

RENAISSANCE MAN

Agnes Heller

translated from the Hungarian by

RICHARD E. ALLEN

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A.H.

INTRODUCTION

Is there a 'Renaissance ideal of man'?

The consciousness that man is a historical being is a product of bourgeois development; the condition of his fulfilment is the negation of bourgeois existence. During antiquity a static concept of man prevailed: his potentialities were circumscribed both in his social and individual life; the ideal was one of objective limits, not of the subjective projection of aims and desires. Medieval Christian ideology dissolved these limits. Either perfectibility or depravity can be a limitless process, at least in the earthly sense of limits; the beginning and end of the process are, however, fixed by the transcendence of beginning and end, original sin and Last Judgment.

With the Renaissance a dynamic concept of man appears. The individual has his own history of personal development, just as society has a history of development too. The contradictory identity of individual and society makes its appearance in every fundamental category. The relationship between the individual and the situation becomes fluid; past, present, and future are human creations. This 'humanity', however, is a generalized, homogeneous concept. It is at this time that 'liberty' and 'fraternity' are born as immanent ontological categories. Time and space become humanized and infinity becomes a social reality. But however dynamic man may be in his interaction with history, anthropologically he is still eternal, generalized, and homogeneous. Man creates the world, but he does not re-create mankind; history, the 'situation' remain external to him. The concept of man does not go beyond the notion of *corsi e ricorsi*, the cyclical movement does not turn into a spiral. In one respect, with their concrete analysis of the human psyche and human behaviour, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries widen the

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search for man, despite a seeming regression from a historical conception of humanity, making possible a real historical anthropology and the notion of the self-creation of man. From Hobbes to Rousseau the *past of mankind* becomes – on a higher plane – history. After the French Revolution the present, too – in such central figures as Hegel and Balzac – becomes history. Finally, with Marx and the negation of bourgeois society, the future as well makes its appearance as history.

The concept 'Renaissance' signifies a total social process, extending from the social and economic sphere where society's basic structure was affected to the realm of culture, embracing everyday life and everyday ways of thinking, moral practices and ethical ideals, forms of religious consciousness, art, and science. We can really speak of the Renaissance only where all these appeared together and in the same period, on the basis of certain changes in social and economic structure: in Italy, England, France, and – partly – in the Netherlands. The Renaissance current of thought which is customarily called 'humanism' is actually no more than one (or several) of the ideological reflexes of the Renaissance, in ethical and scholarly form, detachable from the social structure and the realities of everyday life, and hence capable of taking on a relative life of its own and gaining ground in countries where the Renaissance, as a total social phenomenon, never existed. But in those countries it necessarily remained without roots, gaining adherents only in the upper reaches of social life (albeit among the political and intellectual aristocracy) and quickly becoming isolated. Thus it was that in Germany the Reformation swept humanism away. Thus it was that in Hungary the precocious absolute monarchy of Matthias Corvinus – whose foundations had been laid by his father, János Hunyadi, the greatest of the *condottieri* – vanished almost without a trace.

The Renaissance was the first wave of the protracted process of transition from feudalism to capitalism. Engels rightly spoke of it as a 'revolution'. In that process of transformation a whole social and economic structure, an entire system of values and way of life were shaken. Everything became fluid; social upheavals succeeded one another with unbelievable speed, individuals situated 'higher' and 'lower' in the social hierarchy changed places rapidly. In these eruptions and rapid turns of fortune the process of social development can be seen unfolding in all its plurality; I will discuss some of its concrete problems later in a separate chapter. In any event, the Renaissance takes its place between two more stable social and economic systems: between feudalism on the one hand, and a state

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of equilibrium of feudal and bourgeois forces on the other. And from this point of view it is immaterial how long that equilibrium was maintained in different countries (and that varied greatly). The societies which preceded it and followed it were equally closed societies (though closed in different ways) compared with Renaissance society, of which Shakespeare's Henry VII so tellingly said that

True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

But the Renaissance was the sort of social and economic revolution in whose final phase individual revolutions proved abortive, finding themselves eventually in a cul-de-sac. Certainly Italian, Spanish, and, in part, Netherlands developments led up a blind alley: day-break was not succeeded by day. But even where it was – as in England, the home of the classical course of historical development – this 'day' turned out to be much more problematic and contradictory than it had appeared in the rosy light of dawn. I might say that the thinkers of the Renaissance already recognized this themselves. Let us take Thomas More as an example: in the first part of his *Utopia*, as is generally known, the inhuman world of primitive capital accumulation stands clearly revealed. But the sharp light cast there on social contradictions still illuminates no more than 'anomalies'. The same Thomas More willingly became Lord Chancellor at the court of Henry VIII, for no other reason than his sincere belief that the ruler would take steps to put an end to those contradictions; as a true 'Christian Prince' he would create as just a society as was possible given the existing state of 'human nature'. And More's friend Erasmus (writing in 1517, when Luther was already preparing his theses at Wittenberg) set forth his predictions of perpetual peace and of the noble future existence of the great family of a humanistic and tolerant Christian humanity. If we compare More the critic with Swift the critic the difference between their two epochs becomes palpably clear to us, even in that same England whose development (with that of France) proved the only viable path of development among the various courses offered by the Renaissance.

The Renaissance was the dawn of capitalism. The lives of the men of the Renaissance, and hence the development of the Renaissance concept of man, were rooted in the process by which the beginnings of capitalism destroyed the *natural* relationship between individual and community, dissolved the *natural* bonds linking man to his family, his social estate, and his 'ready-made' place in society, and shook

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all hierarchy and stability, turning social relations fluid, the arrangement of classes and social strata as well as the placement of individuals within them. Marx in the *Grundrisse* compared as follows the 'natural community' and the individuals who belonged to it with the kind of individuals characteristic of capitalist development:

Property in the conditions of production was posited as identical with a limited, definite form of the community; hence of the individual with the characteristics – limited characteristics and limited development of his productive forces – required to form such a community. This presupposition was itself in turn the result of a limited historic stage of the development of the productive forces; of wealth as well as of the mode of creating it. The purpose of the community, of the individual – as well as the conditions of production – is *the reproduction of these specific conditions of production* and of the individuals, both singly and in their social groupings and relations – as living carriers of these conditions. Capital posits the *production of wealth* itself and hence the universal development of the productive forces, the constant overthrow of its prevailing presuppositions. . . . The result is: the tendentially and potentially general development of the forces of production – of wealth as such – as a basis. . . . The basis as the possibility of the universal development of the individual, and the real development of the individuals from this basis as a constant suspension [*Aufhebung*] of its *barrier*, which is recognized as a barrier, not taken for a *sacred limit*. . . . Hence also the grasping of his own history as a *process*, and the recognition of nature (equally present as practical power over nature) as his real body.¹

In societies where the community still exists the object of a man's work does not appear to him as a product of labour, but seems 'naturally given' (findet sich vor als Natur); it is a condition of his existence, something belonging to him as much as his sense organs or his skin. The fact that 'man is a member of the community' is for him 'a reality given by nature'. His relationship to the community is identical with his relationship to 'defined existence'. To step outside the bounds of the given community is equivalent to destruction, and any kind of development is possible only within this circumscribed, untranscendable framework. With the development of capitalism, as the generation of wealth becomes the goal, all pre-existing social characteristics can and do become restricting, and man 'does not wish to remain what he has become, but lives in a constant process

of becoming'. Life in the community gives 'satisfaction from a limited standpoint: while modern [life] gives no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is *vulgar*'.² In the endless process of production 'natural necessity in its direct form has disappeared; because a historically created need has taken the place of the natural one'.³

Marx's analysis shows succinctly how, parallel with the development of the bourgeois forces of production, the social structure and the individual within it have become *dynamic*. According to a naïve commonplace still found today even among scholars, the inhabitants of Italy in the course of their voyages became acquainted with the luxury of the East and a little later with the culture of antiquity, and comparing them with their own circumstances, became dissatisfied with the latter; thus under the influence of antiquity new ideas emerged, which in the course of their development came into conflict with the feudal system, the ideology of the church, and so forth. But in fact nothing of the sort happened. The first forms of capitalist productive forces and bourgeois social relations emerged from the *immanent* development of feudalism; as they gradually corroded and dissolved the latter, men simply found themselves in a new situation, where they *had* to act, feel, and think differently about the world and about themselves, than in the naturally given communities of the system of estates. A new way of behaving and a new manner of life, as it developed, sought out its own ideology, finding it partly in the ideas of antiquity but, as will be discussed later in more detail, *to at least as great an extent* in certain tendencies of Christianity. There was no question of a 'renewal' of antiquity because, so far as the relationship between individual and society was concerned, there was more in common (as is clear from Marx's analysis) between the Greek polis and the medieval system of estates than between the Greek polis and the social structure of the Renaissance era. In some of its forms the ideology of antiquity did indeed prove important in many ways for the ideology of the Renaissance, but, as we shall see, it served rather as a storehouse of thought to be transformed at will than as a model for imitation. I can cite, as random examples, two such basic categories as 'liberty' and 'equality'. In Italy – and in Florence even as early as the thirteenth century – 'liberty' and 'equality' were political slogans; at first they were the slogans of the upper bourgeoisie against the landed nobility, then of the middle and petty bourgeoisie against the *haute bourgeoisie*, and finally of the people against the whole bourgeoisie. The representatives of 'liberty' soon discovered the costume of antiquity (we need think only of Cola di Rienzo), and

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Brutus soon became the ideal of liberty. But in content this liberty had little in common with liberty as Brutus understood it, as is shown by its far from accidental pairing with 'equality'. The concept of 'equality' was quite unknown to antiquity. Engels was right in observing that this notion first appeared in Christianity, as the concept of equality before God. Liberty as equality is a combination of two concepts, appearing at a time when commodity production is becoming general; in its very structure it indicates that here, too, antiquity was no more than an inherited and freely interpreted tradition.

A comparison of Athens and Florence provides the most telling proof for the differences between ancient and Renaissance conditions, as Marx indicated them. I have chosen these two city-states precisely because there were many similarities between them, not all of them merely apparent. In their time and compared with other city-states, both were industrially well-developed: handicrafts and small-scale manufacture were the basis of their commerce, with carrying trade (so important in ancient Ionia and Renaissance Venice) playing a smaller part. They were alike also in the storminess of their history: their great ages were marked by constant and violent class conflicts. Both tended towards democracy, inclining even towards the direct democracy of the polis. Both began to fall apart at their very peak, amid conditions of economic and social expansion. Last but not least, their cultures during their great eras were model, classical cultures. Clearly these similarities do not spring from the fortuitous act of setting the two side by side. The direct democracy of the polis, appearing at a relatively high level of technical culture, was the precondition and foundation of a universal and model general culture.

If we cast a backward glance at these two city-states from the vantage point of the future, the total picture is modified. Both cities fell; that is, they ceased to be independent city-states. But the fall of Athens was more than just the destruction of her existence as an independent city-state; it was almost the symbolic expression of a more general trend. With Athens the entire Greek world collapsed (though the complete process took centuries), and with it the entire *mode of production* on which the greatness of Athens had rested. The Athenian city-state had exhausted the last possibilities of *its own mode of production*. For here – to refer to Marx's discussion – the urban community had turned out to be a *limit* whose dissolution was synonymous with the dissolution of its mode of production. With Florence, on the other hand, the situation was radically different. The mode of production on which it was based did not vanish

with the fall of the Renaissance city, but vice versa: the city fell because a new mode of production was not capable of breaking out of the framework of the city-state, but remained within its limits, even though for modern, bourgeois production these limits were not just boundaries (*Grenzen*), but limits or barriers (*Schranke*). Even at the beginning of the sixteenth century such thinkers as Machiavelli and Michelangelo recognized this fact, to take two individuals of quite different character. They knew even then that the only way to preserve and extend Florentine culture was to make an end of the city-state and create a *unified Italy*. Both hoped for it from the two ill-fated later Medici, Lorenzo II, to whom Machiavelli dedicated his *Prince*, and Giuliano II, for whom Michelangelo designed the tomb in which Florence's future would be interred. But – in contrast with Athens – the mode of production on which the Florentine city-state rested did not perish with Florence; it went on to develop further in those countries where absolute monarchy assisted in breaking down the barriers to bourgeois production.

Let us cast a brief glance, however, at Athens and Florence during their most flourishing epochs. I have said that both were democracies of the polis. But, as is generally known, in Athens a real democracy existed, based on a real institution of slavery. It was a peculiarity of Florentine democracy, however, that on the one hand it was still *direct* democracy, while on the other it was already a *formal* democracy. Bruni, in his *Oratio in funere Johannis Strozze* (1426), declared the existence of equality before the law and of an equal right to office. Formally, this equality extended to the *popolo minuto* and *sottoposti* as well as the *popolo grasso*, to the petty bourgeoisie and workers as well as to the great bourgeoisie. But *in fact* only the great and middle bourgeoisie held office. Hence springs the paradox that in its golden age the culture of Florence, which proclaimed the principle of equality, was *more aristocratic* than Athenian culture at its height. I have mentioned that both Athens and Florence were distinguished by the sharpness of their class struggles. But in the Athens of the classical period class conflict was seen ultimately as a *negative phenomenon*; the goal of its statesmen was to put a real end to class struggles (which of course was not possible there either), while its philosophers sought a 'good' or ideal form of society, in which class conflict could be brought to an end or at least reduced to a minimum. But in Florence the attitude of thinkers and political figures towards the class struggle was far from being so unequivocal as that. Here, too, there were of course those who saw it as a purely negative phenomenon, but they were surpassed in number and importance by those who thought to find

in class struggle a useful leaven in society and who in theory and practice *encouraged* it. In this respect there is no difference in principle between Petrarch's enthusiasm for Cola di Rienzo and the enthusiasm of Pico della Mirandola, Michelangelo or Machiavelli for Savonarola. Again, the reasons are plain. Above all, a considerable proportion of the class struggles in Athens went on *within* a single class, while the Italian city-states of the Renaissance were characterized by a *plurality of ruling classes*. The centuries-old conflict of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence was not carried on for the same simple reason as that of the Athenian aristocrats and democrats, merely for a share in political power; it was conducted primarily for the victory of different economic forms. (That, of course, should not lead one to underestimate the role of struggles for political power or of struggles between various strata of a class.) The class struggle, which in antiquity had indeed dissolved the community, was for the capitalism of the early Renaissance a source of ferment in economy and society. The philosophers and ideologues who in the first case attacked it but in the latter instance defended it were merely giving expression to the real state of affairs – among other things the difference which existed (to return again to Marx's starting-point) between the life of the community as a 'limit' or 'boundary line' and as a 'limitation' or 'barrier'.

My comparison of Athens and Florence was merely an example designed to show the novel character of the economic and social relations of the Renaissance. Wealth as a goal, production for the sake of production, production as an *endless process* constantly dissolving and transforming things, and hence the dissolution of all given, natural communities: *all the imperatives with which the new situation confronted men* led to the development of new types of men and consequently of a new concept of man, different from both the ancient and the medieval concept: *that of man as dynamic*.

The concept of dynamic man is an *undefinable* concept. It may be summed up by saying that *every* conception of human relations became dynamic. Conceptions of value shift; infinity (the infinity of space, time, and knowledge) becomes not merely an object of speculation but an immediate experience, a component of action and behaviour; perfection is no longer an absolute norm, for where everything is in process there can only be a constant striving after perfection, but no absolute perfection in the sense of ancient *kalokagathia* or Christian sainthood. As Max Dvořák wrote perceptively of the art of the period, 'the canon of perfection was not an abiding norm, as in antiquity, but was joined to a subjective will, as a more or less transient stage in the general process of development, already

surpassed almost as soon as it was attained'.⁴ The same dynamism characterized man's relationship to society. The choice of one's destiny is synonymous, in a social sense, with *an infinitude of possibilities* (at the given level of social development, of course). To be sure, the consciousness of the members of various classes conforms more or less closely to their class consciousness. But the life and consciousness of each class was itself rapidly changing, and moreover the individual could, as an individual, rise out of his class, for now he belonged to a class as a result of his place in the productive process, not in consequence of his birth. Destiny thus came to depend more and more on 'what I have done and what I have made of myself'; it became a question of rightly apprehending the dynamism of society. Since man's destiny took shape amid the *general movement* of society, it was there that the individual's relationship to that society emerged – as the relationship of an individual. Answering the question, 'How can I live and succeed amid the given movement of society?' gradually became an *individual* matter; convention could not serve as a basis for feeling out the trend of social movement, for this feeling-out was itself opposed to convention, and on the other hand the later bourgeois routine had not yet developed either. And it was precisely the emergence of an individual relationship to society, the choice of one's own destiny, which made necessary an ever more individualistic outlook, sense of values, and way of behaving – in a word, what we call with some oversimplification 'Renaissance individualism', though it had little in common with the individualism of mature bourgeois society. We might better speak of the cult of the 'self-made man', with the qualification that what a man made of himself was not entirely synonymous with the possession of power or money (though very often it was in fact one or the other), for the chief consideration was *how far he had placed his own stamp on the world*. The first symbol of this kind of self-made man is the equestrian statue of Gattamelata before the basilica in Padua. Thus the individual began to shape his own destiny, and not just in an ethical sense. The dialectic of man and destiny became the central category of a dynamic concept of man.

The development of a form of production carried on in order to acquire wealth, and the dissolution of the system of feudal estates, gave rise to another central category of this dynamic concept of man: that of versatility or many-sidedness. It was this that Marx called the emergence from 'the state of limitedness' (*Borniertheit*). Often he interpreted it as a case of man's not yet being bound to the division of labour, as did Engels in his writings on the Renaissance. But that is true only in so far as we compare the Renaissance with

the later development of bourgeois society; it is not at all so by comparison with antiquity. Pericles was much less subject to the division of labour than Lorenzo de' Medici; the Florentine burgher, who spent the greater part of his days looking after his financial speculations and his manufactures, was far more the captive of the division of labour than the citizen of the Athenian polis, and the Florentine craftsman, toiling from dawn to dusk in his workshop, was less able to concern himself with philosophy than the unpropertied Athenian. It is true that during the Renaissance there was a larger number of broadly cultivated men than during the later stages of bourgeois development; the arts and sciences were themselves less differentiated. The estrangement of public and private life from each other was only beginning, though it is true that during the last century of the Renaissance it proceeded at a rapid pace. When Marx spoke of 'manysidedness', however, it was not primarily this kind of versatility he had in mind. The versatility of the Renaissance man sprang from two factors: the emergence of bourgeois production, and its still relatively low level. It was the former on which Marx laid emphasis. For him, many-sidedness meant primarily the end of *feudal one-sidedness*. In this sense the life of the landed gentleman was one-sided, even if some gentlemen at one and the same time sang and fenced, wrote verses and rode on horseback, and even philosophized. The beginnings of versatility lay, according to Marx, in the expansion of production, its becoming universal, the general development of productive forces, 'the possibility of the universal development of man', and with all these things the endless growth and expansion of needs as *social needs*. With the progress of bourgeois production man became universal, though this universalization occurred more and more in alienated forms. During the Renaissance this process of alienation was only just beginning, but the emergence of universality was only just beginning, too. The Renaissance was the starting-point for the development of versatility, just as it was the *starting-point* for bourgeois production and bourgeois society, but its society and mode of production were *still not* bourgeois society and the bourgeois mode of production themselves. Ancient Athenian versatility attained its most comprehensive form at the most developed level of the given mode of production; social and individual versatility by and large coincided. The *individual* versatility of the Renaissance was much more ambiguous. It was the appearance of the first forms of bourgeois production which made it possible, forms which in the future would create, over the centuries, an unimaginable wealth of *social versatility*. It is true that because of the extension of the division of labour and of alienation certain

forms of individual versatility could not come into existence; thus Renaissance developments may indeed be regarded as a model of individual versatility, but with many qualifications. For even though individual and social many-sidedness closely paralleled each other here, just as in the ancient polis, they rested on social foundations which, in contrast to those of antiquity, were leading to a cleavage between the two; and finally, but not least important, the development of bourgeois production would eventually create much greater possibilities of *individual versatility* than was imaginable during the Renaissance. Hence we must draw the conclusion that the versatility of the Renaissance and its concept of versatility, were themselves, by contrast with their ancient counterparts, *dynamic*, and laden with objective contradictions. Precisely because of the undeveloped state of bourgeois production and the close connection between social and individual many-sidedness, the path of Renaissance versatility could lead backward as well as forward, towards refeudalization, into the cul-de-sac of a partial restoration of the one-sidedness of the system of social estates. In the concrete analysis of the concept of versatility we will often be confronted with these perspectives of 'forward' and 'backward'.

It is a favourite commonplace in discussions of the Renaissance that at that time 'man became the focus of interest'. But it would be just as true to say that nature became the focus of thought. Yet, the problem does not really lie here, but in the question: how did the Renaissance interpret the relationship between nature and man (or society)? First of all, the notion that man can 'conquer' something from nature, creating from primary nature a 'second' nature, dates from the Renaissance. The recognition of the 'conquest of nature' parallels the discovery of the concept of 'humanity', which in turn is inseparable from the idea of the *development* of humanity. The category of humanity, as we shall see, appears in a general anthropological and socio-philosophical light. The concept of the development of humanity first arises, however, in a concrete context, in connection with the 'conquest of nature'. Edgar Zilsel, in his study of the Renaissance's conception of technical co-operation and technical development, quite rightly sees in Bacon the most significant formulator of this tendency.⁵ All these influences worked to transform radically the ontology of nature, and the relationship between ontology and the theory of knowledge as well. Nature came to appear as an object having its own laws (no matter, from our standpoint, if most of these laws were interpreted in an anthropomorphic way), and it became the continual duty of the human mind to gain knowledge of nature. Equal weight was placed on

the human mind and on the *continuous, ongoing character* of the process. The emphasis on the mind implied that the results of cognition are *in no way dependent on ethical behaviour*, while the stress on continuity separated the process of knowledge from logic; in this connection there arose attempts like that of Ramus to transform the structure of logic in such a way as to make it fit the categorical requirements of that process. Ramus's effort, despite all its interest, turned out to be a blind alley; the true course of development demanded a complete divorce of the two. The subject – man, or humanity – now stood face to face with a nature having its own laws; to learn to know this nature, intensively and extensively, became an infinite task. It was Nicholas of Cusa who first formulated both these tendencies – the divorce of the process of knowledge from ethics and logic, on the basis of a conception of an infinite nature acting out of its own necessity – in his conception of a '*docta ignorantia*'.

Everything I have said about a dynamic concept of man entails the notion of *immanence*. A focusing on earthly life did not emerge separately in the life and thought of the Renaissance; secularization in this sense cannot be regarded as a special chapter in the development of the Renaissance. With the dissolution of the corporate system of estates, the social structure on which Thomas Aquinas's world-view rested also vanished objectively (though I must add that in his own country Aquinas never became popular, precisely because of its very early bourgeois development); new ways of life, among them the cult of the self-made man, produced a kind of individual initiative and independence of judgment and desire that rendered nugatory any kind of dogma. But here I must also add (I will discuss it in more detail later) that the appearance of an interest in the things of this world did not at all imply irreligiosity. Outright atheism was very rare during the Renaissance. The decline of an age-old ideological tradition is an extremely lengthy process in any case, and during the Renaissance a practical interest in the things of this world did not conflict with the survival of religious ideas. But Renaissance religion was characterized by the disintegration of dogma: religion became multifarious and many-coloured, as if to express the fact that belief was now less strict, was 'free' and could be freely chosen.

In some philosophical conceptions, the Renaissance has been too much likened to the Enlightenment, on the grounds that the ideology of both eras was *polemical* in character. This emphasis on the polemical does indeed make them kindred periods, for in both cases a revolutionary ideology expressive of new social relations came

forward to attack the old; but the relationship of the Enlightenment to the Renaissance was the relationship of the last battle to the first one, and so the two were conducted with entirely different weapons. Socially, the course of the Renaissance might just as well have led backward towards refeudalization; developments might have become frozen in their tracks, for the process of the constant reproduction of bourgeois society had not yet begun. But there was no longer any going back from the social foundations on which the Enlightenment rested (and the problem of political reaction did not really change this in any way). The ideology of the Renaissance was already a bourgeois ideology, for it grew out of the beginnings of bourgeois production, *but it was far from becoming the conscious ideology of the entire bourgeoisie*; moreover, it left the plebeian strata almost untouched, while at the same time striking root and developing further among the nobility. The Enlightenment, by contrast, was a *universal* bourgeois ideology; differences among the various strata of the bourgeoisie were expressed by the differences *within* the ideology of the Enlightenment (we need think only of the kind of polarization that existed between the Rousseauian and Holbachian wings). A real and sincere social relationship linked early Renaissance absolutism to the ideology of the Renaissance, while the relationship of later, enlightened absolutism to the Enlightenment was ambiguous. A further reason for the great diversity in the substance of the polemics (in practice almost indistinguishable from the foregoing one) was the development which science had undergone between the two periods – the progress which extended from Galileo to Newton, the appearance of problems of method, the advance of analysis *claire et distincte* in philosophy, and so forth. The standpoint of immanence could no longer be reconciled with a religious ideology. The polemic was now conducted against feudalism and religion at the same time, either in openly atheistic form as in Helvétius or Diderot, or by converting religion into a religious need and thus stripping it of its ideological pretensions, as in the case of Rousseau. Of course, no strict historical borderline divides the two different ideologies: there is already a great deal of the Enlightenment in Hobbes, for example, while Goethe in many respects was still carrying on the rearguard battles of Renaissance ideology, as in his polemic against Newton on the theory of colour.⁶ or his reworking of the Faust legend. To illustrate the difference, let me cite another example: the attitude towards reason. For the Enlightenment reason was synonymous with light or illumination; this was already an inheritance from Spinoza and Descartes. But during the Renaissance reason was still regarded as a power fraught