Chapter Five

The Cosmopolitical Animal

"*The means…to bring about the development of [Man's] capacities is that of antagonism within society*" – Immanuel Kant

I

The philosophical discourse of world history, the "grand narrative" of the spiritual/cultural development of Man in time, from a primitive origin to a civilized end, is also a discourse of Europe's exemplary modernity. It is a discourse of Europe's historical development into a distinctively rational and scientific culture, breaking with ways of understanding the world and the significance of our lives through myth, magic, and superstition. We have identified a particularly decisive event in the history of the world within the historical development of philosophy of the history of the world itself: the characteristically modern break from religious (Kant, Hegel) to scientific (Marx, Freud) forms of such philosophical history. In a general way, every rational philosophical history of the world will have always conceived itself as a scientific achievement, and simply to call it philosophical history will already have been to conceive it as in some sense "scientific". But in the break I am concerned with, the position of religion (as "positive religion") shifts from one whose significance is being understood internally, to one whose presence – and (likely) increasingly negligible presence – is being explained (away) externally. This break has a seismic impact on the human future projected by philosophical history. "Since Marx" the most basic differentiating structures of human cultural differences – especially interconnected national and religious differences – have become increasingly regarded as both historically contingent and irrational, rather than natural and permanently compelling. With that shift, the idea of the end of history is transformed from one in which humanity would remain, even in its final form, in some way or to some extent, properly differentiated, parted and divided off, into one which on the face of it may seem more not less religious, or at least more radically cosmopolitan: the end of history in a (politically) undifferentiated universal human community of the future, a community where all human differentiation has ceased to be politically salient.

That the appearance of a supposedly objective and scientific discourse in this field may itself be more historically contingent and short-lived than the forms of individual and social life it regards as withering in our time is something I think we need to take very seriously today. Even a non-religious thinker "since Marx" might affirm that as far as the eye can see religious and national differences, everything that parts off and divides the world politically, are not going away, even if they are no longer to be regarded as natural and immutable. And we need to think through the implications of that.

In the second volume I will do what I can to address and reassess the "since Marx" assumptions about our post-national and post-religious future, and will consider the fate of the humanitarian

ideal in our time in the light of that reassessment. But the fact that we need to do so is itself evidence of a more general development that I want to be able to address: an overall sense, in our time, of a loss of a sense of direction of historical developments, and, no doubt, a lingering desire to bring it all back, a nostalgia for a past of redemptive futures.

The break in the history of philosophical history into a form that is philosophical and scientific presents itself as belonging to a history of the world in terms of which just such a break makes sense: it makes sense as a great philosophico-scientific achievement and advance within the unfolding history of "Man". I think it is undeniable that the hold of that progressive vision of history, indeed the very idea of that history, the history of the world as the emancipation or progress of "Man", is severely weakening in our time. And this is something we need to try to understand today: the promise of Europe's modernity is losing its effective power as the framework of sense-making that is "decisive for us" in the sense I outlined at the start of Chapter Three. We are, I believe, living in a time of the exhaustion of the old modern understanding. We inhabit its ruins. Reassessing the "since Marx" assumptions about a post-national and post-religious future thus belongs to a far more wide-ranging task of coming to terms with our time, a task to which this book, in both its volumes, is dedicated. It is a long march. In the second volume I will explore the idea of an exhausted-Europe condition in detail. In this volume we will set the scene by showing how the classic philosophical discourse of world history (whether religious or scientific) reaches a condition experienced as its "crisis" in the first half of the twentieth century.

What we are heading towards in these volumes is the illumination of a distinctively contemporary perplexity. I am attempting to make sense of the not-making-much-sense that marks our current condition. It is a time in which, increasingly, we no longer know where we are heading or even if we are heading anywhere at all. We are, it seems, becoming mere occupants of a (sometimes barely sustainable and certainly increasingly fragile) life-support system with no higher heading than continued functioning, or rather no higher heading than the optimizing of its performative functioning; as if our heading today was simply to transform the world into a 24/7 convenience store and petrol station – and the world's ancient and holy places made into heritage sites and visitor attractions. Europe, for example. The possibilities are endless, but I can only recommend the reader explore the website of the Association for Convenience & Fuel Retailing, NACS. Among its "popular" awards at its annual "'must attend event'" is the "International Convenience Retailer of the Year Award" which "honors the most innovative and successful international convenience and petroleum retail store of the year with the accolade of "the best convenience store in the world". In 2014 the "home-grown" York County firm "*Rutters*" in the USA won the award. To order "fresh food on the go", their customers encounter a diverse "array of screens" giving them "many options" while still showing a concern to "improve and simplify" their experience, and, "at the *highest* level, their lives". Sponsored by Imperial Tobacco, the must watch post-award video is online here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYxy9DBEMvU)

How did we get into this rut? Perhaps no one has described the early stages of the onset of this condition better than Marx. Running straight out of his history of the golden thread that we have already cited, Marx continues:

> From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed. The discovery of

> America, the rounding the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies…gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry an impulse never known before…The markets kept ever growing…The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry…Large-scale industry has established the world market [leading to] immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land…All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned…The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. (CM, pp. 4-6)

One might wonder if we should be doing political economy rather than philosophy. But I think philosophy can make a contribution, perhaps a singular contribution, in helping us make sense of this geopolitical development as a geophilosophical one. And, as we have already begun to see, from the point of view of an investigation of philosophical history, it takes in Marx too.

"All that's solid melts into air." Indeed. We are coming to terms with the coming to an end of a world, a European world reaching its exhaustion, but now including in that Marx's solid idea of a new world to come which would occupy the still-differentiated space that he supposed was being swept clear by its melting. As I say, an exhausted-Europe problem will be the major theme of the second volume. For now Marx's somewhat casual description of this development as having "a cosmopolitan character" will provide a first step in a step-by-step understanding of the unfolding and unravelling of the promise of Europe's modernity. At issue in our time is, I will argue, the accelerating movement of the Greco-Biblical world in deconstruction.

Geophilosophically speaking, this might be called the coming to an end of the world made with "Man" in mind. Writing towards the end of the Cold War, writing before the unpredictable acceleration that led, in a blink of an eye, to what we call "the fall of the Berlin wall", and writing, with another lens, in what he identifies as a time "after Darwin", the British philosopher David Wiggins offers the following summary:

> Unless we are Marxists, we are more resistant [today] than the eighteenth- or nineteenth-centuries knew how to be [to] attempts to locate the meaning of human life or human history in mystical or metaphysical conceptions – in the emancipation of mankind, or progress, or the onward advance of Absolute Spirit. It is not that we have lost interest in emancipation or progress themselves. But whether temporarily or permanently, we have more or less abandoned the idea that the importance of emancipation or progress (or a correct conception of spiritual advance) is that these are marks by which our minute speck in the universe can distinguish itself as the spiritual focus of the cosmos. (TIML, p. 91)

If this is a time after Darwin, then it is also, quite clearly, a time after Copernicus too. Moreover, since Wiggins says that the formation of the framework articulating our understanding of the world and the significance of our lives is a "largely unconscious" development (TIML, p. 124), perhaps this is also a time after Freud. But writing during the Cold War it is also both a time after Marx (so that

there can be Marxists among us) and a time in which another event inseparable from his name – what I am calling the twentieth century but which Derrida calls "the Marxist blow" (SM, p. 98) – is still ongoing. In this very complicated complex of spirits, Wiggins says that the non-Marxists today are not only more resistant to attempts to locate the meaning of our lives in mystical or metaphysical conceptions of emancipation or progress than our forebears – but also that we have *not* lost interest in "emancipation or progress themselves". We who are not Marxists retain that classic interest – and yet something has, for us, worn away. Whether what survives here can hang on without a certain survival of Marx (so that, equally, we are all Marxists) is extremely questionable. In the next volume I will return to this passage from Wiggins, and try to clarify this spectral survival of Marx, since Marx, with and without Marx. But this is not what Wiggins's initial qualification "Unless we are Marxists" points towards. What he has in view, quite rightly I think, is the hanging on, as a still-yet-to-melt but no-longer-so-solid vestige in our time of a discourse in which the classic interest could be more unproblematically "ours". Unless we are messiano-eschatological Marxists things are far more complicated for us.

The mystical and metaphysical conceptions that Wiggins mentions are ways of thinking about some kind of ultimate unity of Man, a unity which will also be a unity of Man and the Cosmos, or Man and the World. In mystical thought attaining such a unity with the One is something that can, in principle, be attained in *any* "now". In philosophy, by contrast, this unity has been posited as a spiritual finality in which Man attains a proper relation to himself and to the world as the historical end of a movement of self-emancipation and de-alienation. It is the metaphysics of the epoch of Greco-Biblical – and hence European – *archeo-teleo-eschatologism*; an epoch that dreams of the future attainment of a form of individual and social life in which the full potential of Man could be realized. This is the epoch of history as universal history, a history in which the most "advanced" developments have taken shape first in Europe, but concern an end that embraces all humanity – whether in a properly differentiated way or a fundamentally (politically) undifferentiated way. In either case, Man is conceived as a creature with a historical nature in the strictest sense: he is the being whose own being unfolds in time in a movement of history from a primitive origin towards his properly civilized end. What we should now add to this picture is the thought that this is a movement towards the attainment of an increasingly cosmopolitan existence; where (differentiated or undifferentiated) every other is my fellow, and not just "my fellow Germans" or "my fellow Europeans".

These fellows – all of them – they are all, of course, human, and first of all men (males): my fellow is, first of all, my brother. Hence we might also speak of this epoch as an epoch of androcentric cosmopolitanism. This is not merely one political idea among others in this epoch. Indeed, there is reason to consider it the European political idea *par excellence*. Here is Derrida summarising the cosmopolitan tradition, in a lecture given in English in 1997 (http://www.livingphilosophy.org/Derrida-politics-friendship.htm):

> [The] tradition of cosmopolitanism…comes to us from, on the one hand, *Greek* thought with the Stoics, who have a concept of the "citizen of the world". [But] you also have [in] St. Paul, in the *Christian* tradition, a certain call for a citizen of the world as, precisely, a brother. St. Paul says that we are all brothers, that is sons of God, so we are not foreigners, we belong to the world as citizens of the world; and it is this tradition that we could follow up until Kant…

Having traversed the field of formation of a distinctively European cultural identity, having rooted up its *archē*, we can now start tracking its development into Kant's thought on history and the cosmopolitan hope he cleaves to as its truth. Across two volumes we will follow the vicissitudes of this hope across the centuries, and into our time. After Kant we will be exploring a line of development that decisively follows Kant, "in the very skull of Kant" (SM, p. 5), in this Greco-Biblical cosmopolitan tradition of more than one tradition, a tradition that Kant carries and sends on right here, somewhere where we are.

II

While the Greeks developed a concept of the citizen of the world, and produced what we Europeans still regard as the first efforts at narrative history, the narratives the Greeks produced were never, as Hegel noted, "very comprehensive in their range" (PH, p. 2). Man, like everything that is, is regarded as having a *telos*, and political questions relate centrally to the social conditions of its possible fulfilment, which are, for Aristotle at least, necessary conditions: individual men cannot "live well" (cannot fulfil the *telos* of their nature) on their own. As we have seen, the *zoon logon echon* is a *zoon politikon*, although it is not the only one. In his *History of Animals*, Aristotle maintained that some gregarious animals – not those that merely herd or flock together or swim together in shoals – should be called *zoon politikon*: "Animals that live politically are those that have any kind of activity in common, which is not true of all gregarious animals. Of this sort are: man, bee, wasp and crane" (History, 488a). With the idea of having some kind of "activity in common" Aristotle is highlighting a certain way of doing-a-thing-together, rather than simply doing things at the same time or in the same place. At issue, then, is a mode of collective self-organisation in which what gets done gets done only by working together. So Man and bee are both political animals, even though their ways of being such are, naturally, very different. Individual human beings, for Aristotle, can only fulfil their *telos* in this social way, and there is, as a consequence, a certain natural home for Man too: an environment in which individuals can "live well". This is the *polis*, the city: "the city is their end". We are, as it were, destined to be citizens: "Every city, therefore, exists by nature, if such also are the first partnerships. For the city is their end…[T]he city belongs among the things that exist by nature, and…man is by nature a political animal" (Politics, 1252b30-1253a3).

So, the *zoon politikon* that are human (the *zoon logon echon*) are the ones who find their proper home in the *polis*. But what about the idea of a *zoon cosmopolitikon*? Greek philosophy seems never to have given this philosophical attribute, the attribute of the philosopher, to Man as such, or as part of the *telos* of Mankind.

In the epoch of the becoming-European of the world, when Christian creationism appropriates Greek conceptual resources, there is a crucial change. With the introduction of ideas of equality before God (which will later become secularised as equality before the law), the Greek concept of the universal – *katholikos* – is drawn into the universalism of the, in principle, all-embracing (Roman) Church, where "church" here means "the body of all believers", the assembly or *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ekklēsía* ("gathering"). The Church is the gathering or binding of all the believers into a distinct but potentially universal institution. The interest in history in the Greek sense (*historia*) is then tied to Christian (or Greco-Biblical or onto-theological) anthropology, with Man, theomorphic rational subjectivity, as the centre of God's creation in an earthly horizon that spans a beginning (creation) and an end (final judgement). Historical time becomes both finite and linear. It also becomes

providential and redemptive: universal history, the history of the world, is inscribed within the conceptuality of the world after the Fall of Man, and hence has a Fall/Redemption structure. Covenant theology, as we have seen, understands the whole of human history after Man's fall into sin as unifying under the provisions of the covenant of redemption. It is the world made with men in mind, and history is the movement towards the perfection of God's creation, and the end of (in-the-world) time.

On this understanding, Europe itself unfolds in the space opened up by Greek philosophy and Biblical Christianity, the site of the unfolding of the understanding of ourselves as Man, where Man, the being that we ourselves are, is understood in terms of the historical development of his being towards the ultimate destiny of Mankind. The history of the world is a history of a redemptive emancipation of theomorphic rational subjectivity, the true *Theodicea*, as Hegel will say, with Greco-Roman-(Catholic)-(Protestant)-Christian-Modern Europe at the head, both the centre of the centre of God's creation, and the site of the opening of history onto universal history. Every other cultural heading will be and will have always been part of this history, but the truth of *political* animality as *cosmopolitical* animality, and the religious truth that its history reveals, is disclosed as such, first, from what has taken place in "our continent". Out of its opening in Greek history, Europe's modernity bears witness to this break from forms of life dominated by magic, myth and superstition, exemplary evidence of humanity *en rout*e to its proper end, every other part of the world likely to take its course in turn from Europe's heading. This is Europe's promise, the promise of Europe's modernity.

Like a force of nature entering Europe's history – writing with a conceptual flair and lucidity that seems to make him an intensifying prism of the entire spectrum of tendencies of his past, and without reference to whom the spectrum of practically everything in philosophy since seems barely comprehensible – these becoming-European ideas found their most systematic synthesis in the writings of Immanuel Kant.

Kant was born in 1724 in Königsberg in what was then East Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia). He lived for eighty years and hardly ever left the city, never going more than ten miles from it. And yet despite the fact that he never really went anywhere, Kant became the thinker of the most ambitiously universal form of social and political philosophy: a philosophy of a global humanity living a "universal cosmopolitan existence" (Kant, p. 51). There is some justification in referring to Kant's writings on this theme as "late texts": his earlier writings did not show the cosmopolitan sympathy of his late years. Indeed, his early *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, written in 1764, when he was 40, while often very funny about nationalities in Europe has comments on people from Africa that are horribly and continuously derogatory, and his work in anthropology has a similarly pervasive racist undercurrent. How could it be that Kant, of all people, could become, seventeen years later, such a cosmopolitan thinker? I am sure his observation of the French Revolution was decisive in this transformation, but we do not know for sure. But whatever the reason it seems undeniable: change he did.

It is not just Kant's cosmopolitanism that is ambitious. Indeed, his very inquiry and its guiding question are likely to strike us as the most unlikely to find a philosophically compelling answer (other than "nothing"): asking what "a philosophical mind" might be able to say about history. History: the domain of what has actually happened*;* not merely a domain of matters of fact rather than logical

relations of ideas, but the domain of the apparently "senseless course" of contingent human events, so much of which is "made up of folly and childish vanity" (Kant, p. 42); all-in-all a seemingly "planless aggregate of human actions" (Kant, p. 52). How on earth could one say anything at all about history in an *a priori* rather than empirical form? Space and time may be conceived as having an *a priori* character, but what takes place in space and time – history – that would seem beyond the proper limits of philosophical inquiry.

There is an anxiety here to which Kant is alive, and which will only get more overwhelmingly intense as the kind of history Kant announces "*as possible*" unfolds into our time:

> It is admittedly a strange and at first sight absurd proposition to write a history according to an idea of how world events must develop if they are to conform to certain rational ends; it would seem that only a *novel* could result from such premises. (Kant, p. 52)

Philosophical history: a rational inquiry or just an inventive fiction and delusion? We'll come back to this worry again and again as we follow the chain of thinkers who have picked up the Kantian baton.

In 1997, in the first of what was to become a series of public talks he gave at UNESCO in Paris, Derrida addressed that institution's commitment to a universal "right to philosophy". He spoke on this theme not only to speak up for such a right but to draw attention to the way in which the institution in which he was speaking, and from which such a right now emanates, is itself an emanation from philosophy: it is itself a "philosophical act" a "philosophical production and product", it is a "properly philosophical place" (UNESCO, p. 4). Like Europe itself, in its Greek memory and universalist specialisml, it is a "philosopheme": a philosophical thing (UNESCO, p. 2). And at this point Derrida turns to "a great short text by Kant" entitled "*Idee zu einer allgeneinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*":

> This brief and difficult text belongs to the ensemble of Kant's writing that can be described as *announcing*, that is to say predicting, prefiguring and prescribing a certain number of institutions which only came into being in this century, for the most part after the Second World War. These institutions are already philosophemes.

In the next volume I will explore the founding memory and institutional structure of what has become the European Union in terms of Kant's prediction/prescription, his *teleo-poetic* projection of what, in that great essay, Kant calls (to be) "a great political body of the future, without precedent in the past" in "our continent" (Kant, p. 51). Setting that aside for the moment, it nevertheless brings into prominence that while Kant's "idea" is universal in its scope, it is in its orientation and focus fundamentally European. Indeed, it is, as Derrida remarks, "the most strongly eurocentred text that can be" (UNESCO, p. 5). The emanation and projection of a history that would be a universal history, an *allgeneinen Geschichte*, not only comes from Europe but passes through it, is carried by it and disclosed by it from the history of its actual history. This is nowhere more tellingly insistent than when Kant appeals to the actuality of the uninterrupted golden thread of the history of our continent precisely to head off the threatening possibility that the idea of a universal history is just an inventive fiction:

> For if we start from *Greek* history as that in which all other earlier or contemporary histories are preserved or at least authenticated, if we next trace the influence of the Greeks upon

> the shaping and mis-shaping of the body politic of *Rome*, which engulfed the Greek state, and follow down to our own times the influence of Rome upon the *Barbarians* [i.e. the Germanic peoples SG] who in turn destroyed it, and if we finally add the political history of other peoples episodically, in so far as knowledge of them has gradually come down to us through these enlightened nations, we shall discover a regular process of improvement in the political constitutions of our continent (which will probably legislate eventually for all other continents)… All this, I believe, should give us some guidance in explaining the thoroughly confusing interplay of human affairs and in prophesying future political changes. (Kant, p. 52)

In Hegel's massive *Philosophy of History* the seismic upheaval-continuities of the golden thread are re-iterated step-by-Greek-Roman-German-step, adding the (implicit in Kant) thought that while this German "Europe is absolutely the end of History", "Asia" is "the beginning" (PH, p. 109). In both cases, however, Europe's actual history – which I am suggesting cannot in fact finally be distinguished from a discourse that strives to make it so that universal history (really) will have been the sense of Europe's history – is "the real test" (Kant, p. 50) for the claim that a movement of universal world history is (and here is the anxiety again) "anything but overfanciful" (Kant, p. 50). Hegel worried in turn, that philosophy would only succeed in approaching history in such a way as to "force it into conformity with a tyrannous idea.., a process *diametrically opposed* to that of the historiographer" (PH, p. 9, emphasis mine). But, like Kant, Hegel supposed that political developments in Europe (and especially in Germany) could quiet the anxiety that the "historical" portrait produced was just spinning a golden yarn.

As far as "prophesying future political changes" is concerned, this history of the golden thread also opens out onto the dawning of a golden age to come. Kant's brief text and Hegel's lengthy *Theodicaea* both have, as Kant explicitly accepts his own to have, "*chiliastic* expectations" (Kant, p. 50) – that is to say the coming of a time on earth (often called "a golden age" in fact) in which a certain "perfection" of Man will have been attained, something Kant also calls "the fulfilment of man's destiny here on earth" (Kant, p. 52). In the work of Kant and Hegel this is a destiny which, from the start, will have been God's plan for Man, the providential "design of a wise creator" (Kant, p. 45): the realisation on earth (as Marx could have said too, without God and against religion) of Man's ownmost potential for being what he is. For Kant this will lead to a time "(as far as is possible on earth)" of "happiness" (Kant, p. 43). (I will come back to Kant's cautious, parenthetical qualification.)

III

The fact that Marx could have affirmed something of this philosophical history belongs with his own secularized inheritance of the classic theological *archeo-teleo-eschatological* conception. Having said this, while the theological horizon of their analysis is not just something they want to accept but belongs essentially to their sense of its meaning and truth, neither Kant nor Hegel appeals to God to "explain" human deeds regarded as "secular events" (Kant, p. 109), and it is striking that Kant's explanatory accounting of the development of human capacities in history is, precisely, and foreshadowing both Hegel and Marx, "*antagonism* within society" (Kant, p. 44). Moreover (though, as we have seen, this is something Marx thought had been dealt a "death-blow" by Darwin), Kant affirms that a thoughtful "modesty forbids us to speak of providence as something we can

recognise", and in his theoretical work he regards it as "more in keeping…to speak of *nature*" (Kant, p. 109). So the set-up is already and overtly de-theologised in its theoretical content. Indeed, anticipating Hegel, the only thing that Kant begins with, or brings *a priori* into his inquiry into history is "reason" (cp. PH, p. 9). Having affirmed that natural capacities are naturally destined to be developed to their full potential, Kant notes that "in man" the natural capacities at issue are those which are "directed towards the use of his reason" (Kant, p. 42). It is thus, first of all, an idea of Man, a conception of the being that we ourselves are, which is the point of departure for an account of history that will be singularly philosophical, that is to say, universal. As such, it will remain onto-theological through and through, as it does in Marx, and as it does in any number of other secularizing approaches which "deprive" the classic definition of Man as a being that reaches beyond itself of its Christian character. History, for the classics of philosophical history, *is* that ongoing "transcendence" or the "looking up" of the becoming-vertical of Man. In Kant it is the self-development of reason in time. (And who is to say that is not basically what it is for Hegel and Marx too, whatever their differences, and Husserl too as we shall see at the end of this volume). In a successive and interconnected series of generations, human beings pass down whatever understanding and insight is granted their time until "the germs implanted by nature in our species can be developed to that degree which corresponds to nature's original intention" (Kant, p. 43). In this way, Man slowly, and perhaps after many, many revolutions, upheavals, set-backs and reversals (as Derrida stresses Kant's "hope" for a "cosmopolitan end" – which, Derrida adds, "remains a hope" – "is anything but the expression of a confident optimism" (RP, p. 3)), "*work[s] his way up* from the uttermost barbarism to the highest degree of skill, to inner perfection of thought and thence (as far as is possible on earth) to happiness" (Kant, p. 43).

When this history of Man becomes conscious of itself in this way this very event – this enlightened seeing – becomes part of the development it describes, becoming in that event a "normative-practical" contribution to it, so that "their fulfilment can be hastened, if only indirectly" by the work of philosophy, which can thus "accelerate the coming of this period" (Kant, p. 50; cp. DP, p. 247 where we find a related claim for Hegel. Again, as we shall see, one can say the same for Marx's "theoretical" work, and Husserl's too.)

Here we have, in a setting where the normative-practical first arises on the back of a claim to "knowledge of the idea [of Man]" (Kant, p. 50), a classic cognitivist expression of the potential contribution of philosophy to history's unfolding. Ultimately, it will be resistance to that cognitivism – resistance to the idea that there is a final "truth of Man" to be known – that will overwhelm the classic project of philosophical history. Recall that a contemporary non-cognitivist like Wiggins would not want to take no account of historical or scientific discoveries about ourselves, and would in fact respect their objectivity. Nevertheless, the decisive difference of the non-cognitivist about life's meaning is the insistence that such facts are not decisive *for us* but depend for their significance on a framework of sense-making that has an irreducible autonomy. What we mean by *"us"*, our understanding of our own being, does not escape this logic, disclosing an irreducible responsibility, up to and including what Nietzsche called "the most comprehensive responsibility" (one internal to philosophy itself) (BGE, p. 67): responsibility, that is to say, for the meaning of our own being (which will therefore always be "political", affecting what we mean by being a "political animal") – in the understanding of the world and the significance of our lives that most makes sense to us as "ours".

Acknowledging this autonomy and responsibility does not make thought on the meaning of our own being something simply in the service of a given political motivation, but it does entail a resistance to a "positivism" or "scientism" which acknowledge no such responsibility, announcing what one might call a "politics of thought" invisible to modern cognitivist ideas of basing philosophical history on a claim to knowledge concerning our being (UNESCO, p. 10). Our thinking concerning our own being belongs, as one might put it, to a conversation that is not a one-way street from science to philosophy but "would be at once provocation or reciprocal respect", a conversation that would not be marked by philosophy's antagonism towards science – or indeed religion – but would not be simply subordinate to it either, philosophy also asserting its "irreducible autonomy" (UNESCO, p. 10). I will return to this theme in the second volume but it will become especially sharply in view in this one when we explore Husserl's concern with a "crisis of the sciences" in a time of "portentous upheavals" following the rise to power of Nazism in Germany, a situation that Husserl will present as a "crisis of European humanity" as such.

To help us traverse the time that takes us to that condition of European crisis, an historical passage that will track the development of philosophical history from Kant to Hegel to Marx and beyond, I want to introduce an essay by Paul Valéry which also deals with a European crisis condition: "The Crisis of Spirit". Valéry's essay is composed of two "letters" written for publication in English in 1919, and thus at the close of the most devastating war in Europe's bloody history, which brought the death of millions. We will look at the details of this text later in this volume, but for now I simply want to set the stage with Valéry's own stage-setting of the history of philosophical history that concerns us. The text is written with the melancholy sadness, a sort of mourning-before-the-fact, of someone who though feeling "everything has not been lost", felt too that "everything has sensed that it might perish" (HP, p. 24). "The military crisis may be over. The economic crisis is still with us in all its force. But the intellectual crisis, being more subtle, and by its nature, assuming the most deceptive appearances…this crisis will hardly allow us to grasp its true extent, its *phase*" (HP, p. 25).

He looks back to the Europe before the war, to Europe in 1914, and sees "the most perfect state of *disorder*" (HP, p. 27). Disorder is not a state he entirely shies from. He calls it, precisely, "modern", and speaks in the name of "*we moderns*", using that in a boldly generic sense concerning any time (whenever it happens) of "formidable" intellectual energy and "the free coexistence, in all…cultivated minds, of the most dissimilar ideas, the most contradictory principles of life"; a time then of intense cultural vitality, and, in pre-War Europe, of near "infinite potential" (HP, p. 27). The contrast to a modern period (and he gives examples of other "modernisms" from periods in ancient Egypt and in ancient Rome) is a time when a culture is characterized more by its uniformity and order: "more specialized in a single type of manners and entirely given over to a single race, a single culture, and a single system of life" (HP, p. 28).

As we have seen already, such a mono-culture is hardly a culture at all. And for Valéry, Europe's pre-War world was the dangerous opposite of that: the Europe of 1914 is presented as having "reached the limit of modernism"; its "wealth of contrasts and contradictory tendencies was like the insane displays of light in the capitals of those days: eyes were fatigued, scorched…" (HP, p. 28). "The most perfect state of disorder" just as much as "the most perfect state of order" threatens culture (it has limits at both ends). That the upshot of Europe's radical disorder was disorder itself, war, which left Europe in ruins, is perfectly fitting.

Following the striking impression of Europe before the War, in 1914, Valéry develops a Shakespearean image of the situation facing Europe after the War, Europe in 1919. Here is Valéry's "Hamlet of Europe". For reasons that will be significant later in this volume, I reproduce it here in its entirety, with no omissions and all ellipses in the original:

> Standing, now, on an immense sort of t5errace of Elsinore that stretches from Basel to Cologne, bordered by the sands of Nieuport, the marshes of the Somme, the limestone of Champagne, the granites of Alsace…our Hamlet of Europe is watching millions of ghosts.
>
> But he is an intellectual Hamlet, meditating on the life and death of truths; for ghosts, he has all the subjects of our controversies; for remorse, all the titles of our fame. He is bowed under the weight of all the discoveries and varieties of knowledge, incapable of resuming this endless activity; he broods on the tedium of rehearsing the past and the folly of always trying to innovate. He staggers between two abysses – for two dangers never cease threatening the world: order and disorder.
>
> Every skull he picks up is an illustrious skull. *Whose was it?* This one was *Lionardo*. He invented the flying man, but the flying man has not exactly served his inventor's purposes. We know that, mounted on his great swan (*il grande Uccello sopra del dosso del suo magnio cicero*) he has other tasks in our day than fetching snow from the mountain peaks during the hot season to scatter it on the streets of towns. And that other skull was *Leibnitz*, who dreamed of universal peace. And this one was *Kant…and Kant begat Hegel, and Hegel begat Marx, and Marx begat…*
>
> Hamlet hardly knows what to make of so many skulls. But suppose he forgets them! Will he still be himself?...His terribly lucid mind contemplates the passage from war to peace: darker, more dangerous that the passage from peace to war; all peoples are troubled by it…"What about Me," he says, "what is to become of Me, the European intellect?...And what is peace?...*Peace is perhaps that state of things in which the natural hostility between men is manifested in creation, rather than destruction as in war*. Peace is a time of creative rivalry and the battle of production; but am I not tired of producing?... Have I not exhausted my desire for radical experiment, indulged too much in cunning compounds?...ambitions?... Perhaps follow the trend and do like Polonius who is now director of a great newspaper; like Laertes, who is something in aviation; like Rosencrantz, who is doing God knows what under a Russian name?
>
> "Farewell, ghosts! The world no longer needs you – or me. By giving the name of progress to its own tendency to a fatal precision, the world is seeking to add to the benefits of life the advantages of death. A certain confusion still reigns; but in a little while all will be made clear, and we shall witness at last the miracle of an animal society, the perfect and ultimate anthill."

The wording of Valéry's list of the generations of Kant in his (not entirely in French) French text made it more transparent that the ghosts were generated from each other (although he obviously did not think they were generated only by each other), and this will be important to me later. Valéry had written: "…*Kant qui genuit Hegel, et Hegel qui genuit Marx, et Marx qui genuit…".*

And Marx *qui genuit…What? Whom?* Perhaps, as I have said, the twentieth century, and perhaps first of all, a Rosencrantz who did God knows what under a Russian name. In 1919 the magnificent ghosts proceeding from the skull of Kant, like the invention of Lionardo, and the dream of Leibnitz, seem to be on a precipitous heading into disaster in a European world that is increasingly following a trend of *giving up the ghost* – and becoming "the perfect and ultimate anthill".

I shall not say "Farewell" to the ghosts. Indeed, I want to follow them closely, and to track the fate of the discourse of Europe's modernity as it passes through Kant, the begetting of Hegel, the begetting of Marx, and (in one line of its unfolding) the begetting of something from that line of ghosts that Valéry may have anticipated when he noted, in 1919, a "paradox suddenly become fact": namely, that "the great virtues of the German peoples have begotten more evils, than idleness ever bred vices" (HP, p. 24) – the begetting of Lenin. The next section of this book will follow the development of philosophical history from Kant's geophilosophical, cosmo-nationalist hope through to the geopolitical, communist and internationalist vision of a united humanity in Marx and Lenin. As we proceed through our line of ghostly variations we will see how philosophical history, the history of the world, is invariably elaborated as a discourse of Europe's modernity and Europe's promise for humanity. "The archeo-teleological program" of world history is, at the same time, the basic form of "all European discourse about Europe" (OH, p. 27). However, as the disjunction between Europe's promise and Europe's actual history grows ever more acute, we will also begin to see this programme's unravelling – as the old discourse of Europe's modernity becomes a discourse of modern Europe's crisis.

"Et celui-ci fut *Kant…et Kant qui genuit Hegel, et Hegel qui genuit Marx, et Marx qui genuit…".* Did I say I was following a chain of thinkers who picked up a Kantian baton? It wasn't a baton, it was a weapon, a cudgel. Let's follow our ghosts as they smash the skulls of those who generated them.