in the United States. In his study of fin-de-siècle homosexuality, Bert Hansen has highlighted that the 'discovery' of the medical 'pathology' enabled 'sufferers' to re-interpret their difference in ways that reduced guilt and the sense of personal deficiency.²⁷² As had been the case with Comte, it was not their fault. What had previously been moral problems that directly concerned the self could now be cast as an objective medical condition. Motherhood equally benefited from being understood as a matter of hygienic technique rather than virtue. The treatment of

²⁷¹ Laura Asok, 'Alienated Selves: Portraiture in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century France', Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University (Princeton, 2010); Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (London, 2005).

²⁷² Bert Hansen, 'American physicians' "discovery" of homosexuals: A new diagnosis in a changing society, 1880-1900', in: Charles Rosenberg and Janet Golden (eds), *Framing Disease: Studies in Cultural History* (New Brunswick, 1992), pp. 104-133; See: Régis Revenin, 'Paris gay, 1870-1918', in: Revenin (ed.), *Hommes et masculinités de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris, 2007), pp. 21-41; 'L'émergence d'un monde homosexuel moderne dans le Paris de la Belle Époque', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 53/4 (2006), pp. 74-86; Donald Reid, 'Review: Homosexuality in Modern France', *French Politics and Society*, 15/4 (1997), pp. 54-62.

the poor followed an analogous process. The shift from indigence as moral and personal to an objective and social category enabled an unprecedented expansion in the number of services and recipients of welfare programmes.

In the first half of the century, intellectual understanding and the inequality of intellects had been the cornerstone of the social hierarchy. From the work of Simon in the 1860s to the pedagogical reform Bourgeois introduced in 1890, knowledge came to be seen as a new technique of attachment to the social order instead of a threat. Knowledge thus became increasingly socialized through the popular conferences that emerged in the 1860s through to the new republican system of universal and free education introduced in the 1880s. But this was achieved at the price of reducing knowing to an article of consumption. In turn, the qualified production of scientific knowledge became associated to a long process of study and effort as well as to an ever-increasing specialization. Men such as the baron de Gérando, Charles Dupin or Louis-René Villermé who had made original contributions in a range of disciplines would be relegated to the past. In the second half of the nineteenth century scholars started to specialize in a single discipline. Henri Poincaré was the last mathematician to have made significant contributions to all fields of his discipline. By the time of his death in 1912, scholarship was being bound by the restraints of increasingly fragmented fields of specialization.

If the *fin de siècle* offered an ideal of a harmonious society, it was only by internalizing in the subject many of what had been the causes for social conflict in the nineteenth century. Active participation in society required a great deal of inner conflict, as had been the case throughout the nineteenth century. By 1900

the internal struggle had at once become subtler and more challenging. The multiple self was now changed with harmonizing the universal and the particular, the state (recast as society) and the individual, collective and personal interests, group consensus and individuality, national and local belonging, faith and science or cooperation and competition. This had to be worked out individually while maintaining and respecting the boundaries to the different context-specific personalities of the self and others, that is, while identifying as a multitude of competing identities.

In particular, institutions required employees to separate the personal and impersonal dimensions of their work. This would have seemed remarkable half a century earlier when person and function were closely linked. Part of the conflict between departmental inspectors and the charitable notables who served in welfare and hospital boards came from the difference in social rank. The charitable boards were made up of well-established local gentlemen who exercised their role without monetary compensation. They refused to be monitored by ‘a salaried agent and too often their subaltern’, which I would understand to mean their social inferior.²⁷³ The notables generally belonged to the class of *rentiers*, that is, men who tended to retire in their forties.²⁷⁴ The belief in the inferiority of employees was not only typical of their class though. Mid-century *fouirieristes* and *phalanstériens*, who emphasized the importance of freedom understood as self-possession of having ‘the property of one’s person’; after the French Revolution ‘man has once again become *free*, that is, that he does not belong to anyone’ else. Taken to its logical end this view meant that ‘the soldier or the employee has fallen

²⁷³ Conseil Général de la Corrèze, *Session de 1851* (Tulle, 1851), p. 313.

²⁷⁴ Eugen Weber, *My France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 228.

into half-slavery'. Whether simple *ouvriers* or *hauts fonctionnaires*, anyone following orders in their work was 'no longer free: they have alienated a part of their personality and depend on the will of other men who regulate their actions and the employment of their faculties without consulting them'.²⁷⁵ At the fin de siècle, whether in the school or in the office, the individual was expected to manage partial alienation and integration into the group structure without complete estrangement from the personality. This process could allow new freedom for the employee. Starting soon after the 1901 law on associations, public workers very quickly organized. By 1914, almost all civil servants were organized professionally.²⁷⁶ The play of multiple identities meant that civil servants were not restricted to either identifying as either underlings or private persons and representing either common or individual interests, instead they were able to mobilize and actively identify as a group.

The capabilities of guardianship, of exercising power for the benefit of its recipients, greatly multiplied at the fin de siècle. Through new techniques of self-work and self-mastery, individuals were called upon to gradually and painstakingly build a governing higher self capable of controlling and shaping the body, the passions, the knowing mind, social identities and belongings and an active compliance and engagement with society and social functions. The promises of self-command were raised to new heights. In tandem, experts, doctors and teachers gained new capabilities of governing others. New scientific understandings of emotional attachment, mind and will offered a new vantage

²⁷⁵ Emile Bourdon, 'Mélanges: La liberté selon les économistes', *La phalange: Journal de la science sociale*, XIV/II (1845), pp. 169-170.

²⁷⁶ Judith Wishnia, *The Proletarianizing of the Fonctionnaires: Civil Service Workers and the Labor Movement under the Third Republic* (Baton Rouge, 1990), chapters 2-5.

point from where to know and conduct the other, so long as the tutee's natural propensities were given free rein in moments of play and ease. Gymnastics and hygiene made possible new interventions capable of shaping the subject's embodied relationship to self and others. The insistence on loosened discipline both opened up the space needed for the free play of spontaneous action in which particularities emerged and further delegated to the subject the need for a mindful and severe self-government compatible with social liberties.

The rise of the plural self and the shift in the notion of government it implied put to rest many of the old ghosts of the nineteenth century, from the confrontation between the individual and the state to the problem of morality or the assistance of the poor. New freedoms and new constraints awaited the ever-changing modern individual in the new century.

Conclusion.

This thesis has provided a fluid history of both the modern individual and the state practices of which it was inseparable. The analysis was driven forward by the problem of governing the self and other, which both united and separated the individual and the state, while traversing the self's interior, the home, the hospice, the hospital, the church, the barracks or the school. This transversal problem of governing can be found formulated more or less explicitly in a vast array of political, philosophical, pedagogical, scientific, administrative, religious, literary, self-improvement and moral texts and debates. Through these I have shown that the actual formulations, diagnostics and solutions given to the problem of governing did not stop changing throughout the nineteenth century. And yet, the very tension that defined governing as a problem remained a constant between 1800 and 1900. This tension derived from human relationships having been conceptually reduced to either vertical bonds of inequality or horizontal ties of sameness, each of which produced the other, in the same way that the inequalities between parent and child or teacher and pupil produced equal and governing adults capable of reproducing the cycle. I have found this tension between inequality and equality was translated into a thinkable and practicable rationality of governing in the legal figure of guardianship as it applied in the family and in social assistance. The guardian was a hierarch who legitimately conducted

behaviour for a clear purpose: to produce and reproduce *equality in freedom* for the greater good, and thus render his or her authority unnecessary. The guardian was to know how to hold the sceptre of power and then burry it when the job was done, when the governed had blossomed into governors of the self and others, relatives or strangers. The contradiction of such a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating understanding was that equality and freedom could only be arrived at through an apprenticeship requiring hierarchy and constraint. In the self or the collective, the desire and pursuit of an ideal future produced an accelerating and shifting world where the contrasts between progress and backwardness grew exponentially and, with them, the flight forward towards an increased need for governing that further multiplied the disparities it existed to eliminate. As the nineteenth century progressed, this rationality came to be increasingly widespread or even hegemonic. We saw that Catholics and conservatives, plural communities that were more or less opposed and or critical of many of these systemic changes that came hand in hand with political and economic liberalism, also came to embrace the logic of guardianship. Celebrated in grassroots devotion to Saint Joseph, authorized writings on friendship or Papal encyclicals, guardianship in the Church emphasized the functional father over the absolute Father, thus reflecting the wider shift in rationality of which it was part.

Therefore, there are two axes structuring this work. The first axis is that of an historical form that remained stable during the long nineteenth century, while the second comprises the fluidity of the form's constantly changing contents. The crux of the first axis is the issue of guardianship. While the philosophy of the Enlightenment defined some human beings as modern individuals fit for liberty

and not others, the establishment of the notion of the rule of law and freedom during the French Revolution rested squarely on the ability to operate this hierarchical distinction. In this system of constant comparison, 'men' were contradictorily born both equal and unequal, worthy and unworthy. These defining differences in quality and moral worth among persons came to depend on behaviour. The modern subject was expected to internalize and attempt to neutralize these inherent structural contradictions by adopting a deliberate conduct, wherein every action reflects a choice. The long apprenticeship needed to become a modern self was equated with legal minority and the blank-slate of infancy. The success of this learning process was the task of guardianship. This was a conceptually non-coercive way of moulding those not yet able to govern themselves and others in accordance with freedom. It was exercised through the family at the micro level and through social assistance at the macro level. Guardianship intended to produce and reproduce the modern individual as the normative subject of modern collectives.

The second axis has thrown into sharp relief the fact that the conceptual contents, practical arrangements and actual lived meaning of the as the individual, the state, the family or social assistance never stopped changing across time and space in France in the long nineteenth century. Indeed, these modern institutions that organized the public-private divide not only had no essence, but also experienced important mutations from one decade to the next as well as a significant diversity in the way they were thought of and performed at any one time. Even when two paradigmatic shifts dramatically altered the experience of these four institutions in 1800s-1830s and 1880s-1914, the belief in their taken-for-granted naturalness,

reality or necessity was able to seamlessly conceal the long-term contradictions between their form and contents. While the overall systemic discrepancies remained hidden inside the self, the historian may document these as they emerged in a partial but more or less intelligible form in the many and fragmentary disciplines and domains of thought and action that made up the modern public sphere. By casting light on these incongruities through time, I have endeavoured to situate these nineteenth-century institutions, and the logic of guardianship that gave them meaning, within the domain of artefact, history and human agency rather than of 'nature', as all genealogists since Nietzsche have done in their own fields.

While the disparate case studies that allowed me to arrive at these conclusions may resemble impressionistic sketches, when taken together they draw out the elusive silhouette of the 'structures of experience' underlying modernity and individuality in nineteenth-century France. This analysis remains an open framework into which many more case studies can be brought into play in order to offer an increasingly nuanced understanding of these processes.

Since at least the French Revolution very profound discontinuities and changes took place in the short span of individual temporalities which were able to alter 'the whole fabric of men's personality', as Norbert Elias put it.¹ While there is no doubt that transformations in culture, social usage, or mentalities have tended to

¹ Norbert Elias, *Power and Civility* (New York, 1982), p. 285.

operate in the *longue durée*, this changed with liberalism. Since the eighteenth century we have seen that the shaping of morality and behaviour was the central goal of this rationality of government. This was because liberal 'liberty' both required and produced a certain ordering of the human psyche and social relations. 'Psychology' provided the keys to interpreting and experiencing the human mind as a universal phenomenon, that is, it provided a common cognitive template that could be applied to decipher all men, in all times, everywhere. If it was assumed that the psyche was the cause of all human activity, then this made it possible to analyse the motivations and predict the effects of one's actions and those of others, a skill that promised to translate into social advancement. This had a pull effect. Liberal government also mobilized processes that were destructive of traditional community ties and local social, economic and cultural structures and hierarchies. This had a push effect. In their place was founded an increasingly mobile and fluid world, where there were fewer and fewer certainties, but an increasing sense of a social body, united by shared and increasingly normative cultural references and embodied in the nation-state. The state was at once a burden and a saviour, always promising much more than it delivered, always secreting a deficit between the awareness of danger it generated and the security it satisfied. In the gap between the loud promise of progress and the dismay of reality, there developed a competitive social life among 'equals', where the position of no actor or role was stable, where morality and knowledge were founded on equally uncertain grounds, where the social order stood at once glorified and condemned, where there was no hiding from the moral panics of the day, and only the privacy and interiority of the home was, at best, a temporary refuge. Navigating the modern storm was a strategizing, comparing, measuring self, cast as both

subject and object of permanent observation and narrativization of the self and the milieu. The dream of the Panopticon and perfect disciplining simply meant to supply the person's inability to carry out the strategizing, steering, observation, and narrativization of his or her own self. The poor house was a simple training into the self-objectifying mechanisms of psychology.

The 1830 revolution was *the* bourgeois revolution in France. It invented the bourgeoisie as the nineteenth century came to know it, as a dynamic imagined community self-destined to be the first truly universal, rational polity in history; the first men to envision and construct the one, truly natural, transcendental order. It also invented an unprecedented form of material and spiritual human misery: pauperism. A complete branch of the liberal *savoir d'État* was devoted to this new object. It was the state elite that uncovered, analysed, sensationalized and vulgarized the extent of the new poverty, the shortcomings of the industrial order and the retreat of traditional moral authority. This made plain the dearth of virtue in the urban environment. The same state elite demonstrated that the law, government and coercion were incapable of producing virtuous citizens. The solution could only come from each individual person freely and wholeheartedly accepting and subjecting to the social and moral order and behaving accordingly. The wealthy would abandon the superstitious, self-serving, indolent vices from the aristocratic past; the poor, their filthy, promiscuous, nomadic and careless ways. In their place would rise the bourgeoisie and the *classes laborieuses*, and with them the modern nuclear family. While domesticity was alien to most bourgeois household in the 1840s, by the *fin de siècle* it had become 'une grande réalité de la

vie ouvrière'.² But in the nineteenth century, class never was the solid, orderly structure that contemporary and twentieth-century scholars imagined it to be. Class was an imagined, representational community of immense complexity and differentiation, whose identity and legitimacy as 'class' was constantly challenged, while the symbolic, discursive boundaries separating them from the old rich and poor were never secured. Any form of modern belonging and identity required a relentless process that signified, negotiated and performed selfhood.

By exploring the long nineteenth century, I have identified and analysed the shift from one model of subjectivity to another. In the psychological paradigm of the self, there was a melodramatic battle between the one eternal and universal cosmic order linking the individual and the state, on the one hand, and monstrosity, on the other. Both the individual and the state were unitary, indivisible, and in constant need to police boundaries and avoid promiscuity between categories (private-public, man-woman, civil society-political society, and so on). It was a personal struggle between good and evil that was lived in society as much as in the body and demanded commitment and urgent action.

In the sociological paradigm of the self, the specific society or culture was a given, hugely complicated and permanent fact of life, science and our psyches; and it was the task of the individual to escape complete insignificance by making sense of and signifying his or her life, body and the hazy boundaries of the institutional, cultural and social context. The ready-made way to do this was to adopt existing social identities linked to collective roles or functions as a context-dependent collective

² Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature* (Manchester, 1990), p. 137; Michelle Perrot, *Les femmes ou les silences de l'histoire* (Paris, 1998), p. 151.

personality, indeed as ontological hats to wear depending on the occasion. Mother, woman, football fan, patriot, *bretonne*, worker, socialist, trade-unionist, student, Catholic, etc., each label could be experienced vividly as an all-embracing *I am*, but instantly deserted for another equally soliciting identity when the context changed. Given the ability to identify and intervene in pathological cases, space opened up for a social plurality that did not threaten the social ordering, but rather upheld it.

In the psychological paradigm, a person's value in society was derived from a common pool of competitive merit, which was allocated by a kind of stock market, with its ups and downs, requiring constant comparison, measurement and antagonism. In the sociological paradigm, value depended on subjects themselves, on their capacity to use self-discipline in order to turn the social context into value by actively signifying and representing themselves into it through the development of their *personality*. This could best be done by freely seeking out full involvement in merit-allocating institutions, each functioning as microcosms that reproduced and found security in the psychological model. For the more complete the identification not only with the collective 'mind' but also with the vast array of institutions that gave it structure, the greater the social advantages to be gained. The turn of the century saw an explosion of formal sociability, in the form of corporations, unions, and voluntary associations. Each of these organized and regulated a specific social identity built on some communality such as age, occupation, station, gender or opinion, and containing its own parameters of compliance and deviance.

Rather than confronting discourses and practices, the first and third chapter have underscored the internal logic of a new structure for the governing of self and other. The modern self depended on an inner division and conflict. On the one side of the divide, there emerged the overlapping roles of internal spectator or narrator, the observing, calculating mind, the internalized authority figure, the choosing and desiring moral self or the disciplining intermediary as a referee between transcendental and animalistic tendencies. On the other side of the battlefield, we find the large cast of unruly, impulsive 'others' that populated the self and which were the object of an internal project of governing. There were internal governors and governed. The condition for this confrontation to emerge was *vanity*, which was tied to a socialized sense of interiority that displaced basic needs and fears of material self-preservation into the unlimited realm of symbolic survival and self-fashioning through desire. Simple techniques such as school rankings or moral self-analysis educated the subject into some specific practices of self-comparison and self-judgement that underpinned vanity. Such techniques of (self)governing came together to form a complex mechanism of interlocking technologies that was pursued by state elites, especially between 1830 and 1848. For some, that technology affected basic material survival, which could be administered through increased taxes or prices, restricted access to the land and mobility, laws repressive of labour, local solidarities, customary survival strategies and vagrancy, as well as the array of socio-economic structural mutations then termed 'industrialism', including the attack on *mainmorte* and Old-Regime livelihoods. This often led to the fear or reality of hunger and repression, which new policies sought to tie to self-disgust over one's social identity or frustrated desires. For others, the new sweeping structural changes tended to gradually

generalize insecurities about social survival and standing. This could mean fear of loosing status, dispossession, economic crisis, crime and revolution or, in any case, the constant and uncertain striving towards conformity with a systemic ideal by means of internalizing the contradictions and conflicts inherent to the ideal. For school children, insecurity came in the form of a pure system of competitive ranking among age and gender peers, requiring constant self-steering, self-comparison and an internalization of hierarchical structures. For yet others, insecurity could come in the form of large scale religious, social, political or environmental moral panics and scandals, generated, consolidated and amplified by the media, social experts, public inquiries and institutions and state policies.

In these scenarios, among others, if the cause and resolution of the systemic insecurities and incongruences became interpreted as depending on one's behaviour and if one identified with the position of insecurity, that is, if one assumed personal responsibility for structural problems, then the governmental technologies would have succeeded in fostering the desired form of psychological self. Such a self was characteristically *mobilized* into being by the seemingly urgent need to act, choose, take action, make a stand or take sides. Such a self would adopt a distinctive view of him or herself from the outside, thus being able to judge and compare status and morality from an abstractly impersonal and universal viewpoint which would tend to conform itself to societal ideals of the self. This internal splitting of perspective, this multiplication of the ideally unified self, would then require the more mature self to dominate and conduct the behaviour of the more primitive and internally disowned 'other', a juncture at which the problem of self-government would mirror the wider problem of the government of

others. My focus has therefore been on the twofold process whereby people become categorized and categories peopled.

I have also highlighted the importance of the conceptualization of childhood. I have placed the child at the source of the question of 'otherness'. Fuelled by a dual desire and fear of what one is not, the modern self was bound by a struggle away from disorder and towards perfection. The inner conflicts that played such a defining role in both paradigms of subjectivity in the nineteenth century were inseparable from a denigrating concept of childhood. The parallels between childhood and animality, insanity, unreason, barbarity, femininity, passivity, mobility, disorder, hopelessness and so on, necessitated an intermediary entity for self-control and self-government. Equally, the clear distinction established during the French Revolution between legal majority and minority grounded a new understanding of authority that could be limited and utilitarian. Towards the fin de siècle, the child became the main object of institutional treatment. As parenting became more functional and technical, schools and supporting institutions were able to substitute the family for standardized methods of individualization and personality development.

The changes that took place towards 1900 altered the nature of public assistance. The interwar years seem a foreign land to the student of nineteenth century assistance. After the Great War, the preoccupation with hygiene and the fight against tuberculosis gradually extended the aims of social assistance to larger portions of the population. Instead of the *dames* of nineteenth-century charities, urban space was now under the surveillance of social workers. Their aims was no

longer limited to the poor, but rather extended to the whole of the social body which was to be reengineered along hygienist lines. Laura Lee Downs has studied the *Colonies de Vacances* movements that started with the new century. Cities such as Suresnes (Hauts-de-Seine) gave every child the right to spend six (and later eight) weeks of the summer vacation in the countryside, free of charge for those who could not afford it.³ This was part of the urban experiment in municipal socialism carried out by the administration of Henri Sellier. After a period of great success between 1920 and 1933 in which most urban children spent time in the countryside, either with their families or through a programme, the numbers dropped sharply because of the economic crisis. In Suresnes, the proportion of children holidaymakers went from a stable 74 to 80 per cent of children until 1933 to 60 per cent in 1935. As a result, the Ministère du travail moved to support municipal *colonies* in 1935, which enabled municipalities to withhold the part of unemployment allocations destined for dependent children in order to cover part of the municipality's cost of sending these to *colonies de vacances*. Families on the dole either sent the children away or lost the supplementary allocation. This became an instrument through which families could be pressured. Sellier made plain this policy in a 1936 memo to the *assistantes scolaires* in saying that 'the municipality is authorized to *require* that all who receive unemployment benefit send their school-age children to the *colonies de vacances*'.⁴ Thus, spending the summer vacations in the countryside had gone from being a largesse provided by private charities to right to an obligation, at least for some, over the course of just fifteen years.

³ Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham, N.C., 2002), pp. 113, 126-129, 113.

⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.* 181, emphasis added by L.L.D., see, pp. 180-182.

R. H. Hazemann was one of the social experts who in Vitry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne) were developing similar social service system as Sellier was implementing in Suresnes. In a programmatic textbook on municipal social services, Hazemann offered a succinct definition of social assistance as

an institution that derived from the desire to uphold society; it is thus a necessity; it indirectly derives from a feeling of guilt that Society feels towards the individual who cannot subsist, even if his degree of social degradation originates from an individual fault.⁵

While the individual was to be helped regardless of personal circumstances, he or she was depicted as a passive party. In effect, the tendency was for individuals to receive social assistance regardless of their will. Hazemann argued that the democratic notion of a 'social debt' ties to the scientific knowledge of 'the causes and effects of human weaknesses' required blurring of lines between public and private charity in order to offer a more totalizing approach to assistance.⁶ Édouard Fuster, professor of assistance and social foresight at the Collège de France, wrote the introduction. He argued forcefully for the 'intensification' and 'individualization' of social assistance in order to bring about *une rééducation de la personnalité* in beneficiaries, as the Americans were doing at the time.⁷

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century there was not only a move away from means-tested assistance. Whereas access to social aid in the nineteenth

⁵ R.H. Hazemann, *Le service social municipal et ses relations avec les oeuvres privées* (Paris, 1929), p. 85

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. vii, 15-16.

⁷ Edouard Fuster, 'Introduction', in: *Ibid.*, pp. vi, xii.

century was highly restricted, in the twentieth century it increasingly became mandatory in cities like Suresnes or Vitry. While within the psychological model of the nineteenth century the notion of assistance served as a means of moral management, the sociological model's 'social service' became an instrument capable of managing the socialization of individuals.

We have also explored how individuals were called upon to invest their world with meaning. Modernity was characterized for the world itself being absent of its own meaning and value. The disenchanted world was a devalued world. Nothing was worth anything unless there was a collective demand granting it meaning. Guizot argued that nothing was good or bad in itself, for

man has nothing in him that cannot be used to the benefit of good and evil: everything depends on the principles on which he is accustomed to act and judge. Unfortunately, one governs children, as men, rather by their faults than by their qualities: one wants to make them obey? One uses their weaknesses; one wants to get them to do something? One employs all the seductions of interest.⁸

Since 1789, from Kant to Durkheim, the desired alternative was the same, governing through *mœurs*, natural law, the drives of the soul, common sense, the blindly accepted revelation of social tradition, culture, a civic faith or unconscious programming. The aim was to bring about the choice-less choice of voluntary virtue, so that 'man' would resemble his ideal, the ultimate good. The ultimate good was to stand as the ultimate signifier of existence. But this was only possible if each individual chose to perpetually, actively, and militantly give meaning to socially-produced significations. Only faith had power. During the whole

⁸ Guizot, *Méditations*, pp. 290-291

nineteenth century, the person was given the choice to fully identify with the subjectivity structure and the social order or be an outcast. In the twentieth century that choice disappeared. In exchange the person gained the privilege of using the social fabric to fashion outfits or at least consume ready-made costumes. And yet the capacity to signify the world that modernity so generously granted the modern subject was and remains the source of all freedom. The means of valorisation cannot be alienated. The innate power each person possesses is the ability to attribute value to anything, including his or her own existence. The pages above have shown that individuals have been actively investing their world with meaning for centuries.

Therefore, my findings contradict those of the sociologists of the individual quoted in the introduction. The sociological understanding of modern identities and group belonging, as we have seen, is not constitutive of the modern individual but rather has a history, as does the tendency to reduce the agency of the individual to choosing social identities. The modern individual is not a fixed reality, but a very fluid historical experience. And in this ceaselessly changing character is where the liberty, agency and potential of human beings is located, invented and dreamt.

Archives.

Archives consulted.

ADG	Archives Départementales de la Gironde.
ADHV	Archives Départementales d'Haute-Vienne.
ADIL	Archives Départementales d'Indre-et-Loire.
ADIV	Archives Départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine.
ADLA	Archives Départementales de la Loire-Atlantique.
ADML	Archives Départementales de Maine-et-Loire.
AMA	Archives Municipales de Angers.
AML	Archives Municipales de Limoges.
AMN	Archives Municipales de Nantes.
AMR	Archives Municipales de Rennes.
AMT	Archives Municipales de Tours.
ANF	Archives Nationales de France.
AVP	Archives de la Ville de Paris.

Materials consulted.

ADG **Archives Départementales de la Gironde.**

Série X — Assistance publique.

(Note: There are two different series 3X)

2X3 (Unification des services d'assistance); 2X10 (Nominations aux bureaux de bienfaisance); 2X12 (Secours dans communes dépourvues de bureaux de bienfaisance); 2X25 (Laïcisation); 2X46 (Inspections); 2X459 (Ibid. assistance médicale gratuite); 2X466 (Hôpitaux); 2X467 (Assistance médicale gratuite); 2X468 (Ibid.); 2X469 (Ibid.); 2X499 (Ibid.); 3X6 (Etablissements d'assistance privés); 3X7 (Ibid.); 3X9 (Ibid.); 3X10 (Ibid.); 3X11 (Ibid.); 3X13 (Ibid.); 3X14 (Ibid.); 3X16 (Société de charité maternelle de Bordeaux); 3X17 (Ibid.); 3X19 (Etablissements d'assistance privés, aide a l'enfance); 3X20 (Ibid.); 3X21 (Crèches); 3X22 (Orphelinats); 3X23 (Ibid.); 3X25 (Etablissements d'assistance privés); 3X26 (Ibid.); 3X27 (Ibid., aides a la famille); 3X28 (Lutte contre la mendicité et assistance aux vieillards); 3X29 (Ibid.); 3X54 (Assistance aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables); 3X88 (Ibid.); 4X28 (Secours mutuels).

Others.

4J711 (Société de charité maternelle de Bordeaux); 4J718 (Ibid.); Y93 (Asile Terre-nègre).

ADHV **Archives Départementales d'Haute-Vienne.**

Série X — Assistance publique.

1X2 (Nominations aux bureaux de bienfaisance); 1X4 (Bureaux de bienfaisance); 1X10 (Caisse de retraites); 1X26 (Inspections); 1X54 (Laïcisation); 1X77 (Hospice du Dorat); 1X106 (Rapport sur la grippe de 1918); 1X117 (Hôpital de st. Junien); 1X205 (Asile d'aliénés); 1X219 (Ibid.); 2X4 (Bureau de bienfaisance de Limoges); 2X5 (Ibid.); 2X6 (Ibid.); 2X13 (Ibid.); 2X80 (Assistance médicale gratuite, nominations); 3X11 (Orphelinat agricole à La Faye); 3X12 (Etablissements avec mineurs); 3X14

(Ibid.) ; 3X23 (Colonies de vacances) ; 3X24 (Etablissements avec mineurs) ; 3X25 (Enfance difficile) ; 3X26 (Ibid.) ; 3X27 (Ibid.) ; 3X32 (Fourneaux économiques de Limoges) ; 3X36 (Inspections) ; 3X47 (Nourrissons) ; 3X54 (Débat sur les tours) ; 3X55 (Inspecteurs) ; 3X58 (Enfants assistés) ; 3X59 (Hospice dépositaire).

Others.

1Y144 (répression mendicité) ; 1Y182 (Enfance difficile) ; 1Y183 (Ibid.) ; 1Y184 (Ibid.) ; 1Y185 (Ibid.) ; 1Y187 (Ibid.) ; 1Y188 (Ibid.) ; 1Y189 (Ibid.) ; 54J16 (Société de Saint Vincent de Paul) ; 54J17 (Ibid.) ; 54J18 (Ibid.) ; 54J19 (Ibid.) ; 6M332 (Vie chère) ; 6M337 (Ibid.) ; 10M56 (Chômeurs) ; 10M58 (Ibid.).

ADIL Archives Départementales d'Indre-et-Loire.

Note : Collections consulted were being re-catalogued. Provisional references are given (cotes provisoires).

Série X — Assistance publique.

3X19 (Expédients de indigents) ; 3X108 (Assistance obligatoire aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables) ; 3X110 (Ibid.) ; 3X117 (Assistance médicale gratuite) ; 3X137 (Incurables) ; 3X141 (Hospice) ; 3X165 (Crèches privées) ; 3X166 (Société de charité maternelle de Tours) ; 3X167 (Société protectrice de l'enfance) ; 3X168 (Ibid.) ; 3X170 (Œuvres privées pour l'enfance) ; 3X172 (Fondation Carnot) ; 3X256 (Correspondance) ; 3X438 (Pupilles de l'État) ; 3X456 (Enfants placés chez patrons) ; 3X457 (Ibid.) ; 3X215 (Secours temporaires à mères, nourrices) ; 3X216 (Ibid.) ; 3X217 (Ibid.) ; 3X230 (Filles-mères).

ADIV Archives Départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine.

Série X — Assistance publique.

3X1 (Réglementation) ; 3X3 (Assistance aux femmes enceintes et primes d'allaitement) ; 3X13 (Sociétés de protection de l'enfance) ; 3X14 (Ibid.) ; 3X15 (Assistance à l'enfance) ; 3X16 (Ibid.) ; 3X17 (Enfants assistés) ; 3X620 (Protection du premier âge) ; 3X621 (Ibid.) ; 3X626 (Crèches) ; 3X627 (Enfants malades) ; 3X628 (Refuge pour femmes enceintes) ; 3X629 (Sourds muets et jeunes aveugles) ; 3X634 (Ibid.) ; 3X636 (Ibid.) ; 3X637 (Ibid.) ; 3X638 (Ibid.) ; 3X645 (Ibid.) ; 3X652 (Assistance aux familles nombreuses) ; 3X723 (Assistance aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables) ; 3X724 (Ibid.) ; 3X729 (Demandes d'assistance) ; 3X773 (Eux thermales) ; 3X774 (Assistance médicale gratuite).

ADLA Archives Départementales de la Loire-Atlantique.

Série X — Assistance publique.

2X2 (Aide aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables) ; 2X3 (Ibid.) ; 2X5 (Sociétés charitables et bienfaisance privé) ; 2X6 (Ibid.) ; 2X7 (Ibid., subventions) ; 2X8 (Ibid., nominations) ; 2X217 (Bureau de bienfaisance de Nantes) ; 2X218 (Ibid.) ; 3X3 (Conseil supérieur de l'assistance publique) ; 3X4 (Ibid.) ; 3X5 (Direction de l'assistance et de l'hygiène publiques) ; 3X6 (Ibid.) ; 3X35 (Protection du premier âge) ; 3X51 (Crèches de Nantes) ; 3X54 (Assistance à l'enfance) ; 3X1336 (Aide aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables) ; 4X12 (Mutualité) ; 4X120 (Ibid.) ; 4X173 (Ibid.) ; 4X176 (Ibid.) ; 4X177 (Ibid.) ; 4X178 (Ibid.) ; 4X179 (Ibid.) ; 4X180 (Ibid.) ; 4X183 (Orphelinats et ouvriers) ; 4X184 (Ibid.) ; 4X185 (Ibid.).

ADML Archives Départementales de Maine-et-Loire.

Série X — Assistance publique.

X9 (Commissions administratives) ; X36 (Union des femmes de France) ; X303 (Hospices et bureaux de bienfaisance) ; X491 (Etablissements charitables) ; X492 (Ibid.) ; X500 (Asile d'aliénés de Sainte-Gemmes-sur-Loire) ; X529 (Sourds muets) ;

X531 (Orphelinat des Plaines-Pouillé); X534 (Protection du premier âge); X535 (Ibid.); X546 (Enfants assistés); X547 (Ibid.); X549 (Ibid.); X563 (Santé et salubrité); X564 (Etablissements charitables); X566 (Assistance obligatoire aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables); X598 (Etablissements de bienfaisance).

Others.

4M6/69 (Groupe d'études sociales); 4M6/72 (Ligue de l'enseignement; Association pour l'organisation de la démocratie); 6V116 (Sœurs de Notre-Dame de la charité du Refuge de Tours).

AMA

Archives Municipales de Angers.

Série Q — Assistance publique.

1Q21 (Règlementation); 1Q24 (Administrateurs); 1Q25 (Receveurs); 1Q31 (Fonctionnement); 1Q32 (Souscriptions et subventions); 1Q33 (Renseignements de la part d'autres villes); 1Q46 (Inspections); 1Q125 (Demandes de secours); 1Q127 (Secours ordinaires); 1Q129 (Registre des personnes assistés); 1Q130 (Dames de charité); 2Q1 (Fourneaux des écoles); 2Q2 (Fourneaux économiques); 2Q5 (Ateliers de charité); 2Q6 (Ibid.); 2Q7 (Ibid.); 2Q8 (Ibid.); 2Q9 (Ibid.); 2Q10 (Sociétés de bienfaisance); 2Q11 (Société de charité maternelle d'Angers); 2Q12 (Asile de nuit); 3Q15 (Asile St-Nicholas); 3Q34 (Service d'urgence médicales et de nuit); 3Q37 (Commission administrative de l'hospice); 4Q1 (Caisses d'épargne scolaires); 4Q5 (Habitations à bon marché); 4Q7 (Jardins communaux); 6Q5 (Retraites ouvriers et paysannes); 6Q8 (Assistance médicale gratuite); 6Q9 (Assistance aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables); 6Q13 (Familles nombreuses); 6Q21 (Secours mutuels); 7Q1 (Protection du premier âge); 7Q2 (Familles nombreuses); 7Q3 (Crèches); 7Q16 (Goutte de lait municipale); 8Q1 (Assistance à l'enfance); 8Q3 (Enfants malades); 8Q4 (Commissions administratives); 8Q6 (Action sociale); 8Q11 (Orphelinat municipal de garçons); 8Q12 (Ibid.); 8Q17 (Ibid.); 8Q22 (Ibid.); 8Q35 (Orphelinat municipal de filles); 8Q36 (Ibid.); 8Q47 (Ibid.).

AML

Archives Municipales de Limoges.

Série Q — Assistance publique.

1Q1 (Règlementation, laïcisation du bureau de bienfaisance); 1Q2 (Règlementation et organisation de bureau de bienfaisance); 1Q3 (Ibid.); 1Q4 (Ibid.); 1Q18 (Attribution des secours); 2Q2 (Fourneaux économiques); 2Q6 (Œuvres de charité); 2Q7 (Ibid.); 3Q2 (Hôpital de Limoges); 3Q11 (Ibid.); 3Q22 (Ibid.); 3Q23 (Ibid.); 3Q25 (Ibid.); 3Q27 (Ibid.); 3Q28 (Ibid.); 3Q31 (Sourds muets); 5Q22 (Caisse de retraites municipale); 5Q23 (Secours aux employés municipaux); 5Q172 (Assistance médicale gratuite); 5Q173 (Assistance aux ds et vieillards, infirmes et incurables); 5Q177 (Protection du premier âge); 5Q198 (Ibid.); 5Q214 (Ibid.); 5Q215 (Ibid.); 5Q217 (Ibid., suppression des tours); 5Q218 (Enfants assistés); 5Q219 (Orphelinat municipal); 5Q222 (Protection de la famille).

Others.

5S71 (Congrégations et assistance municipal).

AMN

Archives Municipales de Nantes.

Série Q — Assistance publique.

1Q6 (Fonctionnement général); 1Q9 (Projet de caisse de premiers secours); 1Q15 (Droits des pauvres); 1Q32 (Correspondance); 1Q33 (Congrès d'assistance); 1Q34 (Règlementation); 1Q36 (Délibérations administratives); 1Q37 (Ibid.); 1Q54 (Délibérations du Bureau de Bienfaisance); 1Q55 (Ibid.); 1Q74 (Délibérations des bureaux auxiliaires); 1Q77 (Ibid.); 2Q3 (Œuvres charitables); 3Q1 (Hospices civiles); 3Q12 (Ibid.); 3Q13 (Société pour l'extinction de la mendicité); 3Q15 (Enfants trouvés); 3Q18 (Aliénés); 4Q1 (Institutions diverses); 5Q4 (Retraites et accidents du travail); 5Q12 (Assistance médicale gratuite, aux vieillards, infirmes et incurables,

sanatoria, ligue des fonctionnaires pères de famille nombreuses, protection de l'enfance, etc.) ; 5Q15 (Filles mères).

Others.

I5C1D16 (Office central des ouvres d'hygiène sociale); I5C1D17 (Association d'hygiénistes). Fonds de Doulon (Paroisse annexée) : 3Z455 (Secours aux chômeurs); 3Z456 (Secours par extrême misère); 3Z458 (Etablissements privés); 3Z466 (Assistance médicale gratuite); 3Z475 (Assistance de l'enfance) ; 3Z477 (Mutualité).

AMR Archives Municipales de Rennes.

Série Q — Assistance publique.

1Q57 (Bureau de bienfaisance); 1Q58 (Ibid.); 1Q61 (Ibid., nominations); 1Q70 (Secours); 1Q72 (Congrégations et assistance); 1Q74 (Bureau de bienfaisance, correspondance); 2Q1 (Travaux de charité); 2Q4 (Soupes journalières); 2Q5 (Mutualité); 2Q9 (Ibid.); 2Q10 (Ibid.); 2Q11 (Ibid.); 2Q22 (Fêtes de bienfaisance); 2Q30 (Sociétés charitables); 2Q32 (Asiles de nuit); 3Q2 (Hospices civiles); 3Q11 (Service des vénériennes); 3Q12 (Refuge pour femmes enceintes); 3Q13 (Hôpital Pontchaillou); 5Q13 (Assistance médicale gratuite); 5Q17 (Secours temporaires); 5Q20 (Protection du premier âge); 5Q22 (Chèches); 5Q23 (Ibid.); 5Q25 (Enfants assistés); 5Q26 (Ibid.).

AMT Archives Municipales de Tours.

Note : Collections consulted were being re-catalogued. Provisional references are given (cotes provisoires).

Série Q — Assistance publique.

1Q1 (Règlements et rapports); 1Q3 (Secours à l'enfance); 1Q246 (Service médical); 1Q247 (Secours d'urgence); 2Q49 (Fourneau économique municipale); 2Q42 (Jeunes filles admises au Notre Dame de la Charité dit Le Refuge); 2Q43 (Ibid.); 2Q48 (Œuvre des jeunes économes); 2Q49 (Sociétés privées); 2Q51 (Ibid.); 2Q53 (Secours à l'enfance); 2Q54 (Restaurant municipal); 2Q248 (Ateliers de charité); 3Q58 (Commissions administratives); 3Q59 (Administration); 3Q60 (Ibid.); 5Q252 (Pensions civiles); 5Q260 (Nourrices, crèches, enfance); 5Q261 (Filles-mères).

ANF Archives Nationales de France.

Série F — Fonds publics postérieurs à 1789.

F4 2882 (Subsides pour associations); F4 2883 (Ibid.); F4 2884 (Ibid.); F4 2885 (Ibid.); F4 2886 (Ibid.); F4 2887 (Ibid.); F4 2888 (Ibid.); F4 2889 (Ibid.); F4 2890 (Ibid.); F17 12526 (Ibid.); F15 4257 (Ibid.); F15 4258 (Ibid.); F15 4259 (Ibid.); F12 8166 (Classes moyennes); F17 14383 (Ibid.); F12 7023 (Vie chère); F12 7024 (Ibid.); F12 7025 (Ibid.); F12 7026 (Ibid.); F12 7027 (Ibid.); F7 13958 (Ibid.); F22 239 (Subsides pour coopératives); F7 13955 (Malthusianisme et groupes antisystème); F7 13956 (Ibid.); F19 5633 (Œuvres sociales, militaires et religieuses); F19 5634 (Ibid.).

Others.

470 AP 119 (Fond Alexandre Millerand); 470 AP 120 (Ibid.); 470 AP 123 (Ibid.); 470 AP 144 (Ibid.); 470 AP 147 (Ibid.).

AVP Archives de la Ville de Paris.

Rubrique 17 — Assistance et établissements de santé.

D.2 X11 (Laïcisation du hôpital Berck); D.2 X1 (Gouvernement des hôpitaux et hospices); D.2 X4-7 (Affaire Paul Robin).

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