

appropriated by the central planners for their particular schemes, created for the opponents of these proposals a delicate problem. Were they to try to rescue the good word for its legitimate uses, insisting that a free economy rested on the separate plans of many individuals, and indeed gave the individual more scope for planning his life than a centrally planned system? Or ought they to accept the narrow sense in which the term had come to be used and to direct their criticism simply against 'planning'?

Rightly or wrongly, I decided, somewhat to the discomfort of my friends, that things had already gone too far and that it was too late to vindicate the word for its legitimate uses. Just as my opponents argued simply for planning, meaning thereby central planning of all economic activity, I directed my criticism simply against 'planning'—leaving to my adversaries the advantage of the good word and laying myself open to the charge of opposing the use of our intelligence in the ordering of our affairs. Yet I still believe that as things then were, such a head-on attack on 'planning' was necessary to dethrone what had become a shibboleth.

More recently, I have encountered similar difficulties with the blessed word 'social'. Like 'planning' it is one of the fashionable good words of our time, and in its original meaning of belonging to society it could be a very useful word. But in its modern usage in such connections as 'social justice' (one would have thought that all justice is a social phenomenon!), or when our social duties are contrasted with mere moral duties, it has become one of the most confusing and harmful words of our time, not only itself empty of content and capable of being given any arbitrary content one likes, but depriving all terms with which it is combined (as in the German *soziale Marktwirtschaft* or *sozialer Rechtsstaat*) of any definite content. In consequence I felt obliged to take a position against the word 'social', and to demonstrate that in particular the concept of social justice had no meaning whatever, calling up a misleading mirage which clear-thinking people ought to avoid. But this attack on one of the sacred idols of our time again made many people regard me as an irresponsible extremist, entirely out of sympathy with the spirit of our time.

One more example of such a good word which, if it had not been given a special meaning, I should readily have used to describe my own position, but which I felt forced to turn against, is 'positive' or 'positivist'. Again the special sense which has been given to it has created a situation where I felt forced to leave this perfectly good word to my opponents and find myself an 'anti-positivist', although what I defend is quite as much positive science as the doctrines of the self-appointed positivists.

[83]

CHAPTER FIVE

*Kinds of Rationalism**

I

In the course of my critical examination of certain dominant beliefs of our time I have sometimes had to make a difficult choice. It often happens that quite specific demands are labelled by a perfectly good word which in its more general sense describes a thoroughly desirable and generally approved activity. Indeed the specific demands which I find necessary to oppose are often the result of the belief that, if a certain attitude is usually beneficial, it must be beneficial in all applications. The difficulty which this creates for the critic of current beliefs I have first encountered in connection with the word 'planning'. That we should think out beforehand what we are going to do, that a sensible ordering of our lives demands that we should have a clear conception of our aims before we start acting, seems so obvious that it appears difficult to believe that the demand for planning should ever be wrong. All economic activity, in particular, is planning decisions about the use of resources for all the competing ends. It would, therefore, seem particularly absurd for an economist to oppose 'planning' in this most general sense of the word.

But in the 1920's and 1930's this good word had come to be widely used in a narrower and more specific sense. It had become the accepted slogan for the demand, not that each of us should intelligently plan his economic activities, but that the economic activities of all should be centrally directed according to a single plan laid down by a central authority. 'Planning' thus meant central collectivist planning, and the discussion whether to plan or not to plan referred exclusively to this issue. This circumstance, that the good word 'planning' had been

* A lecture delivered on April 27, 1964 at Rikkyo University, Tokyo and published in *The Economic Studies Quarterly*, Tokyo, Vol. XV, 3, 1965.

[82]

I am now, however, involved in another conflict of opinion where I do not dare to do the same without a good deal of explanation. The general social philosophy which I hold has sometimes been described as anti-rationalist, and at least with regard to my main intellectual forebears in this respect, B. Mandeville, David Hume and Carl Menger, I have, like others, occasionally myself used that term. Yet this has given rise to so many misunderstandings that it seems to me now a dangerous and misleading expression which ought to be avoided.

We have to deal here once again with a situation in which one group of thinkers have effectively claimed for themselves the only proper use of the good word and have in consequence come to be called rationalists. It was almost inevitable that those who did not agree with their views on the proper use of reason should have been labelled 'anti-rationalists'. This gave the impression as if the latter rated reason less highly, while in fact they were anxious to make reason more effective and pleaded that an effective use of reason required a proper insight into the limits of the effective use of individual reason in regulating relations between many reasonable beings.

There seems to me to exist a sort of rationalism which, by not recognizing these limits of the powers of individual reason, in fact tends to make human reason a less effective instrument than it could be. This sort of rationalism is a comparatively new phenomenon, though its roots go back to ancient Greek philosophy. Its modern influence, however, begins only in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and particularly with the formulation of its main tenets by the French philosopher, René Descartes. It was mainly through him that the very term 'reason' changed its meaning. To the medieval thinkers reason had meant mainly a capacity to recognize truth, especially moral truth,¹ when they met it, rather than a capacity of deductive reasoning from explicit premisses. And they were very much aware that many of the institutions of civilization were not the inventions of the reason but what, in explicit contrast to all that was invented, they called 'natural', i.e., spontaneously grown.

It was against this older natural law theory which did recognize that much of the institution of civilization was not the product of deliberate

¹ Cf. John Locke, *Essays on the Laws of Nature* (1676), ed. W. von Leyden, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1954, p. 111: 'By reason, however, I do not think is meant here that faculty of the understanding which forms trains of thought and deduces proofs, but certain definite principles of action from which spring all virtues and whatever is necessary for the proper moulding of morals.'

human design that the new rationalism of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and particularly René Descartes contended that all the useful human institutions were and ought to be deliberate creation of conscious reason. This reason was conceived as to the Cartesian *esprit géométrique*, a capacity of the mind to arrive at the truth by a deductive process from a few obvious and undoubtable premisses.

It seems to me that the best name for this kind of naïve rationalism is rationalist constructivism. It is a view which in the social sphere has since wrought unmeasurable harm, whatever its great achievements in the sphere of technology may have been. (If it be thought that by labelling this view 'constructivism' I am once again presenting my opponents with a good word, I should plead that this term was used in precisely this sense already by one of the greatest of the nineteenth-century liberals, W. E. Gladstone. He used it as a name for the attitude for which in the past I had no better term than the 'engineering type of mind'. 'Constructivism' now seems to me the best label for the practical attitude which regularly accompanies what in the field of theory I have described as 'scientism'.²)

The ascendancy of this view in the seventeenth century implied in fact a relapse into an earlier naïve way of thinking, into a view which habitually assumed a personal inventor for all human institutions, be it language or writing, laws or morals. It is no accident that Cartesian rationalism was completely blind to the forces of historical evolution. And what it applied to the past it proclaimed as programme for the future: that man in the full knowledge of what he was doing should deliberately create such a civilization and social order as the process of his reason enabled him to design. Rationalism in this sense is the doctrine which assumes that all institutions which benefit humanity have in the past and ought in the future to be invented in clear awareness of the desirable effects that they produce; that they are to be approved and respected only to the extent that we can show that the particular effects they will produce in any given situation are preferable to the effects another arrangement would produce; that we have it in our power so to shape our institutions that of all possible sets of results that which we prefer to all others will be realized; and that our reason should never resort to automatic or mechanical devices when conscious consideration of all factors would make preferable an outcome different from that of the spontaneous process. It is from this kind of social rationalism or constructivism that all modern socialism, planning and totalitarianism derives.

² Cf. my *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, Glencoe, Ill., 1952.

III

Our issue may now be pointed by asking whether, as Cartesian rationalism and all its descendants assume, human civilization is the product of human reason, or whether it is not the other way round and we should regard human reason as the product of a civilization which was not deliberately made by man but which had rather grown by a process of evolution. This is, of course, in a way a 'hen or egg' kind of question—nobody will deny that the two phenomena constantly interact. But the typical view of Cartesian rationalism is to insist throughout on the first interpretation, on a pre-existing human reason designing institutions. From the 'social contract' to the view that law is the creation of the State, and that because we have made our institutions we can also change them at will, the whole thinking of our modern age is permeated by the offsprings of this tradition. It is characteristic of this view also that it has no place for social theory proper: because the problems of social theory arise out of the fact that the individual efforts of man do often produce an order which, although unintended and unforeseen, turns out to be indispensable for the realization of what men strive for.

It deserves mention that in this respect the two-hundred and more years of effort of social and particularly economic theorists are now receiving unexpected support from the new science of social anthropology: its investigations show in more and more fields how what has long been regarded as the invention of reason was in fact the outcome of a process of evolution and selection very similar to that which we find in the biological field. I called it a new science—but in fact the social anthropologists merely continue work which Mandeville, Hume, and his successors among the Scottish philosophers had commenced, but which was largely forgotten when their later followers more and more confined themselves to the narrow field of economics.

In its more general form the main result of this development is thus the insight that even man's capacity to think is not a natural endowment of the individual but a cultural heritage, something transmitted not biologically but through example and teaching—mainly through, and implicit in, the teaching of language. The extent to which the language which we learn in early childhood determines our whole manner of thinking and our view and interpretation of the world is probably much greater than we are yet aware of. It is not merely that the knowledge of earlier generations is communicated to us through the medium of language; the structure of the language itself implies certain views about the nature of the world; and by learning a particular language we acquire

a certain picture of the world, a framework of our thinking within which we henceforth move without being aware of it. As we learn as children to use our language according to rules which we do not explicitly know, so we learn with language not only to act according to the rules of language, but according to many other rules of interpreting the world and of acting appropriately, rules which will guide us though we have never explicitly formulated them. This phenomenon of implicit learning is clearly one of the most important parts of cultural transmission, but one which we as yet only imperfectly understand.

IV

The fact to which I have just referred probably means that in all our thinking we are guided (or even operated) by rules of which we are not aware, and that our conscious reason can therefore always take account only of some of the circumstances which determine our actions. That rational thought was only one element among those which guide us has of course long been recognized. It was expressed in the scholastic maxim that *ratio non est iudex, sed instrumentum*—that reason is not the judge but an instrument. But clear awareness came only with David Hume's demonstration (directed against the constructivist rationalism of his time) that 'the rules of morality are not the conclusions of our reason'. This applies, of course, to all our values, which are the ends which reason serves but which reason cannot determine. This does not mean that reason has no function in deciding in conflicts of values—and all moral problems are problems created by conflicts of values. But nothing shows better the limited role of reason in this connection than a closer analysis of how we decide such conflicts. Reason can only help us to see what are the alternatives before us, which are the values which are in conflict, or which of them are true ultimate values and which are, as is often the case, only mediate values which derive their importance from serving other values. Once this task is accomplished, however, reason cannot help us further. It must accept as given the values which it is made to serve.

That values nevertheless serve a function or 'purpose' which scientific analysis may be able to discover is a different matter. It will help to distinguish further between the different types of rationalism if we examine somewhat more closely the character of these attempts to explain why we hold the values which we do. The best known of these theories concerning moral rules is utilitarianism. It occurs in two forms which provide the best illustration of the difference between the legitimate use of reason in the discussion of values and that false 'con-

structivist' rationalism which ignores the limitations that are set to the powers of reason.

Utilitarianism appears in its first and legitimate form in the work of the same David Hume who was so emphatic that 'reason of itself is utterly impotent' to create moral rules, but who at the same time insisted that the obedience to moral and legal rules which nobody had invented or designed for that purpose was essential for the successful pursuit of men's aims in society. He showed that certain abstract rules of conduct came to prevail because those groups who adopted them became as a result more effective in maintaining themselves. What he stressed in this respect was above all the superiority of an order which will result when each member obeys the same abstract rules, even without understanding their significance, compared with a condition in which each individual action was decided on the grounds of expediency, i.e., by explicitly considering all the concrete consequences of a particular action. Hume is not concerned with any recognizable utility of the particular action, but only with the utility of a universal application of certain abstract rules including those particular instances in which the immediate known results of obeying the rules are not desirable. His reason for this is that human intelligence is quite insufficient to comprehend all the details of the complex human society, and it is this inadequacy of our reason to arrange such an order in detail which forces us to be content with abstract rules; and further that no single human intelligence is capable of inventing the most appropriate abstract rules because those rules which have evolved in the process of growth of society embody the experience of many more trials and errors than any individual mind could acquire.

Authors in the Cartesian tradition like Helvetius and Beccaria, or their English followers Bentham and Austin down to G. E. Moore, turned this *generic utilitarianism*, which searched for the utility embodied in the abstract rules evolved by successive generations, into a *particularist utilitarianism* which in its ultimate consequences amounts to a demand that every action should be judged in full awareness of all its foreseeable results—a view which in the last resort tends to dispense with all abstract rules and leads to the claim that man can achieve a desirable order of society by concretely arranging all its parts in full knowledge of all the relevant facts. While the generic utilitarianism of Hume thus rests on a recognition of the limitations of our reason and expects its fullest use from a strict obedience to abstract rules, the constructivist particularist utilitarianism rests on the belief that reason is capable of directly manipulating all the details of a complex society.

The attitudes of the different kinds of rationalism to abstraction require somewhat fuller discussion because they are the source of frequent confusion. Perhaps the difference is best explained by saying that those who recognize the limits of the powers of reason want to use abstraction to extend it by achieving at least some degree of order in the complex of human affairs, where they know it is impossible to master the full detail, while the constructivist rationalist values abstraction only as an instrument in determining particulars. To the first, as de Tocqueville expressed it, 'general ideas are not proof of the strength but rather of the insufficiency of the human intellect', to the second they are a tool which is to give us unlimited power over the particular. In the philosophy of science this difference manifests itself in the belief of the adherents of the second view that the value of a theory must be judged by its capacity to predict particular events, i.e., on our ability to fill in the general pattern described by the theory with sufficient concrete facts to specify its particular manifestation, while of course the prediction that a kind of pattern will appear is also a falsifiable statement. In moral philosophy the constructivist rationalism tends to disdain any reliance on abstract mechanical rules and to regard as truly rational only behaviour such as is based on decisions which judge each particular situation 'on its merits', and chooses between alternatives in concrete evaluation of the known consequences of the various possibilities.

It is fairly obvious that this kind of rationalism must lead to the destruction of all moral values and to the belief that the individual should be guided only by his personal evaluation of the particular ends he pursues, and that it tends to justify all means by the ends pursued. The state of mind which it produces has been well described in an autobiographical essay by the late Lord Keynes. Describing the views he and his friends had held in the early years of the century—and he himself admittedly still held thirty years later—he wrote:

We entirely repudiated a personal liability on us to obey general rules. We claimed the right to judge every individual case on its merits, and the wisdom, experience and self-control to do so successfully. This was a very important part of our faith, violently and aggressively held, and for the outer world it was our most obvious and dangerous characteristic. We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term, immoralists. The consequences of being found out had, of course, to be considered for what they were worth. But we recognized no moral obligation on us, no inner

sanction, to conform or to obey. Before heaven we claimed to be our own judge in our own case.³

It is to be noticed that this statement implies not only a rejection of traditional moral rules but of all commitment to any kind of binding abstract rules of conduct, moral or other. It implies the claim that man's intelligence is adequate to order his life successfully without availing himself of the aid which general rules or principles can give him, in other words, the claim that man is capable of co-ordinating his activities successfully through a full explicit evaluation of the consequences of all possible alternatives of action, and in full knowledge of all the circumstances. This, of course, involves not only a colossal presumption concerning our intellectual powers, but also a complete misconception of the kind of world in which we live. It treats our practical problems as if we knew all the facts and the task of coping with them were a purely intellectual one. I am afraid much of modern social theory also has been deprived of value by this same assumption. The crucial fact of our lives is that we are *not* omniscient, that we have from moment to moment to adjust ourselves to new facts which we have not known before, and that we can therefore not order our lives according to a preconceived detailed plan in which every particular action is beforehand rationally adjusted to every other.

Since our whole life consists in facing ever new and unforeseeable circumstances, we cannot make it orderly by deciding in advance all the particular actions we shall take. The only manner in which we can in fact give our lives some order is to adopt certain abstract rules or principles for guidance, and then strictly adhere to the rules we have adopted in our dealing with the new situations as they arise. Our actions form a coherent and rational pattern, not because they have been decided upon as part of a single plan thought-out beforehand, but because in each successive decision we limit our range of choice by the same abstract rules.

Considering how important is this adherence to rules in making our lives orderly, it is curious how little the connection between such abstract rules and the achievement of an overall order has been studied. We all know of course that in fact we have learned to act according to rules in order to give our successive action some coherence, that we adopt general rules for our lives not only to save us the trouble of re-considering certain questions every time they arise, but mainly because only thus can we produce something like a rational whole. I cannot

³ J. M. Keynes, *Two Memoirs: Dr. Melchior; a defeated enemy and My Early Beliefs*, Intro. by D. Garnett, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949, pp. 97-8.

attempt here a more systematic discussion of the relation between the abstract rules followed in all the separate decisions and the abstract overall pattern which will thereby result. But there is one significant point I must mention briefly. If we want in this manner to achieve an overall order of our affairs, it is requisite that we follow the general rule in all instances and not only when there is no special reason to do otherwise. This may imply that we must deliberately disregard some knowledge of particular consequences which obedience to the rule in the given instance may produce. Here I think a true insight into the significance of behaviour according to rules demands a much more rigid adherence to them than would be conceded by the constructivist rationalists who would accept abstract rules at best as a substitute for a decision in full evaluation of all the particular circumstances and would regard it as desirable to depart from the rules whenever there is special reason for doing so.

Lest I be misunderstood I ought here briefly to say that when I speak of rigidly adhering to rules I do of course not mean isolated single rules but always a whole system of rules where often one rule will modify the consequences which we have to draw from another. More precisely, I ought to speak of a hierarchy of rules of different degrees of importance. But I cannot here go further into this important question than is necessary to prevent the misunderstanding that any one rule in isolation will normally be sufficient to solve our problems.

VI

What I have said about the need of abstract rules for the co-ordination of the successive actions of any man's life in ever new and unforeseen circumstances applies even more to the co-ordination of the actions of many different individuals in concrete circumstances which are known only partially to each individual and become known to him only as they arise. This brings me to what in my personal development was the starting point of all these reflections, and which may explain why, though at one time a very pure and narrow economic theorist, I was led from technical economics into all kinds of questions usually regarded as philosophical. When I look back, it seems to have all begun, nearly thirty years ago, with an essay on 'Economics and Knowledge'⁴ in which I examined what seemed to me some of the central difficulties of pure economic theory. Its main conclusion was that the task of economic

⁴ *Economica*, N.S., IV, 1937, reprinted in *Individualism and Economic Order*, London and Chicago, 1949.

theory was to explain how an overall order of economic activity was achieved which utilized a large amount of knowledge which was not concentrated in any one mind but existed only as the separate knowledge of thousands or millions of different individuals. But it was still a long way from this to an adequate insight into the relations between the abstract rules which the individual follows in his actions, and the abstract overall order which is formed as a result of his responding, within the limits imposed upon him by those abstract rules, to the concrete particular circumstances which he encounters. It was only through a re-examination of the age-old concept of freedom under the law, the basic conception of traditional liberalism, and of the problems of the philosophy of law which this raises, that I have reached what now seems to me a tolerably clear picture of the nature of the spontaneous order of which liberal economists have so long been talking.

It turns out to be an instance of a general method of indirectly creating an order in situations where the phenomena are far too complex to allow us the creation of an order by separately putting each element in its appropriate place. It is a sort of order over the particular manifestation of which we have little control, because the rules which determine it determine only its abstract character, while the detail depends on the particular circumstances known only to its individual members. It is therefore an order which we cannot improve upon but only disturb by attempting to change by deliberate arrangement any one part of it. The only way in which we can effectively improve it is by improving the abstract rules which guide the individuals. This, however, is of necessity a slow and difficult task, because most of the rules which do govern existing society are not the result of our deliberate making, and in consequence we often understand only very imperfectly what depends on them. As I have mentioned before, they are the product of a slow process of evolution in the course of which much more experience and knowledge has been precipitated in them than any one person can fully know. This means that, before we can hope successfully to improve them, we must learn to comprehend much better than we do now in what manner the man-made rules and the spontaneous forces of society interact. This will require not only a much closer collaboration between the specialists in economics, law, and social philosophy than we have had in recent times; even after we have achieved this, all we can hope for will be a slow experimental process of gradual improvement rather than any opportunity for drastic change.

It is perhaps understandable that constructivist rationalists, in their pride in the great powers of human reason, should have revolted against

the demand for a submission to rules whose significance they do not fully understand, and which produce an order which we cannot predict in detail. That we should not be able fully to shape human affairs according to our wishes went much against the grain of generations which believed that by the full use of his reason man could make himself fully master of his fate. It seems, however, that this desire to make everything subject to rational control, far from achieving the maximal use of reason, is rather an abuse of reason based on a misconception of its powers, and in the end leads to a destruction of that free interplay of many minds on which the growth of reason nourishes itself. True rational insight into the role of conscious reason seems indeed to indicate that one of the most important uses is the recognition of the proper limits of rational control. As the great Montesquieu clearly pointed out at the height of the 'age of reason': *la raison même a besoin de limites*.

VII

In conclusion I would like to say a few words in explanation of why I have chosen this particular topic for what I regard as my chief public address in Japan—the address to the University which has so graciously received me as one of its members. I do not think I am wrong in thinking that the cult of the explicit use of reason, which has been so important an element in the development of European civilization during the last three hundred years, has not played the same role in the indigenous Japanese evolution. Nor can it probably be denied that the deliberate use of reason as a critical instrument in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is perhaps the main cause of the more rapid development of the European civilization. It was therefore only natural that, when Japanese thinkers began to study the different strands in the development of European thought, they should have been most attracted by those schools which seemed to represent this rationalist tradition in its most extreme and explicit form. To those who were seeking the secret of Western rationalism, the study of the most extreme form of it, what I have called constructivist rationalism and what I regard as an illegitimate and erroneous exaggeration of a characteristic element of the European tradition, was bound to appear as the most promising path to the discovery of this secret.

Thus it came about that of the various traditions of European philosophy that which goes back to Plato in ancient Greece and then was revived by Descartes and Hobbes in the seventeenth century and which, with Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx and later the philosophical and legal

positivists, had carried this cult of reason furthest, was most widely studied by the Japanese. The chief purpose of what I have said was to warn you that the very schools which have carried furthest what may seem most characteristic of the European tradition may have gone as far wrong in one direction as those who have not fully appreciated the value of conscious reason have gone in another. Reason is like a dangerous explosive which, handled cautiously, will be most beneficial, but if handled incautiously may blow up a civilization.

Fortunately, this constructivist rationalism is not the only philosophy which the European tradition has to offer—even if it must be admitted that it has tinged the views of some of its greatest philosophers, including even Immanuel Kant. But at least outside the communist world (where constructivist rationalism has indeed blown up a civilization) you will also find another, more modest and less ambitious tradition, a tradition which is less given to building magnificent philosophical systems but which has probably done more to create the foundation of modern European civilization and particularly the political order of liberalism (while constructivist rationalism has always and everywhere been profoundly anti-liberal). It is a tradition which also goes back to classical antiquity, to Aristotle and Cicero, which was transmitted to our modern age mainly through the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, and during the last few centuries was developed mainly by political philosophers. In the eighteenth century it was mainly opponents of Cartesian rationalism like Montesquieu, David Hume and the Scottish philosophers of his school, in particular Adam Smith, who built up a true theory of society and of the role of reason in the growth of civilization. We owe much also to the great classical German liberals, Kant and Humboldt, who, however, as is true also of Bentham and the English utilitarians, did not wholly escape the fatal attraction of Rousseau and French rationalism. In its purer form we then find the political philosophy of this school once more in Alexis de Tocqueville and Lord Acton; and the foundation of its social theory was clearly restated, for the first time after David Hume, in the work of the founder of the Austrian School of Economics, Carl Menger. Among contemporary philosophers it is particularly Professor Karl R. Popper who has provided important new philosophical foundations for this strand of thought. He has coined for it the name 'critical rationalism', which I think very happily expresses the contrast to the naïve rationalism or constructivism. It seems to me the best term for describing the general position which I regard as the most reasonable one.

It was one of the chief aims of my talk to draw your attention to this

tradition. I believe that if you will examine it you will find less that is new and startling in it than earlier generations of Japanese found in the extreme rationalism of the Descartes-Hegel-Marx school. You may find it at first less fascinating and exciting—it does not carry with it the peculiar fascination or even intoxication which the cult of pure reason engenders. But I hope you will find it not only more congenial. It seems to me that, because it is not a one-sided exaggeration which has its roots in a peculiar phase of European intellectual development, but provides a true theory of human nature, it should offer a foundation to the development of which your own experience should enable you to make important contributions. It is a view of mind and society which provides an appropriate place for the role which tradition and custom play in their development. It makes us see much to which those brought up on the crude forms of rationalism are often blind. It shows us that sometimes grown institutions which nobody has invented may provide a better framework for cultural growth than more sophisticated designs.

President Matsushita,⁶ on another occasion, asked me a question which goes right to the heart of the matter but which I was not then at once able to answer. He asked, if I understood him rightly, whether a people who relied on convention rather than invention for its institutions may not sometimes provide more freedom for the individual and therefore more scope for evolution than those who attempted deliberately to construct all institutions, or tried to remake them according to the principles of reason. I believe the answer is Yes. Until we have learnt to recognize the proper limits of reason in the arrangement of social affairs, there is great danger that in trying to force on society what we think is a rational pattern we may smother that freedom which is the main condition for gradual improvement.

⁶ Dr. Masatoshi Matsushita, President of Rikkyo University, who took the chair when this lecture was delivered.